

The road to successfully eluding organizational borders

- a case study of a multi-agency project

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SNF Report No. 07/14

The road to successfully eluding organizational borders - *a case study of a multi-agency project*

by

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SNF Project No. 4321
FOCUS – Future-Oriented Corporate Solutions

Prosjektet inngår i FOCUS-programmet som er finansiert av:
NARF, Statoil ASA, Telenor ASA, Gjensidige, Deloitte, DNB

Centre for Applied Research at NHH
Bergen, October 2014

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ISBN 978-82-491-0869-5 Printed version
ISBN 978-82-491-0870-1 Online version
ISSN 0803-4036

Preface

This thesis is written as a final assignment to conclude our five years of study for the Master of Science in Economics and Business Administration at the Norwegian School of Economics (NHH). We started working on the thesis in January 2014, and finished it in June the same year. It has been an exciting and educational joyride for us. We have learned a lot about public agencies and project collaboration, and not to mention about collaboration in our own project of writing this thesis.

Our research is based on a multi-agency pilot project between the Labor Inspection Authority (region West), the Tax Administration (region West), and the Tax Collection Office in Bergen. The project group members and steering group members have participated in interviews and provided us with useful information throughout the entire process. We would therefore like to thank our contact persons in the Labor Inspection Authority who provided us with the information we requested and facilitated access to the data we needed. We would also like to thank all the interviewees for their positive attitude and for trusting us with thorough and honest answers.

This thesis is written in cooperation with the FOCUS program at NHH. We wish to thank them for their economic support and the access to office space this semester. Further, we would like to thank our supervisor, Torstein Nesheim, for showing a great interest in our research by providing us with inspirational ideas and constructive feedback. Lastly, we wish to thank each other for fruitful discussions and for keeping a positive mindset throughout the semester.

Bergen, June 2014

Mari Sand Frogner

Marita Mjøs

***Coming together is a beginning;
keeping together is progress;
working together is success.”***

-Henry Ford-

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 The importance of collaboration

The Project Management Institute (2014) defines a project as “a temporary group activity designed to produce a unique product, service or result”. From this definition we can draw that project based work always has been a part of everyday human life, whether it is arranging weddings or building stave churches. Today, projects constitute a significant part of organizational life; as much as two-thirds of all activities in organizations are project based (Karlsen, 2013). Ever since project management became a distinct profession in the 1990s, its importance has continued to increase. It is expected that the profession of project management will have an economic outcome growth of impressing USD 5 trillion between 2010 and 2020. (Project Management Institute, 2013). Projects have become increasingly more common also in the public sector. Public agencies are following the private sector and are focusing more on performance management and result orientation (Jessen, 2005). The Norwegian Government prefers top-down approaches for their public projects, which means that projects are initiated by the top managers (Müller, 2011)

Today, there is a growing use of inter-organizational projects in both the private and the public arena. An inter-organizational project entails that multiple organizations work together on a shared activity for a limited period of time in order to coordinate complex products and services. (Jones & Lichtenstein, 2008) Increasingly globalized and fast paced markets put immense pressure on organizations, and this makes relationships between organizations more important than ever. Inter-organizational collaboration can be of vital importance for companies in their daily struggles to survive rapid technology advances, intensified competition, and rising development costs. (Pitsis, Kornberger, & Clegg, 2004) Inter-organizational relations and entities are thought to have existed for as long as there have been organizations around to relate to each other. With a modest start in the late 1940's, the literature on inter-organizational relations has grown tremendously over the past 60 years and evolved into many different directions. (Cropper, Ebers, Huxham, & Ring, 2008a)

Over the last decades, public organizations have also become concerned with exploring relationships outside the walls of the office building. The theory of New Public Governance, which has a focus on inter-organizational relationships, emerged in the literature in the beginning of the 21st century. It is today the prevailing line of literature concerned with public

organizations (Osborne, 2006). Collaboration with other agencies, but also with private firms and non-profit organizations, are recommended to enable public organizations to tackle complex social problems (Knudsen, 2004). The Government Action Plan 3 provides a great example of the increased focus on inter-organizational collaboration in the public sector in Norway. A part of the action plan explicitly encourages a further development of multi-disciplinary and multi-agency collaboration (Arbeidsdepartementet, 2013). The multi-agency project we have studied in this thesis is a direct result of the Government Action Plan 3.

1.2 Our contribution

We have chosen to study inter-organizational collaboration through a case study of a multi-agency pilot project. The project was initiated by the Labor Inspection Authority in Bergen with the aim to fight and prevent social dumping. The Labor Inspection Authority invited the Tax Administration and the Tax Collection Office in Bergen to join the project. The project group started their work in January 2014. This gave us a great opportunity to follow the group from the very beginning of the project execution.

We found this pilot project particularly interesting because it is a project between public agencies. The public sector in Norway is very big with almost 35 % of total employment (Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2014), and its dominance is a frequently debated issue. Our interest in the public sector originates from its importance for upholding the welfare state and especially the complexity that stems from attending to both efficiency and welfare goals. Additionally, we were intrigued by the idea that this is a quite novel field of study, and that what we find through our study will be a noticeable contribution to literature on multi-agency collaboration.

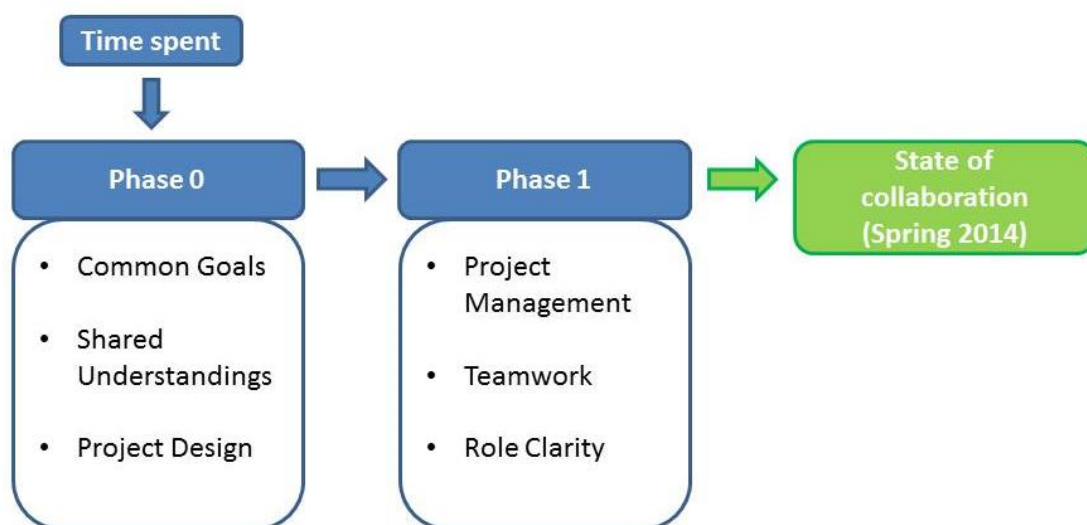
The interdependencies that many organizations today are subject to underpin the importance of studying such a collaboration. Inter-organizational projects are common in the public sector within the areas of initiating and completing significant infrastructure projects and in the case of natural disasters and crises. However, inter-organizational projects have not been the common solution in other contexts within the public sector. (Jones & Lichtenstein, 2008) The project we have decided to study is new in many ways. Firstly, it is an entirely new contribution in the eyes of inter-organizational theory and project theory. Secondly, the project based collaboration work form is unknown territory for the involved agencies, and the parties have to relate to a new way of organizing their work. They have to adjust to a project organization which includes a temporary unit with temporary tasks and roles. This can be quite a contrast to the usual work tasks and the line organization of public agencies. Also, the

agencies in our study have to relate to inter-organizational collaboration on a day-to-day basis in contrast to collaboration that previously was either non-existent or on an ad-hoc basis. For the Labor Inspection Authority it is also a new feature that the project is initiated on a regional level. These unfamiliar features make this undertaking more challenging for the agencies, but simultaneously more exciting for us to study and maybe also for them to partake in.

1.3 The research question

To answer our research objective we have based our study on theory and research from three lines of literature: project theory, inter-organizational relations theory and multi-agency collaboration theory. Together these three lines of literature include all contextual factors of our case. Because there are very few frameworks developed for understanding the various types of inter-organizational projects (Jones & Lichtenstein, 2008), we have developed a synthesis based on the chosen theories. The synthesis is illustrated through a model, which creates the basis for our research question and our data collection and analysis. The model is presented in Figure 1 followed by the main research question.

Figure 1: Model



Our research question is: *How do the identified factors in phase 0 and phase 1 influence the state of collaboration, and how are the factors in phase 1 influenced by the execution of the factors in phase 0?*

To explore and analyze the model and the case we have conducted a total of 19 interviews with project members and steering group members in the Labor Inspection Authority, the Tax Administration, and the Tax Collection Office in Bergen. These interviews have given us

great insight into a multi-agency project and its activities, and provide us with a solid base to answer our research question.

1.4 Structure

In chapter 2 we will present previous research and literature on which we have based our synthesis. At the end of chapter 2, the synthesis will be presented as a model accompanied by our research question. A short explanation of the different factors included in the model will follow. Chapter 3 will describe the methods we have chosen to conduct our research and to answer our research question as correctly as possible. Next, a description of the context of our research, as well as the organizations involved, will appear in chapter 4. Our empirical findings will be presented in chapter 5. In chapter 6 we will discuss our most central findings in relation to reviewed literature presented in chapter 2. The aim of the chapter is to answer our research question. Finally, chapter 7 will hold our conclusions and briefly sum up the most important results related to our research question. The chapter also includes implications for further study in the three lines of literature. In continuation, we provide advice for the current project group, together with implications for future similar projects. After chapter 7, there will be a reference list followed by attachments. The attachments consist of interview guides from the two rounds of data collection, an information sheet sent out to the participants before the interviews, and lastly the consent form all the interviewees signed before the interviews.

2.0 Literature review

In this chapter we will present three lines of literature that all offer insight into our case study. These are: project theory, inter-organizational theory, and multi-agency collaboration theory. As these areas all comprise of an extensive body of literature we have had to extract those aspects that we found most relevant for our thesis. Following the presentation of the literature is a synthesis presented as a model. The synthesis is created on the basis of the three reviewed lines of literature.

2.1 Project theory

Projects and project management are widely covered topics in research and literature. Today, two thirds of all activities in organizations are project based, contributing to numerous studies and theories on the subject (Karlsen, 2013). Project based work has been present in the private sector for decades, and is today also prevalent in the public sector.

2.1.1 What is a project?

The extensive literature on projects and project management contains a wide range of definitions of what a project really is. Today's main angle is to view projects as organizations. The Oxford Handbook of Project Management defines a project in the following way: "...primarily organizational entities used to integrate activities and people across different organizational and disciplinary domains..." (Morris, Pinto, & Söderlund, 2012). The Project Management Institute uses a simpler definition: "A temporary group activity designed to produce a unique product, service or result" (2014). These two definitions serve as the base for our view on projects in this thesis.

Four basic characteristics seem to be present in almost any project: uniqueness, temporariness, limited resources, and interdisciplinary teams. A project is initiated to reach a specific goal; the goal says why a project is initiated and what it is supposed to produce. This is the uniqueness of the project. Further, the temporariness of a project is emphasized. A project has a specific start date and end date. Limitation of resources is another important characteristic that strongly affects a project. Resources may include features such as money, employees, and equipment. Lastly, a project also often includes interdisciplinary teams, enabling organizations to exploit employees' expertise. (Jessen, 2005; Karlsen, 2013; Rolstadås, 2006)

Projects can be divided into two subcategories: external projects and internal projects. An external project is a project executed for external clients. Companies that take on such

projects usually have project work as their main business, e.g. companies within consulting and construction. Internal projects, on the other hand, are projects with an internal client, meaning that the project group and the client belong to the same organization. The purpose of such projects can be everything from planning, improvement and restructuring, to a major change of the organization. (Karlsen, 2013)

Project autonomy is shown to be positively correlated to project success. A project's autonomy can be seen in relation to what defines a social system's autonomy: goal defining autonomy, structural autonomy, resource autonomy and social autonomy. (Gemünden, Salomo, & Krieger, 2005) In the context of a project, autonomy is thus explained as "authority to set its own goals, its social identity and boundaries with other social systems, its resources to complete its task and freedom to organize the behavior of its members" (Martinsuo & Lehtonen, 2009, pp. 262-263). Autonomy is mainly linked to the team's right to make decisions relevant to its task, but is also highly related to the team's interplay with the parent organization and stakeholders. Access to information is not seen as an indicator of autonomy. Projects tend to create their own unique autonomy profile on the basis of their stakeholder network. (Martinsuo & Lehtonen, 2009)

A fully autonomous project has certain advantages and disadvantages. With full autonomy the group can concentrate on only one task, it is independent of resource allocation by the parent organization, it has clear responsibility and authority relations, the project leader can keep focus on project tasks, and there is only one leader to relate to. All these are clear advantages of an autonomous project group. Some disadvantages may be that the parent organization has little control, and that the group can develop goals that are not harmonized with the parent organization. Further, the group may be subject to bad resource utilization and worries among group members about what will happen after the project. (Karlsen, 2013) The parent organization may create or limit a project's autonomy by taking advantage of organizational design, structure, and processes. The autonomy may also be altered by boundary management, conducted both by the project leader and the parent organization. (Martinsuo & Lehtonen, 2009)

Other classifications of projects are also mentioned frequently in current literature. Factors such as size, organizational conditions, task features, and whether the project is executed in the public or private sector are recognized indicators for disagreements that may arise in

projects. Projects often differ on important features, thus requiring specific types of theories and success measurement. (Söderlund, 2011)

2.1.2 The players in the game

A project, like any organization, has to relate to “the players in the game” known as stakeholders. These are all the organizations and persons who are actively involved in the project, but also those who may affect or be affected by the execution or the end result of the project (Rolstadås, 2006). A project can be viewed from different stakeholder perspectives that are divided in various ways in the project literature. Our division of the stakeholders is a product of having reviewed and simplified different perspectives in recent theory.

Stakeholders can be divided into three main groups: Principal, Agent, and Environment. The Principal is the group that initiates projects, sees the need for a project, controls resources, and gives guidelines. The Principal can consist of only one organization or person, or be a mixture of several persons and organizations. The Agent group consists of the project leader and the project team members; this is the group that actually carries out the project and produces deliverables. The Environment consists of third parties like the Government, the media, and NGO’s that may affect or be affected by the project. (Jessen, 2005; Karlsen, 2013; Rolstadås, 2006) In an internal project, the Principal and the Agent are within the same organization.

It is vital for the success of the project that the project leader has an overview over the most important stakeholders and their requirements and expectations, and that their influence is accounted for (Rolstadås, 2006). In addition, factors like work and resource allocation, communication flows, and decision making must be clarified between the Principal and the Agent (Jessen, 2005). If the Agent and the Principal lack a common rational understanding, it may lead to failing projects, or a continuation of projects on a negative trend (Müller, 2011). To make sure that these factors are clear and agreed upon, a project steering group is often appointed by the Principal to maintain continuous communication between the Principal and the Agent. The steering group is generally responsible for the initiation, planning, execution, control, and termination of the project. Thus, they are accountable for results but not responsible for the project team members (Müller, 2011). The project leader reports to and cooperates with the steering group. (Rolstadås, 2006) This solution is recommended in almost any project, especially those with a Principal group consisting of several organizations. The steering group will help coordinate interests, plans, and report on progress to the parent organizations. (Karlsen, 2013)

2.1.3 A project's life cycle

A project is not treated as a steady state but rather a dynamic process (Söderlund, 2011). All projects have a life cycle that shows the path from origin to completion, and most projects go through similar phases on this path. Though different theories have different ways of explaining the life cycle, there are four generic phases that seem to apply to all types of projects: Initiation, Planning, Execution and Termination (Karlsen, 2013). The earlier stages of a project is seen as more important than the later stages, and is therefore more studied (Söderlund, 2011). The conventional view of a project life cycle is a slow-rapid-slow progress toward the goal accomplishment and termination of the project. The two first phases are normally quite slow, while during the Execution phase the activity increases to a project maximum. After the peak, the activity decreases as the project nears termination. It is however important to remember that different types of projects may have different patterns, but that a change between slow and rapid activity generally always occurs. (Meredith & Mantel, 2012)

A project is strongly affected by various control factors. Three important elements are scope, time, and cost. These are present in any project. The control factors are highly interdependent because a change in one will affect one or more of the other control factors. If the scope is expanded, it will probably require more time. If more time is needed, the project will need more money. If the budget is cut, on the other hand, the scope will most probably have to lessen in extent. (Karlsen, 2013) This causes an important trade-off. Conventionally, it was thought that scope took precedence in the two initial phases of the life cycle, followed by a focus on cost during the Execution phase, and lastly on time scheduling in the Termination phase. This has been proven wrong by recent research, as projects generally have a stronger focus on scope and time scheduling than on cost throughout the project life. (Meredith & Mantel, 2012) This focus of course also affects the life cycle pattern of the project activity.

Initiation phase

The Initiation phase starts with deciding whether the project should be taken further from just being an idea to becoming a real life concept (Direktoratet for forvaltning og IKT, 2013). There are several important factors to consider at this stage to make sure that the right projects are initiated.

In the Initiation phase there are often many ideas on the table and an analysis is therefore necessary to make sure that the right project is chosen. The project idea should be considered in the light of the overall strategic goals of the Principal, and other goals that may be relevant.

It is important to identify how the project can contribute to the Principal. This is often solved with the help of a goal hierarchy, where you map the overall goal of the project together with the objectives and targets (see Figure 2). (Rolstadås, 2006).

In this paper, we use the term goals as an umbrella term for all the levels in the hierarchy. A goal is defined as being “the result or achievement toward which effort is directed” (Dictionary.com, 2014). At the top of the project goal hierarchy is the organizational goal. This links the project to the Principal’s strategic goals and explains how the project can contribute to the organization reaching its strategic goals. At the next level in the hierarchy, you find the objectives of the project. An objective explains the most important reason for the project, i.e. why the project is initiated. It is thus the tools to reach the overall goal. At the same time, an objective functions as a framework for the targets. (Karlsen, 2013) The next level in the hierarchy consists of the targets, which are specific and measurable goals on what should be accomplished by the project (Rolstadås, 2006). A target can for example be a 20 % increase in customer satisfaction. As we move down the hierarchy, the levels clarify and elaborate on the goals above them. As we move up the hierarchy, the levels explain why the goal below should be realized. See Figure 2. (Karlsen, 2013)

Figure 2: Goal Hierarchy



Based on Karlsen, 2013, fig 2.4, p 52

Goals serve as a foundation for establishing strategy and actions concerning how to carry out the project. The goal hierarchy will be further developed and decided upon in the Planning phase, which is the next phase in the project’s life cycle.

The financial aspects of the project must also be taken into consideration during the Initiation phase. Calculations of net present value, internal rate of return and payback-time are often found in the private sector, while a cost-benefit analysis is more often seen in the public sector. A conceptual review where you map what solutions the project will create also has a place in this phase. Here one should among other things assess the quality of these solutions and the integration with existing solutions. Moreover, the uncertainty and risk involved with taking on the project should be analyzed. Opportunities and risks concerning technology, politics, resources and finances should be looked at. Finally, the plan for the execution has to be considered; i.e., will the project be possible to carry through? Factors such as time, cost, resources, capacity, cooperation, contracts, and organization of the project should be taken into account. (Karlsen, 2013)

After having considered all the relevant factors, one is ready to answer if the project represents a desired investment. If so, it should be taken further to the Planning phase. (Direktoratet for forvaltning og IKT, 2013) Based on the abovementioned assessments, a project mandate that summarizes the definition of the project is developed. The mandate contains objectives and targets of the project, and is a formal document stating that the project is approved by the management. (Karlsen, 2013)

The Planning phase

During the planning phase you lay the foundation for a successful project. Empirical evidence suggests that no effort should be spared during the initial phases of a project. (Dvir, Raz, & Shenhar, 2003)

It is of vital importance to ensure that the project goals and the deliverables requirements are properly developed. This means that they should be linked to the overall strategy of the principal organization in order for the project to be valuable and thus seen as successful (Karlsen, 2013). Further, the Agent organization should be well informed about the work that is demanded to carry out the project. The project is then planned in more detail through an execution strategy including strategies to reach the goals according to schedule. The expected deliveries should be clarified with a focus on purpose, features, and design. This means, among other things, that the organization of the project has to be designed and settled. Which employees do we want in the project group? What kinds of competence are needed? How is the group organized? Who will be responsible for what? All these questions and more should be answered during this stage. Picking the right team is essential; they are the ones that will actually carry out the project. A realistic scheduling of time and budget are important areas to

focus on during this phase. (Direktoratet for forvaltning og IKT, 2013) A plan on how to manage complexity, uncertainty, change, and risk, especially with regards to the stakeholders' expectations is vital. Keeping the stakeholders well informed during periods of change is very important at this stage. (Hartman & Ashrafi, 2004)

Alignment is key during the Initiation phase. Three different elements have to be aligned: the stakeholders have to be aligned with the objectives of the project, team members have to align with the project plan, and lastly the project has to be aligned with the project performance metrics used for management of the project. If these alignments are not in place, the project will later suffer from spending time on unnecessary activities. (Hartman & Ashrafi, 2004)

During the planning phase, a set of documents should be developed and determined. This process should be led by the project leader with constant involvement from all stakeholders, especially the end customer and the project team. The control documents include everything about the project, such as goals and wanted results, strategy, organization of the management, roles, and the project plan. The control documentation is under constant change during the project to reflect the status quo of the project. However, the first edition of the documents is kept, to be used as a reference point at the end of the project, for evaluation. Hartman and Ashrafi (2004) stresses the importance of keeping all documents together to make sure that all documents are up to date at all times, and do not drift apart during the project due to changes.

The execution phase

During the execution phase the project is run by the project leader together with the team members of the project. Plans and main outlines for the project are decided upon in earlier phases, and the group now has to start the actual work. Normally, a group is put together especially for a certain project, thus forming an entirely new group. Developing an effective team may be tough but very important. Studies show that teamwork and communication within the team is found to influence team performance in a positive manner (Yang, Huang, & Wu, 2011).

Project management literature has to some extent ignored the contribution of the project leader's leadership style to project success (Yang, Huang, & Wu, 2011), but it is recognized that a project leader has great influence on his/her team. The project leader is in fact crucial for successful team development and is responsible for teaching the team how to work together. This is especially important in interdisciplinary and autonomous groups (Larsen, 1998). It is harder for diverse groups to achieve an adequate level of effectiveness, as they

often encounter more obstacles to productivity. A suitable project leader should understand the group's work and be able to meet the group's needs. (Wheelan, 2013) It is reasonable to believe that different leadership styles are appropriate in different contexts. Müller and Turner (2007) showed that the ability of a project leader to effectively communicate and motivate his/her team correlates positively with the success of organizational and business projects.

Some main factors are important to focus on if the group wishes to develop in the right direction. Firstly, members need to understand and agree upon goals and roles in order to reach a high level of effectiveness. Clear communication and consensus are some of the factors that will help the team along. Regular meetings and time spent together is important. If possible, the team should sit together and interact on a daily basis. This will strengthen the cohesion of the group (Larsen, 1998). Cohesion is here defined as when its members possess bonds linking them to one another and the group. It can be divided into social relations, task relations, perceived unity, and emotions. (Forsyth, 2010) A positive and supportive working relationship among group members, together with common norms and room for individual differences are important characteristics of a highly effective team. (Abudi, 2010; Wheelan, 2013)

The very first theory on teams and their stages of growth and development, written by Tuckman, is still the basis of current literature and studies on teams and their development. Tuckman's model consists of the four stages of Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing. The stages are seen as inevitable in order for a team to become a fully effective one, performing at the highest level possible. (Abudi, 2010) When a team is moving through the stages, members are left with the task of resolving both interpersonal relationships and task processes (Miller, 2003).

The first stage, Forming, is the initial stage of the teamwork. The project members are introduced, they learn about the project, and starts discussing objectives and goals. Some focus is also given to the future roles and work tasks for the team members. (Abudi, 2010) At this stage, the team members tend to assume consensus in the group and basically does not express disagreement. Roles are usually based on external status and first impressions, and this causes high conformity and compliance among members. The reason for this behavior is often insecurity in the group. (Wheelan, 2013) These insecurity issues require a quite directive leadership style in order for the project group to develop. The project leader should be confident, and provide a clear structure and clear agendas for the meetings. Members of the

team have a need for supervision, training, and education in tasks to help them raise their feeling of being competent and being a resource for the group. Positive feedback is important as it creates cohesion. Basically, high performance standards and guidance by the project leader is a recipe for success at this stage. (Wheelan, 2013)

The second stage, Storming, prevails when the team has worked together for some time. At this stage team members have become secure enough in the group to express opinions and may therefore begin to express discontent with roles, ideas, and goals and objectives of the project. Conflict is prominent at this stage. With the guidance of the project leader the members learn how to solve problems, and how to work both together and independently. The team members also start settling into roles and responsibilities in the team. This stage can be challenging for the project leader, as team members may challenge earlier decisions made by the leader. As the team becomes more accepting to one another and learns how to work together, the project leader needs to allow the team more independence and to transition some of the decision making to the team. (Abudi, 2010; Wheelan, 2013)

The third stage, Norming, is reached when a team begins to work together more effectively. The focus shifts from individual goals towards team goals. Different opinions are respected and valued, and a set of team “rules” for working together has been established. (Abudi, 2010) There is a conformed clarity about roles and responsibilities, as well as team goals and objectives. Conflict still arises, but is dealt with effectively. The project leader keeps entrusting team members with tasks, and is becoming more like a consultant than a leader. (Wheelan, 2013)

When reaching the fourth stage, Performing, the team has become a fully effective team performing at a high level. The group norms encourage high performance and quality; communication is open between team members, and everybody gets, gives, and utilizes feedback on effectiveness and productivity. The team roles are absolutely clear and constitute a great match to a member’s abilities. (Wheelan, 2013) The project leader has, at this point in time, little to do with decision making, problem solving, and other day-to-day work of the team. The leader is more like an expert member, and serves as a link between the project team and the steering group. (Abudi, 2010)

Not all groups make it to the Performing stage; many teams stop at earlier stages and are unable to make their way further. At all stages, it is possible that the team reverts back to an

earlier stage. In the case of receiving a new group member, a team will revert back to the Forming stage. (Abudi, 2010)

Termination phase

The termination phase is entered when the project group has reached its goals and the Principal is satisfied with the results. The phase is led by the project leader with an aim to secure learning from the outcome of the project. A number of activities must be executed, such as delivering the results, structuring and reporting of knowledge created in the project and securing closure of the financial documents. (Direktoratet for forvaltning og IKT, 2013)

2.1.4 Critical success factors

The use of critical success factors (CSFs) for projects are one of the best known approaches to secure project success. The factors can be explained as the few key areas that should receive constant and careful attention from managers and where “things must go right” in order to achieve success. (Fortune & White, 2006) Although the flow of new publications have slowed down, reference to and use of the concept is still flourishing, showing its continuing importance. Fortune and White (2006) have through a review of 63 publications on the subject, created a list of the most cited CSFs. The following list of top eleven factors is produced:

1. Support from senior management
2. Clear realistic objectives
3. Strong/detailed plan kept up to date
4. Good communication/feedback
5. User/client involvement
6. Skilled/suitably qualified/sufficient staff/team
7. Effective change management
8. Competent project manager
9. Strong business case/sound basis for project
10. Sufficient/well allocated resources
11. Good leadership

One of the most interesting findings from this review is that there is generally little agreement among authors on the most important CSFs. The three most cited CSFs are only cited together in 17 % of the publications. It is then implied that CSFs may differ to a great extent from project to project, and that the top three CSFs may not be as important in every project. (Fortune & White, 2006)

2.1.5 Sources of complications

There are many sources of complications in a project. Söderlund (2011) suggests that there are two overarching problems that all projects face: cooperation and coordination. The cooperation problem relates to achieving common goals and some kind of joint effort or operation for mutual benefit. A diverse background and a lack of common history between actors may lead to different opinions regarding decision making and differing priorities regarding tasks. One should pay attention to different organizational interests and more permanent institutional structures that may influence project interactions (Marshall & Bresnen, 2011). Reaching trust and consensus may be hard. Projects are not stand-alone entities and thus possess an additional level of complexity by the multifaceted institutional context within which they exist (Marshall & Bresnen, 2011). The coordination problem shows a different side of a project's many challenges, and may remain a problem even though the cooperation problem is solved. Coordination problems appear through different views on what to do, when to do it, and how to do it. (Söderlund, 2011)

Hartman and Ashrafi (2004) have through a literature review created a more specific list of factors related to success and failure. Various factors are related to stakeholders, and how to firstly align their perception of success and expectations and then later meeting or exceeding these. A prerequisite to this is that the success criteria are clearly defined at the birth of the project. Another core factor during the two initial phases is to make sure that the project's overall goals are aligned with the corporate strategy of the Principal. (Hartman & Ashrafi, 2004) Many projects may be successful in their execution, but if the outcome is of no value to the client's overall strategic goals the project is basically a failure. The return on investment will in this case turn out to be low or even negative. Precise and verifiable goals from the beginning will make the execution of project tasks, and outcome measures easier. Unsuccessful projects are often linked to imprecise goals for the project (Rolstadås, 2006).

Another recurring problem area is communication. One of the biggest threats to the execution of a successful project is in fact bad communication. "Communication is defined as the exchange of information between a sender and a receiver, and the inference (perception) of meaning between the individuals involved" (as cited in Karlsen, 2013, p. 241). The lack of effective communication is a key reason for project failure, because it may, amongst other things, cause differences in perception of project success factors and criteria (Hartman & Ashrafi, 2004). Effective communication is accomplished if the receiver interprets the message as it was intended by the sender, thus creating a shared understanding. A lack of

effective communication can have great negative consequences in many ways for a project. The project team's satisfaction and productivity is highly affected by the communication, 46 % of the variation in a project member's satisfaction can be explained by the communication skills of the project leader (Karlsen, 2013).

Poor and missing information from the Principal can be a considerable element of uncertainty and complexity. This is especially prevalent when the members of the Principal group are from different organizations, thus bringing different traditions, goals, and expectations to the project. In many projects, public authorities are both the Principal and the Agent. As the public sector consists of various public bodies and agencies with complex relationships, they are often badly coordinated and may be following their own priorities. This causes mixed signals and great insecurity in the project group. The steering group, although often of great help, can also cause problems for a project. These problems come from a lack of awareness of responsibilities and decision making. The steering group may also make too many decisions about matters that are not within their work tasks. (Karlsen, 2013)

2.2 Inter-organizational relations

The topic inter-organizational relations (IOR) is, as the name implies, concerned with relationships between organizations. This includes relationships between anything from two organizations up to a vast network of organizations between private, public, and non-profit organizations. The growing complexity, uncertainty, and risk that describe the world that organizations meet today force managers to think in new terms about their strategy. An increasing number of organizations are engaging in inter-organizational relationships both as a precautionary defense mechanism and as a response to the challenges they are faced with. (Pitsis et al., 2004)

2.2.1 Introducing inter-organizational relations

The study of IOR aims to understand the character and pattern, origins, rationale, and consequences of these relationships (Cropper et al., 2008a). It was around the mid-20th century that research on IOR started to gain momentum. Over the past half century the body of research related to the topic has grown tremendously with contributions from many different disciplines and theoretical perspectives. Cropper, Ebers, Huxham, and Ring (2008b) refer to the field of research as jungle due to its huge variety, specialization, and fragmentation. This is in part a result of that scholars rarely build on or draw links to existing IOR literature outside their particular area of research (Cropper et al., 2008b).

Many different names and terms are used to describe different forms of relationships between organizations. Common examples of inter-organizational entities are partnerships, collaborations, networks, joint ventures, and cooperations. These terms are all used in the literature with multiple meanings. Many attempts of making definitions have been made, but there are no definitions that are universally accepted (Cropper et al., 2008a). It is outside the scope of our paper to define and elaborate on the differences between these terms, and we will therefore employ a broad perspective by not considering the differences in our review.

When something new and different is created through collaboration one has reached synthesis. Pitsis et al. (2004) present the term inter-organizational synthesis. They say that synthesis between two or more organizations occurs when the inter-organizational collaboration is effective. Although practically any group of organizations can create an inter-organizational relation, not everyone will create an effective relationship. Specialized management skills and knowledge are required to reach synthesis. Despite the importance of achieving synthesis, much of the literature on inter-organizational collaboration tends to ignore its significance. (Pitsis et al., 2004)

2.2.2 Phases

The issue of managing an inter-organizational relation is commonly approached by looking at different phases the collaboration passes through. In the literature there is a diverse range of examples of models that represent different stages of an IOR's life cycle. The common factor of these models is often the intention to provide insights about what should be the focus of management in the different phases. Often, the early periods of collaboration is seen as especially important. (Hibbert, Huxham, & Ring, 2008)

Gray's (1985) model with its focus on the early stages is described as one of the classic ones, and contains the three following phases: Problem setting, Direction setting, and Structuring. The focus of the first phase, Problem setting, is to identify stakeholders and to reach a mutual acknowledgment of the issue that connects them. This phase should not be underestimated, as a lack of shared understanding of the issue and the stakeholders will thwart sequential stages of the collaboration. The second phase of Gray's model, Direction setting, is where the parties discuss their individual values and objectives and start identifying a common goal. In the last phase, Structuring, a framework for the collaboration is created. Understandings reached in the previous phases are formalized, specific goals are set, tasks elaborated, and roles assigned. The creation of a formal structure is not set at a fixed point in time and the Structuring phase should therefore be viewed as a process of institutionalizing emerging norms and

understandings. In Table 1 the factors that facilitate collaboration in each stage are presented. Unsuccessful collaborations are most likely occurring due to a failure to achieve the appropriate conditions in each phase. (Gray, 1985)

Table 1: Facilitative conditions in the early phases of collaboration

Phase	Facilitative Conditions
Problem setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of interdependence • Identification of a requisite number of stakeholders • Perceptions of legitimacy among stakeholders • Legitimate/skilled convenor • Positive beliefs about outcome
Direction setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coincidence of values • Dispersion of power among stakeholders
Structuring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High degree of ongoing interdependence • External mandates • Redistribution of power • Influencing the contextual power • Geographical proximity

Based on Gray (1985)

Unless the conditions in the Problem setting phase are established it will be challenging to set direction for and structure the collaboration in the following phases. When achieving the conditions in the Direction setting phase, benefits from the collaboration may begin to appear; however, formal structuring is often needed to regulate the collaboration first. If some of the conditions are not reached in a certain phase, the collaborative process can move backwards to the previous phase. The distribution of power is a factor that may cause such a setback. Some dispersion of power is important in the Direction setting, but balanced and countervailing power may lead to a stalemate. The parties then need to return to the Problem setting phase where interdependencies must be emphasized and incentives increased. (Gray, 1985)

Another recognized model with a focus on dividing the collaboration process into phases is proposed by Ring and Van de Ven (1994). They have studied the developmental processes of cooperative inter-organizational relationships and introduce a model consisting of three stages: Negotiation, Commitment, and Execution. In the Negotiation stage, the parties must develop shared expectations and understandings of each other's identities to be able to commit and enter into a cooperative IOR. The Commitment stage consists of agreeing on

responsibilities and rules, while lastly the Execution stage entails carrying out what has been planned. Both formal and informal processes are part of the different stages. Contracts are written and roles are set, but simultaneously psychological contracts and personal relationships develop. These psychological commitments and relationships can turn out to be crucial for the continuation of the collaboration. The model is cyclical and reflects the belief that cooperative IORs are continued because they strive to obtain balance and not because they achieve permanent stability. Changes in expectations, conflicts, and misunderstandings are practically inevitable if the collaboration continues over a period of time; thus, renegotiations are required to avoid termination of the relationship. (Ring & Van de Ven, 1994)

2.2.3 Success factors

Another approach to the issue of managing IOR's is looking at factors of success and failure. Such factors are often a mix of controllable aspects that need to be managed and uncontrollable aspects that nevertheless must be taken into consideration by the management (Hibbert et al., 2008). Mattessich, Murray-Close, and Monsey (2001) provide a list of twenty success factors divided into six categories presented in Table 2 below. The list is compiled through a comprehensive review of commonly mentioned success factors in the literature on inter-organizational collaboration.

Table 2: Success factors in IOR literature

Category	Factors
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of collaboration or cooperation in the community • Collaborative group seen as a legitimate leader in the community • Favorable political and social climate
Membership Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mutual respect, understanding, and trust • Appropriate selection of members • Members see collaboration as in their self-interest • Ability to compromise
Process and Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members share a stake in both process and outcome • Multiple layers of participation • Flexibility • Development of clear roles and policy guidelines • Adaptability • Appropriate pace of development

Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open and frequent communication • Established informal relationships and communication links
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concrete, attainable goals and objectives • Shared vision • Unique purpose
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient funds, staff, materials, and time • Skilled leadership

From Mattessich et al., 2001

The factors in Table 2 cover most of the extensive literature on factors, criteria, and conditions to succeed with inter-organizational collaborations. Somewhat less attention has been paid to contributors to bad performance or to the termination of collaborations (Hibbert et al., 2008). An Accenture survey reported in Anslinger and Jenk (2004) is a quite rare example of research on this topic that is not context specific. This survey presents, in descending order, the following five most common reasons for failure: Shift in partner's strategic direction, senior management attention wanders, champions move on, lack of career path/shortage of staff and lastly clash of corporate cultures (Anslinger & Jenk, 2004).

Gray (2008) presents both driving forces and restraining forces in the formation and continuation of collaborations. These forces are divided into strategic factors and institutional factors. Strategic factors are those that the involved organizations exert some control over, while institutional factors are out of their control. The restraining forces classified as strategic include limited vision of domain, internal conflicts, and perceived loss of control or essential support. History of conflict and mistrust, disincentives, and power differences are listed as institutional restraining forces. Gray's (2008) driving forces are all overlapping with the factors gathered in Table 2.

2.2.4 Inter-organizational projects

Many different industries such as advertising, construction, film, and financial services are increasingly using inter-organizational (IO) projects to maneuver uncertain and competitive environments. IO projects are also very common in the public sector where they are used to ensure quick responses to natural disasters and social crises, and also for the process of commencing and completing large infrastructure projects. However, despite this prevalence of IO projects, few frameworks have been developed to help understand the subject. (Jones & Lichtenstein, 2008)

Jones and Lichtenstein (2008) point to the temporality of IO projects as a key distinction from other, more studied, inter-organizational entities. They describe IO projects as a way for organizational actors to handle uncertainty of demand and transactions. Transactional uncertainty comes from complex and specialized knowledge arenas where collaboration may be needed to innovate, or from arenas where several professions are involved. This uncertainty can be handled through creating shared understandings and relations to help the parties coordinate activities in the most efficient way. (Jones & Lichtenstein, 2008)

Maurer (2010) points to trust as a vital component in IO projects as it facilitates knowledge sharing and innovation. Lack of experience on which to ground expectations, together with time pressure that regularly characterizes projects, can make it difficult for the parties to build the needed trust. High levels of conflict and suspicion are likely ingredients in inter-organizational projects. The way in which power between parties is divided can often be determined by the number of participants in the group from the different parent organizations (Oerlemans, de Kok, & de Jong, 2009). Project staffing and the design of project rewards are factors that aid the generation of trust in IO projects. Good project staffing includes that members know each other from before and that the team members work full-time throughout the whole project from beginning to end. Rewards should be objective and measurable to restrict opportunistic behavior and thereby decrease suspicion among partners. (Maurer, 2010)

2.3 Multi-agency collaboration

Multi-agency collaboration is a small branch of the immense research done on inter-organizational relations. Assuming that all literature on private collaborations could be directly transferred to collaborations involving public organizations would be somewhat naive. The natural differences between the public sector and the private sector point in the direction of differences existing also between private and public collaborations. While for example private organizations often have purely economic goals, the goals of the public sector are more complex. In addition, public organizations are subject to more demands in terms of documenting decision making processes and publishing information (Jessen, 2005).

2.3.1 The public sector and inter-organizational relations

There has been done relatively little systematic and empirical research on inter-organizational relationships within the public sector. Moreover, much of the work that has been done on the subject is conducted in the USA, and due to both cultural and political differences one must be careful with uncritically transferring these research results to conditions in other countries. (Knudsen, 2004) A substantial part of the literature addresses the issue of collaboration

between the private and the public sector, and at times these types of relations are not clearly separated from the ones where only public organizations are involved. In Norwegian literature on public-public collaboration, the focus is often on either relations between a municipality and a higher level of public administration, or between municipalities (Andersen & Røiseland, 2008; Røiseland & Vabo, 2012). Both international and Norwegian literature on collaborations between public agencies are dominated by case studies on agencies involved in children's care, education, and health (Atkinson, Wilkin, Stott, Doherty, & Kinder, 2002; Sandfort & Milward, 2008).

2.3.2 The history of public administration and management

Over the last century, three different views on public administration and management have been dominant in the Western world; these are Public Administration (PA), New Public Management (NPM) and New Public Governance (NPG) (Røiseland & Vabo, 2012). The newest concept, NPG, deals with the rising need for inter-organizational collaboration, and emerged in the literature around the beginning of the 21st century. PA, on the other hand, can be traced back another 100 years, while NPM was the prevailing paradigm in the 1980's and 1990's. (Osborne, 2006) In the following sections, the three concepts will be briefly presented. It is not our purpose to delve deeply into the history of public administration and management, but rather to put the current situation into context.

PA is the classical model and emphasizes the rules of law and the importance of a bureaucracy for policy making and implementation. This direction had its glory days in the post-war era when the welfare state emerged in Norway and other developed countries. The belief in the state as the solver of all society's problems was strong. The supporters of PA believed in a clear separation between the public and the private sector, which is a key distinction from the two other directions. However, the popularity of PA was not indefinite and from the 1970's and onwards it was criticized first by academic circles and later by the political elite. (Osborne, 2006; Røiseland & Vabo, 2012)

The decline of PA opened up for new lines of thinking in the subject of public administration and management, and NPM was the popular new solution. Advocates of NPM stressed that the public sector should learn from the management of the private sector, and thereby increase its efficiency (Røiseland & Vabo, 2012). This entailed more hands-on management, entrepreneurial leadership, and a focus on performance management and output and input control (Osborne, 2006). As a result of NPM, public agencies were liberalized and given more responsibilities within certain frameworks (Røiseland & Vabo, 2012). NPM has received

much praise, but has also been criticized quite harshly. Critics have among other things pointed out the negative sides of an intra-governmental focus and the usage of outmoded private sector-techniques (Osborne, 2006).

As a reaction to the extensive specialization and decentralization, a new direction emerged: NPG (Røiseland & Vabo, 2012). Røiseland and Vabo (2012) define NPG as “...the non-hierarchical process where public and private actors and resources are coordinated and given a common direction and goal” [our translation] (p.20). Its development is driven by the increasing complexity and the uncertain nature of public management in the 21st century. Inter-organizational relationships, governance of processes, and a focus on service effectiveness and outcomes are key points in this paradigm. It recognizes the existence and challenges of both a plural state and a pluralist state. A plural state is where several interdependent actors play a part in public service delivery, while a pluralist state is where various processes inform the policy making system. NPG also includes collaborations with private actors as they may be involved in processes that affect public governance. (Osborne, 2006)

Because of its focus on inter-organizational relations, NPG relates to more contemporary management theories than its antecedents. Nevertheless, instead of a replacement, it can be viewed as a supplement to the other two directions. NPG combines elements from both PA and NPM by acknowledging the legitimacy and relation between policy making and implementation processes in the public sector. Many different perspectives can be applied to NPG, as it is not clearly defined as a theoretical and empirical phenomenon. (Osborne, 2006) Organizational theory, network theory, partnership theory, and theory on regimes are all relevant when exploring the multiple sides of NPG (Røiseland & Vabo, 2012).

2.3.3 Public organizations and the need for collaboration

Although not everyone refers to New Public Governance, several books and articles point to the need for collaboration in the public sector. Knudsen (2004) describes how the Norwegian public sector is being criticized for using too many resources while the demand for public services at the same time is both rising and changing. New competence and more flexibility is demanded to meet the social problems, and collaboration between parties with different specializations will often be more efficient than the traditional hierarchical solution (Knudsen, 2004). The need for collaboration in the public sector stems from society’s demand for a holistic offer, but the public sector is forced to divide their offer into manageable tasks (Jacobsen, 2004). At the same time, the increasing complexity in the society may lead to

different public measures interfering with each other and bringing forward unexpected consequences. This reduces the opportunity for one single organization to find the right measures to address a problem. A public sector that is able to meet the society's needs and solve social problems is a prerequisite for the democratic government to be viewed as legitimate. (Røiseland & Vabo, 2012)

Christensen, Læg Reid, Roness and Røvik (2009) explain how a focus on performance management, stemming from the thoughts of NPM, has increased the fragmentation in the public sector as goals often are made on an organizational or unit level. This becomes a challenge when important social problems go beyond the boundaries of one organization. According to NPG, multi-agency structures and collaborations are therefore needed to increase coordination. (Christensen, Læg Reid, Roness, & Røvik, 2009) Arbo (2002) clarifies the issue in his description of the public sector: "As the public sector is a multi-headed troll, it is important to make the heads share their thoughts and pay attention to each other in their priorities and allocations" [our translation] (p. 8).

2.3.4 Success factors and sources of complications

Literature shows that multi-agency collaboration is widely practiced and also highly recommended. However, it is also clear that some collaborations are more successful than others (Glavin & Erdal, 2013). The following section will highlight challenges and success factors for multi-agency collaborations that have been described in the literature.

The body of literature offers various collections of factors that may affect the outcome of a multi-agency collaboration. Based on a review of this literature, Atkinson et al. (2002) provide a list of the most commonly mentioned factors (See Table 3, top section). The same article also emphasizes that this line of literature too often focuses on a specific type of collaboration or a particular field of services in the public sector. Therefore, Atkinson et al. (2002) attempted to contribute with a broader assessment through an examination of 30 different multi-agency collaborations. The study resulted in a new list of required factors for succeeding with multi-agency collaboration (See Table 3, middle section). The factors are related to the personal qualities of the people involved and to installing effective systems and procedures in and between the organizations. Sharing and access to funding was considered the most important factor in overcoming challenges and was the main area where problems arose. (Atkinson et al., 2002) In Norway, relatively little empirical research has been done on success factors and challenges linked to multi-agency collaborations (Andersen & Røiseland, 2008). An exception is Glavin and Erdal (2013), who have studied multi-agency relationships

in Norwegian municipalities and developed their own overview of success factors (see Table 3, bottom section).

Table 3: Collection of success factors and factors affecting multi-agency collaboration

Factors affecting multi-agency collaboration gathered from body of literature by Atkinson et al.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differences between agencies • Joint training • Finding common language • Staffing and time commitments • Information sharing and confidentiality • Budgets and financing
Success factors for multi-agency collaboration found in Atkinson et al.'s study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment and willingness to be involved • Understanding of roles and responsibilities • Common aims and objectives • Leadership or drive • Communication and information sharing • Sharing and access to funding
Success factors for multi-agency collaboration found in Glavin and Erdal's study of Norwegian municipalities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment and structure • Common aim • Realistic view of collaboration opportunities • Benefits experienced • Necessity • Mutual respect and trust • Knowledge of collaboration partner • Development of joint competence

Based on Atkinson et al., 2002; Glavin & Erdal, 2013

Peter Arbo (2002) has also contributed to multi-agency literature by presenting six conditions that should be in place before entering a partnership in the public sector. Firstly, the relevant players need to have institutional leeway; this means that they must have the freedom to act independently and make agreements with their partners. Secondly, all parties must have resources to invest, which could be in the form of money, competence, networks, time, and attention. Thirdly, the collaboration partners need to have a minimum of shared understanding and identity and in this way create a “we” instead of “us and them”. The fourth condition says that there must be something that encourages the parties to seek together. This could be a threat that demands innovative thinking, or the prospect of gains through extra governmental

financing or other project returns. The need for a defined leadership and someone who drives the processes is the fifth condition proposed by Arbo. Many may have experience with leading internal projects, but this is not synonym to being suited for leading a collaboration project. The last condition is that the collaboration should be legitimate. This means that there must be understanding and accept of the collaboration because it uses public resources that could have been spent otherwise. (Arbo, 2002)

Knudsen (2004) approaches the issue of collaboration by suggesting three criteria for succeeding, all related to compatibility. The first one is called domain compatibility and says that collaboration must be seen as beneficial based on the division of tasks between the organizations. Completely overlapping domains will lead to competition, while completely separated domains will not offer any benefits from collaboration. The second criteria, ideological and quality compatibility, entails that the parties should view each other as equal in both their view of good work methods and the level of quality. The last criterion, mandate compatibility, says that there must be something that brings the organizations together such as a superior authority. The mandate must then be accepted and viewed as legitimate by all the participating parties. (Knudsen, 2004)

Røiseland and Vabo (2012) argue that collaboration often is viewed in a too blue-eyed manner while at the same time one is lacking experience and systematic knowledge of what happens when things go wrong. Collaboration may solve problems, but may also create new problems and challenges, especially when it comes to communication and learning. Dialogue and trust building can be very difficult between organizations that normally have very different goals, functions, and culture. (Andersen & Røiseland, 2008) Conflicting tasks and goals, lack of resources, and too little knowledge of each other and the need for collaboration are factors that may hinder a successful collaboration (Glavin & Erdal, 2013). In addition, problems of loyalty and decision making can become very problematic when the participants have leaders both in their base organization and in the collaboration structure (Jacobsen, 2004).

Collaborations tend to be portrayed as win-win situations. There is a risk of that power distribution and conflicts of interests are being under-communicated and thus later turn into a problem (Arbo, 2002). Conflicts between parties related to power, influence, and non-mutual benefits are the biggest hinders of a successful collaboration (Røiseland & Vabo, 2012). In a situation with uneven power structures, communication and trust will be especially important

in order to grow a well-functioning collaboration. Although an uneven distribution of benefits need not be a problem, there must at least be a balance between what is provided and what is gained in the collaboration (Glavin & Erdal, 2013).

Conflicting or differing goals in collaborating organizations can impede a successful outcome (Glavin & Erdal, 2013). Often, the goals of public organizations are complex and vague as they wish to prioritize different activities and considerations at the same time. Ideally the performance management system that is prevailing in the public sector should be based on goals set by politicians that reflect the needs and wishes in the population. In practice these goals are however often developed on lower levels in the public administration system. Activity targets and performance indicators get aggregated to political goals and result in a more technical character than one would expect from an ideal goal. (Christensen, Læg Reid, Roness, & Røvik, 2009)

As the goals of public organizations may differ from those of private organizations it is reasonable to expect that also the motivation for entering a collaboration will differ. Collaboration between organizations may be imposed and controlled by the government, which may entail little motivation in the individual organizations (Glavin & Erdal, 2013). On one side, every unit wants to protect themselves through reducing dependency and uncertainty and therefore avoid inter-organizational relations. On the other side, every unit wants to strengthen their position and document that goals have been reached. Then, it could be looked upon as politically positive to succeed with inter-organizational collaboration. However, a lack of resources, staff, and information could be a stronger incentive than political pressure to engage in collaboration. (Knudsen, 2004)

2.4 Model

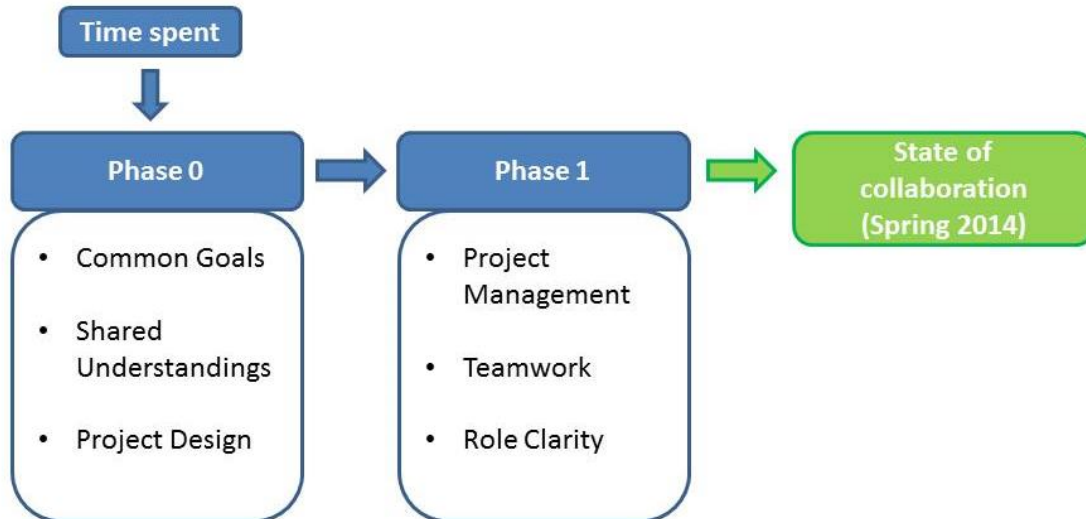
We have aimed to create a model that describes how measures taken in the early stages of a multi-agency project affect the state of collaboration. The model is based on research and theories from literature on project management, inter-organizational relations and multi-agency collaboration. Theoretical models are, as we all know, a simplification of reality. It is important to keep in mind that although the model is a useful tool for understanding, it does not hold all complexities that are present in real life.

2.4.1 Model description

Based on current literature, we have divided our model into two phases, each with three activities that has been highlighted as important for successful project collaboration. The state

of collaboration reflects how well the project group works together to reach project goals. See Figure 1 for an illustration of the synthesis.

Figure 1: Model



The model predicts that time spent will affect how well the factors are performed in phase 0, which again will affect how well the factors are performed in phase 1. This then, will have an effect on the state of collaboration. Drawing on this, we have developed the following research question:

How do the identified factors in phase 0 and phase 1 influence the state of collaboration, and how are the factors in phase 1 influenced by the execution of the factors in phase 0?

We highlight the fact that the factors are limited to the phases they belong to, meaning that it is only within their specific phase that they are of vital importance. The first phase, phase 0, has a defined time limit from the project first is initiated and until the project group starts their work together. It thus includes both the Initiation phase and the Planning phase described in chapter 2.1.3. Phase 1 begins when the project group starts working together on the project, and has no clearly defined time limit. This phase corresponds to the first months of the Execution phase described in chapter 2.1.3. We would like to make the reader aware of the fact that our list of factors is not exhaustive, but is rather a collection of activities that we have found to be most important. The factors are quite broadly defined and include various features that are described in 2.4.2 and 2.4.3. Our aim has been to provide a holistic view through the model and create a general image for the reader as to what to pay particular attention to in a multi-agency project.

In the subsequent sections we will elaborate on our choices of factors by briefly summarizing and merging the three lines of theory described in chap. 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3.

2.4.2 Phase 0

Phase 1 has a defined time limit from the project first is initiated and until the project group starts their work together. Time spent is predicted to affect the factors of phase 0: Common Goals, Shared Understandings, and Project Design.

Time spent

Empirical evidence states that no effort should be spared when planning a project; Time in an important part of this. The aspect of time is essential in the initial phases of a project. It is of special importance to spend a sufficient amount of time on the Initiation phase and the Planning phase to make sure that the project group starts out the best possible way. (chap.2.1.3) The importance of the initial phases should not be underestimated as its outcome can greatly affect the sequential phases (chap. 2.2.2). It is a common view that time has become a scarcity in our society. The time one spends on certain activities has a great effect on the quality of the outcome of those activities. We therefore believe that time is an important factor throughout the project life, but of specific importance during the early phases. Based on our own perceptions of existing literature and especially chap. 2.1 on project theory we have included time as an important influencing factor on the outcome of phase 0 in our synthesis.

Common Goals

Throughout the literature on the subjects of projects, inter-organizational relations, and multi-agency collaboration, Common Goals is a recurring factor. Developing common goals is important both internally for the project group and between the organizations involved.

Clear and realistic objectives is one of the most cited critical success factors in general project theory (chap. 2.1.4). Well defined goals that match the overall strategy of the Principal are of vital importance in order for a project to create value and be successful. Having common goals internally in the project group is a prerequisite for the group to become as efficient as possible (chap. 2.1.3). Moreover, developing precise and verifiable goals in the initial phases will make the execution of project tasks and outcome measures easier (chap. 2.1.5). From this we see that the factor belongs in phase 0 of our synthesis.

Agreeing on concrete, attainable goals is also one of the most commonly cited factors in IOR literature. Common goals are necessary for the design and structuring of the collaboration to

be effective (chap. 2.2.3). Similarly, the importance of common aims and objectives is pointed out by multi-agency literature. Both IOR and multi-agency literature highlight that every party involved should experience some benefit from the collaboration for it to be seen as successful. In cases where the collaboration is imposed and controlled by higher authorities it can be especially challenging to reach agreement on common goals because the individual organizations may themselves hold little motivation for the collaboration. The complex and sometimes technical nature of the goals in public organizations is likely to be a source of complication in the search for a common direction. (chap. 2.2.3 & 2.3.4)

The importance of creating a set of common goals in phase 0 is evident in literature, thus making it an obvious factor in our synthesis.

Shared Understandings

Shared Understanding is here referred to as effective communication both between and within the participative organizations. When the receiver understands the message as the sender intended, shared understanding is generated (chap. 2.1.5). Communication is one of the most cited critical success factors in general project theory (chap. 2.1.4). A project group is dependent on effective communication in order to work well together, and it is described as a great threat to project success if the importance of communication is overlooked or badly handled (chap. 2.1.5.) Conflict of interest is something that can easily be under-communicated because one only wishes to focus on the positive sides of collaboration (chap. 2.3.4)

In the initial stages of an IOR collaboration it is important with a mutual acknowledgement of interdependencies (chap. 2.2.2). This means that for a collaboration to work, the involved parties must all be aware of that they are dependent on each other to solve their common issue. Additionally, IOR and multi-agency literature say that having a shared and realistic vision of the outcome is an important element in successful relationships. Communication and trust is therefore important, and help create a shared understanding of the situation and everyone's needs and demands. Dialogue and trust building may however be very difficult between organizations that normally have very different goals, functions, and culture. A history of collaboration or contact between the parties is a great advantage when trying to reach shared understandings. (chap. 2.2.3 & 2.3.4)

Based on the abovementioned literature we believe that developing shared understandings in phase 0 are of vital importance for a successful continuation of a collaboration.

Project Design

By Project Design we refer to how and where the project is placed in the parent organization, how the reporting lines are set up; i.e., who reports to who, and lastly resources such as money, staffing, and time.

Project theory states that a project is strongly affected by certain control factors. The most important elements are time, cost, and scope. The strong links between these three elements provide an arena for grasping the importance of Project Design. Alteration of one of the factors will affect the other two factors. If for example scope broadens, the project would need more time and thus more money to finish the project. (2.1.3) The third most cited critical success factor in project theory is a strong and detailed plan kept up to date. Having a clear plan right from the beginning of the project makes the start as easy as possible for the project group. (chap. 2.1.4)

Project theory poses the importance of suitably qualified and sufficient team members as a success factor for project collaboration (2.1.4). Correspondingly, IOR theory says that the selection of an appropriate mix of group members is important for a collaboration to succeed. An appropriate mix involves selecting the right personalities as well as the right competence. (chap. 2.2.3 & 2.2.4) A lack of resources is one of the most common problems mentioned in multi-agency theory (chap. 2.3.4). IOR theory deems sufficient resources in the form of money, staff, material, and time as vital for the collaboration's success. Further, IOR theory highlights the importance of involving different levels of the parent organizations, and establishing communication links and policy guidelines. (chap. 2.2.3) The importance of involving all the relevant personnel and integrating the collaboration in the individual organizations is also emphasized in multi-agency theory (chap. 2.3.4). Determining a clear structure can ease decision making processes and save time in phase 1; the participants should know who to report to and who they can obtain information from. In addition, joint training can affect the collaboration positively. (chap. 2.3.4)

Project Design is basically an umbrella term for the structural and practical matters regarding projects. It contains a number of important issues, pointed out above, that needs attention during the initial phases of a project and therefore serves as an inevitable factor in phase 0 of our synthesis.

2.4.3 Phase 1

Phase 1 begins when the project group starts working together on the project, and has no clearly defined time limit. The phase includes three factors: Project Management, Teamwork, and Role Clarity.

Project Management

General management theory concludes that a good manager with a suitable leadership style contributes significantly to the success of an organization. Project management literature has little research on the subject, but it is reasonable to believe that the project leader has the ability to affect the rate of success of a project. Research shows that the leadership style of the project leader matters. Therefore the leadership style should be adapted to the type of project conducted as well as to the phase of the team development. The ability of a project leader to effectively communicate and motivate his/her team correlates positively with the success of organizational and business projects. Further, the project leader can have a significant positive effect on teamwork. (chap. 2.1.3)

To develop the teamwork of a project group, the project leader should adapt his/her style to the different development stages of the group in order for it to continue improving. According to theory, the leader should employ a quite directive style at the beginning of a project and continue towards a type of consultancy role as the team moves through the stages of development. (chap. 2.1.3)

The need for a strong leadership and someone who drives the processes is also mentioned several places in IOR and multi-agency theory. Having experience as a project leader is not the same as having experience with leading more demanding inter-organizational teams. A strong and driving leadership is also needed from leaders in the individual organizations as they should show commitment to the collaboration. Perceived loss of support can be very detrimental for the collaboration's progress. Problems of loyalty and decision making may arise when the participants are unsure about their relationship to their base organization versus the leader of the collaboration project. (chap. 2.2.3 & 2.3.4)

We derive from the literature that Project Management has significant influence on the state of collaboration in phase 1 of a multi-agency project. Both the actions of the project leader and the management in the participating organizations are included in this factor.

Teamwork

Research shows that teamwork is positively correlated to project success, making teamwork and team development of vital importance to a project. It is not an easy task for a team to

reach a highly effective stage, and it takes both time and effort. The project leader plays an important role in developing the team. Diverse and inter-disciplinary teams often run into more hardship towards the goal of becoming a highly effective team. A team may move both forward and backward in its developmental stages throughout a project, and certain events have an especially interruptive effect on team development. In the case of having a new member added, the team moves back to the first stage of Forming. (chap. 2.1.3)

Inter-organizational project theory enhances trust as a crucial feature to grow a good collaboration environment (chap. 2.2.4). Other IOR and multi-agency literature also highlight the importance of mutual trust and respect together with the creation of informal relationships to facilitate collaboration and information sharing. Creating a common identity and language, and moving towards “we” instead of “us and them” is a building stone for good teamwork (chap. 2.3.4). Internal conflicts, mistrust, and a perceived unfair power balance can be restraining forces for a good collaboration (chap. 2.2.3).

Grounded in our own perceptions and the literature review, we believe that the state of the teamwork has a big impact on the success of a project collaboration. The factor Teamwork obviously belongs to phase 1, when the project group starts its work together.

Role Clarity

Role Clarity is here referred to as the roles of the team members within the project group, as well as the project leader. For a team to reach a high level of effectiveness, they need to understand and agree upon roles within the team. An allocation of roles should be discussed already in the planning phase, but are usually not clarified within the team before they have spent a considerable amount of time together (chap. 2.1.3).

Having an understanding of roles and responsibilities is a frequently mentioned factor in IOR and multi-agency literature (chap 2.2.3 & 2.3.4). Knowledge of the other organizations’ objectives and work methods will be essential here. At the same time, it is argued that the collaboration should also develop joint competence where new and more efficient role divisions may arise. (chap. 2.3.4)

We chose to include Role Clarity as an influential factor in our model as it is a commonly cited success factor in the relevant literature. We feel that even though roles may be discussed in phase 0, it is not until phase 1 commences that roles are important for the state of collaboration.

3.0 Method

In this chapter we wish to clarify the methodic choices we have made during our work with this thesis. A method refers “to techniques and procedures used to obtain and analyze data” (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012, p. 4). Our aim is to explore how a collaboration project is affected by it consisting of multiple agencies. To explore this, we have developed a model on which we have based our research question. The chosen method is used to support our search for an answer to our research question.

3.1 Research and data

The term research is widely used, and often misused, in our everyday life. Three characteristics help define the term in this thesis. If a research has been undertaken it usually means that data has been collected systematically, data has been interpreted systematically, and that there has been a clear purpose of seeking an unknown answer. (Saunders et al., 2012) The research method functions as a guide as to how and where one should collect the right data to be able to answer the research question. Data comes in many shapes and sizes, and can be separated into two main categories based on their features: quantitative data and qualitative data. (Saunders et al., 2012)

Quantitative data is often a large amount of data based on meanings derived from numbers. It is found in for example official registers or collected through surveys. The main purpose of quantitative data is to describe and/or explain, test hypothesis and to generalize to a population. Qualitative data, on the other hand, refers to data based on meanings expressed through words and are seen as more rich. (Saunders et al., 2012) When the purpose of the study is to explore and understand a new phenomenon, or to understand a person's attitude and experience, qualitative data is the right choice (Ghauri, Grønhaug, & Kristianslund, 1995). Based on this, we have chosen to base our study on qualitative data. We wish to gain a deep understanding of multi-agency collaboration through the collection of qualitative data.

3.1.1 Approach

At the beginning of the study one has to decide whether to base it on existing theory or to study something entirely novel. This choice will be decisive of which approach to use. When using a deductive approach, you base your study on existing theory and thus move from theory to data. The approach is highly structured, and has generalization as its main objective. Quantitative data is in this relation often analyzed to test causal relationships between established concepts. (Saunders et al., 2012) The opposite approach is named inductive approach. If there is little existing literature on the topic of interest, this is the right approach.

It is strongly related to qualitative data. The main objective is to accomplish an understanding of meanings individuals attach to events and getting a close understanding of the context. A normal procedure is to firstly review literature and conduct data collection, followed by an analysis on which you base the development of a new theory or conceptual framework. (Saunders et al., 2012) It is important to highlight that these two approaches are two extremes on a continuum and that most research is somewhere between them.

The inductive approach is closest to our research. Although there is a lot of existing literature on various factors of our research, there is little, if any, existing literature including all aspects of our study. However, we do not use an entirely inductive approach, as we have a stronger focus on existing theory than a pure inductive research. Our study is based on three different lines of literature, from which we have created a model. This model functions as a guide for our data collection. We have taken great care to not be restricted by the model, so that we can explore new sides and phenomena of a multi-agency project.

3.1.2 Research design

The research design is an overall plan for how to answer a research question. The plan contains principles of measurement, comparisons and basic methods for data collection. There are three main designs for business research: exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory. The exploratory design is usually chosen when little knowledge has been developed on the subject. It has a purpose of further developing and exploring the subject by maintaining a maximal openness towards unknown aspects (Swanborn, 2010). An exploratory method is often connected to qualitative data such as interviews and case studies. The second design mentioned is a descriptive method where the purpose is to describe a certain problem of which there is some existent theory. The descriptive design is usually connected to quantitative data such as the use of a survey for data collection. Finally, the explanatory research design is used when the purpose is to explain relationships, specifically causal relationships. The problem is often quite structured, and the execution of experiments is a widely used method for explaining relationships. (Saunders et al., 2012)

To find the answer to our research question we have chosen an exploratory research design. As we have a relatively complex problem with little existing theory on the subject, the exploratory design is the most suitable one. Due to our great access to information and qualitative data collection, our design may also partially consist of an explanatory design. The reason why certain behaviors, actions and situations appear is of great interest to our study.

The time horizon also constitutes an important part of the research design. The two general aspects mentioned in literature are cross-sectional studies and longitudinal studies. A cross-sectional study is basically when you perform one data collection that shows a “snapshot” at a particular time. A longitudinal study, on the other hand, means that you perform a series of snapshots, allowing you to study change and development over time. (Saunders et al., 2012) Although we have a very limited period of time to conduct our research we have chosen to undertake a longitudinal study with two data collections, the first in mid-February and the second in late April.

3.1.3 Case study

The research strategy is a plan of action on how one should engage in answering the research question (Saunders et al., 2012). Our chosen research strategy is a case study. A case study may take several forms, but a general definition is that “a case study explores a research topic or phenomenon within its context, or within a number of real life contexts” (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 179). A case study may consist of both quantitative and qualitative data, and is often a mix of the two to get a triangulation effect. This means that the different sources of data are used to describe and explain an object from different perspectives, and thereby ensure that the data are showing you what you think they are showing. (Swanborn, 2010). A case study is the preferred research strategy when questions of “how” and “why” are being asked, when the researcher has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context (Yin, 1994).

As we are studying something unique and novel, the case study is the right strategy for our thesis. It will help us gain a rich understanding of what is happening, and to put it all in context. Our study consists of a single case due to its extraordinary uniqueness. The case will give us an opportunity to observe and analyze something that few or no one has studied before. A case study is strongly linked to an exploratory purpose, thus a perfect strategy for our thesis.

3.2 Data collection

Data is the information used to answer a research question. When conducting a research one can use secondary data or primary data. Secondary data has been collected by somebody else and normally for a different purpose, while primary data is data that you collect yourself especially for the purpose of your research. (Saunders et al., 2012) It is very important that a researcher is critical about data and the way it is collected (Swanborn, 2010). “The most

important rule for all data collection is to report how the data were created and how we came to possess them” (as cited in Swanborn, 2010, p.17)

3.2.1 Sample

In small projects and pilot projects, a sample of 10 to 15 participants is sufficient (Johannessen, Kristoffersen, & Tuft, 2011). Various researchers though state that one should conduct interviews until no new information prevails in the interviews (Brinkmann & Tanggard, 2012). It thus seems that there is no upper or lower boundary as to how many interviews one should conduct. The number of participants depends more on the research question and what is practically possible. In case studies, a researcher often deals with a number of different stakeholders, which often have different perceptions, interpretations, arguments and prejudices. It is recommended to interview all the stakeholders and to ask them about the views and opinions of the others in order to understand the dynamics between them. (Swanborn, 2010)

We have interviewed all the group members of the pilot project, as well as the official steering group of the project. The project group consists of four members from the Labor Inspection Authority, and two members from both the Tax Administration and the Tax Collection Office. The steering group consists of three members from the Labor Inspection Authority, one member from the Tax Administration, one member from the Tax Collection Office in Bergen, as well as one member from the Police. As the Police became a member after the project had started, and does not have a representative in the actual project group we chose not to interview him. All the other members of the steering group have been interviewed. The actual project group together with the Inspection Manager has been interviewed twice. One of the members from the Tax Administration was only interviewed once because he entered the group in March. We chose not to interview the member from the Tax Collection Office that joined the group towards the end of our second data collection as we considered him too new in the group to provide any novel and essential information at that point. The number of interviews sums up to a total of 19 interviews of 12 individuals.

Independent of research question and objectives one has to consider whether there is a need to use sampling or not. Due to the free access and relatively small size of our case, we have been able to collect and analyze data from all the group members and steering group members. Thus, we have access to information from all the people involved in the pilot project. This is termed a census. Sampling is therefore not necessary in our thesis.

3.2.2 Interviews

A research interview is a way of collecting primary data through asking relevant questions related to the research topic. An interview can also be of great help to refine ideas and develop the final research question and objective. The research interview is an umbrella term for various types of interviews that can be conducted in relation to a research. Saunders et al. (2012) classify research interviews into three separate types: structured, semi-structured, and in-depth. Each type is linked to the specific research question and objectives, to different purposes, and to the type of data and research strategy chosen for a particular study. (Saunders et al., 2012)

Structured interviews are strongly related to quantitative data and are based on a predetermined and standardized set of questions. They are interviewer-administered and call for little or no open discussion regarding a subject. This type is strongly linked to descriptive studies, and often also explanatory studies. The complete opposite of a structured interview is the in-depth interview which is labeled as an informant interview. This means that there are no predetermined questions to work through but rather a short list of topics that the interviewee is free to talk about in relation to events, beliefs, and behaviors. The in-depth interview is connected to qualitative data collection with an exploratory purpose. Somewhere between these opposites is the semi-structured interview. This type is mainly connected to exploratory and explanatory studies, and provides a form of qualitative data. The interview contains a set of predetermined topics and open questions, giving the interviewee the opportunity to talk freely, but within a given frame of topics. (Saunders et al., 2012)

We have chosen semi-structured interviews as our main data collection method. Firstly, it goes hand in hand with our research question and objectives, as well as the purpose, design, and strategy chosen for our thesis. Semi-structured interviews will provide us with important background information as well as a contextual understanding. It will give us a chance to explore the project, given its particular context, and additionally provide us with the opportunity of examining underlying factors which explain why certain events take place. The semi-structured interview gives the respondent the opportunity to talk freely, while we maintain the possibility of making sure that our topics of interest are covered.

To prepare for the semi-structured interview we created an interview guide. An interview guide “lists topics that you intend to cover in the interview along with initial questions and probes that may be used to follow up initial responses and obtain greater detail from the participants” (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 386). We made two different interview guides for our

first data collection: one for the steering group members and one for the project group members, including the project leader. Our interview guides for the first round of interviews were mainly based on existing literature and in connection with the information we had on the case and its context. During the second round of interviews we concentrated on the group members and the head of the department where the group is situated, who also is a member of the steering group. Only one interview guide was made for these interviews, though with some modifications of the guide when we interviewed the Inspection Manager, the project leader, and the new group member from the Tax Administration. The guide was based on our synthesis of the existing literature and results from the first analysis.

We started off our interviews using specific and closed questions and proceeded to ask more open and probing questions. This was to make sure that the respondents felt that they could answer the questions in a satisfactory manner in the beginning, and to “warm them up” for the more difficult and sensitive questions.

3.2.3 Other sources of data

Between our first and second round of interviews, we attended three meetings in order to make some observations. An observation technique for data collection is well recognized in case studies and entails that you spend time watching what people do. What is observed is then described, analyzed and interpreted. An advantage to this technique is that you get to observe people in their natural surroundings, also known as ecological validity. Literature describes four different kinds of observation techniques with the influencing factors of being a passive or active researcher with a concealed or revealed identity. (Saunders et al., 2012) Due to the nature of the group size and that we use face-to-face interviews as our main data collection technique, the concealed identity was not even a choice. Further, we felt it was natural for us to take a passive stance as an observer to make sure that we did not affect the group dynamics and state of collaboration.

Our thesis is not only based on primary data, we have also used various forms of secondary data during our course of work. Due to the nature of secondary data, we have taken care while reviewing and analyzing it as it has been collected or made for a different purpose than our research.

We have mainly used secondary data concerning the organizations involved in the project, where information has been collected from the homepages of the different organizations. Further, we have gathered information about the project from organizational documents,

project documents, news articles, and websites discussing the problem of social dumping. Additionally, we have read a vast amount of literature that have not been used nor referred to in this thesis, but may have colored our viewpoints and perceptions.

3.3 Analyzing data

A problem with all kinds of research is to reduce a vast amount of data in order to find an answer to the research question (Swanborn, 2010). The meanings of qualitative data depends on social interpretation, thus qualitative data tends to be more ambiguous and complex than other data (Saunders et al., 2012). For the analysis and understanding to be meaningful, one has to take into consideration this ambiguousness and complexity.

Before analyzing, one has to transcribe the interviews. All interviews were recorded on tape by consent from all of the interviewees. It is important to transcribe in reasonable time after the interview to make sure that all important non-verbal communication is written down (Saunders et al., 2012). Due to the amount of interviews we conducted, we tried to structure our calendar so that we had one or two interviews in a day and then time to transcribe them the same and following day. This was done in order not to be confused by which interviewee did what, and to be able to transcribe as much and correct as possible of the non-verbal communication. As we were both present at all of the interviews, one of us would interview and the other one would observe. The observer would then transcribe the interview. Transcribing interviews is a great way of processing an interview and to get well acquainted with the information. This helped us a lot in when we started analyzing the data.

Analyzing qualitative data is difficult because it does not have a clear and structured road like quantitative data. Yin (1994) emphasizes the importance of a researcher to be clear about choosing a theory-oriented general strategy for analysis. He suggests that one should develop a descriptive framework for analysis when there are no theoretical propositions available. As previously mentioned, we have developed a synthesis of existing theory and used it as a basis for data collection. The same model serves as a guide for our analysis, thus following the recommendation by Yin. This helps us structure our analysis, both for ourselves and for our readers. The vast amount of data is somewhat overwhelming, and is better understood when presented in a framework.

An analysis consists of dividing the data into smaller parts, categorize it, and then put it back together in a way that makes it easy to present and comprehend. Coding is a common process when analyzing qualitative data. Codes are applied to different sections of the data to make it

easier to locate and categorize. Codes can originate from existing theory, which means that the codes are predetermined, and appear from the data while analyzing. (Simons, 2009) We have mainly focused on predetermined codes based on our model, but have been very open to new codes appearing from our data to be true to our exploratory design.

When we were transcribing the interviews we categorized the answers by the themes from the interview guide. Following this, we started categorizing our findings according to the identified factors in our model. The categorizing was done by extracting the most relevant answers to each question into an excel sheet, to make sure that we did not miss any important points and to easier see the respondents' answers to the same question in relation to each other. Our findings and discussion presented in Chapter 5 and 6 are mainly structured according to our model. This has helped us make sure that our analysis is consistently tied to our research question, and that it creates a solid base to answer it. We wish to highlight the fact that qualitative data may be interpreted in various ways due to its nature, and that the findings and discussion in this thesis is our interpretation of the data.

3.4 Reliability and validity

When collecting primary data it is very important to consider the quality of the data. There are two general criteria to be used to make sure that the quality of the data is satisfactory: reliability and validity. (Simons, 2009)

3.4.1 Reliability

Reliability is connected to consistency of the data collection; i.e., how did you measure? If data is collected consistent it means that another researcher would get the same results if he or she measured the same at a different point in time. Reliability is high when the same results appear if the research is conducted a second time. (Swanborn, 2010) There are four main threats to reliability: participant error, participation bias, observer error, and observer bias (Saunders et al., 2012).

Participant error is present if there are any factors which can alter the way in which a participant performs (Saunders et al., 2012). We have tried to avoid this threat by allowing the participants to choose time and date for the interviews. Additionally we have been very flexible, and have sometimes postponed interviews when something pressing has showed up for the project group, such as an urgent tip that the group should respond to quickly. Participant bias may occur if there are any existent factors which may induce a false response from the interviewee. (Saunders et al., 2012) During our data collection we have made sure

that we have had access to a private room where we have conducted the interviews. We have tried our best at all times to make the participants feel secure about their anonymity.

Researcher error may occur if there are any factors which may alter the researcher's interpretation. Researcher bias means that something may induce the researchers recording of responses, for example allowing a subjective view to get in the way of an objective recording and interpretation. (Saunders et al., 2012) To avoid these threats we have made sure to come well prepared to the interviews. Additionally we have conducted all interviews together to avoid overlooking and misinterpreting subtle meanings and to secure an objective interpretation. All interviews have been recorded, which have eased and secured the interpretation and analysis.

3.4.2 Validity

Validity refers to how well the method for data collection and measuring actually measures what it is supposed to measure, i.e. to what degree the findings are what they seem to be. There are two main types of validity: internal and external validity. (Swanborn, 2010)

Internal validity is concerned with the relationship we investigate. Strong internal validity is accomplished if a cause and effect relationship is proven (Swanborn, 2010). To strengthen internal validity we have taken certain measures. As a preparation to the interviews we informed the participants about the main topics we wanted to discuss, thus giving them the opportunity to mentally prepare for the interviews. This has been part of securing that the information we collected was actually about this pilot project and the collaboration between the three public organizations. External validity refers to the ability to generalize the findings to a population (Saunders et al., 2012). This has not been an objective of ours, as we are studying a case with a specific context. Regardless, we hope that our research suffice to be a contribution to literature on the main topics, and may thus be generalized to a wider theoretical aspect.

On the basis of the above discussion, we believe that we have maintained both reliability and internal validity in our research.

3.5 Ethical considerations

“Research ethics deals with questions of the appropriateness of your choices and behavior as a researcher, in particular with regards to those who are the subjects of your work and those who are affected by it” (Pedersen, 2013, p. 3). This basically means that research ethics relates to every step of the research process.

We have taken several measures to make sure that those we study are being ethically treated. Before the interviews we informed the interviewees about our thesis, the topics of the interview and the consent form. We also repeated this information before we started the interview, focusing especially on their anonymity and confidentiality, and the right to withdraw their participation from our study at any point in time. Further, we have taken great care in presenting our analysis and results as accurately and honestly as possible. We have also referred to all of our sources to make sure that they are credited for their work. During our entire research we have kept our eyes open for possible weaknesses and limitations to our work, and made sure to inform about these in order to not to misguide those who may read and use our research. (Pedersen, 2013)

We have done our best to act politely and respectfully towards all the people with which we have had contact during our research. As ambassadors for NHH and subsequent students writing their thesis, we have made an effort to consequently maintain a professional and positive impression of ourselves and our research.

4.0 Case description

In this chapter we will present the context of our case study: the organizations involved, the issue that brings them together, and background and design of the project.

4.1 Introducing the case study

In January 2014 a project group with participants from three public organizations started working together on a pilot project in an office in Norway's second largest city, Bergen. The background for the initiative is an increased focus by the Norwegian government on fighting social dumping. The main organizations involved are (Norwegian names in parenthesis): the Labor Inspection Authority (Arbeidstilsynet), the Tax Administration (Skatteetaten), and the Tax Collection Office in Bergen (Kemneren). This paper seeks to study the initial phases of this project collaboration that is initiated to work towards preventing and detecting social dumping and related illegal activities.

4.2 The Organizations

The Labor Inspection Authority (LIA) is a government agency subordinate to the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. In total about 600 people work in LIA and the agency's main task is to oversee that organizations in Norway are following the Working Environment Act (Arbeidsmiljøloven). The agency is divided into seven regions across the country with the Directorate as a managing office. Each region holds both region offices and inspection offices. It is the Western region with the region office in Bergen that is responsible for this pilot project. The Directorate is responsible for strategy, plans and communication, as well as functioning as an appellate body for resolutions decided upon in the regions. (Arbeidstilsynet, a)

The Norwegian Tax Administration (TA) is also a government agency but is subordinate to the Ministry of Finance. The agency is responsible for taxes and fees being determined and paid appropriately, and for keeping the National Population Register updated. Over 6500 people are employed in the agency that is organized in a Tax Directorate and five different regions, each with several offices. It is the Western region that is involved in the collaboration project that we are studying. (Skatteetaten)

The Tax Collection Office (TCO) is, unlike the other the organizations, a municipal agency that performs tasks on behalf of the state and each office's respective county and municipality. Collection of taxes and fees, employer controls, and handling tax reduction applications are some of the responsibilities of TCO. For these tasks the agency is subordinate

to the Ministry of Finance and the Tax Administration. The agency also collects property taxes and other municipal fees on behalf of the municipalities. (Bergen Kommune, 2014)

4.3 Social dumping and tax evasion

LIA defines social dumping as situations where “especially foreign employees working in Norway have significantly worse working conditions and salary than Norwegian workers have” [our translation]. Bad working conditions can include tough working hours, lack of safety training and an unsafe work environment. (Arbeidstilsynet, b) Although foreign workers are the most typical victims of social dumping, also young employees are found to be at risk of being exploited by their employers (Arbeidsdepartementet, 2013).

Experience from LIA and TA shows that if an actor does not comply with one part of the law it often does not comply with other parts either. Therefore social dumping and different forms of tax evasions are often connected. With the free flow of work force across national borders, the problem of illegal activities in the Norwegian job market is constantly increasing. Both LIA and TA have put a lot of effort into limiting the problem over the last decade. In addition to putting health and lives of employees in danger, the businesses that do not follow Norwegian law create unfair competition and force law-abiding businesses out of the market.

4.4 The project collaboration

The pilot project was first initiated by LIA in the early fall of 2013. The region director in Bergen was granted funds from the government to facilitate a pilot project on social dumping based on a project mandate that she had developed. The background for this was the Government Action Plan 3, presented in May 2013, which addressed the problems of social dumping. A section of the action plan states the following:

“The government wants to further develop multi-agency collaboration, especially local collaboration between the Labor Inspection Authority and other public agencies. The goal is to co-ordinate the efforts, including inspections, and use resources where they are most needed” [our translation] (Arbeidsdepartementet, 2013).

The project was initially thought to just include LIA and TA, but after the first meetings it became clear that both parties also wished to include TCO. Both TA and TCO were then invited to suggest alterations and additions to the mandate. A steering group with representatives from each of the organizations was also created at this point in time. This group would make the big decisions and set the direction of the project. The steering group

includes three members from LIA, while TA and TCO have one representative each. Around the time of project start a representative from the Police was added to the steering group.

In the original plan the project group was supposed to start their work already in 2013, but the project was later postponed with a start-up in the beginning of January 2014 and a planned duration of two years. A pilot project is described as being a trial project where a form of working is being tested before possibly being executed on a larger scale. In this case, a successful pilot project can mean that the working form would become a permanent solution, and spread to other Norwegian cities. The main idea of the project is to co-locate people from the different organizations in the same office to enhance the collaboration. Being in the same room would facilitate faster and better information sharing and communication which could make the work against social dumping and tax evasions a lot more efficient.

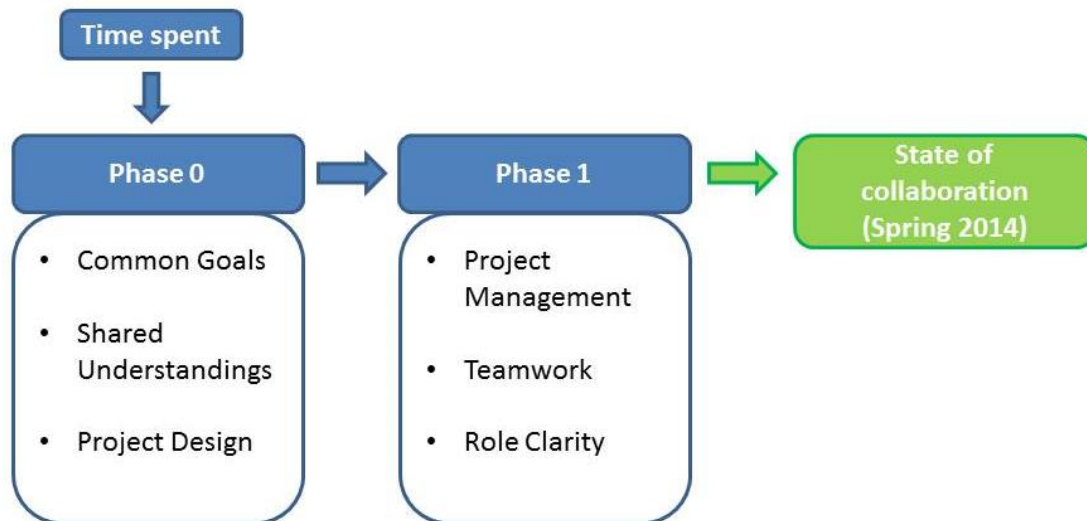
Two subprojects were presented in the project mandate, both with the goals of preventing social dumping and encouraging legal activities. The first subproject is that the agencies should engage in joint information activities, while the second subproject has a focus on engaging in joint control activities. While the project's name and focus originally was on social dumping, this was a few months into the project officially broadened to a focus on labor market criminality that in a better way covers the differing objectives of all three agencies.

Office space for the project group is provided by LIA, which was also responsible for hiring a project leader. The project leader was externally hired and was employed in late 2013 to start his job in January 2014. His responsibilities include making a project plan, reporting to the steering group on a regular basis, and leading the project group on a daily basis. The project group that started in January consisted of one person from TA, one from TCO and three full-time employees, excluding the project leader, from LIA. Some months into the project two new resources joined the group, one from TA and one from TCO. In addition, the project group has assigned a lawyer from LIA that assists them in cases when needed.

5.0 Empirical findings

In this chapter we present the findings from our two main rounds of data-collection, as well as observations done during meetings in both the steering group and the project group. We have structured the chapter based on our model (see Figure 1), and start by reminding the reader of how it looks like. Thereafter, we present the responses by the interviewees together with our perceptions of their behavior and answers. Our findings related to the factors in phase 0 are dominated by answers from the first round of interviews in February. At this point, the interviewees still had a clear memory of phase 0, and were not likely to be colored by newer events.

Figure 1: Model



The model represents a synthesis based on current literature about projects and project management, inter-organizational relations, and multi-agency collaborations. The model shows which activities we believe to be most important in phase 0 and in phase 1 of a project in order for a group to achieve the best state of collaboration possible. As mentioned above, we use the model as a base to present our findings. This means that the findings related to events before the project start date is found under phase 0 and linked to the three factors belonging to this phase. Findings that relate to things happening after the project start date is presented under phase 1 and structured according to the factors connected to this phase.

5.1 Phase 0

In this section, we will present findings related to Time spent in phase 0 and the factors in phase 0: Common Goals, Shared Understandings, and Project Design.

5.1.1 Time spent

The time spent planning the project was a recurring topic during the interviews. All of the members in the steering group and several members in the project group mentioned that the planning period had gone very fast compared to what they were used to. No one expressed clearly that they disapproved of this, but it was still apparent that some would have wished that more time was spent planning the project so that it would run as smooth as possible once it was launched. On the other side, a few interviewees also voiced their joy over the fact that the public sector could move this quickly and that the project did not need much planning since things would not change that much. Also, some interviewees did not think that it would have been useful to spend more time before project start. They believed it was impossible to know where the project was going and that one therefore had to just jump right to it. The following quotation describes the general opinion regarding planning of this project:

“This is not something you sit and do and talk about for years, but... because it went so quickly one could say that it is not designed in the same manner as other projects in our agency and not planned the same way as other projects” (Interviewee A).

The interviewee refers to the fact that projects normally take a lot of time to plan, and that this project is unique due to its short planning period.

It was also pointed to by several participants that TA maybe needed more time than the other agencies because of its superior size and its tendency to have more cumbersome processes. Several interviewees explained the short planning period by referring to the funds LIA had received from the Government to launch such a project. The funds were originally meant for 2013 and therefore the initial plan was to start the project in December 2013.

5.1.2 Common Goals

A project mandate including the project goals was first outlined by the Region Director of LIA and then elaborated by the Inspection Manager at LIA’s Bergen office. TA and TCO were then invited to make contributions to the mandate. For TA it was important that information activities became a part of the project mandate. A pure focus on control activities was of little interest to them. It is evident from the interviews with the steering group members that there were close to no disagreements when discussing the goals; the few suggestions to changes or additions to the mandate were all incorporated.

“So it was very quick and informal, she just noted the inputs we had in... in addition and then the mandate was adjusted and we were ready” (Interviewee B).

When being asked about the goals for the project however the representatives in the steering group from TA and TCO seemed less sure of the actual goals for the project than the representatives from LIA. The project leader, together with a few others, also pointed to that the parties all seem to agree when it comes to the overall goals, but that there is more disagreement regarding how to reach these. The agencies all have their own targets, and several interviewees mentioned the contrast between LIA, which has a focus on reaching a high number of controls, and TA, which has a focus on cases that involves collecting as much money as possible.

5.1.3 Shared Understandings

The most recurring issue when it comes to Shared Understandings is related to the balance between the level of information activity and the level of control activity. While representatives from TA are very focused on the information perspective,

“Just making this a traditional control approach was really not very interesting” (Steering group member TA),

others say that the project group is put together to carry out inspection activities:

“These are people who will go out and do controls and inspections. This will not be... an office group to put it like that” (Interviewee A).

A frequently mentioned topic related to Shared Understandings, was the choice of the project group member from TA. Many interviewees from LIA and TCO were surprised that TA chose a person without any control experience as they believed it was clearly communicated that this was what the group needed. The steering group member from TA on the other hand voiced that they envisioned their person in the group as a contact point between the group and the rest of the organization and that this person did not need to participate in any controls. This was a view that TA, at the point of staff selection, thought was shared by the other organizations.

There is a mutual understanding among all the participating parties that social dumping and tax evasion are important social problems. It is also an overall agreement that a multi-agency collaboration like this project can have positive effects on such social problems. A member of the steering group expresses the general perception among the parties involved as following:

“Very very positive attitude from all three agencies and very... cooperative and a very constructive approach. In every way.” (Interviewee A).

Both from interviews and from observations of steering group meetings it is apparent that the group has a very positive and informal vibe. Additionally, there seems to be a mutual acceptance of LIA as the driver force and leader of the project, although most of the interviewees describe the parties as equal. This is apparent in the following quotations:

“I am very concerned with equality and I do not think the other parties see it as a challenge...It is very important that we feel that we own it [the project] together.” (Interviewee D)

and

“[...]I feel that we have been pretty... equally eager both of us in that sense, but of course they [LIA] are in the driver’s seat there is no doubt about that.” (Interviewee C).

Based on the descriptions from the steering group members, we see that there are different views on the project in each organization. TCO refers to the project as business as usual where the only difference is that their representative has changed office. For LIA the project seems more important and more like a prestigious initiative although they also say that in practice not much have changed. TA approached the project differently. The person chosen by TA for the project group got a new contract and was released from his old work tasks. At the same time, TA gives the impression that the project is less important for their organization and rather a fairly interesting thing happening on the side of their usual business. At the end of phase 0 there also seem to be different perceptions about the existence of unresolved issues. Some members from LIA together with TA expressed that many issues had yet to be discussed, while TCO and other representatives from LIA felt content with what was done in phase 0.

5.1.4 Project Design

As we briefly mentioned above, the project’s place in the organizational structures differs between the involved parties. The project group member from TA was chosen after an internal hiring process. A new contract was made especially for the project, but at the same time, the group member said that he was given no specific job instructions or target demands. The member from TCO was specifically requested from LIA due to her vast experience, and the involved management in TCO expressed no hesitation to accommodate this request. Neither the organizational targets nor the work tasks for the chosen person were changed; the only difference would be the move to LIA’s offices. This is clearly stated through the following quotation by the steering group representative from TCO:

“There is nothing special happening with our work in relation to this project being established and that is because we already had a very close collaboration with the Labor Inspection Authority... so we do things much the same way” (Steering group member TCO).

For the group members from LIA the changes were even smaller. The biggest change was to move to a project office in the same building where they already worked. Because of space limitations, one inspector even remained in the same office. All of the inspectors who already worked in relation to social dumping were placed in the project. They had to keep the same targets and work tasks as they would have had without the project. These inspectors included both experienced and less experienced employees.

It appeared from the interviews that there had been no discussion in the steering group about the composition of the project group regarding personalities and group dynamics. The imbalance of group members from the three different organizations, with LIA outnumbering their partners, did not appear to be a concern for any of the steering group members. As LIA was the initiator, both TCO and TA found it natural that LIA housed the project and had more representatives in the group. Finding a project leader was also the responsibility of LIA and the other parties expressed that they were completely fine with this solution. The steering group members from LIA that were involved in the hiring process all expressed an internal agreement about wanting an external project leader with analytical skills and the ability to see the full picture.

“[...]it was important for us with an analytical education in order for him [the project leader] to see the full picture and not only have good internal competence but to see the full picture with respect to the multi-agency part” (Steering group member LIA).

The project leader was hired in late 2013 and was scheduled to start working the 6th of January, without receiving any prior training. He is clear about the fact that both him and the project would have benefited greatly if he had received some form of relevant training or preparation before the project startup. Several of the project group members say that they knew very little about the project in the planning phase, while the steering group members from LIA say that much information was given during this period. The steering group member from TA explains that information was shared on the intranet and with those departments that would be most affected. In TCO only those who needed to know were informed about the project.

The plan in TCO was that the project group member would continue reporting to her line manager in addition to TCO's representative in the steering group. Project group members from LIA would also continue to report in their systems the way they were used to. One steering group member from LIA emphasized the importance of integrating the project group in the agency's ordinary work so that the project does not become a satellite by itself as she puts it. Another approach was voiced by the steering group member from TA. He said that the project leader is the one in charge of their group member's work, although the formal administrative responsibility was with TA. At the same time he admitted that the reporting lines were unclear between TA and the project group and that much had to be fixed once the project got started.

"At least two departments are involved based on the traditional division[...]So it is a little crisscross, but that is typical of these projects" (Steering group member TA).

It is clear from the quotation that certain things were not quite sorted out when the project started. The steering group member from TA saw that the project required a new structuring in TA in order to avoid complications.

All three parties explained that it is the project leader's responsibility to report to the steering group. However, it seemed like nothing was planned regarding how and what the group members should report to the project leader. Both the steering group member from TA and one steering group member from LIA point to that there were still some unresolved issues when the project group started working. This is illustrated through the following quotation:

"Well, I guess we could say that the boat is built while rowing" (Interviewee C).

One of these unresolved issues involved a lack of data access to TA's and TCO's systems for the respective representatives at the project office. Duties of confidentiality, different media approaches and offers of utilizing various resources at TA, were subjects the steering group member from TA expressed that he had wished to discuss more in-depth during the planning phase.

Interviewees from the steering group all showed great insecurity when being asked about how they plan to organize the steering group and how often they will meet. Several members admitted that they did not know if any plan existed for the steering group, but no one seemed to view this as a problem. A steering group member answered by saying

“There is no plan. There has not been any plan” (Interviewee B).

However all of them emphasize the prevalence and importance of informal contact through mails, quick phone calls, and meetings in other contexts.

While LIA had invited TA to participate in the project from the beginning, TCO was asked to join somewhat later in phase 0, partially due to wishes from inspectors in LIA. There was also a wish to include more agencies before project startup, but steering group members from LIA explained it as impossible because of obstacles such as a lack of resources in the other agencies. Among the representatives from LIA in the steering group, there is in February still a determination to bring in other agencies at a later stage.

5.2 Phase 1

In this section, we will present findings related to the factors in phase 1: Project Management, Teamwork, and Role Clarity.

5.2.1 Project Management

The main findings related to Project Management, are structured under two different titles: Senior management and Project leader.

Senior management

The support from senior management is described very differently from person to person and from organization to organization. The group representative from TCO has throughout the project described the support from her organization as good. The first representative from TA, on the other hand, describes the support as lacking from the beginning. He says the reason is that the organization is big and slow, and that it will take time before responsibility for the project is placed in someone's hands at TA. Later in the project he describes the support as more than sufficient and that the representatives from TA get what they ask for. Thus, it appears that something has changed in TA regarding their view on the project. The second representative from TA, which entered the project in March, describes the support as OK and says that due to his extensive experience he does not need support to perform his everyday tasks.

Regarding LIA, the perception and need for support is varying. Some group members say that the support is fine, and that the management listens to them and follows through on promises. The presence of senior management is commented on during interviews:

“[The support] has been good. But you could say that the presence has maybe been... uhm medium to... poor” (Interviewee E).

Some group members were positive to the fact that the management has given the group room to grow. Other group members, including the project leader, express a need for more support, especially at the beginning of the project. A group member says that more direction and support would have helped the group find their roles and responsibilities, while the project leader expresses a wish for more feedback on his performance. Some group members from LIA also articulated an uncertainty regarding the mixing roles of the project leader and the Inspection Manager at the Bergen office. At the beginning of the project the group members were unsure of which person to turn to with different issues. The project leader himself also expressed that he was confused about whether he was supposed take the role as a personnel manager, something he would find very strange. During the second round of interviews, we perceived that this role confusion had improved. It seemed settled that the project leader was in charge of the day-to-day project work, while personnel management was the parent organizations' responsibility.

In April, an issue regarding the Directorate in LIA appears in several interviews. The project group feels that although the Directorate has expressed their full support to the project, it does not follow through in its actions. Project members complain about a slow process regarding tools and measures that they have been promised. Additionally, the Directorate has supported an appeal against the project group. The group members feel that the Directorate's decision is wrong, and that it should have supported the project group in the appeal.

Project Leader

The project leader was as previously mentioned hired just before Christmas 2013 by LIA. He started his new employment as of January 6th 2014. In his first week he was responsible for planning a seminar on social dumping as well as planning three weeks of joint inspections to be conducted by the three agencies. The project leader expresses great frustration and stress regarding his initial weeks. He had very little knowledge of the organizations and their different tasks and methods. During the first round of interviews he declines to answer our question about LIA's goals for the project, as he says that he knows too little about the organization to answer that. This answer was something that surprised us somewhat as we experienced that this says that he knew very little about the organizations and the project.

The project group is generally satisfied with the project leader, but they have certain concerns about his experience and knowledge of the work tasks.

“We do have some problems now in the starting phase and that has something to do with... the project leader is new and does not have experience with inspections” (Interviewee F).

Most members focus on the fact that the project leader is new and needs more time to settle into his role, and learn more about the organizations and their work tasks. However, one member of the group expresses that he would have wanted a project leader with inspection experience. The project leader is also dissatisfied with his lack of knowledge. He is frustrated by the fact that he has to make decisions regarding something that he knows next to nothing about. For this reason he explains that his leadership style is very open, and he leaves it to the team to develop their work methods; they decide how to choose a subject and how to conduct an inspection. The project team, on the other hand, is generally confused about the direction of the project, as it has little structure and no specified goals. In February, members from LIA say that they basically work as they have always done and see little difference from before the project was initiated in their day-to-day work. Expressions such as

“we work in a fan formation” (interviewee F).

were used a number of times by different group members to explain that the group was spread out and worked separately. The project leader said that he found it hard to unify the group. Further, some group members were uncertain about the role of the project leader, and whether he was supposed to be a real leader to the group or just handle administrative tasks. It is clear that the group was waiting for directions from the project leader during the initial period, while at the time he did not feel competent enough to give the team directions on what to do.

During our first data collection, various group members uttered a need for more structure in the project and the group. Between the two rounds of interviews, we attended a group meeting. This gave valuable insight into the group dynamics and the lack of structure. The project leader had made an agenda, and tried to have the group members follow the agenda and discuss the relevant topic, but the group members drifted off to another topic or whispered across the table on some different case or subject. The project leader tried to reestablish focus, but was often interrupted or overlooked. One member later said that there was a need for a more directive leadership, and that the group needed a strong leader that

urged them to become more receptive of what was discussed in group meetings and what the plan for the group work was.

During the second round of interviews it seems like the project leader have settled better into his role, he takes more charge, and the team members seem happy about this. One of the group members said that

“...he is kind of a focal point that unifies the three agencies so that we know what everybody is doing” (Interviewee G).

Others say that he still runs a flat and free structure, but that he seems more confident and makes more decisions now than earlier. The team is quick to explain that the project leader is new and that he needed time to learn and settle into his role.

5.2.2 Teamwork

The team members officially started working together on the project as of January 6th with LIA's offices as their base. None of the representatives had received any project related training, or sufficient information about the direction of the project and everyone's role in this.

Competence

In February the group members were all positive towards their fellow group members, and described the ambience of the group as very good. In spite of this, there was a common perception that the composition of competence in the group was not perfect. Nearly the entire group expressed that they wanted to expand the group to include representatives from other agencies that work with the same social problems. Additionally, various members mentioned the fact that the group could benefit from a more experienced team. The extensive experience of the representative from TCO was seen as very valuable to the group by all the members. LIA only had one member in the group with noteworthy experience within the field of social dumping. Thus, the group only had two members with significant experience. These two members said that they knew each other quite well as they had previously collaborated on cases. TA's first member, on the other hand, had no experience with inspection activity, neither had he received any training on the area. In addition to this, the member expressed uncertainty about work tasks, and he had realized that he might not have the right competence for the project.

At this point in time there was great frustration linked to TA and, according to the group, TA's lack of understanding for the type of competence needed in the group. Although they all talked warmly about the representative from TA, they felt that he did not hold the right competence. The group expressed that they were held back by the lack of competence, and that TA was spending an unnecessary amount of time to respond to their requests.

In March a new representative from TA with extensive experience within inspection activities joined the group as an addition to the first member. This new member is an acquaintance of the two most experienced representatives in the group from LIA and TCO due to prior contact between the three agencies. All of the group members seem very satisfied with his accession. Nevertheless, experience is still viewed as a scarcity in the group, and the lack of knowledge among other members has been the cause of some frustration. The following sentence describes the general opinion in the group:

“We are many new people who are fumbling a bit. So we are actually many who's in training in the project” (Interviewee F).

The more experienced members have been subject to a great strain. Based on this, yet another member entered the group during our second round of data collection in April. The new member from TCO was placed in the group to relieve the first member from some of the pressure that had built up during the first few months. Now, the project team seems quite satisfied with the composition of competence that exists in the group, although many still express a wish for more people as well as a person with language competence. A difference from the first round of interviews is that many do not utter the same wish for expanding the group with other agencies. It seems like the focus has shifted to enhancing the collaboration that already exists.

Project goals

The project goals are very unclear to the group in February. When asked, the group members differ in their answers with the only denominator being them fighting and preventing social dumping and tax evasion. A quotation from one of them underpins the fact that they have not yet decided on common goals. When we specifically asked about project group's goals the answer we got was

“our goals, well my goals are...” (Interviewee H).

The project plan was not yet developed, and the project group knew very little of it other than that the project leader was working on it. Yet, some members from LIA said that they felt that the project's goals were coinciding with the organizational goals. Others however, expressed uncertainty about priorities between their organizational goals and the project goals.

In April, the project plan was presented to the steering group by the project leader, though not accepted without some changes. The project leader says that it is hard to consider and include the wishes of all the agencies involved:

"It's challenging for me to reach the goals on fighting labor market crime, uhm which we have now called the project, while following up on the expectations on targets and quantitative goals from each agency" (Project leader).

He says that the organizations are on the same page when it comes to overarching goals, but that it is hard to satisfy everyone on a more operative level.

In April, the group seemed more united regarding the project group's goals, and the general answers are more in sync during these interviews than during the ones in February. Some developments of goals are mentioned. All members agree on the fact that the goals are narrowed down and more concrete, although it is still not completely clear what all the targets are. A visible change is that the group members now are divided into focus areas. In addition, several group members mention that the information part of the mandate has almost vanished. The group members seem generally positive to these changes.

Autonomy

The degree of project autonomy is hard to grasp and appear somewhat unclear to the group as there seems to be confusion about the project's place in the parent organizations. Within certain frames given by the project mandate, the project leader has been given freedom to develop a project plan. He also states that he has been given a lot of freedom in his day-to-day work. The project leader reports results to, and receives feedback from the steering group in steering group meetings. All the group members from LIA report inspections electronically to their Inspection Manager, as they did before the project, as well as reporting to the project leader. The same solution applies to the representatives from TCO; they report both to their line manager in TCO as well as to the project leader. This double reporting solution is seen as unnecessary and superfluous to the project members. They express a stronger loyalty to their organization, and have therefore executed the project reporting somewhat halfway.

“Well, the project leader tries to gather us all on a narrow path, but it is not always easy because the Labor Inspection Authority has their kind of reporting lines and the Tax Administration has theirs and the Tax Collection office has theirs, not that I know what they are doing. But we have a computer where we register, or have been told to register, all inspections we conduct” (Interviewee F).

The quotation gives a descriptive image of the situation in February. The organizations demand individual reporting as well as group reporting, thus requiring the project members to spend unnecessary time, according to their answers, on recording their inspections. However, when the group members do not report to the project it affects the project leader and the group member from TA. He explains that he needs information from the group to be able to do his job as a contact point and pass on the information to the right people in TA.

In our first round of interviews, the different expectations from the different agencies was seen as an obstacle to collaboration, and the members found it easier to continue to work as they had always done. It was also evident that the group members still felt a stronger connection to their usual work tasks than the project group tasks. When being asked questions about both the organization and the project group the representatives from LIA appeared to find it hard to see the project group as a separate entity. The group member from TA was the only one that did not work as usual, as he had been freed completely from his previous tasks. As presented in a previous section (chap. 5.2.1), there was confusion in the beginning of the project about whether the project leader should also function as a personnel manager for the group members. In April this confusion had disappeared and it was clear that the personnel management lies with the parent organization.

When we asked the project group members about their link to the organization in April, nearly all stated that the link is important to their everyday tasks, even though many say that they rarely cooperate with employees outside the group. One member from LIA, however, says that he regularly consults with other co-workers, including lawyers in LIA others than the one who is appointed to the group. The representatives from LIA and TCO seem more attached to their base organization than those of TA. Both representatives from TA are on project specific contracts, which state that their work location during the project is at the LIA offices. Additionally, they are not subject to certain targets set by TA. The first representative from TCO, on the other hand, has kept her office at TCO in order to have peace and quiet

while writing her toughest reports. One group member has expressed some frustration about this, as the member from TCO is not as available as he would have wished her to be.

Targets

Project group targets and organizational targets are hot topics in this project and builds on the preceding discussion regarding autonomy. All of the representatives from LIA and TCO face the exact same expectations and targets from their organizations as they would have faced without the project. This means that a certain number of inspections and reports have to be conducted and written per anno. It has been clearly expressed in the interviews that this causes much tension and stress for team members from LIA and TCO, as the project demands more time and meeting activities than what they are used to, and what they expected. The high meeting activity in the project is by one member seen as restrictive to reach the targets given by the organization. Some of the LIA representatives see this the other way around. They say that the increased expectations regarding cases, both on quantity and quality, are restricting the group from developing and putting an immense pressure on the group members. Either way, the group members from LIA and TCO feel pressured on time and tasks. The situation is explained by a representative from LIA:

“I don’t think the Labor Inspection Authority considered that the project members also have to contribute to the project and hopefully develop it. We haven’t gotten any time set aside for that. It is something that I have to do in-between everything else I’m supposed to do” (Interviewee E).

Group members from LIA find it hard to combine the achievement of organizational targets with participation in the group. One group member expressed a wish for a lower number of required inspections so that the group can work more systematically and create an actual project. By the time of our second round of interviews, this issue had been seen and dealt with by the senior management in LIA. Team members from LIA have now been given a lower target number on expected inspections and thus more time for meetings in the project group. Although the response from the management is regarded positively by the inspectors, they clearly state that it is far from enough and that they are still under excessive time pressure.

The representative from TCO has freedom under responsibility, as she puts it. However, she said in February that she was under pressure and would probably need help with her toughest reports in the future. She says that she needs peace and quiet to finish the reports and has therefore kept her office at TCO. This makes her somewhat unavailable to the rest of the team

situated at the LIA office. The representatives from TA are not subject to a particular set of goals decided by their organization. In fact, the first representative from TA conducts task in the group that are not at all related to his previous work in TA.

Equality

When we asked about equality in February some members expressed that they were worried that the project leader and the representative from TA were somewhat overrun by the other members due to experience and strong personalities. From our own observations of a meeting we feel that this has some truth to it. In comparison with the other members, TA's representative in the group acted quite passively. When he made suggestions they were not truly considered by the other members. The project leader struggled with obtaining attention from the group members, and to keep their concentration on his subject of choice. Based on interviews and our observation it seemed like the members from LIA and the member from TCO were more connected to each other. During the interviews, one representative from LIA consistently calls other LIA workers and the representative from TCO by name, while saying "the project leader" and "the guy from TA" when referring to the other two members.

Our findings from the second round of interviews regarding equality and dominance are also quite interesting. We asked if the group members saw the partners involved in the collaboration as equals and if they saw the group members as equals. Both the group members from TA and TCO are quite convinced that they are all equals in the project, both in the group and on a higher level. The representatives from LIA however feel that they are dominant on both levels. Their dominance on the group level is explained through the strong personalities they exhibit and their majority in number of participants. On a higher level, they think that their dominance stems from LIA's control regarding resources, locality, and initiative.

The project leader feels that there has been some insecurities and unease among group members. When we asked about inclusion and a feeling of security, all group members stated that they feel included themselves and that they pronounce their opinions in any case during meetings. The project leader however believes that there might be some members of the group that are not as comfortable as others with declaring their beliefs regarding an issue. He feels that the representatives from TA might not voice their opinions as often as they would like.

Group dynamics and cohesion

In February the group dynamic was perceived quite similarly by the group members. Everybody had a positive attitude towards the project and felt that they communicated well within the group. The group structure was perceived as flat.

A recurring theme during the first round of interviews was the fact that the project members did not feel as being part of a group. It was obvious that the members worked quite separately and independently. They felt that they needed more time to settle the project and decide upon roles and structure. One of the members from LIA said that she did not feel like she was part of the group, and that she was waiting for someone to include her in the project:

“You’re not 100 % part of the group. At least not me. The others may be more part of the project than I am. I’m kind of just working on my own little project, which I made myself” (Interviewee F).

At this point in time, the project leader found the group demotivated and uncommitted to the project. In retrospect, he understands that they were probably just confused and poorly prepared for the project.

One of the main problems in February was still present a few months later. Although most of the group members feel that they are more unified and on the same page as a group, there is still a long way to go for the group to become fully cohesive. Particularly the latest addition to the group, from TA, seeks a feeling of common identity. He says that he rarely sees some of the group members and that it is delaying his work. Also, he finds it strange that the representative from TCO sits at her old office, as his contract clearly states that the LIA office is the work location during the project.

We made an interesting observation while visiting the office in April. The new member from TA was unsure about who was asked for when somebody asked whether he had seen another member of the group, using the person’s first name. This happened one month after he joined the project. We found this peculiar, as they then had been in the same group for quite some time. This observation enhanced our impression of the group not spending much time together as a team. When we asked group members about the development of joint work task methods we got widely differing answers, everything from getting better and more efficient to not being present at all.

Some practical matters are also affecting the group. Mentioned a number of times during the interviews is the office situation. Due to the increase in group members, they are now scattered around LIA's offices. According to both group members and the project leader, this is inhibiting to the group collaboration. Further, the project leader has a strong wish for a private office in order for him to have more talks with group members without making it too formal by booking a meeting room. The new representative from TA complains about the condition of the computers and the lack of equipment, and how this is tiring in his day-to-day tasks.

In our second round of data collection the group members seem to have reflected a bit about the first period and conclude that they got off to a bad start. There was a lot of frustration linked to time pressure, a new project leader and the composition of competence together with a slow response from TA. The project leader in particular emphasize that the group has had its ups and downs. However, it seems like the project group is at a better place in April. Although the group members see that there is still potential for improvement, they express that the structure is enhanced and that work tasks are better allocated and settled. The project leader still calls the structure a bit messy, and says that routines are not yet in place.

The group ambience is pronounced as good also during the second round of data collection, but several group members admit that they at times have been demotivated due to a constant pressure on time and performance.

"It almost went as far as many of us almost withdrawing from the project because we haven't had capacity. The pressure was so immense after a while that we had to talk to the management. Luckily they understood us" (Interviewee F).

Team members say that there is still too much meetings, but most group members have an understanding for the need of the meetings. They feel that the need for group development was not taken into account by the management before the project started.

5.2.3 Role Clarity

When we asked the group members about roles and responsibilities in the group in February, it quickly became clear that this was unresolved. Some respondents were uncertain about their roles, while some merely concluded that they were a representative for their organization. Two members from LIA said

"I don't think I have a different role than I had before the project" (Interviewee I).

and

“We are now trying to sort out which role each member should have, and this is quite new so you may say that we are somewhat drifting” (Interviewee F).

The uncertainty was unmistakably reflected in the response from the lot. Another member from the LIA wished for more time to sort out questions like this. The representative from TCO was clear about her being TCO’s representative, and did not see the need of having a certain role in the group other than that. Several group members also expressed their lack of knowledge, and somewhat lack of interest, regarding the role and tasks of the representative from TA.

Another recurring theme when we talked about this was the tendency to work separately and not act like one group.

“We have to figure out a way to unify the group so that we don’t sit on our own little island...” (Interviewee J).

Each member described that they worked on their own tasks separated from the group, due to uncertainty about the group direction, their role in the project, and to some extent the role of others. Various group members expressed confusion about the role of the project leader and whether he was supposed to solely report to senior management or if he was supposed to delegate tasks as well. The interviewees made it clear to us that the role uncertainty among group members caused frustration in the group.

During our second round of interviews the role situation appeared to have improved somewhat. The role of the project leader seems to have become clearer to everyone in the group in April. They seem positive towards him making more decisions and taking more control of the group. There were still differing answers when we asked about their own and the others’ role in the group, but the general idea was that it was clearer. Roles are not entirely sorted out but some improvement has happened. One member voices that the reaction time in the group still is too slow due to somewhat unclear roles. He feels that if everyone were surer about their own role and their colleagues’ roles, everything would move quicker from they receive a tip until they are out doing the needed controls. A few group members have expressed that a main problem with the reaction time is cumbersome procedures in TA, but that this is outside the control of TA’s representatives in the group. It is enhanced that the

reaction time has been improved since February, but nevertheless it causes some frustration that cases are closed due to a too slow response.

Some roles are sorted out in the group. Three team members appear to feel certain about their roles; the two experienced members describe themselves as consultants for the others while the first member from TA describes himself as an information link between TA and the group. The newer member from TA, on the other hand, is uncertain about roles and says that it has not been discussed in the group. The less experienced members from LIA are mainly focused on their role as being a part of one of the focus groups that are allocated by the project leader. One interesting observation though, is the answer from the representative from TCO when we asked about the roles of the other members:

“Yes. I knew that already before I came here. I knew their mandate” (Project group member, TCO).

This makes us think that she might have a different view on group roles than what we had in mind when asking. It seems like she bases the other members' roles merely on work tasks, although she placed herself in the role of “the experienced one” when we asked about her role. She expresses that she knew everyone's roles and responsibilities from before the project, and that it is not very useful for her to participate in group meetings to settle issues related to this.

Rounding up chapter five, we see many interesting issues in our collected data. In the following chapter we will discuss those issues we find most interesting and see if and how these relate to our model presented in chapter 2.4.

6.0 Discussion

In this chapter we will discuss what we consider the most central findings from chapter 5 in connection to the literature review and the model presented in chapter 2. The overall aim of the discussion is to answer our research question:

How do the identified factors in phase 0 and phase 1 influence the state of collaboration, and how are the factors in phase 1 influenced by the execution of the factors in phase 0?

As reflected in our model we propose that there are three factors in both phase 0 and phase 1 that have an influence, directly or indirectly, on the state of collaboration. We also suggest that there are relationships between the phases and their corresponding factors. To be more precise, we believe that phase 1 and the belonging factors are affected by the outcome of phase 0 and how well the factors in phase 0 are performed. Further, we believe that the execution of the factors in phase 0 is affected by the time spent in this phase. These relationships and the factors' influence on the state of collaboration will be the focus of chapter 6.

To aid us in answering the main research question we have three subordinate questions:

How does time spent in phase 0 influence the identified factors in phase 0?

How do the identified factors in phase 0 influence the identified factors in phase 1?

How do the identified factors in phase 1 influence the state of collaboration?

For pedagogical reasons we have decided to begin by discussing phase 1 together with the current state of collaboration and continue backwards to phase 0 and the time spent. We believe that this will make it easier for us to describe and for the reader to understand the proposed causalities between activities performed in phase 0 and issues that arise in phase 1.

To ease the reading we will throughout the discussion sum up the most important findings under each factor before moving on to the next. We will then conclude the chapter by systematically answering the sub-questions and thereby our research question based on the main takeaways from the chapter.

6.1 Phase 1

In this section we will discuss the state of collaboration and how it is affected by the three factors: Project Management, Teamwork, and Role Clarity. Based on our findings we have also chosen to include a new factor in our discussion that we did not have in our initial model:

Project Autonomy. This factor did not stand out in the three lines of literature, but in our case study we have found it to have a huge impact on the state of collaboration. Due to its importance we found it meaningful to include Project Autonomy as a separate factor.

We recognize a high interdependence between all of the factors, but see that Role Clarity is especially prominent. Although having distinct roles is important to the state of collaboration, we found the factor too narrow and embedded into the other activities of phase 1 for it to remain a separate factor. We thus decided to include the features of Role Clarity in Project Management and Teamwork. The reasons for proposing to include Project Autonomy and exclude Role Clarity from our model will be discussed more in chap. 6.1.3 and 6.1.4.

The aim of this first segment is to answer the sub-question: *How do the identified factors in phase 1 influence the state of collaboration?*

In answering this question we will focus on what we consider the most relevant issues from our data collection and discuss these in-depth.

6.1.1 Project Management

Related to this factor we want to discuss the role of the project leader, as we experience that this issue has had quite large influence on the state of the collaboration. We understand from the literature that it can be especially challenging to lead a project where multiple organizations are involved. From our point of view there is no doubt that the project leader in our case study has met some challenges.

A strong leadership and someone who drives the processes are vital ingredients in a successful collaboration according to IOR theory and multi-agency theory. Literature on teamwork states that when a team is put together for the first time, a directive style of leadership is necessary in the beginning to give the group direction. In this case the project leader has done the exact opposite by aiming for an open leadership style and a flat structure from the start. From our perspective the lack of a directive leadership has led to a less favorable collaboration situation.

Several group members give the impression that they would have wanted more direction in their work from the start, and we think this could have been provided by a stronger leader. The lack of direction has in part been a reason why the group, especially in the first months, worked very separately from each other and, in our view, with hardly any form of structure in the collaboration. It is hard to see that much had changed from how everyone worked before

the project. We believe that with a more directive project leader no one would have sought for the senior management to be more present.

The three reviewed lines of literature all point to the importance of a joint understanding of roles and responsibilities. In the first months of this collaboration the group members seemed very unsure of the leader's role in the project and did not know what his job was except from that of writing a project plan. The preparation of the project plan was also something the project group seemed to have little knowledge of and care very little about. This gave us the impression that several group members did not expect that the plan or the project leader would have much impact on their work routines. At this point in time, there seemed to be little understanding of the role and responsibilities of the project leader.

In our view it appears like some of the group members listen more to other group members than their actual leader. In project meetings we experience that the project leader struggles to get the group's attention. We believe this to be related to that the group members see him as inexperienced and therefore do not understand his contribution to the group. If he would have stood out as a clear directive leader this role confusion could have been avoided. Many of the group members have wished for a leader with more experience in the field of inspection, and we believe this may be a reason why the more experienced members of the group are somewhat viewed as leaders or at least consultants for the others. It is still apparent that the project leader is well liked, and the criticism from the group directed towards the leader is not at all based on a personality issue.

Some group members point to that they are a very hard group to control due to their strong personalities. In our view this impression of the group is to a high degree a result of the project leader allowing them to be "uncontrollable". By this we mean for example that group meetings involve too many interruptions, distractions, and discussing of several themes simultaneously across the table. We do agree that it is important to give the group members freedom to express themselves to nurture a good collaboration environment, but in our opinion there should be a balance between freedom and boundaries in order for a functional structure to develop.

At the point of our last data collection we see that many of these elements have improved, something which is recognized by all parties. The group members are happy with the project leader being more confident and settled in the situation and that he is making more decisions. We think the project leader have had some really good initiatives with arranging seminars

where the group members learn more about the roles and responsibilities of the other agencies, and meetings where they review cases to learn how they can work better together. These initiatives go hand in hand with multi-agency theory which highlights the importance of joint training.

However, there are still group members that seek more structure and common direction in the group. We experience that much of the project leader's time has been spent on developing the project plan and establishing a valuable network around the group, while he has spent little time on actually establishing a clear structure inside the group. The role of the project leader is described by group members as an administrative role rather than a leader role. Project theory states that as the group develops and works more efficiently, the leader can move from being directive to functioning more as a consultant. In our opinion the group is still at a stage where they need direction.

There is no doubt that the project leader has had a tough start, he was more or less thrown in at the deep end and told to start swimming. He did not receive any training and therefore knew very little about the involved organizations and their tasks. Although we experience that a more directive leadership style would have been more fitting in a new group like this one, we also understand how this style in the given situation would be extremely challenging to implement. He had to make decisions about things that he knew next to nothing about, and he has expressed that he did not feel competent enough to give much direction to the group members that all were more experienced. We also think that due to his inexperience the group members would have been resistive to his ideas if he had been too commanding from the start.

In sum, we experience that the project leader's lack of experience led him to creating a flat structure in the group. This has led to confusion about the project leader's role and a lack of structure and direction in the group. These are also problems the project leader has been aware of. His approach is, however, very understandable in the challenging situation he is in.

6.1.2 Teamwork

The identified factor called Teamwork includes a number of themes from our findings chapter. The two main issues that we would like to highlight in this section are competence and group cohesion. These two themes are the ones that we have found to be most prevalent in the multi-agency project group that we have studied.

Competence

During our first round of data collection it was quite clear that the group was dissatisfied with the composition of competence in the project group. The project leader and the TA representative were new and completely inexperienced in the field of work. Additionally, various other members of the group had very little experience within the subject of social dumping. A critical success factor for project success is in fact a well composed team with the right set of skills and qualifications. The importance of an appropriate selection of members is highlighted also in IOR literature. It is thus no wonder to us that the group expresses discontent with the situation. The lack of competence in the group is seen as inhibiting for their daily work, and may be part of the reason why the group struggles with cohesion.

The lack of experience and competence among members has during the first couple of months put a great strain on some of the group members. This problem has been reported to management and the steering group, which has brought two new members into the group from respectively TA and TCO. We see this as a positive initiative by the management, though somewhat late. According to theory on project group development, a new addition to the group is inhibiting group development as they will revert back to the first stage: Forming. This means that the group has to go through the same steps of deciding roles and responsibilities, and re-establish a sense of security in the group. It seems though, that little attention has been paid to the fact that a new member has entered the group with regards to group development. The new member from TA had been working as a part of the project for one month when we interviewed him in April. During the interview he expresses uncertainty regarding roles in the group and says that roles have not been discussed in the group. He also repeatedly articulates a need for more colocation of the group members. In his view, the group is dispersed, and he says that the unavailability of some members is hampering his work tasks.

A critical success factor for projects is a group consistent of sufficient and well allocated resources. During our second round of interviews, the project leader praises the composition of personalities and experience. He feels that it is a benefit to the group to have both experienced and inexperienced members from each agency. The project leader is also looking forward to utilize the different personalities in the group to facilitate innovation and streamline work tasks. Group composition is evidently far better in April than in February, but various group members still wish for more resources to the group. They see that the problem of labor market crime is extensive, and that they will need more people to be able to fight this problem. The project leader, on the other hand, wishes to develop the group as it is today and

rather include more agencies and group members after a while. Our take on the matter supports the view of the project leader. Based on our findings it seems best for the group to settle in and develop effective methods before they add more people to the group. Adding more people at this point in time would not contribute to group development, but rather give life to the expression: “too many cooks spoil the broth”.

Even with the abovementioned problems, the group has also seen positive development on some areas between our two data collections. The importance of joint training and development of joint competence is apparent in all three lines of literature. In the Forming stage, especially, group members have a need for training and education in order to raise the feeling of being competent and being a resource to the group. This view seems to be shared by the project leader as he has initiated joint training of the group to develop their knowledge of each other’s work tasks and mandate. He also says that he plans to send group members to other offices with more experience on social dumping and multi-agency collaboration, in order for the group to learn from their practices. This goes hand in hand with the multi-agency success factor stating that knowledge of collaboration partners are critical to project success.

Group cohesion

During our research it has become evident to us that one of the group’s main problems is cohesion. Although some group members have strong social- and task relations between them, these are almost non-existent between other members. The perceived unity is low within the group, and several feel that they need to be gathered more and become a team. We will use this section to present several prevalent issues that we think affects the group cohesion negatively. Among these issues are project goals, group roles and generally group dynamics.

Throughout all three lines of literature presented in chapter 2, the focus on project goals is repetitive. For a team to reach its highest level of effectiveness they have to firstly agree upon goals and roles in the group. Clear and realistic objectives and a strong and detailed plan are listed as critical success factors for a project. For the project group in hand though, the situation is somewhat a contrast to the literature. In February the group expresses high uncertainty regarding project goals. Although they all agree upon the main objective of fighting social dumping, their answers differ regarding more detailed goals. They have little relationship to the project plan, which at that time is being developed by the project leader. Theory says that precise and verifiable goals from the beginning make the execution of tasks easier. It is also established that concrete and attainable goals and objectives are of vital

importance. Following this we understand that there is no wonder that the project members feel dispersed and not part of a group. They are insecure about their work tasks and how to approach the project. A completed project plan with objectives and targets for the project would probably have secured that the project got off to a better start. We think that part of the problem for the group in February is that they really do not know what to do in the project and how to separate it from their original job.

In the beginning of April, more than three months after the project group started working together, the project plan was presented to the steering group for approval, though not accepted without changes. During our second round of interviews the group members seem more synoptic regarding group goals, although it is evident that on the target level insecurity is still high. Theory says that unsuccessful projects have a strong link to imprecise goals. Thus, connecting the dots between theory on the subject and the struggles of the project group, we see that the lack of clear goals has a negative effect on Teamwork and that the group needs a direction for them to progress in their team development.

Another important factor for a well-functioning and effective team is for it to have agreed upon group roles. Development and understanding of roles and responsibilities are highlighted in all three lines of literature. In February there are no clear roles established for neither the project members nor the project leader. While some say that this is something which is under discussion, others do not see the need for specific roles in the project group at all. Generally, group members are confused about the direction of the project and their role in it, and this leads to some frustration. At this point in time, it seems like the project group is subject to the cooperation problem explained in project theory. They do not know what to do, when to do it, nor how to do it. In April though, we see an improvement from the first round of interviews. Some members seem to have found their role and settled in it, while others still struggle to find theirs. This is not unusual for a project group, especially a diverse group like this. Theory says that a heterogeneous group has a tendency to bump into more obstacles on their way to becoming an effective team. The unclear roles and responsibilities seem to have had a negative effect on the state of collaboration and its development.

Above we have discussed task relations and social relations of the group. The remaining part of this section will discuss another side of group cohesion, namely: perceived unity and emotions in the group. In February the group exhibits little unity. Members from LIA and TCO basically structure their daily work tasks according to the way that they did before the

project. Although the group members report a positive attitude towards the project and say that the group communicates well, this is not evident when we ask other related questions. One member specifically says that she does not feel as being part of the group. She is situated in a different office than the project group and awaits being included by someone. Other members also describe the group as kind of scattered. The group appears to have a problem with unity.

IOR literature also mentions the importance of being familiar with the other project group members before joining the group. The influence that earlier acquaintances have on the group in question is prominent in February. The two experienced members from TCO and LIA know each other from before and cooperate well. The inexperienced members from LIA seek each other and the experienced member from LIA for guidance. These dynamics cause to some extent an exclusion of the project leader and the TA representative. We noticed during observations, that the project leader and the TA representative were less active in the group meeting than the other members. Additionally, some members demonstrated a lack of respect for the project leader as they changed subject and whispered during other conversations. We see a clear effect of earlier acquaintances on the team feeling of the group.

In April, most group members seem to feel more included in the group, except from the new member from TA. He feels that one of the main problems is that everyone is not sitting together in one office. According to theory, daily meetings and time together is important for a project group to be successful. It also has a great positive effect if the group sits together and interacts on a daily basis. Thus, theory underpins the concern voiced by the TA representative.

Clear communication and consensus are important factors in a project group. According to theory, effective communication is of vital importance for the group and its success. Regarding the group in question it is hard to judge whether communication is well handled or not. All group member state that communication within the group is good. Nevertheless, it seems as though there are some flaws in this statement when we are reviewing our data. The project leader, for example, admits during our second round of interviews that he found the group to be demotivated and uncommitted to the project in the very beginning. The group members were not at all unmotivated, but rather confused and unsure about what they were supposed to do as part of the project. This leads us to believe that the communication between the group members and the project leader was ineffective. Another example is the way in which project meetings are conducted. During observations we saw that there are constant

interruptions and changes of subject in meetings. This indicates poor communication and that the group members do not really listen to each other. The ineffective communication is also apparent in the fact that the project group members are uncertain about what the other group members are actually doing in the course of a day or a week. Effective, open and frequent communication is seen as an important success factor in IOR literature, while multi-agency literature highlights the importance of communication and information sharing. Our findings lead us to believe that ineffective communication within the group has hindered development of the team and negatively affected the state of collaboration.

In April, it seems as though group cohesion has improved somewhat. Some group members also seem to have gained some insight into how the group has done so far and on what points they should improve. They see a need for improvement regarding structure, work task allocation and roles. In spite of this, the group seems to have remained quite positive so far. Theory says that a positive and supportive working relationship with room for individual characteristics is highly important for a project group. Based on interviews and our observations of group member interactions in the hallways or in the office, we believe that the group satisfies these requirements to the fullest. IOR theory highlights the importance of a shared vision. This is something that is evident in the group; they are all concerned with fighting labor market crime, some more passionately than others. It seems like the group holds mutual respect and trust towards each other, which is positively affecting the state of collaboration.

Summing up Teamwork, we see that the group has struggled with especially competence and cohesion. We find that the group has improved on several areas between February and April, but that they still have a long way to go in order to have a fully developed team with high effectiveness. The lack of competence and experience has affected the state of collaboration in a negative matter, but we think that the additional members and the initiatives taken by the project leader regarding training will contribute positively. A lack of unity and effective communication has also hindered group development, but a good group spirit has been positive for the collaboration.

6.1.3 Role Clarity

In our model presented in chapter 2 we propose Role Clarity as a factor in phase 1. The model is a synthesis of three lines of literature, from which we found Role Clarity to be of major importance to the success of a multi-agency collaboration. However, during our research it has become clear to us that Role Clarity is strongly embedded in the two other factors of

phase 1: Teamwork and Project Management. Role confusion is a recurring subject in discussions about the project leader and the group. We therefore do not see a clear causal relationship between the activities in phase 0 and Role Clarity, but rather an indirect link through the two other factors in phase 1. For this reason we have concluded that Role Clarity is too narrow and at the same time too embedded in Project Management and Teamwork for it to hold its position as a separate factor.

6.1.4 Project Autonomy

As revealed in the introduction to phase 1 we want to include Project Autonomy as a factor in our model. Autonomy is not very evident in the three lines of literature that we have reviewed, but project theory states that Project Autonomy is positively correlated to project success. Explained briefly, we think of Project Autonomy as how the project is set up in relation to the parent organizations and the project's freedom to make decisions (see chap. 2.1.1 for a more thorough definition). We find this factor especially interesting due to different approaches to autonomy by the three parent organizations. Additionally, we see the project leader's wish for more autonomy as a sign of its importance. Related to this factor there are especially two issues we wish to discuss that we have found to have had a detrimental effect on the collaboration environment: Involvement, thereunder organizational targets, and reporting lines.

The first, and in our opinion, most interesting issue related to Project Autonomy is the level of the parent organization's involvement or interference in the project. According to theory, a high level of autonomy is beneficial for the group because it enables the team to keep focus on only project tasks. It is also seen as beneficial to have only one leader to relate to. We clearly see different approaches chosen by the three agencies. The two representatives from TA both have new specified contracts for the project and are freed from individual targets decided by their organization. The steering group member from TA named the project leader in charge of the representatives' work in the project group. Based on this we see a high level Project Autonomy in relation to TA.

The representative from TCO has the same work tasks and organizational targets as she had before the project. Her targets involved writing a given number of reports. We perceive that neither the steering group member nor the project group member from TCO view the project as a separate unit that needs to be developed through meetings and collaboration activities. They see the project merely as business as usual with a co-location of representatives. We believe that this view makes it easier for the representative from TCO to spend much time at

her old office, something that we experience as a hindrance to the collaboration. Additionally, we believe that the pressure stemming from having to fulfill the demands from TCO makes it easier to justify pulling away from the group and the group development.

The biggest issue related to autonomy seems to lay with LIA. When starting the project, each representative from LIA held the same individual targets they had prior to the project. Some group members were even given a higher target than they had from before. A few months into the project their target numbers got reduced after meeting with their leaders in LIA. The reduction was done in order to free time for the group members to participate in meetings and group development. Prior to this reduction, the time-demanding project development together with high organizational targets actually led representatives to consider pulling completely out of the project. The high targets illustrate a close link between the group members and LIA as well as a low degree of autonomy. It seems like LIA is trying to keep the project and its members very close to their organization. We believe that this limitation of the project's autonomy has a detrimental effect on group development because the representatives are more focused on organizational targets set by LIA than on being a part of the project and developing as a group. Further, the fact that the three organizations have a different approach to Project Autonomy seems to divide the group members into subgroups of organizational belongingness and has a negative effect on the unity of the group.

A low level of autonomy is also indicated by the fact that the LIA group members struggle to see the project as something different from LIA and therefore seem confused when we ask about the project's relation to LIA. They experience that the project *is* LIA. In continuation, the group members from LIA visibly seem to identify more with being an LIA employee than being a project group member, which is true also for the member from TCO. We see this as a result of not having enough time to bond with the group due to time pressure and the fact that some of them do not see the importance of developing the collaboration. As an example, although LIA hired a lawyer to be especially available for the group, one group member says that he often rather talks to other LIA lawyers that he is used to work with.

We experience that the two representatives from TA are those who have time for group development. If all of the project members were dedicated completely to the project work, we think that the state of collaboration would be at a more advanced level today. The group member's would then have been better prepared and concerned with working as a team and developing superior methods.

Theory state that the dangers of a too autonomous project can be that the project develop goals that do not harmonize with the organization's goals. The organizations may feel the need to keep control of the project, and this leads to less autonomy. The project leader expresses that the parent organization's goals and demands sometimes stand in the way of what is best for the project. This does not only relate to the project members' targets and contracts discussed above, but also to how the project leader must balance the benefits to each agency. Although the overall goals seem to be aligned, all of the agencies have different objectives, and we believe it is natural that there are somewhat differing views on which measures and activities that are the most beneficial. This however, hinders the project leader in doing what he finds most appropriate as he at all times must think of who it is that will gain the most from different measures.

The second big issue related to Project Autonomy is the reporting lines. Project theory says that communication flows must be clarified between the Principal and the Agent. In our case study, the project leader is supposed to report to the steering group on a regular basis, which is a recommended solution in the literature. There also seems be some uncertainty regarding exactly how often "on a regular basis" is. We see that a problem arises when the project leader tries to get information from the group members to make his reports accurate and relevant. One would not expect that it would be very difficult to make a project group follow instructions on how to report to their project leader, but in this case it is. After a somewhat failed whiteboard solution, the current solution is a computer in the project office that is set up solely for the group members to report where they have conducted inspections and information about findings. We have understood that this reporting method is somewhat ineffective. Group members say that they forget about it or that they do not have the time to fill in the information that the project leader asks for. It is obviously very frustrating for the project leader that the group members do not always report to him. The first TA representative is also dependent on the information the group members fill in about their control activities. He says that he needs the information in order to do his job, and expresses frustration about the lack of commitment to the project group reporting system. We think that this may cause him to feel excluded from the group and also question if he contributes sufficiently to the group work. This again may reinforce the others' impression of that the TA representative has little to supplement to the group when it comes to fighting labor market crime.

We think that the problem and the solution lie in the double reporting system that we see in this project. All of the group members have to report in their organization's own systems in addition to having to report to the project leader. We find this double work very unnecessary and see that it causes group members to forget and overlook their responsibility of reporting to the project. This double reporting solution also makes it harder for the project leader to control the group, an issue discussed in the Project Management section. If the group was truly autonomous the members would only report to the project leader who in turn would report to the respective organizations. We do however understand that this solution would be somewhat extreme, and we see the need for coordinating the group with the organizations to avoid overlapping inspections and controls. Nevertheless, a solution where the group members only report one place would save both time and frustration. Based on our findings discussed here and earlier it seems that the group members prioritize their parent organization over the project.

The double reporting system has been an issue related especially to LIA, but also TCO. The first representative from TA on the other hand had a problem of not being sure who to report to in his organization, something which was recognized by the steering group member from TA after a while. It was especially challenging for the first representative who did something completely new compared to his old job at TA. The newest representative from TA has worked with control activities before and the connection to his old department is therefore more natural. We now see that this issue regarding TA has improved vastly. However, we do agree with the steering group member from TA when he says that a longer planning phase could have prevented these reporting insecurities from the start.

To sum up Project Autonomy, we see problems that clearly affect the state of collaboration. Too little time to take part in project development and trouble regarding two different reporting lines have undoubtedly hindered group development. Further, we experience that the group members from LIA and TCO are more occupied with fulfilling the goals of their organizations than improving the project work.

6.2 Phase 0

Based on our discussion of phase 1 we will in the following section try to draw links between the activities that affect the state of collaboration in phase 1 and the three factors in phase 0: Common Goals, Shared Understandings, and Project Design. We will continue to focus our attention on the most prevalent issues from our data collection. The aim of this section is to

answer the following sub-question: *How do the identified factors in phase 0 influence the identified factors in phase 1?*

Towards the end of this section we will turn to discuss how the time spent in phase 0 has affected the outcome of phase 0 and thereby aim to answer the last sub-question: *How does time spent in phase 0 influence the identified factors in phase 0?*

6.2.1 Common Goals

Agreeing on common goals and objectives is one of the most prevailing success factors in all the three lines of literature presented in chapter 2. Common aims serve as a foundation for developing plans for the collaboration. We see that the three agencies in our case had a focus on common goals; however, as many other things in phase 0, the process of deliberation went very fast.

When talking about project goals with the steering group members it becomes evident that LIA has been in charge of this subject. LIA developed a set of goals that the two other agencies later agreed to after having edited in some minor suggestions. Our perception is that this approach is not completely optimal as it may have caused LIA's point of view to be favored. We have understood from multi-agency theory that the goals of public organizations often are complex and that it therefore can be a challenge to agree on common goals. A process where everyone contributed equally to the mandate could have ensured that the agencies were more equal and that the project goals were aligned with the goals of all of the agencies.

One of the things that were added to LIA's original mandate suggestion was an information perspective. TA said that it should be part of the goals to do information activities in order to prevent labor market crime, rather than solely focusing on catching those that are already breaking the law. This was, together with other smaller suggestions made by TCO and TA, included in the mandate goals. However, we see that some steering group members are very focused on the control perspective and do not recognize the information perspective as a part of the goals. This may be the reason why some group members, colored by the view of the steering group members, expected that every single project group member would have control experience. The mandate has now been changed to not include the information perspective. When TA clearly stated that the information activity was a prerequisite for them joining the collaboration, it seems a bit odd that this has become the result. We believe this to be a sign of a lack of common goals and understanding each other's wishes. It seems like the information

perspective was added to get TA onboard, and we would not be surprised if TA now feels somewhat overlooked. From our discussion we see that a lack of common goals caused a competence problem for the group. This problem was discussed in relation to Teamwork. Based on this we can draw a link between Common Goals and Teamwork.

Although in some ways it is very positive that the goal making process seems to have been streamlined and without any big discussions, it also has a negative side. In our opinion we think that the agencies rushed a little through this process and failed to take the time to discuss the goals in-depth. Project theory says that unsuccessful projects often are linked to imprecise goals for the projects. In phase 1 the project leader says that the agencies generally agree on the overall goals, but not necessarily on targets. This is also highly interdependent with a partial lack of understandings for each other's view point, a subject that will be discussed further in the following section.

In sum, we experience that although the steering group members at first sight seem to have agreed on common goals, there are disagreements especially when it comes to the lower level goals. The fact that the steering group members are not fully aligned has rubbed off on the project group members and caused them to enter phase 1 with differing expectations.

6.2.2 Shared Understandings

The importance of having a shared vision and understanding of the collaboration is mentioned several places in our three reviewed lines of literature. Project theory points to effective communication as essential for creating shared understandings; the receiver must understand correctly what the sender wants to convey. IOR theory states that a lack of shared understanding of the involved stakeholders and the issue that brings them together will thwart sequential stages of the collaboration.

When it comes to a shared understanding of the issue, this has in part been quite good. All of the parties understand that labor market crime is an important problem, and everyone sees the value of collaborating in order to fight the problem. We do however recognize that the agencies have had different approaches to the project. This has affected the design of the project as well as phase 1. As an example, we see in phase 1 that representatives from TA find it frustrating how other members of the group sometimes work at their old office when their own contracts say that the project office is the work place. We trace this back to differing understandings of the project in the parent organizations in phase 0 which has led to different expectations among the group members. While TA views the project as something secondary

and different to their usual business, TCO sits on the opposite side calling the project “business as usual”.

As discussed previously, the three parties seem to agree on the overall goals. However, it seems as something is wrong regarding one thing: the role of information activity in the project. While the steering group member from TA stated that information activity is vital for TA’s willingness to participate in the project, some representatives from the other agencies seemed to be unaware of the information perspective’s place in the project. They expressed that control activities was the main or only focus. When TA placed a representative without control experience in the group, other steering group members did not understand why he was chosen. LIA and TCO say that it was clearly stated that the project required members with control experience, while TA has a completely different perception. TA believed that the right choice would be an employee that could work as a contact point between the project and the organization. Here we see little trace of effective communication and little understanding of other stakeholders’ views and needs. This has a clear link to phase 1 in relation to Teamwork and competence. We saw that there was much frustration tied to the competence of the first representative from TA. The group members did not understand why he did not have any control experience. With the direction that the project has taken, the lack of control experience has slowed the execution of work tasks. In addition, the frustration linked to the missing competence also hindered the progress of team development.

We view the atmosphere in the steering group as very positive and nicely balanced between formality and informality. IOR theory says that informal bonds can turn out to be vital for the continuation of a collaboration. However, a good point is made in the multi-agency literature when saying that being too positive can become an issue. Problem areas may get swiped under the carpet to avoid arguments, but delaying a problem will seldom make it disappear. We suspect that this may be some of the explanation to why TA’s need for including the information perspective was not discussed in detail. LIA wanted everyone to get on board and might therefore have accepted every suggestion regardless of whether it was in line with the actual plan.

A lack of common history of collaborating is brought up in the three lines of theory as a hinder for reaching shared understandings. The three agencies have collaborated before and therefore have some knowledge of each other. We see that this may have been beneficial because they partly know what to expect, and we do see that there are no huge disagreements.

However, we suspect that because they thought that they knew each other's viewpoints, several steering group members did not see the need for spending much time discussing everything.

Summing up, we think that if they had spent more time understanding each other's plans and views it would have led to less frustration and misunderstandings between both steering group members and group members in phase 1. We perceive that many of the steering group members did not see the need for much discussion as they believed, or hoped, that everyone was on the same page.

6.2.3 Project Design

Project Design in phase 0 is the factor that we believe to have the most direct links to problem areas in phase 1. Project Design has affected the role of the project leader, project autonomy, and problems concerning competence and cohesion in the group.

According to project theory, poor and missing information from the parent organizations can be a considerable element of uncertainty and complexity in the group. We experience that a lack of information and training is one of the key problem areas that has held up the project group. In phase 1, we saw that the project leader's inexperience with the organizations and the work tasks have affected both his behavior and the group's behavior. This is supported by project theory that says that a suitable project leader should understand the group's work. With some training and more information before phase 1, the project leader could have been more directive and confident from the start. The group would then have seen him more as a clear leader and it could have prevented much uncertainty about roles, direction and structure in the group. Project theory also states that the project plan should be developed during the Planning phase, and that this process should be led by the project leader. The project plan in our case study was developed during the Execution phase. This has made the project leader less prepared for leading the group, and the development of the plan has taken a lot of his valuable time.

We also see that the group members could have benefited from more information about the project before the start date. A finished project plan could have been of great use. Additionally, as multi-agency theory suggests, joint training and information could be beneficial. Because the parent organizations did not give their representatives the same information, the members joined the group with different expectations. Giving the same information would have to be grounded in a shared understanding, which we have found to be

somewhat lacking. As we have seen examples of, there are different views of the project among the group members which can cause uncertainty and misunderstandings. Some group members view it as important to sit together and develop work methods while others just want to continue doing things as they have always done it. We believe that joint training and information in phase 0 would have reduced role confusion and improved the structure and sense of cohesion in phase 1. We see this as a link between Project Design, and Teamwork and Project Management.

Selection of the right group members is another vital ingredient in the Project Design, found in both IOR and project theory. This has been a recurring issue in our case study as many did not understand why TA placed a person without control experience in the group. This has greatly affected the teamwork in the first months of phase 1. It is not accurate to say that the representative was a wrong choice; from TA's viewpoint it was a good choice at the time. TA saw their representative as a contact point between the group and the many resources in TA, while LIA and TCO wanted only operative resources in the group. The problem is again that the agencies had different interpretations of the project direction and group needs. Hence, we see that this problem is an antecedent of weak shared understandings and incomplete discussions about the goals of the project.

The varying experience among the other members has also been mentioned as an issue, and we have seen that this has affected the teamwork. We know that there are not necessarily many employees to choose from that have experience with the subject in the involved agencies, and that a different selection therefore would have been hard to bring about. However, we do believe that if the members were relieved from other work tasks, it would be easier to accept having to educate coworkers and easier taking time to be educated. Moreover, there was no discussion related to the social aspect of the group, and the members' social and work style compatibility. We do however see that this has worked out quite well with a good spirit among the members. If this is due to luck or if the social aspect rarely turn out to be a problem is hard for us to assess.

As discussed previously, one of the biggest issues in the project is that most group members are not relieved from the parent organization's expectations. This was recognized by the managers in LIA some months into phase 1, but clearly had time to hamper with the state of collaboration. We understand from project and team theory that a group needs a lot of time together to reach the stage of working effectively together. In our opinion, the need for group

development has been clearly underestimated. It was not planned to set aside any time for group development. This has clear consequences for the state of collaboration in phase 1 that are elaborated in the section discussing Project Autonomy. In short, all of the members from TCO and LIA experience an immense time pressure. From this we see that Project Design in phase 0 is strongly related to the degree of Project Autonomy experienced in phase 1.

Another issue discussed in relation to Project Autonomy was a double reporting problem. This also seems to be a result of a less favorable project design. Project theory states that communication flows and decision making authority should be clarified between the group and the parent organizations. Although they seem to be somewhat clear in the cases of LIA and TCO, we view the design as poor because the members have to report everything twice. When the group members already experience time pressure, it is especially troubling to get them to do something twice. For TA, the uncertainty related to the reporting lines has been solved and for now TA seems to have the best solution. However, with more planning in phase 0 this problem could have been avoided from the start.

The reporting and target problem, both related to autonomy, seem to be mainly caused by a “business as usual” approach from LIA and TCO. There appears to be a lack of acknowledgement of that for the collaboration to reach synthesis, i.e. create something new and better, the group needs to be given room to develop.

To sum up, we see that poor project design have had a detrimental effect on factors in phase 1 that subsequently affect the state of collaboration. Lack of training for the project leader, an unfinished project plan, and unchanged organizational targets for the group members are some of the biggest issues that stem from bad project design. An improved project design would have helped both the project leader in his role of steering the group and the group members in how to better work and interact as a group.

6.2.4 Time spent

Empirical evidence from project theory suggests that no effort should be spared during the initial phases of a project; Time is an important part of this. Further, the literature says that the foundation for a successful project is laid during the planning phase.

Looking at phase 0 there seem to be one common denominator: time, or more precisely too little time. We argue that phase 0 was rushed and that more time should have been set aside to plan the project. Lengthening this phase would have given the opportunity for everyone to explain and understand each other’s needs and demands and thereby create a more solid

common ground. With extra time, the goals could have been elaborated more and the organizations could have been closer to a shared understanding. We also see that little time has led to many short-cuts and postponements in the project design. The project plan should have been ready before phase 1, and the project group and the leader could have been more prepped. With more time, the need for relieving the group members from organizational targets could have been seen and handled already in phase 0.

Steering group members have admitted that the planning was a little swift, but say that it was because LIA first had received funds only for 2013 and therefore wanted to get started already in December 2013. As the project was postponed to January we find it peculiar that they did not postpone it more to ensure a better start. We experience that too much optimism and eagerness have come in the way of careful planning. Project theory states that things get more complex when more organizations are involved compared to when only one organization forms a project. Every organization brings their traditions, goals, and expectations to a project. From this we understand that because of the complexity of this project, it would require a lot of time for it to be planned optimally. Additionally, it is a common belief that organizations in the public sector often need more time because of a heavy bureaucracy. TA is repeatedly described as a typical public agency with its superior size and cumbersome processes. Regarding this project, we understand the view of those who praise the fact that the public sector could get something done so fast. Nevertheless, one must balance the benefits of a fast planning phase with the drawbacks of an execution phase where things are less efficient for an extended period of time

Summing up, we see that time spent has had a vast effect on the identified activities in phase 0. We believe that the project group would have benefited greatly from a better planned project. Though one might argue that it does not matter whether extra time is spent during planning or during execution, we see a greater benefit of clarifying as much as possible from the beginning. We think that the state of collaboration would have been at a more advanced level today, had for example the organizations spent January on planning and training rather than starting up a project without a clear plan.

6.3 Answering our research question

In this section we will answer our main research question. We will start by answering our three sub-questions based on the discussions above. The first sub-question to be addressed is *How do the identified factors in phase 1 influence the state of collaboration?*

We have seen that Project Management, and especially the project leader, has had a significant impact on the state of collaboration in the project we have studied. There is a lack of structure and common direction in the collaboration. We argue that this is strongly related to that the project leader is insecure; the insecurity is a result of a lack of knowledge of the involved organizations and their work tasks. The missing structure and common direction have had a detrimental effect on the state of collaboration.

Regarding Teamwork we see several issues that have affected the state of collaboration. The lack of competence in the group has been an area of dissatisfaction. First because of different views by the parent organizations for what competence the group needed, and second because there are many inexperienced group members. We argue that the issues concerning competence have slowed down the development of an effective collaboration. The second main problem area is related to group cohesion. We see that group members are insecure about project goals as well as everyone's role in the project. There is also an issue concerning the sense of unity and the feeling of being a group because members of the group continued to work as they did before the project. We believe that the problems to a large degree stem from a lack of prior joint information regarding the purpose and design of the project. Our proposal is that these problems have hindered the development of more efficient work methods. A positive group spirit has offset some of the negative impact that these issues have had on the state of collaboration.

In our initial model we have suggested Role Clarity as a factor. Although we still view Role Clarity as important, it is in our opinion strongly embedded in Project Management and Teamwork. In connection to these factors we have seen that insecurities about roles have had a detrimental effect on the state of collaboration. Unclear roles hinder efficiency because the group members do not know who to turn to in given situations, and they are insecure about their own responsibilities in the group.

In our study we have identified Project Autonomy as a new factor to be included in our model. This factor was not very prevalent in the reviewed literature, but has appeared to be very important in our case study. There are two important issues related to Project Autonomy that we see have affected the state of collaboration. Group members from two of the three organizations are not relieved from their old work tasks and experience an immense time pressure that impedes them from contributing to group development. It also causes confusion about whether to prioritize goals set by the project or goals set by their organization. The

double reporting solution has also caused problems. The group members prioritize reporting to their parent organization instead of the project. This hinders effectiveness because the project leader and one of the group members depend on information from the group to fulfill their tasks. We believe that the issues mentioned above have had a negative effect on the state of collaboration.

Summing up phase 1, we see that all the identified factors have an impact on the state of collaboration. We have also found a new factor that affect the state of collaboration. Problem areas related to our factors in phase 1 have delayed the effectiveness of the group work.

Next, we move backwards to phase 0 to answer the second sub-question: *How do the identified factors in phase 0 influence the identified factors in phase 1?*

Agreeing on Common Goals has appeared as a very streamlined process without any disagreements. The parties seem to agree on the goals of the project. However, we think they should have discussed the goals more in-depth because they seem to have neglected that they actually do disagree on some aspects of the goals. This has led to that the project leader finds it hard to make decisions that match everyone's needs. We also argue that if the goals were more elaborated the parties could have avoided misunderstandings regarding the competence needed, a problem we discussed related to Teamwork.

In this case study we see that the factor Shared Understandings is strongly linked to Common Goals. The main issue found in relation to Shared Understandings is that the involved parties have different understandings of the goals. As mentioned above, the misunderstandings about competence, which springs out of different perceptions of group needs, have negatively affected the team. There is also a lack of shared understandings about the project's place and importance in relation to the parent organizations. We argue that this have affected Teamwork because the group members joined the project with different expectations and therefore struggled to understand each other.

Project Design includes things like planning pre-project training and information, selection of members, clarifying reporting lines, and creating a project plan. We argue that neither the project leader nor the group members received adequate training and information beforehand, and this has affected Project Management and Teamwork in phase 1. The fact that the project plan had to be developed in phase 1 instead of in phase 0 also affected these two factors negatively. Developing the project plan took up a lot of time from the project leader that could

have been used to help develop the group. Further, the lack of a clear plan from the start enhanced problems of role and goal confusion. Selection of members and missing competence have been seen as sources of frustration that especially have affected Teamwork. Another clear problem area that antecedes from Project Design is a lack of Project Autonomy. This stems from poor planning of reporting lines and a lack of recognition for the need of relieving group members from the targets and work tasks they had before the project. This last feature also has affected the Teamwork, especially the feeling of unity, as group members are not fully invested in the project.

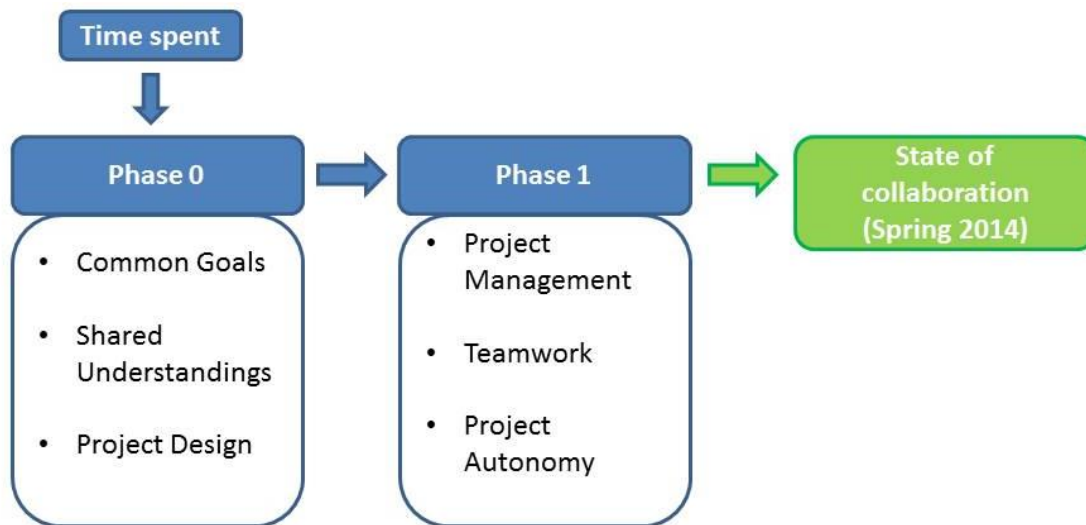
In sum, we see that the identified factors in phase 0 clearly have had an effect on phase 1. Inadequate execution of important activities in phase 0 has a negative effect on the identified factors in phase 1.

Lastly, we turn to the time spent planning the project and ask the third sub-question: *How does time spent in phase 0 influence the identified factors in phase 0?*

We see that too little time spent on the different activities in phase 0 is a common denominator. Common Goals could have been discussed in-depth and Shared Understandings would have been more developed if the parties spent more time in phase 0. Project Design would also clearly benefit from more time. We experience that many important aspects of the project were not given enough thought due to time pressure. Additionally, things that were thought about and discussed were not properly completed due to a lack of time. A better execution of Shared Understandings and Common Goals would also have aided the outcome of the Project Design.

Finally, after having answered our three sub-questions we see the contours of the answer to our main research question: *How do the identified factors in phase 0 and phase 1 influence the state of collaboration, and how are the factors in phase 1 influenced by the execution of the factors in phase 0?*

We conclude that our model was right in suggesting that Time Spent, Common Goals, Shared Understandings, Project Design, Project Management, Teamwork and Role Clarity influence the state of collaboration. However, we have excluded Role Clarity as a separate factor and rather see its features as a part of Project Management and Teamwork. Further, we have added Project Autonomy as a separate factor because we believe it has a strong influence on the state of collaboration in this project. See Figure 3 for illustration.

Figure 3: Revised model

The factors from phase 1, Project Management, Teamwork and Project Autonomy, are directly linked to the state of collaboration. We have experienced in this case study that problem areas related to these factors bear negative consequences for the state of collaboration. Common Goals, Shared Understandings and Project Design, the factors from phase 0, have been shown to influence the factors in phase 1. A poor execution of these factors has a negative effect on the factors in phase 1 and thereby on the state of collaboration. Lastly, we conclude that Time spent in phase 0 strongly influence the execution of the factors in that phase.

Adding to our answer to the main research question, we would like to inform about two interesting observations we have made. Through our data collection and analysis we have found that there are both interdependencies and possible causal relationships between the three factors within each of the phases. Firstly, we have found strong interdependencies between for example Common Goals and Shared Understandings. These interdependencies have at times made it hard for us to separate the factors properly, and show an excellent image of the complexities that are present in real life. We have seen interdependencies between almost all factors within a phase. Secondly, we observe that there may be some causal relationships between factors within the same phase. As an example, we see that Common Goals and Shared Understandings may have an effect on how well Project Design has turned out. These interdependencies and possible causal relationships are important to be aware of and understand when putting our model to use in a different context.

7.0 Conclusion

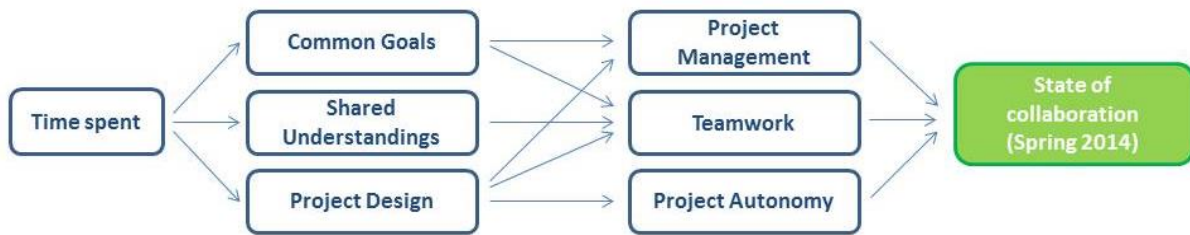
7.1 Mapping the road to successfully eluding organizational borders

This master thesis was set out to explore a multi-agency project and the problems that may arise with this new way of organizing the work in public agencies. The project challenged the established organizational life and structure in the involved agencies on two levels. First, the project based work form differs from the traditional line organization with accustomed responsibilities and task divisions. Second, collaboration across organizational borders that extends beyond the occasional phone call or e-mail represents a new direction for the involved agencies and their employees. Changing the work form inside one organization could be challenging enough in itself; adding more organizations with different purposes and structures increases the complexity considerably.

We have aimed to contribute to what appears to be a void in the literature regarding multi-agency projects. Building on existing literature on the different aspects of our case study, that is project theory, IOR theory and multi-agency theory, we created our research question and a model framework. Our ambition was to investigate which issues that are important to focus on in the beginning stages of a collaboration project. We proposed that a set of identified factors belonging to two different phases in a project's life cycle influenced the state of collaboration. Additionally, we projected that the factors in the first phase influenced the state of collaboration only indirectly through influencing the factors in the following phase.

The wording of our research question is: *How do the identified factors in phase 0 and phase 1 influence the state of collaboration, and how are the factors in phase 1 influenced by the execution of the factors in phase 0?*

We consider our factors to have had a big influence on the state of collaboration in the time that we have been able to study the project. Our findings give us reason to believe that the factors in phase 1 have a direct influence on the state of collaboration. The factors in phase 0 influence the factors in phase 1 and thereby indirectly the state of collaboration. We also observe in our findings that time spent in phase 0 seems to have an important effect on how the factors in phase 0 are performed. The arrows in Figure 4 show the influences in our model that we found most apparent; however, the model does not aim to reject other relationships.

Figure 4: Suggested influences

Our findings confirmed our beliefs about factors and relationships that affect the state of collaboration. Additionally, the findings pointed to Project Autonomy as an important factor that managers should pay attention to when designing a multi-agency project. Our experience from this case study shows that issues regarding Project Autonomy might harm the state of collaboration. It has therefore been included in our revised model (see chap. 6.3, Figure 3).

7.2 Theoretical implications

Our theoretical implications will be structured according to the three lines of literature that are presented in chapter 2. We will start by discussing the implications for multi-agency collaboration theory, as we find this to be of most importance. Thereafter, we will provide some suggestions for further research regarding IOR theory and project theory.

Our main contribution to the reviewed body of literature, and especially multi-agency collaboration, is our model. We are curious to know if other similar studies would find the same activities to be the most important ones for the state of the collaboration. Therefore, we encourage other researchers to base their data collection on our advised model. If the model turns out to apply in other similar settings and studies, it will increase the possibility of a generalization of our findings and accordingly our model. We would also propose tests of the causal relationships in the model to gain better insight in the level of importance of the different phases and activities and their effect on sequential stages. Our model is restricted to a study of only a few months. It was developed based on the assumption that phase 1 would only cover the initial months of the Execution phase. We therefore propose that a further study should be conducted to see if phase 1 covers the entire Execution phase, or if another phase should be added to the model in order to describe important factors in the months following phase 1.

Project Autonomy has proven to be a very important factor in our specific case study. However, despite the importance of the factor in our study, we have not been able to find much research and theory regarding this subject. Project theory has devoted some focus to

autonomy, but from our knowledge the factor is as good as non-existing in IOR theory and multi-agency theory. It would be highly interesting to see if Project Autonomy is as prevalent as a factor in other multi-agency projects as it was in our case study.

Multi-agency collaboration theory is to our knowledge quite limited and generally in great need of further research. The public sector is subject to some challenges that are not as common in the private sector. One of them is that the public sector is often more hierarchical and bureaucratic than the private sector, and therefore experiences slower reaction time and processes. In our case study we saw that the project group struggled with opposing statements and actions from the Directorate. Although the Directorate expresses support, its actions have, according to the project group, not followed through on promises and therefore caused delays and demotivation. Even though this kind of a problem might be present in the private sector, we see it as especially prevalent in the public sector and of particular importance for multi-agency collaboration theory. Further research should focus on how this special feature of the public sector affects a collaboration and how it may be dealt with in an effective manner.

Another feature of the public sector is the limited choice of collaboration partners. In the private sector there are often several organizations providing the same kinds of products and services. This makes it possible to choose the collaboration partner that is most suited for your organization regarding features such as culture and competence. The Labor Inspection Authority, on the other hand, can only collaborate with the Tax Administration and the Tax Collection Office if they want a partner that works with tax evasion. This makes collaboration in the public sector more challenging. Firstly, the collaboration must deal with the challenges of possibly very different cultures and organizational structures. Additionally, competence is often limited and the team may often be a collection of the only people with suitable competence. Project theory and IOR theory stress the importance of appropriate selection of team members, both regarding competence and personality, in order to optimize the team. But what if a selection like this is impossible? How do you optimize a team that consists of a random selection of personalities and competence, which may be a likely outcome of a multi-agency team? We suggest that this should be considered in further research within project theory and IOR theory.

7.3 Implications for project collaboration partners

In our thesis we have studied how the state of collaboration of a multi-agency project is affected by the execution of certain activities. We see that the time spent on the activities in

phase 0 is vital for its outcome. Further, we believe that the outcome of phase 0 highly affects the activities in phase 1 and thus the state of collaboration. Drawing from this, we highlight the importance of spending a sufficient amount of time to develop common goals, a shared understanding of the project and its outcome, and designing the project properly. In phase 1 we see a particular need for stronger leadership, a clear project plan, a common mindset towards the project as well as adequate staffing. Following our discussion we have arrived at a few suggestions that may improve the state of collaboration for the project group we have studied. Unfortunately, we have found that most problems at this stage in the collaboration stem from how earlier activities are carried out. We will also provide the reader with some general tips as to how to approach the initiation of a new similar project.

7.3.1 Suggestions to improve the current project

Through our discussion of the project management it becomes evident to us that a more directive leadership style would have benefited the group greatly, especially in the beginning of the project. Even though much now has settled and the group feels more secure about roles and responsibilities, we think that the group still lacks some structure. This, however, can be gained through a slightly more directive leadership style by the project leader. When the structure is more in place, he can begin loosening his grip and let the group members take more and more control of the project.

Regarding competence in the group, it still seems to be somewhat lacking. We therefore encourage the project leader to go through with his plans on this topic. It seems like a good idea for the group members to educate each other regarding their work tasks, their organizations, and their specialization. Additionally, it is clever to take advantage of nationwide competence on the subject by sending group members to other offices to learn from their experience.

Our last suggestion on how to improve the state of collaboration is related to the project's autonomy. The organizations' different approaches to autonomy has caused confusion and hampered group development. The approach of the Labor Inspection Authority and the Tax Collection Office has had a particular negative effect on the collaboration. We recommend the organizations to fully release their members from organizational targets during the course of this pilot project. We rather suggest that the group members together should develop group related targets. This way, the group cohesion would most likely improve and the group members would be relieved of the great stress that they have been subject to. The double reporting problem should be solved technically so that the group members can report only one

place, and still provide information to everyone who needs it. We understand that this may be very difficult especially for the Tax Collection Office members due to their professional secrecy, but it should be quite easily solved for the Labor Inspection Authority members. All reports marked social dumping in the system should easily be accessible for the project leader and the remaining group members after some technical modifications in the data system.

7.3.2 General takeaways

The general takeaways from this project collaboration can be of high value for future multi-agency collaboration. We will therefore provide the reader with some general advice on what to pay particular attention to while planning and starting up a multi-agency project.

Firstly, spend a sufficient amount of time on the initiation and planning of the project. Spend time together with the involved parties to make sure that you have landed on a set of common goals that are satisfactory to all. Also, make sure that you possess the same understanding of the project and its wanted outcome. The more time you spend together, the surer you will be of having achieved a shared understanding.

When common goals and shared understandings are settled, the project design should be developed together with some of the future team members. The ones that are going to carry out the work tasks will probably hold the best understanding of problems that may arise. Later, when the activities in phase 0 are executed properly, the team members and the project leader should receive training based on the plans for the project. Preferably, the training should be executed together to make sure that the team enters the project with the same foundation and similar expectations. We also recommend the parties to hire a project leader with knowledge of the involved organizations and work tasks. All these activities will provide the team with the best beginning possible. Most problems that we discovered by studying the project group in hand seems to have its origins in phase 0. Therefore, a proper execution of activities in phase 0 will save the project from spending unnecessary amounts of time on problems in phase 1 that probably could have been solved much quicker in phase 0.

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9.0 Attachments

Attachment 1:

Interview guide project group, February

- Thank the participant for meeting us
- Present ourselves, our supervisor and the FOCUS-program.
- Inform about the general purpose of our study
- Inform about anonymity and the use of dictating machine: The recordings will be deleted after being transcribed.

Introduction:

- What is your position in [organization]?
- How long have you worked in [organization]?
- Is this the first multi-agency collaboration that you have been involved in?
- What is your role in the group?
- How do you process a typical case on social dumping or undeclared work in your organization?

Communication

- How would you describe the communication between the project group and your organization?
- How is the rest of the organization involved in the project?
- How would you describe the communication between the group members?

Planning/Start-up

- What do you know about the background for the initiation of the project?
- How did you get involved in the project?
- How were you included in the planning process?
- Will you fulfill the same work tasks that you had before the project?
- Were you personally positive to the project from the beginning?
- Do you feel that all of the parties have contributed to the same degree?
- Do you view the parties as equal? (Does anyone have the final word)
- What do you see as the biggest differences between the organizations in this project?
 - Organizational

- Communication
- Computer systems
- Culture

Goals

- What are the project group's goals for the project?
- What are your organization's goals for the project?
- Why does your organization participate in the project?
- How have the project group's goals developed after the work started?
- Has it been difficult combining your organization's goals with the work in the group?

Outcomes

- What are your organization's expectations to the project?
- What are your expectations to the project?
- What are the project group's expectations to the project?
- How do you think the work with social dumping can be improved through this collaboration?
- In what way do you think your organization will benefit from the project?
- Do you think any of the parties will benefit more from the collaboration than others?
- Do you see an alternative way to streamline the work with social dumping in your organization?
- How do you feel about making this a permanent collaboration?

The project

- How has the project lived up the expectations so far?
 - Time schedule
 - Quality
- Have the expectations changed?
 - In your organization
 - In the project group
- Have the goals changed?
 - In your organization
 - In the project group
- How has the project affected your organization's work with social dumping?
- What difficulties have arisen so far in the project?

- Is there anything you think should be changed?
 - Do you feel that you have had enough time to do what is expected of you?
 - How would you describe the support from your organization?
 - How do you feel about changing office building?
 - Have you improved your work method through the collaboration?
 - What can frustrate you about the project?
 - How has it been to reach agreement on work methods?
 - Do you mostly agree on which cases you want to look further into?
 - How would you describe the ambience in and around the project?
-
- Anything else the participant wants to share about the project?
 - Any questions for us?
 - Thank the participant again for meeting us

Attachment 2:

Interview guide steering group, February

- Thank the participant for meeting us
- Present ourselves, our supervisor and the FOCUS-program.
- Inform about the general purpose of our study
- Inform about anonymity and the use of dictating machine: The recordings will be deleted after being transcribed

Introduction:

- What is your position in [organization]?
- How long have you worked in [organization]?
- What is your connection to the pilot project?
- Is this the first multi-agency collaboration that you have been involved in?
- How do you process a typical case on social dumping or undeclared work in your organization?
- What authority does your organization have when you discover violations of the law?

Communication

- How will your organization and the project group communicate?
- How is the rest of your organization involved in the project?
- How have the employees in your organization been informed about the project?
- How is the communication between the members of the steering group planned?

Planning/Start-up

- Please tell us about the background for why the project was initiated
- Please tell us about the activities carried out in the planning phase
- How did you and your organization get involved in the project?
- Were you personally positive to the project from the beginning?
- What subjects were discussed during the meetings in the planning phase?
- Did you encounter any issues that were difficult to agree on?
- How did you select the group members and the project leader?
- Are there any additional costs for your organization that are caused by your participation in the project?
- Will the employees in the project group fulfill the same work tasks that they had

before the project?

- Why did you choose the Labor Inspection Authority's offices as base for the project group?
- Have any of the parties been more of a driving force for the project than others?
- Do you feel that all the parties have contributed to the project to the same degree?
- Do you view the parties as equal? (Does anyone have the final word)
- How is the project placed the in the organization?
 - Reporting lines
 - Management
- What do you see as the biggest differences between the organizations in this project?
 - Organizational
 - Communication
 - Computer systems
 - Culture

Goals

- What are your goals for the project?
- What are your organization's goals for the project?
- How has the project affected your organization's work against social dumping/tax evasion?
- Why does your organization participate in the project?
- How would you define the goals of the project group?
- Please tell us about development of the goals for the project?

Outcomes

- What are your organization's expectations to the project?
- What are your expectations to the project?
- How do you think the work with social dumping can be improved through this collaboration?
- In what way do you think your organization will benefit from the project?
- Do you think any of the parties will benefit more from the collaboration than others?
- Do you have any thoughts about problems that might appear?
- Do you see an alternative way to streamline the work with social dumping in your organization?
- Would your organization consider pulling out of the project before scheduled if it does not live up to the expectations?

The project

- How has the project lived up the expectations so far?
 - Time schedule
 - Quality
 - Have the goals changed?
 - In your organization
 - In the project group
 - Have the expectations changed?
 - In your organization
 - In the project group
 - Have the communication between the project group and your organization worked out as planned?
 - What difficulties have arisen so far in the project?
 - Is there anything you think should be changed?
 - How would you describe the ambience in and around the project?
-
- Anything else the participant wants to share about the project?
 - Any questions for us?
 - Thank the participant again for meeting us

Attachment 3:

Interview guide project group and Inspection Manager in LIA, April

- Thank the participant for meeting us
- Inform about anonymity and the use of dictating machine: The recordings will be deleted after being transcribed

Communication and reporting

- How is the group collaborating with other employees in the organizations?
 - How is this working out? Good/bad
 - Changed during the project?
- To what extent is the registration- and reporting routines formalized?
- How important is contact with your organization for your day-to-day work in the project group?
- Do you see the project group as independent from [organization]?

Group dynamics and structure

- What is your role in the group?
- Are you fulfilling the same work tasks that you had before the project?
 - Changed during the project
- Do you feel that you know the others' roles and responsibilities in the group?
- Do you think everyone feels included in the work in the same way as the others in the group?
- Do you feel safe enough in the group to share all of your opinions?
 - How do you think this is for other group members
- How would you describe the structure in the group work?
- Have the group dynamics changed during the project?
 - More/less consensus
 - More/less effective
- Could you tell us about any problems that have arisen in the group?
- Do you feel that the group has the right composition of competence?
 - Anything that is missing?
- Are you pleased with the leadership style of the project leader?
 - What can be improved?
- Has the leadership style of the project leader changed during the project?

- In what way?

Goals and outcome

- Do you experience that everyone in the project group is working towards common goals?
- How have you further developed the project group's goal after the work started?
- Has it been hard combining [organization]'s goals with the work in the group?
- Do you view the parties as equal? (Does anyone have the final word)
- Do you think all the parties experience that they get sufficient benefit from the resources they have invested in the project?

The Project so far

- How has the project lived up the expectations so far?
 - Time schedule
 - Quality
- What difficulties have arisen so far in the project?
- Is there anything you think should be changed?
- Do you feel you have had enough time to do what is expected of you?
- How would you describe the support from your organization?
- What can frustrate you about the project?
- How has it been to reach agreement on work methods?
- How would you describe the ambience in and around the project?

Additional questions for Inspection Manager and project leader

- How have the goals changed on senior management level (steering group)?
 - How would you describe the communication on senior management level (steering group)?
 - How have you worked to achieve a common understanding regarding goals and expectations?
 - How is the project linked to the involved organizations?
 - Do you experience that the project group and the steering group have a shared understanding of goals and expectations
- Anything else the participant wants to share about the project?
 - Any questions for us?
 - Thank the participant again for meeting us

Attachment 4:

Participant information

Dear participant

Request regarding interviews and observations

We are two students writing our master thesis at the Norwegian School of Economics (NHH). The main themes of our thesis are temporary projects and multi-agency collaborations. By studying the pilot project on social dumping we wish to find out how a multi-agency project group is affected by the different parties involved. In relation to this, we would like to interview all parties involved in the project. If you would consider participating in an interview we encourage you to read the information below together with the consent form before you give us a final answer. During the interviews we will ask questions about the planning phase, communication between the project group and the organizations, goals, and expectations to the project.

Our master thesis is written in cooperation with the FOCUS program at NHH. The program is a research project where NHH and various corporations work together to develop knowledge about Norwegian companies. The goal is to contribute to the development of theories and perspectives for future corporate solutions.

The interviews we are going to conduct will be semi-structured. This means that we will follow an interview guide with questions connected to various themes we wish to learn more about. The length of the interview will vary somewhat from person to person, but we estimate that it will last up to 60 minutes. We wish to use a dictating machine to avoid overlooking important information during the interview. The recording will be deleted as soon as the interview is transcribed, and it is only us and our supervisor that will have access to the transcribed interviews. All the information that you provide during the interview will be anonymized before possible further use.

We will also be observing meetings in the project group. Here, we may take notes which will only be available to us and our supervisor. The information is obtained during these meetings will be anonymized before possible further use.

Before the interviews and the observations the participant must sign a consent form that involves the use of information for our thesis and further research. Feel free to contact us by e-mail if you have any questions or want more information.

We would like to point out that all participation in our master thesis is voluntary. You may withdraw from this thesis within the 30th of April, and from the research program FOCUS at any point in time.

In advance, thank you for your participation.

Best regards

Mari Sand Frogner and Marita Mjøs
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Attachment 5:

Consent form

Consent form: interviews and observations

Master thesis on multi-agency collaboration in temporary projects
Norwegian School of Economics, spring 2014

The participant consent to the following statements:

- Participation is voluntary
- The interviews will be recorded and later deleted after transcription
- The data will be anonymized during transcription
- The participant may be anonymously quoted in the thesis
- All references to interviews and observations in the thesis and the research program FOCUS will be anonymous and confidential
- The researchers in the FOCUS program will gain access to the anonymized data, and are subject to professional secrecy

By signing this document I agree to the abovementioned statements, and that I can withdraw from this thesis within the 30th of April 2014 and from the research program FOCUS at any point in time.

Date and place

Signature

Responsible for the thesis

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This master thesis has explored a multi-agency project and issues related to this new way of organizing the work in public agencies. The thesis is based on a case study of a project collaboration between three Norwegian agencies: The Labor Inspection Authority, the Tax Administration, and the Tax Collection Office in Bergen. It is a clear trend that both project based work and inter-organizational relationships are becoming increasingly more prevalent in both the private and public sector.

We have used a qualitative method and conducted 19 semi-structured interviews with 12 individuals. In addition, we have attended meetings to observe the participants in their natural surroundings.

Our case study is a novel field of research. We therefore created a model based on three reviewed lines of literature: project theory, inter-organizational relations theory, and multi-agency collaboration theory. The model has two phases with three factors each. Common Goals, Shared Understandings, and Project Design are factors in phase 0. Project Management, Teamwork, and Role Clarity are factors in phase 1. We predicted that the state of collaboration is directly influenced by the factors in phase 1, and indirectly influenced by the factors in phase 0. Additionally, we predicted that time spent in phase 0 influenced the outcome of this phase.

Our findings show that the factors identified in our two phases have, as predicted, an influence on the state of collaboration. Role Clarity appeared highly embedded in Project Management and Teamwork, and was therefore removed as a separate factor. We discovered Project Autonomy to have an important direct influence on the state of collaboration, and included it as a factor in phase 1 of the model.

Based on our findings, we believe that our revised model creates a good image of which activities to pay extra attention to when initiating a multi-agency project.

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