"Cut Me Some Slack":

Psychological Contracts as a Foundation for Understanding Team Charters

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Abstract

This paper examines the functioning of team charters in teamwork. We argue that the psychological contract literature serves as a theoretical foundation for understanding team charters. We examine what types of psychological contracts are established and developed during interactions between team members and whether these psychological contracts are related to team functioning. Through in-depth interviews and objective performance measures, we find some distinct patterns of psychological contracts that can be related to team functioning. Our results indicate that teams may benefit from early and explicit discussions about standards for work effort and work quality, and about the importance of being tolerant with each other. More particularly, we find that teams that are able to "cut each other some slack", that is, the ability to live with short-term imbalances in give-and-take relationships, are more functional teams.

The increased use of teamwork in organizations has been followed by an explosion of interest in understanding what drives team effectiveness (Burke et al., 2006; Marks, Mathieu, & Zaccaro, 2001; Mathieu, Maynard, Rapp, & Gilson, 2008). One area attracting attention is the initial phase of teamwork, suggesting that successful teams hinge on developing a solid foundation before operating as a team (Hackman, 2002). This has long been acknowledged in the practitioner literature, advising teams to develop team charters, which detail "the mutual expectations regarding behavior of the group, meeting management and allocation of work" (McDowell, Herdman, & Aaron, 2011, p. 80) in the initial phase of their teamwork (Aiken & Keller, 2007; Buchel, 1996; Fisher, Rayner, Belgard, & Armstrong, 1995; Harris & Harris, 1996; Hickman & Creighton-Zollar, 1998; Wilkinson & Moran, 1998). More recently, academic work has picked up this trend, examining both how team charters affect team performance (Mathieu & Rapp, 2009; McDowell, Herdman, & Aaron, 2011), and more normatively, how teams should develop team charters (McKendall, 2000; Mohrman, Cohen, & Mohrman, 1995; Norton & Sussman, 2009). Furthermore, researchers have found that when student teams establish ground rules and clarify expectations, team satisfaction and team performance increase (Aaron, McDowell, & Herdman, 2014; Byrd & Luthy, 2010; Cox & Bobrowski, 2000, 2004; Hillier & Dunn-Jensen, 2013; Hunsaker, Pavett, & Hunsaker, 2011; Mathieu & Rapp, 2009).

However, despite the increasing interest in the initial phase of teamwork, the literature on team charters is surprisingly atheoretical. Previous studies have developed team charters that focus on a diverse set of elements, ranging from conflict handling (Aaron, et al., 2014) to feedback mechanisms (Mathieu and Rapp, 2009) and vision/mission statements (Hunsaker et al., 2011). When analyzing this more closely, we see that the team charters are often based on best practice literature rather than a theory of team charters. This lack of a theoretical

foundation weakens the ability to understand how and why team charters can facilitate team processes and performance.

A team charter is about "mutual expectations" (McDowell, Herdman, & Aaron, 2011, p. 80) and represents an agreement between team members on how they will work together (Mathieu & Rapp, 2009). These definitions stress expectations and mutual agreements between team members as core mechanisms of team charters. A theory that indeed deals with expectations and agreements between interacting parties is the psychological contract theory. A psychological contract is defined as "an individual's belief regarding the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between that focal person and another party" (Rousseau, 1989, p. 123). Thus, it is an individual's implicit and unwritten assumptions about what he or she will give and receive in a relationship. Team charters deal with contractual elements, but with few legally binding features (Malhotra & Murnighan, 2002). Therefore, we propose that psychological contracts can serve as a theoretical framework for studying team charters.

This paper contributes to the team literature by offering the psychological contract theory as a theoretical lens through which we can understand the impact of team charters. The research questions we look at through this lens are twofold: First, we ask what kinds of expectations are established and developed during the interactions between team members in the initial phase of teamwork and onwards. Second, we ask whether teams develop various expectations or psychological contracts and how these are related to teams' functioning. Through in-depth interviews of team members together with objective team performance measures, we examine 12 small teams consisting of farmers that have established small joint operations. In line with suggestions from the team charter literature, we find that well-functioning teams develop explicit psychological contracts. However, our findings extend the

team charter literature in that well-functioning teams "cut each other some slack", meaning that they are able to live with short-term imbalances in give-and-take relationships.

The Team Charter Literature

The increased use of teams rests on the assumption that interdependent individuals can accomplish more than the sum of individuals. However, bringing people together in a team does not automatically result in effective team performance (Salas, Stagl, & Burke, 2004). As a result, team researchers have focused particularly on how to promote team performance. A small stream of research has focused on the impact of the initial phase of a team's life on performance. In particular, Hackman (1987, 2002) has repeatedly urged team leaders to create supportive conditions in a team's initial phase. In addition, Brown and Eisenhardt (1997) noted that high-performing project teams were more carefully created than low-performing teams. Recently, Zijlstra, Waller, and Phillips (2012) found that swift-starting teams that enabled an early emergence of balanced and stable communication patterns were more effective. A balanced pattern implies reciprocity in the interaction of the parties involved. Routines established early in a team's life tend to persist over time (Gersick & Hackman, 1990), thus affecting its processes and performance after the initial phase (Feldman, 1984).

Although both practitioners and academics have introduced team charters as a plan for how teams can establish optimal routines in the initial phase, the content and foundation of these team charters vary. Aaron et al. (2014) argued that a team charter should involve topics like meeting management, meeting behavior norms, decision making, communication plans, and the handling of conflicts. They developed their team charter based on a conceptual model introduced by Hoegl and Gemuenden (2001). The model presents six teamwork quality measures: communication, coordination, the balance of member contributions, mutual support, effort, and cohesion. In their experimental study, Mathieu and Rapp (2009) developed a team charter with three sections. The first section describes preferred working

styles, availability, and contact information. The second relates to feedback mechanisms, how team members would meet, and their general working style. The third concerns developing plans for dealing with performance problems and how to provide positive feedback and rewards. Their team charter is based on the two major tracks of activities of *team work* and *task work* introduced by Marks, Mathieu, and Zaccaro (2001). Furthermore, Hunsaker et al. (2011) developed a team charter based on the literature on best practices for team charters and included the following elements: a mission statement, a team vision, a team identity, boundaries, operating guidelines, and performance norms and consequences.

Existing research on team charters introduces a diversity of elements in such charters, but few overlapping elements can be found. Moreover, researchers have based the elements of their team charters on findings from team performance and best practices, but they have not particularly looked at the core of team charters, namely expectations between team members (McDowell, et al., 2011). Thus, since team charters are contractual and deal with clarifying expectations, we suggest that we need to empirically explore the expectations that develop between team members and how these are linked to teams' functioning. We therefore introduce the psychological contract theory as a theoretical framework for understanding the content and effects of early teamwork. In a psychological contract the parties typically develop a reciprocal relationship based on *expectations* about what they owe each other. This theory allows us to explore team members' expectations (psychological contracts) of each other and how they react to breaches and the fulfillment of these expectations.

A Theoretical Foundation for Team Charters

The psychological contract concept has gained increased attention since its reintroduction in 1989 (Rousseau, 1989), and has since been developed into a theory by examining how a psychological contract is formed, what it contains, and its consequences when breached. More so, the majority of studies have emphasized the impact of a

psychological contract breach and its significant effects on various organizational outcomes, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover intention, in-role performance, and organizational citizenship behavior (e.g., Bal, De Lange, Jansen, & Van der Velde, 2008; Zhao, Wayne, Glibkowski, & Bravo, 2007). Although numerous, studies on psychological contract formation, content, and breach have focused on the reciprocal relationship between an employer and an employee.

In the current study, we apply a psychological contract to the relationship between team members, as parties that are interdependent and interact will develop psychological contracts (Rousseau, 1989). The psychological contract theory is applicable not only because it allows us to go into detail about expectations in teams, but also because it informs us about what happens when psychological contracts are breached. Hence, by exploring team members' expectations and breach/fulfilment perceptions, we can gain a better understanding of how to set up a team charter and for what purpose. A team charter is a written document about how team members should work together. A team charter will therefore influence the content and perceptions of the psychological contract in the specific team, but regardless of whether teams have a written team charter or not, we argue that a psychological contract will develop in teams. Since researchers have mainly studied the content of psychological contracts between employers and employees, we lack empirical data on the content of psychological contracts between team members. However, previous research may provide some insight into what a psychological contract in a team may contain and what happens when such contracts are breached.

Research on the *content* of psychological contracts between employees and employers have shown that psychological contracts can be transactional or relational (Rousseau, 1995). Transactional contracts refer to highly specific exchanges of limited duration and with characteristics such as low ambiguity, low member commitment, weak integration, and the

freedom to enter new contracts. Relational contracts are more open-ended and relationship-oriented with little specification of performance requirements, high member commitment, high affective commitment, high integration, and stability. In addition, psychological contracts can be measured in terms of various *features* (Janssens, Sels, & Van Den Brande, 2003; Sels, Janssens, & van den Brande, 2004). For example, the feature of tangibility refers to whether a psychological contract's terms are explicit or implicit, while the timeframe refers to whether it is short- or long term. Thus, team members may develop various types of psychological contracts, both with regard to content and features, and clarifying the content of these expectations can inform us about which elements should be included in a team charter.

The unique and perhaps most important contribution of the psychological contract theory is that of a "*breach*" (Conway & Briner, 2009; Coyle-Shapiro & Conway, 2004). Robinson and Rousseau (1994, p. 247) defined breach as "when one party in a relationship perceives another to have failed to fulfill promised obligation(s)." The breach of a psychological contract has proven to be detrimental for employees' job satisfaction, commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, and performance (Zhao, et al., 2007). However, we lack empirical evidence regarding what happens when team members perceive a breach to a psychological contract with another team member. We therefore aim to examine psychological contract breaches and fulfillment in teams to help inform which elements are vital for a team to clarify through team charters.

In sum, the team charter studies have demonstrated that teams can benefit from clarifying expectations before they start working together. However, little research has been carried out as to which expectations should be clarified and what happens when they are fulfilled or breached. We argue that the psychological contract theory can provide a theoretical foundation that allows us to explore, in detail, which expectations are pertinent in teams as well as how contract breaches or fulfillment influences the teams. Hence, our

purpose is to explore which expectations (psychological contracts) are developed when teams start up, as well as how the team members perceive breaches/fulfillment of these expectations. By linking these two literatures, we aim to make recommendations for how to set up a team charter, and make suggestions for what to include in a team charter.

Method

Data Collection

Given the limited research and theoretically based literature on team charters, we relied on inductive theory-building using embedded, multiple cases (Eisenhardt, 1989b). Multiple cases are likely to yield a more robust, parsimonious theory than single cases (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). The cases we examine are joint operations in the farming industry in Norway. These operations are small firms in which the farmers join their quotas (how much milk they are allowed to produce), herds, and land. That is, the operations are owned and typically driven by the farmers themselves in a joint collaborative partnership, and as such, act as teams who work interdependently toward a common goal (Thompson, 2008). Moreover, the joint operations are part of a larger cooperative, which is Norway's largest producer, distributor, and exporter of dairy products. It is owned by 15,000 farmers in which each farmer is a shareholder of the cooperative. Hence, the joint operations fit the definition of a team and are thus treated as such in the current paper. An advantage of studying teams in this context is that they are fairly independent within the larger cooperative, making the psychological contracts and their relationship to team functioning easier to interpret.

We collected data on 12 joint operations in two geographic regions with different contextual characteristics. In each region, we asked an adviser from the farming industry with extensive knowledge about the joint operations in the region to select relevant operations. To maximize variability in the findings across operations, we asked the adviser specifically to select some joint operations that seemed to cooperate well and others that cooperated poorly.

This sampling technique is referred to as "polar types" and is consistent with Eisenhardt and Graebner's (2007) recommendations for exploring clear and contrasting patterns in the data.

We examined relatively large joint operations; the operations typically had three or four members and had invested more than $1 million in new cowsheds and technology. Table 1 summarizes the key information describing the joint farming operations (i.e., region, year established, number of members, milk quota, and main technology). In each of the 12 joint operations, we interviewed two people: the administrator of the operation and one member whom the advisers suggested. Importantly, the administrators did not have a hierarchical position above the other members; their role had more practical purposes, as all operations were formally required to name an administrator. We carried out the interviews one at a time, which resulted in 24 interviews. The interviews lasted 1–2 hours and were semi-structured; that is, the informants answered open-ended questions about the joint operation and how team members collaborated and interacted. We were particularly interested in stories about how they established the joint operations, which expectations they had toward each other and the team, and whether they discussed these expectations before starting the joint operation. They were also asked to talk about how they perceived their collaboration, whether they would have started a joint operation again, how committed they were, how they communicated, and how they made decisions and solved problems. The goal was to explore broadly what they perceived to be important to run the operation in terms of expectations of the other members.

Insert Table 1 about here

All interviews were conducted by at least two interviewers and at the farmer's site. During the interviews, we were also allowed to inspect the farm to obtain firsthand impressions about the business and context. These observational data enhanced our understanding and interpretations. All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. In addition, shortly after each interview we wrote down our impressions and

immediate thoughts and reflections from the interviews and observations at the farm. After completing all the interviews, we held several presentations for farmers and farming industry representatives (advisers, consultants, and managers), so they could assist with interpretations and feedback.

Data Analysis

Qualitative analysis typically involves three related processes: identifying meaning, categorizing, and integrating (Barker, Pistrang, & Elliott, 2002). We conducted a template analysis (King, 2012) and followed the principles of a within- and cross-case analysis approach to identify meaning and to categorize and integrate the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In other words, the goal of a template-analysis approach is to attain a condensed and broad description of a phenomenon, and the outcome often represents concepts or categories that describe the data (Elo & Kyngäs, 2007). A within-case analysis approach aims to understand each case in the data (or, in this article, each team). A cross-case analysis examines and compares all of the cases (teams) to identify patterns. As recommended by Eisenhardt (1989a), we searched each case (team) and compared the cases for similarities and differences to explore potential patterns.

First, we began the analysis by applying a few rough codes to the data and applied Atlas.ti version 6.1 in the coding process. We coded quotes indicating a psychological contract between group members exemplified by expectations and specific exchanges between group members (this is how the psychological contract was operationalized). After identifying these quotes, we proceeded with a more fine-grained coding process. The goal of the fine-grained coding process was to categorize more specifically the *content* and *features* of those expectations identified in the rough coding process and to compare findings across the teams.

Second, we analyzed the psychological contracts identified in the initial coding

process in terms of fulfillment and breaches. We coded participants' reported situations as

breached if they perceived team members in the joint operation as having failed to meet their

expectations. Conversely, we coded participants' reported situations as fulfillment if they

perceived other team members as having met their expectations. Third, team functioning

consists of measures of objective performance data and the teams' subjective perceptions of

cooperation, commitment, and team viability. The coding of these variables is described next.

First, teams were characterized as either cooperating well or poorly. The following

quotes (T1=Member of Team 1) represent examples of good cooperation "We cooperate well;

I think we really do (T1)," and "The cooperation between us has worked really well (T6)."

"We now have a bad cooperation climate (T5)," and "The cooperation, you said? It has totally

tipped over (T8)" represent poor cooperation quotes.

Second, the teams varied in how committed each member felt to the others and to the

work. For instance (R=Researcher, F=Farmer), "I am much more committed now than in the

beginning" (T3), and "R: How is your commitment now compared to in the beginning? F: It

has actually increased" (T11) are examples of quotes indicating joint operations with high

commitment, while the following quotes are examples of low commitment: "R: So there is

little commitment from the others? F: Yes, they just sit down and wait for someone to come

(T8)," and "the commitment is not very high (T5)." In some of the teams where there were

some discrepancies in perceptions, we categorized them as having medium commitment.

Third, team viability varied across the teams in terms of whether they wanted the team

to continue, with "There is no doubt that the only right thing is that we started up. There are

no regrets," (T1) and "I have not regretted entering this joint operation and recommend it to

others…I wish to invest more" (T6) as examples of high team viability. Low team viability is

exemplified by the following: "I would not have started up again under the conditions we

have now," (T8) and "I would not have started with the same people as today." (T5) We labeled two of the teams as having medium team viability.

Finally, each team's performance was measured on four objective indicators: quota filling, milk per cow, milk quality, and fertility status. We ranked the teams as either high, medium, or low based on an average rank across the indicators when equally weighted.

Results

We aimed to answer two questions: Which expectations (psychological contracts) evolve between team members across teams, and how are psychological contracts tied to team functioning? We first present our findings pertaining to expectations and obligations between team members. These findings can inform us about which elements to include in team charters. Second, we present our analysis of how these expectations are tied to teams' functioning.

Psychological Contracts in Teams

Through the analysis of team members' psychological contracts, we searched for various *content* and *feature* elements of psychological contracts. Overall, we identified two distinct content elements across all teams, which we have termed *work effort* and *work quality*. Work effort relates to expectations or obligations about the amount of work each farmer should contribute with during the workday and in the team. Work quality concerns expectations or obligations about the level of standard for the work carried out. Furthermore, we identified two feature elements, which we called *tangibility* (explicit/implicit) and *tolerance* (slack/rigid). The teams varied with regard to having explicit or implicit psychological contracts, or slack or rigid contracts. That is, teams were recognized as having explicit psychological contracts when they had discussed or talked about their expectations of each other. In contrast, teams that had not talked about expectations and obligations were

identified as having implicit contracts. This feature element has been recognized in the psychological contract literature already (Janssens, et al., 2003; Sels, et al., 2004). A feature element that has not previously been addressed was the feature we called tolerance. Through our analysis we found that some of the teams used phrases like "cutting people some slack" or "to turn a blind eye to things," meaning that to be able to work collaboratively, one cannot constantly monitor the balance with regard to effort (who does what at what time) and quality (the level of standard varies). Rather, one has to let differences in contribution and quality pass. Hence, teams varied with regard to tolerance, either cutting each other slack, or being rigid in terms of work effort/quality.

During the cross case analysis, we found that among the 12 teams, the psychological contract could be divided into two main types, A and B. These types varied in terms of how *explicitly* expectations were established/discussed about work effort/quality before starting the joint operations, how much *slack* they would allow in terms of work effort/quality, and whether the expectations were perceived to be *fulfilled* or breached. Seven teams (T1, T2, T3, T6, T7, T9, and T11) had during the initial phase explicitly established expectations in terms of work quality and work effort, discussed the importance of cutting each other some slack in terms of quality and effort, and perceived fulfillment of these expectations. Five teams (T4, T5, T8, T10, and T12), on the other hand, had a more implicit perception of their expectations of each other, which meant that they had neither openly discussed expectations in the initial phase nor discussed the importance of cutting each other some slack. These team members perceived more breaches relating to work quality and work effort than type A. Next, we present quotes highlighting the observed patterns of these two types, before we tie these findings to the teams' functioning.

Type A: Explicit and slack psychological contracts

14

We show first that the teams in type A had explicit and fulfilled expectations tied to work quality and work effort content, while they also emphasized the need to cut some slack. The following quotes show examples of how respondents in type A had *explicitly* agreed on the *work quality* that they wanted to operate by when establishing the joint operation:

> We want to have a high standard on the operation. And, we have jointly agreed on that (T1).

> We have some routines that should be followed, which we have agreed on. For example, the cow shed should be cleaned and tidied until the next person comes. It has worked out fine (T3).

> We spent a lot of time discussing that [expectations], and I think that is maybe the most important time spent…Yes, so that everyone understands what this common platform means. Because that is what it is (T9).

By having clarified the expectations tied to work quality in the initial phase of the teamwork, the team members knew which routines to follow. A further observation in this respect is that they seemed to perceive fulfilment of these expectations, thus avoiding breaches. Furthermore, after establishing these routines and working together, some of the team members talked about adapting to each other's routines and standards. For instance, in T7 and T11, team members talked about how people were different, and thus carried out their work differently, but through learning and communication, they adapted routines to each other (F=Farmer, R=Researcher):

> F: I think there are places [other joint operations] where things have not been clarified initially. R: It seems like you have done a good job at that F: Yes, I think we have…and you want to hand over the cow shed to the next person in a good condition R: and the expectations might be different from person to person? F: Yes, but they have become more similar…you discover that others do things that you can learn from (T7).

> X might do things totally different than I do, and I can do things the way he doesn't like them to be done, and then you need to find a middle ground. R: How do you deal with such a situation? F: We don't push things through our way; we agree on things (T11).

In addition to explicitly discussing the work quality and hence avoiding breaches of these expectations, the teams in type A aligned their perceptions about *work effort*. Work effort includes team members' expectations about contributing equally, or to the level they have agreed upon. However, work effort also came across as something that one should be flexible about, and where members should be able to step in for each other. The following quotes are typical examples of how these teams perceived work effort.

> There is no use in saying "I have worked this and this much, and should get this and this back." I think that would have been useless to start with (T1).
>
> R: Have you had any challenges in the joint operation? F: No, I wouldn't say that. One of us was on sick leave a while ago, and we adapted to the situation. Me and X covered for him. So, during the summer the two of us had to do it all. So it got busier than planned, but these things happen...we discuss whether some of us have something extra; we are not very rigid about "you have to work this week." We try to adapt this to each team member. Like X has sheep, so when there is lambing, he gets time off. So we try to adapt this to every one (T3).
>
> We have work that rests more on some of the team members. For instance, removing manure from the cowshed is a lot of work, and it is often those who don't have work outside the joint operation that have to make an extra effort…as a basis they should be paid for that...because of the economy, it turns out to be voluntary work…Yes, it mostly evens out (T6).
>
> R: So you have a working schedule for the whole year? F: Yes, and I think that is important for the long-term. For example, in May, X has a confirmation in the family, and Y has a birthday the same weekend. They can't go in the cowshed then. Of course, we have to do the work even though it is not our weekend…So I think the part about mutual trust, that you know each other and flexibility, that everybody does it all, is important (T9).

These quotes show how team members in type A were concerned with filling in for each other, trusting that in the long run people would step in for each other. Being explicit about filling in for each other and helping each other out seemed to have clarified how much they can expect from each other in terms of effort and how they distribute this work effort. Thus, through clarification processes, they seemed to avoid perceptions about breaches.

The most prevailing feature of the teams in type A was the notion of slack. We used the term *slack* for perceptions and expectations tied to give-and-take, generosity, or flexibility. Next, we present quotes that show what is meant by *slack*:

> There can easily be a conflict in a joint operation; the little things can become a big irritation. So, you need to know each other well, be willing to give and take, and be willing to see the positive side of your partner (T1).

> It is important that there is a "give-and-take" relationship. You can't just run things you yourself have planned. You have to be flexible, and it is very important that you are able to recognize your own mistakes (T3).

Hence, several team members brought up the phrase "give and take." "Giving and taking" seemed to relate to perceptions about how much one contributes and receives in a relationship and whether he/she feels this relationship is balanced. Moreover, giving and taking meant acknowledging that sometimes the relationship between what one contributes and receives may feel unbalanced, but trusting that this evens out over time. As a consequence, the team members explained that they cannot constantly monitor a psychological contract's balance:

> The most important thing in a joint operation is that you have to be incredibly generous. Otherwise, there is no use (T1).

> When you work together you can't focus too much on details. You can't be irritated because a bucket is standing upside down or things like that…we have talked about this. It was part of the process when we started, that we should look at things in terms of the bigger picture; that was the premise (T2).

> You have to be a bit flexible. You can't be rigid about all matters. You have to be able to turn a blind eye to things. You can't achieve 100% justice (T6).

Slack seemed to mean different things depending on whether it was tied to work quality or work effort. That is, in terms of work quality one can cut others slack if he/she acknowledges that each person has a different standard. In terms of work effort, this can be done by allowing for an uneven level of contributions (effort) in the short term, as one can expect this to equalize in the long term.

Moreover, the quotes show how the teams handle differences and disagreements during collaboration by discussing this during meetings or during work. Hence, it seems like this is not only established during the initial phase, but it is an ongoing process. That is, some talked about how important it is to discuss these things while they work together, in case some perceive an imbalance in the give and take relationship. To sum up, the teams in type A have explicitly agreed on which standard to operate by, how much effort each should put in, and that they should cut each other slack as long as they maintain a balance in the give and take relationship in the long run. Although not written, we suggest that by being explicit about expectations, these teams have established some sort of team charter, which have influenced the types of psychological contracts that have developed in the teams. Also, by establishing a "team charter" about being tolerant, they seem to avoid perceiving breaches of the psychological contract.

Type B: Implicit and rigid psychological contracts

A second group of teams (5) had less explicit discussions of expectations, both in the initial phase of the teams and during their work together. Also, these teams came across with a more rigid type of psychological contract. Nevertheless, we find the same types of expectations, that is, work effort and work quality, as in type B. The difference between types A and B was that in type B, we learned about these expectations mostly through stories of breaches, not through how they had clarified expectations. The following quotes show examples of breached expectations tied to work quality:

> The fodder they [the other team members] deliver is not of the quality I want…they [the other team members] cut the grass one month after they should have, and the grass has no value as fodder for the cows *(T4, Member 1)*.

> R: Did you discuss things like goals and expectations? F: No, you know, we didn't do that. And that was a total mistake *(T4, Member 2)*.

The first quote shows how one of the parties perceived breaches to the expectations related to the quality of the fodder, which is of high importance when feeding the cows and getting the right quality of milk. The second quote illustrates how another member of the team felt that they had spent too little time discussing expectations, which he believed was a mistake. While analyzing the expectations in this particular team (T4), there seem to be more breaches of expectations and a joint perception about a lack of discussing these issues while establishing the joint operation. Likewise, the quote below illustrates how a farmer in another team perceived breaches related to work quality exemplified by handling the equipment and maintenance of the equipment, and also that they did not discuss these issues when establishing the joint operation:

> R: How has the joint operation worked then? F: A lot of it has worked really badly. R: Why is that? F: Well, there are differences in interests, and differences in attitudes about the equipment. That is just the way it is. R: In terms of taking care of it? F: Yes, and with regard to use and maintenance. R: So, beforehand, did you go through work routines, or make a work schedule of some sort? F: No, we did not do that. I thought we had done that, that we had some sort of a working plan, and that was all right, but then one of the parties withdrew; since then everything has become very loose (T5).

While talking about this, the respondent was clear about being frustrated about how little the others cared about taking care of the equipment and following up on maintenance, and as such perceived breaches of expectations tied to work quality. Similarly, the following quotes show examples of what happens when a group member perceived breaches to work quality expectations, that is, a feeling of frustration and a decrease of trust.

> It is no secret that I think there has been a lot of inconsistency concerning how the work is carried out around here…and when you feel you have sacrificed a lot during your duty, and when you come back again and you see that the standard has decreased again, that is frustrating… I feel that some of the others take the dairy work too lightly…when you see that this continues, it's apparent that trust decreases, too (T10, Member 1).

In the same team, another member shared how he thinks they would have done better if they had discussed mutual expectations when starting the joint operation.

> R: Did you discuss in advance that you might have different expectations in terms of standard? F: No, not really, and that is one of the things we could have done better beforehand: discussed what our expectations were in terms of these things (T10, Member 2).

As such, these quotes show how they, through breaches of work quality, have acknowledged that they should have discussed these issues more thoroughly in the initial phase of the teamwork. Similar to work quality the expectation tied to work effort came across during stories of breaches in type B, as the following quote shows:

> The others are quite eager to come to the meetings, but when it comes to making an effort…(T8).

The farmer goes on to talk about how much work there is in addition to producing the milk and that he feels like the others are less willing to make an effort that is not directly tied to the milk production. He feels he needs to do a lot of voluntary work, without the others contributing, thus describing a breach relating to effort and a lack of balance in the give-and-take relationship. Another farmer on another team had similar perceptions:

> And I mean, when they first come here, they could at least make a little effort, instead of just "chu, chu, chu," and then leave again — done. And, when I come back on Monday, it is double the work for me (T4).

Hence, the farmer is disappointed that the other team members are not willing to contribute more, and he is frustrated with the little effort that is put in. Again, we see a similar story from one of the farmers in joint operation 5:

> They really want to join in when decisions are to be made, but when it comes to contributing to the actual work efforts, they are less likely to help. It is very off and on when it suits them in terms of how much they contribute…In the joint operation contract, it says that we should have 1/3 of the work load each, and even though I don't expect them to do that much, I expect them to do more than what they do…It is

more like a duty now. I don't think it should be voluntary…that you put in extra effort, from the others' perspective that is (T5).

Both teams (T4 and T5) admitted that they did not focus enough on discussing their mutual expectations in the establishing phase, particularly their expectations tied to work effort and how they should collaborate.

> The farmers were divided into sub-teams, and after a while some of them wanted to change teams; one member claimed that he couldn't work with another one because he had different routines…and I think maybe it related to work effort, that when the other person puts in half the effort you do, you have to work harder (T10, Member 1).

> Well, the challenge when we work alone is that it is so busy that you are not able to do something extra, and you are just able to do exactly what is necessary…And then, if one person does it [extra effort]…he will probably be frustrated if he feels he has sacrificed a lot during his week and he comes back after three weeks to see that it has decreased again (T10, Member 2).

The final team in type B also had trouble with fulfilling expectations when it came to work effort, and as seen in the following quote, they had some challenges when it came to discussing issues that were not working well:

> I write lists every Monday of what should be done, but not all tasks are executed…I should probably have some deadlines to ensure a follow-up…as long as I don't address things that are uncomfortable, the meetings are fine (T12).

The teams in type B did not seem to explicitly discuss expectations during the teams' establishment, either tied to work quality, work effort, or slack. As such, there seemed to be a more rigid feature to the psychological contracts in these teams. Still, during the interviews some of them reflected on the subject of *slack* when asked about giving advice to others on how to establish a joint operation. For instance, the following quote shows how one of these troubled joint operations looked at it:

> You have to be able look at the big picture and be flexible. I see when I am out and working in other work places that it is the same there. Some don't do things at the same pace and other things as well. So I think it is the same whether you work in a cow shed or…You have to find a middle ground and a way for all parties adapt…the one that is the most meticulous has to lower his demands, and the one that makes less effort has to step up (T10).

As a consequence of not talking about being tolerant and cutting each other some slack, some experienced problems with conflicting expectations.

> He wants us to do it on our own initiative, while we want him to say that "next week such and such cow is going to calve, can you help me search for it and bring it home?" Of course we can do that. But it is a bit conflicting. We want him to call if he needs extra assistance, and he wants us to come by on our own initiative. But he's the one who knows what life in the cow shed is like. Also, he lays the plan for what is going to happen in the future. So, I guess there are some conflicting expectations (T4).

Likewise, when asked for advice about how to establish a joint operation, one of the farmers in a joint operation from type B shared the following description:

> If you are to establish a joint operation, there are some things you need to know. And that is to work in a team. A person who has never had a boss should not join a joint operation. Absolutely not. You have to know how to work in a team, and you have to be used to doing your own share. And you have to be able to talk about things, and be able to give in for the majority…two, or at least one has explicitly said that I do what I want. And over time there has become less and less communication between the administrator and him. So, if the administrator gives him an instruction, he replies that he does whatever he wants. It's too bad, because they are both about to burst with anger. And with the other guy as well, yesterday I went through the list and carried out the work for him (T8).

> I was ill one day and asked x to cover for me, and it was Saturday…he worked for me, but gave me a bill of 23,000 NOK [3,700 USD], which he wanted me to pay (T5).

In sum, the type B psychological contracts were characterized by expectations tied to work quality and work effort, but unlike type A, the majority reported breached expectations and a lack of discussing these expectations when establishing the teams. As such, they can be seen as having implicit psychological contracts. In addition, there was little room for slack when experiencing an imbalance in a psychological contract, and as such they had a more rigid nature to their psychological contracts. Tying this to the team charter literature, we see that these five teams did not spend time establishing explicit expectations, or a team charter, in the startup process. However, like the teams in type A, they had developed expectations about work quality and effort, showing that regardless of developing a team charter, teams develop a psychological contract. An important difference between type A and B teams showed that

when no expectations are clarified or written down in a team charter, there seems to be more breaches of the psychological contract. This may be tied to the issue of tolerance, which was not clarified in the type B teams. With this clear-cut difference between types A and B, we wanted to further analyze what these differences might indicate for the teams' functioning.

Linking the Psychological Contract with Team Functioning

Tables 2 and 3 present our findings pertaining to team functioning. First, Table 2 presents the average scores for each team on each indicator for the 2008–2010 period. The right-hand side of the table shows how each team ranked according to these indicators, the average rank across the indicators when equally weighted, and our overall conclusion about performance defined as high, medium, or low. Further, the table shows differences among the teams' performance. However, within the teams the various indicators are highly associated; those scoring high on one indicator also tend to score high on other indicators. Consequently, teams score quite consistently across the quality and productivity indicators, being stable high, medium, or low performers.

Insert Table 2 about here

Table 3 presents examples of the team members' perceptions of three perceptual variables: cooperation, commitment, and team viability. We have included relevant quotes within each of the 12 teams to illustrate the levels of cooperation, commitment, and team viability. The table demonstrates that there were differences across the teams. That is, across the teams, an overall pattern among the three perceptual variables emerged: teams in which the members perceived good cooperation were also more committed and had higher team viability. Conversely, teams in which the members perceived cooperation as poor were less committed and had lower team viability.

Insert Table 3 about here

In our cross case analysis, we further plotted the results of psychological contracts for types A and B and team functioning (performance, cooperation, commitment, and team viability) and present these in Table 4. Table 4 demonstrates that across the teams, an overall pattern linking psychological contracts and team functioning emerged. There was a consistent pattern when comparing main groups A and B with the subjective variables of cooperation, commitment, and team viability, such that type A, which had more explicit, slack, and fulfilled psychological contracts, also perceived their teams as having better cooperation, higher commitment, and higher team viability than type B. Furthermore, there were some divergent findings, as well as a less consistent pattern concerning the link between psychological contracts and objective performance. We comment on these patterns next.

Insert Table 4 about here

The most consistent pattern in Table 4 is the link between psychological contracts and *cooperation*. The analysis showed that all seven teams having good cooperation belonged to type A, while those having poor cooperation belonged to type B. Hence, being explicit about expectations tied to work quality and work effort in the establishment phase, as well as cutting people some slack in terms of contributions in the short term (tolerance), seemed to coincide with good cooperation.

Second, for the relationship between psychological contracts and *commitment,* we found a somewhat similar pattern. Seven teams were identified with high or medium commitment, with six belonging to type A and one to type B. Further, the three teams with low commitment all belonged to type B. Hence, more committed farmers seem to perceive psychological contracts based on explicit expectations and contributions.

Third, seven of eight teams having high or medium *team viability* belonged to type A, while four of five teams having low team viability belonged to type B. Again, there seems to be a consistent pattern between the type of psychological contract and team functioning variable.

24

Finally, for the relationship between psychological contracts and *performance*, however, the pattern was less consistent. For type A, four out of seven were high performers, while three were medium or low performers. Furthermore, for type B, one out of five teams was a high performer, and four were medium or low performers. Although weak, the most consistent pattern showed that type A had a tendency to be high performers, while type B tended toward being medium or low performers.

Taken together, the results indicate that the psychological contract is different for teams that cooperate well, are committed, and have high team viability compared with teams that cooperate poorly, are less committed, and have low team viability.

Discussion

The overall aim of this article was to provide a theoretical framework for the team charter concept. We introduced the psychological contract theory as a basis for understanding the expectations and obligations between team members and how this was tied to team functioning. First, we explored expectations between team members, with regard to their content, feature, and breach perceptions, to better inform us about the content and functioning of a team charter. Second, we examined how various types of psychological contracts were tied to team functioning. The findings show that team members develop expectations tied to work quality, work effort, and further, that teams vary with respect to how explicitly expectations were clarified, the level of tolerance that each team developed in terms of psychological contracts, and whether they perceived breaches or fulfillment to these expectations. Moreover, the findings indicate that teams that were explicit about their expectations to each other, as well as cutting each other some slack, perceived fewer breaches and functioned better in terms of cooperation, commitment, and team viability, and to some degree performance, than teams with implicit and rigid psychological contracts.

Theoretical Implications

In the following sections, we discuss theoretical implications related to the content and functioning of a team charter. First, in terms of team charter content, researchers who have empirically examined the link between team charters and team performance (Hunsaker, et al., 2011; Mathieu & Rapp, 2009), seem to have included a broad range of elements with little overlap. As such, our goal was to address the core element of team charters that researchers agree upon, that of clarifying expectations, and further explore how and of what team members develop expectations. Similar to existing team charter literature, we found that well-functioning teams explicitly establish some sort of team rules, which resembles the team charter activity. In our study, team members predominately developed expectations and obligations tied to *work effort* and *work quality*. These elements are different from many of the elements suggested by previous team charter studies, in that they focus on the tasks that are carried out. In contrast, previous team charter studies have mainly included elements focused on facilitating team meetings rather than the actual work that is carried out.

In addition, one of our most profound findings is related to the value of tolerance. Tolerance emerged as a feature relating to "cutting each other some slack." That is, some of the teams which had discussed and agreed upon how much each person should be obligated to contribute and how the quality of work should be delivered, had also discussed how important it was to be flexible and generous, and not always monitor the short-term balance of the give and take relationship. Consequently, even though a team clarifies how much to contribute and at what level, an important aspect seems to be to incorporate that things do not always work out as planned. It is therefore important that teams not only clarify what to contribute related to the task, but that they also include the element of slack.

In relation to the functioning of team charters, our results fit into two main categories, with explicit, slack, and fulfilled psychological contracts one the one hand, and implicit, rigid, and breached psychological contracts on the other hand. This also described the functional

and dysfunctional teams, respectively. However, we do not know how the various features (explicit/implicit, slack/rigid) and content (work effort/quality) elements are interlinked, and which combination of elements is optimal. Based on our findings, we suggest that teams that explicitly discuss expectations tied to work effort and work quality in the initial phase are better off than other teams. Additionally, the element of slack seems to be vital for further teams' development, especially when it comes to evaluations of whether a psychological contract is breached. To elaborate, teams that explicitly had established slack seemed to avoid breaches of psychological contracts. Also, the teams that had explicitly discussed expectations might as well have written this down, and as such established a team charter tied to these expectations.

To understand how team charters may function in teams, we can draw on the distinction between breaches and violations in the psychological contract literature. A breach deals with the cognitive registration of a discrepancy between what was expected and what was actually delivered, while a violation is the emotional reaction to a breach often described through negative emotions (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Morrison and Robinson (1997) described how employees try to make sense of breaches and claimed that most employees perceive breaches to be an act of reneging; they ask for future research to address cases where employees perceive breaches as incongruence instead. In our study, teams that had explicitly discussed the issue of slack seemed to go through a sense-making process where they would perceive incongruence in either work quality or work effort, but instead of attaching a feeling of reneging and henceforth a violation, they seemed to cut the other person some slack and waited to see what happened next. This is an important contribution to the team charter literature, as the purpose of a team charter is to rule out misunderstandings and clarify how a team should work together. Psychological contract researchers have shown that breaches

happen frequently (Conway & Briner, 2002), such that how breaches are managed and made sense of are maybe as important or more important than trying to avoid breaches.

We developed two main categories based on our findings (A: explicit, slack, and fulfilled; B: implicit, rigid, breached), and as such our data did not provide examples of teams with, e.g., implicit and slack psychological contracts. However, Schalk and Roe (2007) suggested in a conceptual article that an employee's contributions may fluctuate over time within the limits of acceptability, and that the other party to the contract can have an implicit understanding of how much deviation from the norm he or her finds acceptable. Hence, if one person senses that the other person cuts him/her some slack, this might lead to a reciprocation of slack. We therefore argue that it is the element of slack together with making expectations tied to work effort and work quality more explicit that is important when developing team charters.

Our findings may also contribute to the psychological contract literature. More specifically, our results indicate that a psychological contract between team members is somewhat different in terms of content and features compared to a psychological contract between employees and employers. Hence, we suggest introducing a horizontal psychological contract perspective (between employees), in addition to the traditional vertical psychological contract perspective (between employees and employers). First, the transactional and relational type of a psychological contract in the vertical psychological contract literature relates to elements tied to an employer's responsibility such as salary, benefits, training, and environment (Herriot, Manning, & Kidd, 1997), while we found that the elements of work quality and work effort were pertinent in a horizontal psychological contract. Second, the features that have traditionally been found in a vertical psychological contract (e.g., tangibility), was extended in a horizontal psychological contract perspective with the feature of tolerance (slack/rigid). Tolerance was inductively derived in our study. Again, the study by

Morrison and Robinson (1997) serves as a reference here since the authors claimed that whether an employee perceives a breach depends on a threshold effect, such that the greater the perceived imbalance, the more likely an employee will be to conclude that a breach has occurred. They claimed that a person's threshold is affected by cognitive biases, personal dispositions, and the nature of the relationship. We suggest that the tolerance feature, which describes the nature of the relationship, will affect the threshold level of whether the contractual party/ies perceive/s a breach/violation. More specifically, when parties to a psychological contract have included slack, the threshold is higher for perceiving a breach/violation compared to a rigid psychological contract that has a lower threshold. To illustrate, when team members have slack built into a psychological contract, there is room for a discrepancy of contributions related to work effort and work quality because the parties are less concerned with continuously monitoring "who does what." In sum, our findings allow for a new type of psychological contract when studying the relationship between employees.

Practical Implications

In terms of practical implications, we argue that in the initial phase of teamwork, team members can take several measures. First, it is important for the team to find out what kind of work that needs to be done, and discuss more thoroughly who can contribute with what in terms of both competence and effort. Next, members should discuss expectations tied to work quality and work effort. By this, we mean that they should discuss what is meant by work quality, what each team member thinks is the best work quality, and how they should go about agreeing to an accepted level of work quality. In terms of work effort, team members also need to discuss what is meant by effort, whether they are willing to step in for each other, or if it is important that everybody contributes equally. Though we stress the importance of discussing these issues in the initial phase of teamwork, teams also need to be open to discussing discrepancies or changes to the team charter. This can be done in regular meetings.

In accordance with the team charter literature, we suggest that the team members should do more than just discuss these matters, but also write them down in a team charter. It is important, though, that the team charter is a dynamic document, such that the team members have the opportunity to reflect and change the team charter based on what seems to work and not work for the team.

In addition, we suggest that team members discuss the element of slack, both to prevent breaches and to increase the threshold for perceiving breaches to a psychological contract. To discuss the element of slack we suggest that the team members both talk about their time and ability to contribute in the team when considering their personal life, but also what each team member mean by slack. Can the team members reflect on their own tolerance level based on previous experience, and as such discuss how they will build in slack? Also, they can discuss on which matters they can include slack. Is it in relation to work quality or work effort, or should they include slack on other elements?

Moreover, since we know that psychological contract breaches occur relatively frequently (Conway & Briner, 2002), teams should also discuss how to handle breaches if they occur. By establishing a language and room for discussing breaches, teams can prevent the negative emotions tied to breaches (violation), and instead renegotiate their psychological contracts. By renegotiation a psychological contract, we mean that they can adjust obligations and expectations so that they fit the way team members work together. This is tied to the establishment of a team charter, such that a team charter gives the opportunity to discuss expectations, and further readdress and reflect on these elements when one or more team members have perceived some sort of breach.

Limitations and Further Research

This study has several limitations that may inspire further research. The first pertains to the study's internal validity. That is, we cannot be certain about the relationships between

psychological contracts and team functioning variables. Because this is a qualitative study, we could not assess the relationships between the variables in accordance with rigorous causal testing; rather, we identified patterns in the data. As such, other variables or explanations than those recognized in this study may also be relevant. For example, the contextual variables of size, technology, region, and milk quota could have affected the relationship. However, when linking the contextual variables with the team functioning variables, we found no systematic patterns. In addition, because we examined relationships rather than causal effects, we cannot be certain about whether psychological contracts affect team functioning variables, or vice versa. However, according to the interviews, psychological contracts formed quite early (either explicitly or implicitly); yet because a psychological contract is a process variable (Conway & Briner, 2005), it is also likely that changes in psychological contracts follow from changes in various team functioning variables. Future studies are encouraged to test these relationships and consider alternative explanations.

Second, because we did not interview all of the team members, the interpretive validity could be threatened. However, by interviewing two members in each joint operation, by having at least two interviewers in every interview, and by observing during the guided tours on the operations site, we do believe that we obtained a quite robust impression of each joint operation. Furthermore, our procedure is in line with previous studies in which not all members of the same group are interviewed to understand the groups' perceptions (Bartunek, Huang, & Walsh, 2008). Further research could, however, explore whether all members of a team have the same type of psychological contract.

Finally, our findings were based on a case study, which makes generalization to other settings difficult. However, Pratt (2012) suggested that obstacles to generalization can be overcome by showing how a study's context is similar to other contexts. The teams we examined herein were high in task interdependence and in carrying out production tasks.

Thus, our findings might transfer to operative groups or teams that are high on task interdependence, though this needs to be tested in future studies.

Conclusion

Teams have been found to benefit from establishing some ground rules by using team charters in the initial phase of teamwork. However, since the team charter literature diverges in terms of content and theoretical foundation, we introduced the psychological contract theory as a theoretical foundation to learn more about content and functioning of team charters. Through in-depth interviews with 12 teams, we found that teams that establish explicit and slack psychological contracts tied to work quality and work effort perceived fewer contract breaches and were well-functioning in terms of cooperation, commitment, team viability, and to a certain degree, performance.

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Table 1

Description of the Teams

Team	Region	Year Established	Members	Milk Quota per Year (liter in thousands)	Main Technology
1	West	2002	3	240	Milking parlor
2	West	2001	4	425	Milk robot
3	West	2007	3	400	Milk robot
4	West	2005	4	491	Milk robot
5	West	2005	3	664	Milking parlor
6	West	2006	5	548	Milk robot
7	North	2005	4	474	Milk robot
8	North	2001	4	664	Milking parlor
9	North	2004	3	288	Milking parlor
10	North	2007	5	506	Milk robot
11	North	2006	2	726	Milk robot x 2
12	North	2004	3	502	Milking parlor

Table 2

Key Performance Indicators and Rank for the 2008–2010 Period

| Team | Performance Indicators | | | | Rank | | |
	Quota filling	Milk per Cow (Liter)	Milk Quality	Fertility Status	Average Rank (across indicators)	Total Rank	Performance
1	2.2	8198	1.00	97	2.0	1	High
2	3.6	8460	0.92	66	5.8	6	Medium
3	12.0	7533	0.92	31	9.8	10	Low
4	6.9	8178	1.00	89	4.0	4	High
5	8.0	6427	0.22	36	10.8	11	Low
6	1.7	7668	0.97	79	4.3	5	High
7	13.4	6632	0.42	57	11.0	12	Low
8	9.8	7631	0.97	64	7.3	8	Medium
9	3.2	8272	1.00	82	3.0	2	High
10	9.9	6856	0.75	70	9.3	9	Low
11	3.4	8197	0.97	109	3.5	3	High
12	2.9	6989	0.94	87	5.8	6	Medium

Note: Quota filling shows how much (in percentage) the team deviates from 100%. Each team has a quota it is allowed to fill, and producing below quota reduces income, as does producing above quota because of fees. Lower numbers thus indicate lower deviation and better results. Milk quality refers to how much of the milk classified as elite milk is delivered. This ranges from 0 (none elite) to 1.00 (all elite) and affects income. Fertility status is an indicator of how well teams succeed in getting calves (high numbers indicate higher success), and it also affects the teams' economic status. Average range is calculated as the average rank of each team across the four indicators. Total rank shows the overall rank among the teams, where 1 is the highest/best and 12 is the lowest/worst. All numbers are from the database of TINE AS.

Table 3

Example Quotes for Cooperation, Commitment, and Team Viability in the 12 Teams

Team	Cooperation	Commitment	Team Viability
1	-We cooperate well; I think we really do. -We have always cooperated well for several generations. **Good**	-R: How do you feel your commitment is now compared to the start up? F: It is pretty much the same…when we first have this JO it is important to give it all. **High**	-There is no doubt that the only right thing is that we started up. There are no regrets. -I would probably have started up again today…being a JO is a positive thing. **High**
2	-We have very good cooperation. -I: would you characterize your cooperation as good? R: Yes, I would say it is. **Good**	-I feel we have kept the spirit. -I am not as committed as I was in the beginning. **Medium**	-R: Uou are not satisfied with the economy in the business? F: No…I am not sure I would have joined again today. -We have plans to cultivate more pasture. **Medium**
3	-This is a cooperation where everyone needs to be flexible. -We constantly work to improve our cooperation. **Good**	-I am much more committed now than I was in the beginning. **High**	-I believe in the future. -We try to become a model JO. **High**
4	-You have to be willing to give and take when you cooperate (indicates that this is lacking). -I practically run this JO on my own, the others have jobs outside of the JO, so they can't help me. **Poor**	-F: I was more committed in the beginning…R: And you are less committed now? F: Yes, basically. -F: How do you feel the commitment was in the beginning? R: It was higher than it is now. **Low**	-I have thought about different options: either continue or pull out. -R: Would you have joined again today with what you know? F: You should ask my husband…he would not have done it…I am more optimistic. **Low**
5	-We now have a bad cooperation climate. -The challenge lies in having committed cooperation. **Poor**	-The commitment is not very high. -After we couldn't be fully employed in the JO…the commitment has decreased. **Low**	-I would not have started with the same people as today. -Someone came to visit to get advice about starting a JO…and I highly advised them against it. **Low**
6	-The cooperation between us has worked really well. -We have cooperated before we joined the JO. **Good**	-R: How is the commitment now compared to the beginning? F: I think it works really well. I am satisfied. **High**	-I have not regretted entering this joint operation and recommend it to others…I wish to invest more. -We have plans to increase production…production has increased faster than we thought possible. **High**
7	-We have always cooperated…and enjoyed social activities together. **Good**	(Not enough data to conclude)	-R: Would you have started the JO again? F: Yes. -I am not sure I would have started again if I knew how bad the economy would be…but having flexibility is good and cooperation is good. **High**
8	-The cooperation you said? It has totally tipped over. **Poor**	-R: So there is little commitment from the others? F: Yes, they just sit down and wait for someone to come. **Low**	-R: Any plans for the future? F: To liquidate this business as fast as possible. -I would not have started up again under the conditions we have now. **Low**
9	-We have had some cooperation before…and we know each other well…this is one criterion for success. **Good**	-I felt earlier this summer that the others had decreased their commitment, and confronted them saying that I want them to take more initiative. **Medium**	-R: Have you regretted entering the JO? F: No I have not. -R: Would you have started the JO again? F: Yes, particularly because you avoid the problem with hiring substitutes. **High**
10	-I think several of us feel that the cooperation has been so-so. **Poor**	-When there is trouble, you start focusing on the negatives, and this impacts commitment. -R: How is the commitment now compared to the start up? F: I feel more responsibility because I have taken over the farm…the commitment is the same. **Medium**	-If someone really eager would want to take over my share…I am not sure I would want to continue. -I would have started up again, but maybe with other solutions...possibly only with one or two other farmers. **Medium**
11	-We have never had problems with cooperation. **Good**	-R: Are you as committed as you were in the beginning? F: Yes, I think this is pretty stable. -R: How is your commitment now compared to in the beginning? F: It has actually increased. **High**	-R: Would you have done the same today? F: Yes…I think we have succeeded pretty well with our qualifications. **High**
12	-The cooperation between me and X needs to improve. **Poor**	(Not enough data to conclude)	-If I had known what I know today, I am not sure I would have joined again. **Low**

Note: JO = Joint operation/team, R = researcher, F = farmer.

Table 4

Summary of Psychological Contracts and Team Functioning

Team	Psychological Contract Type	Cooperation	Commitment	Team Viability	Performance
1	A	Good	High	High	High
6	A	Good	High	High	High
11	A	Good	High	High	High
9	A	Good	Medium	High	High
2	A	Good	Medium	Medium	Medium
3	A	Good	High	High	Low
7	A	Good	---	High	Low
10	B	Poor	Medium	Medium	Low
5	B	Poor	Low	Low	Low
8	B	Poor	Low	Low	Medium
12	B	Poor	---	Low	Medium
4	B	Poor	Low	Low	High

Note: A = Explicit, slack, and fulfilled psychological contract, B = Implicit, rigid, and breached psychological contract. "---" = Not enough data to conclude