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“Professional Colleagues and Almost Like Friends”:
The Development of Interorganizational Trust within a
Partnership of Three Norwegian NGOs

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Abstract

This case study examines the development of interorganizational trust within a partnership of three Norwegian nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that formed a vocational school in Norway. Building on previous research, this study considers interorganizational trust to be constituted by the trust held by key individuals within the partnership - the boundary spanners. Furthermore, it categorizes the boundary spanners into three groups: the operational-level, strategic-level, and the board members. This study views the trust held by boundary spanners as a spectrum, in which there are various forms or levels of trust that can be held, and it uses two separate models of trust to examine the trust: one in which trust is developed in the context of a shared interpersonal history and the other in which trust is actually presumed before the relationship begins.

The study set out to determine how interorganizational trust is developed among the different boundary-spanner groups, and it also set out to determine the impacts of interorganizational trust on the overall partnership. It found that trust was developed in different ways in different groups. Some groups based trust more on shared values and interpersonal history, while others based their trust on role categorizations or group membership. The boundary spanners saw several impacts that resulted from the interorganizational trust within the partnership: it created a positive work environment, where problems could be solved, and interorganizational trust was also considered a “cornerstone” that allowed the partnership to keep moving forward even in the face of challenges.

1. Introduction

Trust has long been an important topic to humanity. Deutsch (1958) noted that it is discussed “[w]henever philosophers, poets, statesmen, or theologians have written about man's relationship to his fellow man” (p. 265). It has been called “a fundamental ingredient or lubricant, an unavoidable dimension of social interaction” (Gambetta, 1988, as cited by Mayer et al., 1995). Trust is a central element in human relationships and “a concept that many people can relate to from personal experience” (Möllering, 2006b, p. 5). It underlies many of the choices and actions we take, even if we do not give it much thought at the time. In fact, trust only “tends to become topical when it is problematic” (Möllering, 2006b, p. 2).

Trust is clearly a concept that is relevant to understanding human behavior; however, it is also relevant to organizational behavior. In fact, it has “been a productive focus of organizational theory for several decades... that continues to excite considerable interest among organizational researchers” (Kramer and Lewicki, 2010, p. 247). That interest, according to Kramer (2006), is caused, first of all, by “a growing appreciation of the substantial and varied benefits that accrue when high levels of trust are in place within organizations” (p. 6). Secondly, the increased interest in trust is caused, by a “growing appreciation of the fact that however desirable trust might be, it [is] an illusive and fragile resource” (Ibid, p. 7). Therefore, research has pointed toward ways in which organizational actors can develop and maintain trust as a vital organizational resource.

The research interest in trust has also extended to the realm of interorganizational relationships, in which, “trust is considered to be a variable of importance” (Janowicz and Noorderhaven, 2006, p. 264). In fact, due to the complex nature of interorganizational relationships, trust may even be considered a necessary ingredient for their successful planning and implementation. As Sydow (1998) has noted, “trust relations are considered to be constitutive properties of interorganizational networks... It is true that both high rewards and high risk usually associated with this kind of relationship create the necessity of trust” (pp. 34-35).

The aim of this study is to explore how interorganizational trust is developed within a partnership of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), as well as the impacts that interorganizational trust has on the overall partnership. It is notable that much of the existing research on interorganizational trust has been dedicated to studies within the business sector.

Therefore, this research project is unique, as it examines interorganizational trust within the social sector.

The following sections of this chapter begin with some relevant background information about NGO partnerships and a quick overview of the particular partnership that is the subject of this case study. The chapter unfolds with a specific research problem and objectives, and it moves the study forward by explaining some diverging perspectives that are important for researching interorganizational trust. It combines the work of scholars across various disciplines: social psychology, sociology, economics, and organization theory. Furthermore, it includes input, not only from recent sources (Möllering, 2006; Kramer and Lewicki, 2010; Janowicz and Noorderhaven, 2006), but also from classic texts that have stood the test of time (Deutsch, 1958).

The succeeding chapters begin with chapter 2, which lays the groundwork for examining interorganizational trust by looking at key individuals within the partnership. It moves on to chapter 3, which gives a more detailed description of the case study, in light of the presentation from chapter 2. Chapter 4 reviews key literature on forms of trust and provides a theoretical lens through which interorganizational trust can be examined. Chapter 5 presents a theoretical framework for examining interorganizational trust within this case. Chapter 6 describes the methodology that was employed in the study and articulates the adaptive theory approach that was used to test and generate theoretical concepts. Chapter 7 presents the data from the case study and also presents its analysis. Finally, chapter 8 offers some contributions to the existing theories, shedding insight on the development of trust with NGO partnerships and presenting some concluding remarks and pointing toward future research on interorganizational trust.

1.1. NGOs and Partnerships

This case study concerns NGOs, “organizations that are neither prince [state] nor merchant [market]” (Nerfin, 1986, as cited by Turner and Hulme, 1997, p. 200). They include “*Relief and Welfare Agencies*, such as... various mission societies... *Popular Development Agencies*... which concentrate on self-help, social development, and grassroots democracy... [and] *Advocacy Groups and Networks*... which have no field projects but which exist primarily for education and lobbying” (Clark, 1991, as cited by Turner and Hulme, 1997, p. 203, original italics and emphasis). These organizations have become an

increasingly common sight since the late 1970s, when the world saw what Turner and Hulme (1997) have called, “The Rise of Nongovernmental Organizations” (p. 200), and they have “moved to the center stage” of development issues with “a high profile in the popular media” (Ibid, pp. 202-203).

Many NGOs are now “increasingly forming alliances, partnerships, and collaborations both within and across sectors to achieve important public purposes” (Guo and Acar, 2005, p. 340; see also Sagawa and Segal, 2000) and to “find new solutions to complex problems” (Seldon et al., 2006, p. 340). Therefore, research on trust is a crucial aspect for understanding interorganizational relationships (Sydow, 1998) as trust is seen “as a necessary element of network forms of organization... [and] the starting point for problem-solving sessions across work groups and between firms” (Creed and Miles, 1996, pp. 16-17).

1.2. Partnering NGOs in this Case Study

The partnership within this case study is a group of three Norwegian NGOs that entered into a partnership ten years ago. Together, they formed a vocational school that brings together Norwegian students with international students who learn about cross-cultural understanding and international work. This case study examines the interorganizational trust development that has occurred within the partnership of the three organizations. More details on the partnership and each NGO are presented in chapter 3.

1.3. Research Problem and Objectives

Trust is an issue that inevitably arises within interorganizational relationships such as the partnership of three NGOs in this case study. How can individuals in one organization trust individuals from another organization? After all, risk and vulnerability are inherent aspects of these relationships. As Sydow (1998) aptly noted, “while trust in interorganizational networks may be particularly important, especially if these are intended to be stable and efficient, it is particularly difficult to develop and sustain” (p. 32).

The main objective of the case study is to explore the sources of interorganizational trust within a partnership of NGOs, and a special emphasis will be placed on the nature of trust held by key individuals within that partnership. The second objective of the study is to determine the impact that interorganizational trust has had on the alliance.

To explore interorganizational trust, this study employs Layder's (1998) adaptive theory approach, which "uses both inductive and deductive procedures for developing and elaborating theory" (p. 133). Therefore, prior theoretical frameworks and findings were important from the outset of research design and throughout the analytical process. The following sections and chapters describe theoretical implications for researching interorganizational trust, which provide a foundational perspective for the research questions, variables, and findings that will follow in the succeeding chapters.

1.4. Diverging Research Perspectives on Trust

There are many divergent perspectives on trust that can ultimately lead researchers in different directions (Rousseau et al., 1998; Lane, 1998; Kramer and Lewicki, 2010). Therefore, some important theoretical implications should be considered whenever designing and carrying out research within this field. The first implication regards the various academic perspectives on trust. The second implication regards the ways in which trust is defined. The final implication regards the subjects and objects of trust - *who* is trusting *whom*, which is covered in greater detail in chapter 2.

1.4.1. A Multidisciplinary Approach to Trust

The literature on trust spans across various academic disciplines, as researchers have contributed within their own fields to broaden our collective understanding of it. However, their efforts have also produced many divergent views. Rousseau et al. (1998) noted some of the broadest differences: "economists tend to view trust as either calculative (Williamson, 1993) or institutional (North, 1990). Psychologists commonly frame their assessments of trust in terms of attributes of trustors and trustees... Sociologists often find trust in socially embedded properties of relationships among people" (p. 393). It is true that these variations can often lead to confusion when beginning a research project, but they also help "reflect trust's many facets and levels" and give a more comprehensive picture of its causes and effects (Ibid, p. 393).

Propitiously, there is common ground to be found within the different theories of trust. Lane (1998) has listed three such commonalities: "First, theories assume a degree of interdependence between trustor and trustee" (p. 3). After all, trust can only be an issue when one party's "consequential activities depend on the prior action or cooperation" of another

party (Ibid, p. 3). The second commonality is “the assumption that trust provides a way to cope with risk and uncertainty in exchange relationships” (Ibid, p. 3). It is important to note that risk is a theme that is often repeated throughout research on trust, because without risk, there is no need for trust in the relationship. In fact, Luhmann (1988) noted that trust “presupposes a situation of risk” (p. 96), and Deutsch (1958) aptly proposed that “[r]isk-taking and trusting behavior are thus really different sides of the same coin” (p. 266). The third common element within theories of trust, according to Lane (1998), is “a belief or an expectation that the vulnerability resulting from the acceptance of risk will not be taken advantage of by the other party in the relationship” (p. 3). These three elements are generally found within the existing literature, and they help bridge together the disparate theories and provide researchers with a coherent view of trust.

1.4.2. The Behavioral and Attitudinal Perspectives of Trust

Janowicz and Noorderhaven (2006) presented two overarching perspectives that will inevitably inform all researchers’ definitions of trust. They are the *behavioral* and *attitudinal* perspectives of trust, and they will have profound implications on the findings of research carried out in this area. A behavioral perspective implies that trust is defined “in terms of observable behavior”, and it “finds reflection in the *decision to rely* on another” (Ibid, p. 265, italics added). An attitudinal perspective, on the other hand, “views trust as an *expectation of the partner’s reliability* with regards to its obligations, predictability of behavior, and fairness in actions” (Ibid, p. 264, italics added).

Whether researchers choose the attitudinal perspective or the behavioral perspective will have far-reaching implications on their research. The first implication regards inference, because, as noted by Janowicz and Noorderhaven (2006), “[t]he observed trusting behavior may be driven by factors other than trust... Therefore, behavioral trust is a much broader and more ‘messy’ concept than attitudinal trust” (p. 264). The second implication of these perspectives regards the subject of trust, i.e., the trustor. Attitudinal trust “cannot be attributed to an organization, as it is an inherently individual-level phenomenon... Therefore, application of an attitudinal definition... is appropriate only when organizational members, rather than the organization as such, is assumed to be the subject of inter-organizational trust” (Ibid, p. 266).

1.4.3. Trust Defined

A commonly used definition within organization theory comes from Rousseau et al. (1998), who defined trust with the following:

“Trust is a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another” (p. 395).

The definition from Rousseau et al. (1998) is succinct, yet it still captures the essence of vulnerability to risk and interdependence of trustor and trustee. It is also attitudinal, as it reflects expectations that the individual trustor has on the trustee. The remainder of this thesis will refer to the attitudinal definition of trust that was provided above and will, therefore, be applied to individuals within organizations rather than to organizations themselves.

1.5. From Multidisciplinary Foundations Toward Interorganizational Trust

The perspectives that were introduced in the previous sections have implications on any research that is carried out on trust, and those implications will be seen as this study unfolds. The following chapter narrows the focus further and presents recent literature on how interorganizational trust can be conceptualized, thus laying the groundwork for analyzing interorganizational trust in this case study.

2. Researching Interorganizational Trust

Researching trust within interorganizational relationships is more complex and can be more problematic than researching trust between two individuals. It leads to the question: Exactly who trusts whom? Janowicz and Noorderhaven (2006) posited that the trustor can only be an individual, and that the trustee can either be an individual or an organization. After all, “[i]n the strict sense of the word an organization cannot trust; only an individual can” (Ibid, p. 268). That is particularly true concerning the attitudinal perspective of trust that was discussed in the previous chapter, because an organization, in itself, cannot have an attitude.

Whenever researchers view organizations as the trusting agents, they will find themselves in danger of attempting to “simply apply individual-level terminology and logic to the organizational level... without specifying the link between the micro and the macro level” (Ibid, p. 268). Zaheer et al. (1998) gave a word of caution regarding this practice: “We maintain that theories of interfirm exchange that simply view opportunism – or conversely, trust – as a property of organizations without specifying the link between micro and macro levels is inaccurate as it tends to anthropomorphize the organization” (p. 142). Therefore, researchers must be clear about their units of analyses if they want their research on trust between organizations to be meaningful. Recommendations to that end will be presented in the following sections.

2.1. *The Important Role of Boundary Spanners*

Janowicz and Noorderhaven (2006) recommended examining trust at the individual level because “[c]onceptualizations that involve an individual as a trustor... are relatively unproblematic” (p. 268). After all, it is through individuals that partnering organizations actually interact with one another. As Janowicz and Noorderhaven (2006) noted:

Organizations are made up of and managed by individuals (Aulakh et al., 1996) and it is through them that interfirm relations come into effect (Inkpen and Currall, 1997; Noteboom et al., 1997). Therefore, it is not an organization itself that trusts, but rather the individuals who constitute it (p. 265).

The key individuals within a partnership are called boundary spanners, as they leave the boundary of their own organization to enter into the boundary of another organization and interact with the individuals within it. Examining the attitudes of boundary spanners also

makes data collection simpler, because “[d]ata concerning trusting attitudes and/or behaviors of an individual boundary spanner towards its counterpart or the organization can be obtained in a relatively easy and reliable manner by way of an interview or questionnaire” (Janowicz and Noorderhaven, 2006, p. 268).

2.2. Levels of Boundary Spanners

Boundary spanners across an interorganizational matrix are not homogeneous. They operate at different hierarchical levels, and that has an effect on their trust attitude and the outcomes of their trust. Zaheer et al. (2002) noted, “it is likely that interpersonal trust between top managers may need to be understood differently than that between individuals at other levels of the organization” (p. 349). Perhaps it is because, “top managers are required to face higher levels of uncertainty, or risk, and adopt a longer view” (Ibid, p. 349), while lower-level employees are “responsible for the actual implementation of the collaboration” (Janowicz and Noorderhaven, 2006, p. 274). Therefore, as Janowicz and Noorderhaven (2006) proposed:

[I]t is crucial to make a distinction between trust at the strategic level and trust at the operational level. This is due to the unique roles actors at those levels play... Both of these types of trust, however, have an inter-organizational character and jointly constitute inter-organizational trust (p. 275).

Janowicz and Noorderhaven (2006) “conceptualize strategic-level trust as the shared attitude of the company’s top boundary spanners towards the partner firm... and its members” (p. 273). In contrast, they “define operational-level trust between organizations as trust shared by the non-executive boundary spanners of the collaborating organizations towards the partner organization and its individual members” (Ibid, p. 274).

In the following section, empirical evidence (Zaheer et al., 2002) is presented, which indicates that the trust between executive boundary spanners and the trust between lower-level boundary spanners have different characteristics, and they are based on different influences.

2.3. Empirical Study Regarding Levels of Boundary Spanners and Trust

Zaheer et al. (2002) conducted empirical research that sheds insight on the roles of boundary spanners and their development of trust. They studied six cases of partnerships

between biotechnology companies, and they focused their research on two core issues. The first issue was “the effect of roles on interpersonal trust” (Ibid, p. 347). More specifically, they set out to “explore the differences in the nature of interpersonal trust at different hierarchical levels, and try to identify the sources and ramifications of such differences” (Ibid, p. 349). The second issue they focused on was the link between interpersonal and interorganizational trust; namely, “how interpersonal and interorganizational trust relate to each other as alliances evolve; and succeed or fail” (Ibid, p. 349).

Their research indicated that “interpersonal trust differs in its nature, causes, and consequences at different levels of the hierarchy across an interorganizational relationship” (Ibid, p. 347). They also found that “the relationship between interpersonal and interorganizational trust is complex and, while they are related to one other, they are not simply an aggregation of interpersonal trust” (Ibid, p. 375). Their findings are explained further within the succeeding sections.

2.3.1. Executive Boundary Spanners

Zaheer et al. (2002) found that the executive boundary spanners (the CEOs, in their case) exhibited a “broad-based and stable” form of trust (p. 347) that “was driven by a historic relationship” between the leaders (p. 356). This trust was based on “individual competence”, “shared interest”, “commitment”, “repeated ties”, “prior relationships”, and overall shared values (Ibid, pp. 356-357). It was not based upon the fact that their counterpart was in a similar organizational role to their own. The research actually found that these leaders based their trust “almost exclusively... on personal aspects of the counterpart CEO rather than on the CEO’s role as an organizational representative or leader” (Ibid, p. 356). They held a form of trust that was based on a strong personal connection and “goodwill”, and their “goodwill trust would serve the viable function of keeping the alliance moving along” into the future (Ibid, p. 356).

In addition to the bases of trust held by executive boundary spanners, Zaheer et al. (2002) also examined the effects of that trust, and they found that it was a “crucial factor in alliance initiation” as the “alliance was more likely to be formed when a trusting relationship existed between the CEOs” (p. 361). Furthermore, the trust held by the executives within the partnership impacted more than just the initiation phase of the alliance. It also played a

significant role in the alliance's implementation, especially when problems arose. "The more solid and deeper the level of trust between the CEOs, the greater was the likelihood that they could get the alliance partners to see beyond the immediate irritants and obstacles to mutually beneficial outcomes from continuing alliance" (Ibid, p. 362).

2.3.2. Lower-Level Boundary Spanners

Trust among lower-level boundary spanners was notably different from trust at the executive level. Zaheer et al. (2002) found that "organizational members lower in the hierarchy were quite willing to trust one another on the basis of readily observable role related characteristics... and occupational categorizations" (p. 358). They did not need time to build a shared history in order to develop interpersonal trust. Instead, they based their trust "on the basis of categorization schemes and the teleological recognition that trust is required to fulfill role responsibilities" (Ibid, p. 361) as well as "a clear-eyed understanding of the value of and the need for trust" (Ibid, p. 359).

After that initial trust in the beginning of the alliance, the dynamics of lower-level relationships started to change. The actors began to develop a stronger type of trust, "consistent with Lewicki and Bunker (1995), who suggested that interpersonal trust moves through stages... becoming more comprehensive as it takes on elements of goodwill" (Zaheer et al., 2002, p. 359). If the boundary-spanning counterparts proved trustworthy, then trust could eventually become stronger and more broad-based. Zaheer et al. (2002) further noted: "Interpersonal interaction during alliance implementation served to test earlier trustworthiness assessments by either reinforcing or dispelling the initial role-based trust" (p. 360).

Finally, Zaheer et al. (2002) also examined the effects of the trust that was held by lower-level boundary spanners, and they found that it "has a strong influence in the day-to-day functioning of the alliance... [and] has significant consequences for how the alliance unfolds" (p. 364). In the midst of carrying out their collaborative work, the lower-level boundary spanners' trust was necessary for a "smooth execution of the alliance operations" (Ibid, p. 365).

2.4. A Way Forward for Examining Interorganizational Trust

This chapter has presented a way forward for examining the complex phenomenon of interorganizational trust. It has demonstrated the usefulness of the concept of boundary spanners within a partnership, and it has posited that the trust held by those key individuals actually constitutes interorganizational trust as a whole. The research concepts of Janowicz and Noorderhaven (2006) and Zaheer et al. (2002), therefore, contribute to the first foundational element of this case study: boundary spanners are the subjects of interorganizational trust.

Furthermore, this chapter can lead to some expected findings in new research on interorganizational trust and boundary spanners. According to the propositions of Zaheer et al. (2002), one might expect to find that strategic-level boundary spanners would exhibit a strong form of trust that is based on a shared interpersonal history rather than their common organizational roles. On the other hand, one might expect to find that operational-level boundary spanners would begin the partnership with a weak form of trust in their counterparts. That trust would be based on their common roles within the partnership, and it could grow into a stronger form of trust as the operational-level boundary spanners developed their interpersonal relationships with one another.

The next chapter moves the study forward by presenting more detailed information about the case study. It provides the context and background information on the history of the partnership, and it gives detailed descriptions of the three organizations that are the co-owners of the school. Finally, the chapter will end by providing a break down of the actors within the partnership and placing them into boundary-spanner groups that will be the subjects of the study.

3. The Case of Three Norwegian NGOs

The following chapter describes the partnership of three nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), which is the context of this case study. The following sections provide relevant information on the partnership's historical background, its organizational structure, and details about each of the three NGOs and their respective programs within partnership. It should be noted that the identities of the organizations and individuals have been withheld and/or deliberately obscured within this publication. This was done to promote open and honest dialogue during the interview process. Therefore, the interviewees could discuss the issues of trust frankly and without fear of damaging the partnership or the reputations of any of the three NGOs.

3.1. *The School Partnership*

Ten years ago, in 2001, the three NGOs partnered together to form a *fagskole* (vocational school) in Norway, which for the sake of anonymity in this case study, will simply be called *The School Partnership*. The School Partnership combines young-adult students (ages nineteen to twenty-five) from Norway and various African, South American, and Asian countries. These students come together to participate in courses and field work focused on cross-cultural understanding and international work. The courses and field work are provided through three programs at the school, which are run by the partnering NGOs. The first NGO is a humanitarian aid organization, whose program at the school focuses on humanitarian aid and relief in less-developed parts of the world. The second NGO is a Christian student organization, whose program focuses on leadership development and the religious faith of the students. The third partnering NGO is a Christian mission and aid organization, and its program at the school focuses on church work as well as humanitarian aid in less-developed countries.

Prior to the founding of The School Partnership, these three organizations had already engaged in short-term projects and ventures together. Furthermore, the three organizations were all founded on common religious ideals and values that are based on the Christian faith. Those previous interactions and their common values helped provide the opportunity for the three NGOs to start the vocational school in Norway, and it paved the way for their long-term partnership that exists today.

The School Partnership has an average of sixty to seventy-five students enrolled in the school each year, of which one third of them are international students and two thirds of them are Norwegian. The students live and study together on the school campus in Norway during the first six weeks of the academic year. Then, they are placed in different countries for work programs for six to seven months. During that time, the Norwegian students live in a foreign country while the international students stay in Norway. The academic year concludes with all of the students back on the campus in Norway for two months of debriefing and further classroom education.

The School Partnership is an interesting case study for two reasons. First, according to their website, it is the only vocational school within the country that is focused on cross-cultural understanding and international work. The second reason, and more importantly to the study, is because the school is a partnership of three separate NGOs. In theory, this partnership should be able to capitalize on the strengths of each organization as they work together to teach the fundamentals of cross-cultural understanding and international work to the students. However, a partnership like this will also add complexity to the administration of the school, and it will create a situation in which trust would become “a variable of importance” (Janowicz and Noorderhaven, 2006, p. 264). Therefore, The School Partnership provides a worthwhile case study for examining ways that interorganizational trust can be developed and also the impacts of that interorganizational trust on the partnership.

3.1.1. The Humanitarian Aid Organization

For the sake of anonymity, the first NGO in The School Partnership will be called *The Humanitarian Aid Organization*. This organization is focused on poverty reduction around the world. According to their website, they base their work on Christian values, while at the same time they remain religiously and politically neutral. The Humanitarian Aid Organization’s training program at the school is an extension of its core mission and values, and its objectives are to give the students a global perspective and help them understand issues concerning poverty and sustainable development. The program sends its students to other countries to experience different cultures and various aspects of humanitarian aid and development work, first-hand.

The Humanitarian Aid Organization already had a history of engaging in partnerships and collaborative efforts when The School Partnership began ten years ago. It has partnered with other organizations in Africa, Asia, and South America to accomplish its poverty-reduction goals; and, in turn, those partnering organizations are also encouraged to work in cooperation and collaboration with other humanitarian aid and development actors (paraphrased from The Humanitarian Aid Organization's Statement of Development Policy). It is to those various locations and with those partner organizations that the Norwegian students in The Humanitarian Aid Organization's program go during their seven-month work exchange.

The Humanitarian Aid Organization has two representatives on the staff of The School Partnership. First, there is a program leader, who is responsible for the management of the program and recruiting students. Second, there is a program worker, who is responsible for the administration of the program and working with the international students. The Humanitarian Aid Organization also has two of its own organizational members on the board of The School Partnership. Furthermore, the general secretary of the organization plays an active role with the students in the school as one of the guest teachers on the teaching schedule each year.

3.1.2. The Christian Student Organization

The second organization in the case study is an organization for Christian students and Christian schools in Norway. In this report, it will simply be called *The Christian Student Organization*. Its program at the school connects students to Christian religious groups at universities and schools around the world. This program is an extension of The Christian Student Organization's existing work on Norwegian university campuses, which includes training in leadership development, building interfaith and Christian education, and developing a prayer and resource network (paraphrased from The Christian Student Organization's Mission Statement and Vision Statement).

The Christian Student Organization's program at the school focuses on the individual religious faith of the students and how their faith connects to other people around the world. They send the Norwegian students to exchange programs in Africa, Asia, and South America where they work alongside the local students at their own universities; this includes leadership training, camps, and diaconal work with children and youth in underdeveloped

regions. Likewise, they send the international students to different parts of Norway to be involved in similar programs.

The Christian Student Organization has two representatives on the staff of The School Partnership. There is one program leader, who is responsible for the management of the program, and there is also one part-time program worker, who is responsible for the administration of the program and working with the international students. The Christian Student Organization also has two of its organizational members on the board of the partnership. Additionally, it owns the property on which the school operates.

3.1.3. The Christian Mission and Aid Organization

The third NGO within The School Partnership will anonymously be called *The Christian Mission and Aid Organization*. It is the oldest organization of the three partners, as it was founded over 150 years ago. It has a history of church work around the world as well as a focus on humanitarian issues, such as women's rights, the environment, and conflict resolution (paraphrased from the Strategy Statement for The Christian Mission and Aid Organization).

The program that The Christian Mission and Aid Organization runs at the school emphasizes mission work, humanitarian issues, and service within the church. The Norwegian students from the program are placed in another country, where they serve alongside the local people in various ministries. Likewise, the international students from the program are typically placed in a local Norwegian organization or church, and they engage in ministry activities alongside Norwegian workers and volunteers.

Like the other two organizations, The Christian Mission and Aid Organization has two representatives on the staff of The School Partnership: one program leader, who is responsible for the management of the program and recruiting students, and one program worker, who is responsible for the administration of the program and overseeing the internships of the international students. The organization also has two of its members on the board of the partnership, and at the time of the field work for this case study, one of those board members held the role of chairperson of the board.

3.2. *The Structure of the Partnership*

The School Partnership began in 2001, when each of the three organizations entered into a joint ownership agreement. According to the *selskapsavtale*, the document of partnership agreement, each of the three organizations contributed a sum of NOK 200,000 for a total of NOK 600,000 *kapitalgrunnlag*, or capital base. Apart from that initial investment of NOK 200,000, none of the three organizations has needed to contribute additional financial resources to keep the school running. The operating expenses for the school actually come from two other sources. The first source of income for the school is derived from student fees. The foreign students do not actually have to pay those fees themselves because *Fredskorpset*, the Norwegian Peace Corps (known internationally as FK Norway), has stepped in to cover the fees for each foreign student each year. Norwegian students, likewise, can apply for funds to cover their own student fees through *Lånekassen*, which is the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund. The second source of income to cover the school's operating expenses comes from *Kunnskapsdepartementet*, the Ministry of Education and Research of Norway.

The fact that The School Partnership does not receive ongoing funding from any of the three owning organizations has given it a degree of financial independence, without a heavy hand of direction from any of the three organizations. The staff of the school are actually employed and paid by the school itself and not paid directly by the owning organizations. The day-to-day leadership of the school is carried out by a *daglig leder/ректор* (managing director/principal), who represents the overall interests of the school – not the interests of any particular one of the three NGOs.

The School Partnership is governed by a board that is comprised of six representatives from the three owning organizations (two board members from each organization). These primary board members govern the partnership, make all hiring decisions, and set the salaries for the staff positions. In addition to the six primary board members, there are two representatives from the school staff and one representative from the student body. The first staff representative is the managing director/principal of the school, who serves as the secretary of the board, yet does not have the right to vote on board decisions. The second staff representative is elected by the rest of the staff and does have the right to vote within the board. Finally, there is one student representative, elected by the student body to represent its interests to the board, yet the student representative does not vote on any issues that come

before the board. The board chairperson position rotates between the three organizations every two years. Therefore, each organization is assured a leadership role on the board one-third of the time. The board formally meets together four times each year, and they also meet together with all of the staff members one time each year.

One more interesting factor within the organization of The School Partnership involves the ownership of the land on which the school resides. The land and buildings are owned by The Christian Student Organization, and it receives regular rent payments from The School Partnership. Therefore, The Christian Student Organization actually derives an income from The School Partnership of which it is also a part owner. There is an obvious potential for a conflict of interest in this situation, and this has contributed to some challenges in decision making on the board, particularly decisions that have to do with the possibility of moving the school to a new location that might be more suitable for the needs of the school.

The following organizational chart gives a graphical representation of The School Partnership and lists some vital statistics that might be useful as a *Quick Reference* throughout the rest of the case study report. It illustrates the relationship between the three owning organizations, the board, the school, the three programs within the school, and also a break down of the students enrolled in the programs.

Quick Reference
The School Partnership Organizational Chart

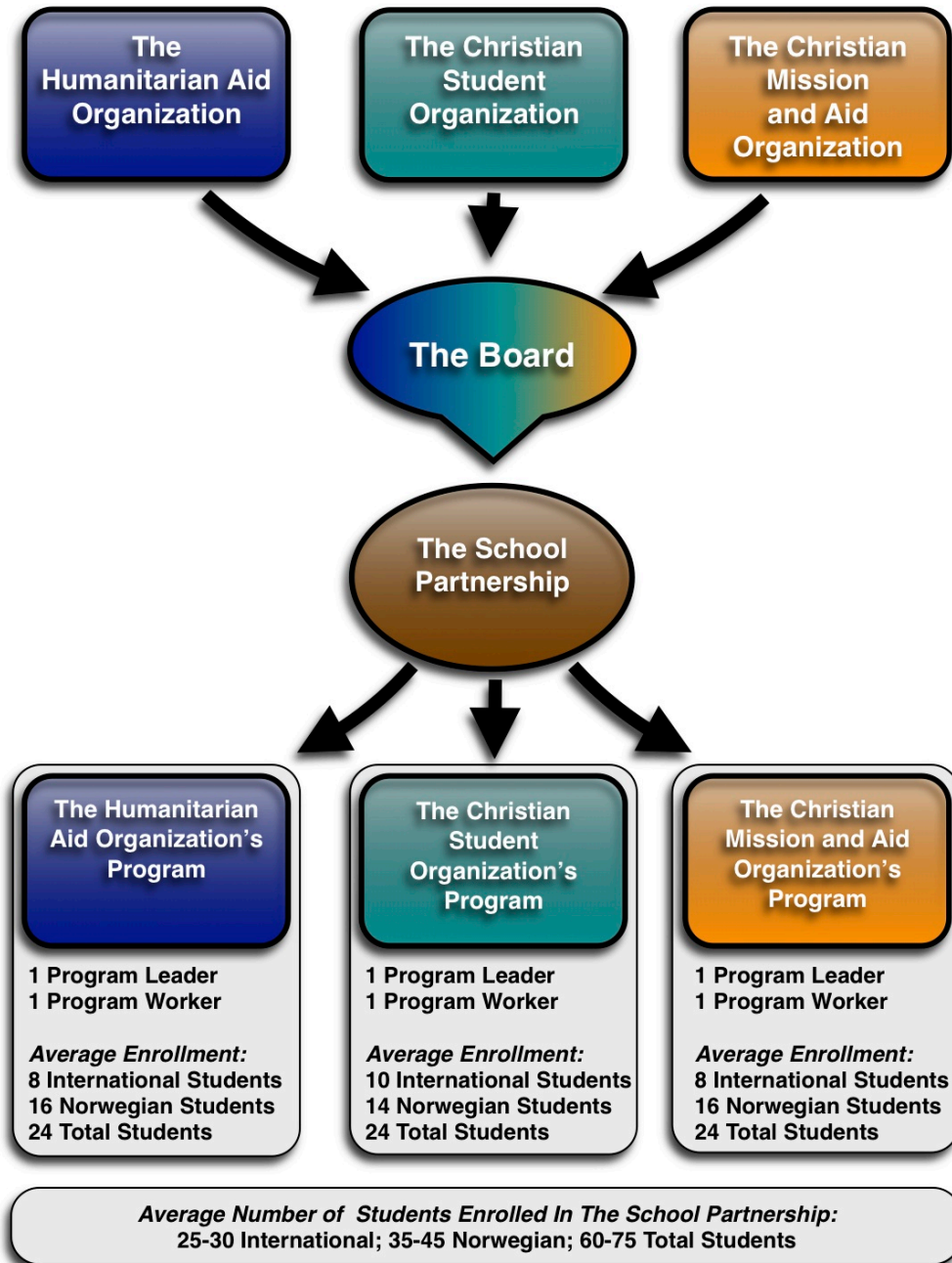


Diagram 1: The School Partnership Organizational Chart

3.3. The Boundary Spanners within The School Partnership

The boundary spanners within The School Partnership will be broken into three groups for analysis within this case study. The first two groups will be the *operational-level*

boundary spanners and *strategic-level boundary spanners*, as proposed by the framework of Janowicz and Noorderhaven (2006). Additionally, a third group of boundary spanners will be added to the framework of Janowicz and Noorderhaven (2006) - *the board members*.

3.3.1. Operational-Level Boundary Spanners

The first group of boundary spanners within The School Partnership is the operational-level boundary spanners, and it is comprised of the three program leaders and three program workers. Each program at the school has a program leader who is ultimately responsible for managing the program and recruiting the students. Likewise, each program also has a program worker who works closely with the international students and oversees their internships within Norway. Both the program leaders and program workers share the responsibility for teaching within the school.

As Janowicz and Noorderhaven (2006) noted, these boundary spanners “are responsible for the actual implementation of the collaboration... By carrying out the operational tasks of the collaboration, they effectively link the two [or three in this case] organizations across their boundaries” (p. 274). It is these operational-level boundary spanners who keep The School Partnership going on a daily basis and ensure its strategic objectives are being met within the context of interorganizational collaboration.

3.3.2. Strategic-Level Boundary Spanners

The second group of boundary spanners in The School Partnership is the strategic-level boundary spanners, and it is comprised of the general secretaries of the three organizations that co-own the school. As Janowicz and Noorderhaven (2006) noted, the top-level leaders from these organizations are “predominately responsible for the shaping and manipulation of the structural context of the collaboration”, particularly “in the initial stages of the alliance’s existence” (p. 273). However, “top-management trust may also be of importance in the subsequent stages of the collaboration”, such as “when the collaboration encounters some unforeseen circumstances requiring an emergency intervention” (Ibid, p. 273). In this case, the general secretaries may have been involved most during the initiation of The School Partnership, but their leadership roles remain important, especially during the most crucial moments of the partnership.

3.3.3. Board Members

The third group of boundary spanners is comprised of the board members who provide oversight and governance for The School Partnership. This study presumes that the board members should be added to the original framework by Janowicz and Noorderhaven (2006), because board members make critical decisions that effect the partnership for the long-term, and they are an integral part of the collaboration. They have the precarious role of protecting the interests of the collaboration while, at the same time, protecting the interests of their own home organizations. Therefore, the board members add an important and interesting element to this study on the development of interorganizational trust.

3.4. The Development of Trust Among the Boundary Spanners

The School Partnership and the three groups of boundary spanners are the focus of this case study. It is the boundary spanners' trust in one another that jointly constitutes interorganizational trust within the partnership, according to the theoretical framework of Janowicz and Noorderhaven (2006). The next chapter highlights another facet of interorganizational trust by presenting literature about various forms of trust that can be held by boundary spanners. These forms of trust, together with the concept of boundary spanners that was presented in this chapter, will form the foundation of a theoretical framework for examining the development of interorganizational trust within an NGO partnership.

4. Trust and Its Various Forms

As stated in chapter 2, interorganizational trust is constituted by the trust held by boundary spanners. Their trust can be based upon different factors and can be characterized according to various dimensions. This has led some researchers and theorists to categorize trust into forms, types, and/or levels (Shapiro et al., 1992; Lewicki and Bunker, 1995; Meyerson et al., 1996; Kramer and Lewicki, 2010). Rousseau et al. (1998) described the spectrum of trust as “‘bandwidth’, where it can vary in scope as well as degree” (p. 398). They went on to specify, “Trust takes different forms in different relationships - from a calculated weighing of perceived gains to an emotional response based on interpersonal attachment and identification” (Ibid, p. 398).

In the following subsections, four forms of trust will be presented. The first three forms of trust are *calculus-based trust*, *knowledge-based trust*, and *identification-based trust*. Those three forms were originally proposed in a model by Lewicki and Bunker (1995) and have been used and expanded upon by several organizational researchers and theorists (Maguire et al., 2001; Askvik, 2003; Panteli and Sockalingam, 2005). The three forms by Lewicki and Bunker (1995) are used as a core element in the theoretical framework (chapter 5) of this study. The fourth form, *presumptive trust*, is based on more recent research by Kramer and Lewicki (2010), and it is used to add explanatory elements to the study, which were found to be missing from Lewicki and Bunker’s (1995) model.

4.1. Lewicki and Bunker: Three Forms of Trust

Lewicki and Bunker (1995) proposed three forms of trust: calculus-based, knowledge-based, and identification-based trust. They suggested that these three forms of trust are more than just distinctions or categories; in their framework, the three forms are also sequential developmental phases within a trusting relationship. According to their conceptualization, trust is developed over time, within the context of interpersonal relationships. They proposed that calculus-based, knowledge-based, and identification-based trust are actually “linked in a sequential iteration in which achievement of trust at one level enables the development of trust at the next... By understanding how trust changes, develops and declines, we may also understand how relationships change grow and decline” (Ibid, p. 144). However, other researchers (Askvik, 2003; Maguire et al., 2001) view the three forms simply as unique and separate forms of trust – not necessarily sequential steps.

4.1.1. Calculus-Based Trust

The first form is calculus-based trust, which is based on a cost-benefit analysis. It “is grounded not only in the fear of punishment for violating the trust but also in the rewards to be derived from preserving it” (Lewicki and Bunker, 1995, p. 145). Therefore, it is in the best interests of both parties to participate in the trust relationship. Notably, it is self-interest that drives calculus-based trust, and Lewicki and Bunker (1995) described it as “an ongoing, market oriented, economic calculation whose value is derived by comparing the outcomes resulting from creating and sustaining the relationship to the costs of maintaining or severing it” (p. 145).

Calculus-based trust is considered “a ‘thin’ form of trust” (Askvik, 2003, p. 13), because it requires the ability for parties to have proof that the other is trustworthy. The interactions are typically limited to short-term exchanges. Rousseau et al. (1998) described it in the following: “Opportunities are pursued and risks continually monitored. The range of calculus-based trust is often limited to situations where evidence of failure to perform can be obtained in the short term. Risk may entail short-term performance losses but not threaten the trustor’s broader interests” (p. 399). Lewicki and Bunker (1995) compared calculus-based trust with the children’s board game, Chutes and Ladders:

In calculus-based trust, forward progress is made by ladder climbing in a slow, stepwise fashion; however, a single event of inconsistency may ‘chute’ the individual back several steps – or in the worst case, back to square one. At this early stage, trust is partial and quite fragile (p. 154).

Calculus-based trust is generally a low-risk type of trust that organizational actors can engage in as they begin to collaborate with other organizations. It normally does not entail a high degree of long-term risk, and it is noncommittal. If the relationship between organizations does not work out, the actors can part ways with relatively little trouble. If it does work out, then they can continue to collaborate and, according to Lewicki and Bunker (1995), they may develop a stronger and more significant form of trust.

4.1.2. Knowledge-Based Trust

The second form is knowledge-based trust, which “is grounded in the other’s predictability” (Lewicki and Bunker, 1995, p. 149). It generally occurs when the trustor “comes to have confidence” in the trustee “on the basis of experiences and previous observations” (Askvik, 2003, p. 13). Maguire et al. (2001) noted that it “does not imply goodwill” (p. 289). In fact, “the trustor’s knowledge does not imply any comprehension of the incentives behind the [trustee’s] behavior” (Askvik, 2003, p. 2). Knowledge-based trust develops from simply “observing and comprehending others’ behavior patterns” (Maguire et al., 2001, p. 289). Therefore it requires time, communication, and repeated interactions to develop. Over time, the trustor can predict, with some level of confidence, the future actions of the trustee; and therefore, “as long as the other remains predictable... trust will endure” (Lewicki and Bunker, 1995, p. 149).

The metaphor that Lewicki and Bunker (1995) provided for knowledge-based trust comes from agriculture:

[Knowledge-based trust] is like gardening – tilling the soil year after year to understand it, to know the sandy and moist sections, and to know what will grow in what locations. This knowledge comes by experimenting... over the years and building on that experience. Parties cultivate their knowledge of each other by gathering data, seeing each other in different contexts, experiencing each other’s range (p. 154).

Knowledge-based trust can be seen as a stronger form than calculus-based trust. Perhaps, the trustor has taken a few short-term risks, and the trustee has demonstrated trustworthiness on a consistent basis. The short-term exchanges may have provided an opportunity for the trustor to judge the trustee’s predictability, which opened the door for a longer-term trust that is based on expected results.

4.1.3. Identification-Based Trust

The third form is identification-based trust, which Lewicki and Bunker (1995) described as “a full internalization of the other’s desires and wants” (p. 151), and it is the strongest level of trust among the three forms (Shapiro et al., 1992). At this stage the actors have learned to trust the other’s intentions, and they may have even developed an emotional bond, which intensifies the strength and resilience of trust (Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 399). In contrast to knowledge-based trust, which “does not imply goodwill” (Maguire et al., 2001, p.

289), in this case the trustor actually “believes in the goodwill of the trustee” (Askvik, 2003, p. 2). “The other can be confident that his or her interests will be fully defended and protected, without surveillance or monitoring of the actor” (Lewicki and Bunker, 1995, p. 151). Identification-based trust is also the most resilient form of trust: “Unmet expectations can be survived when relational trust exists, particularly if parties make an effort to restore a sense of good faith and fair dealings to their interactions” (Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 400).

The metaphor that Lewicki and Bunker (1995) used for identification-based trust involves the musical concept of harmonizing:

The parties know each other well enough to see themselves as a collective entity, learning how to use their voices to sing a collective melody that is integrated and complex. Each knows the other’s range and pitch, each knows when to lead and follow, each knows how to play off the other to maximize their strengths, compensate for each other’s weaknesses, and create a joint product that is much greater than the sum of its parts (p. 155).

There is an “unverbalized, synchronous chemistry” that can exist in a singing group, which also illustrates the nature of identification-based trust (Ibid, p. 155). Through repeated interactions, the parties develop a stronger identification and empathy with one another. At that point, trust would no longer need to be tested; it would simply be taken for granted.

Lewicki and Bunker (1995) discussed four factors that help create the basis for identification-based trust:

Commonality in name: When actors have a sense of collective identity, they are more likely to develop identification-based trust. “Mergers, strategic alliances, and joint ventures create new company names and identities – buildings, logos, mission statements, slogans, trademarks, colors, and so on – to constantly remind themselves and others of their collective intentions” (Ibid, p. 152)

Collocation: Placing actors side-by-side in various contexts can also help build identification-based trust. “Collocation constantly brings parties into regular and consistent contact with each other and permits them to affirm their identity” (Ibid, p. 152).

Creation of joint products and goals: “When people work to create joint products and goals, they strengthen their identification with each other” (Ibid, p. 152).

Shared values: When actors share “the same core values, beliefs, and concerns”, they can “effectively stand in for the other. By being able to substitute for each other in

transactions, the parties' joint goals and interests can be effectively leveraged and enhanced" (Ibid, p. 153).

4.1.4. Empirical Study: "Why Principals Trust and Distrust School Governing Bodies"

Askvik (2003) used Lewicki and Bunker's (1995) three forms of trust in a study on school governance in South Africa. The principals in the study had recently begun working with new school boards that were comprised of parents from their schools. Askvik (2003) used the three forms of trust as a framework to explore the different bases of trust between the principals and their governing bodies. He asked: "to what extent do the principals deal with the uncertainties represented by the governing bodies in terms of calculus-, knowledge-, or identification-based trust" (Askvik, 2003, pp. 11-12).

Askvik (2003) interviewed fifteen school principals in Western Cape, South Africa. The interviews were based on "open-ended questions and took about 1-2 hours each" (Ibid, p. 7). He found that the principals perceived a number of risks in working with their school governing bodies. Some of those risks were the school board members pursuing "their own personal interests" (Ibid, p. 8), "not perform[ing] their tasks properly... not tak[ing] very much initiative" (Ibid, p. 9), or the "mismanagement of funds" (Ibid, p. 10).

Askvik (2003) then set out to determine which forms of trust the principals used to deal with the risks presented by the governing bodies, and he drew several interesting conclusions. First, he found that calculus-based trust "appears less frequent", with the exception of "financial matters, where trust is based on extensive control systems" (Ibid, p. 19). He also found that the concept of trust built on "actors pursu[ing] their self-interests does not receive much support" (Ibid, p. 19). On the contrary, the principals usually attributed self-interest in board members to "distrust, rather than trust" (Ibid, p. 19).

Second, Askvik (2003) found that the "knowledge-based form of trust is, nonetheless, difficult to distinguish from identification-based trust" (Ibid, p. 19). Principals observed reliable behavior while they worked alongside governing body members and developed a notion of the board member's "track record", yet they often interpreted the board member's activities "in terms of goodwill" (Ibid, p. 19). The one exception to this confusion regarded competence. The school principals may trust board members based on their competence, "without conceptualizing their behavior as expressions of goodwill" (Ibid, p. 19).

Finally, Askvik (2003) found that the principals themselves played an active role in constructing knowledge-based and identification-based trust. The principals saw “themselves as educators of their governing bodies, teaching them the skills and giving them identity as governing body members”, especially in “disadvantaged schools where parents lack education and experience” (Ibid, p. 19). Askvik’s (2003) study helps to clarify the concepts of Lewicki and Bunker (1995), and it also contributes to similar findings in another study on trust by Maguire et al. (2001). Their study deals with trust, control, and identity building, and it is covered in the following section.

4.1.5. Empirical Study: “Trust, Control, and the Discursive Construction of Identity”

Another relevant study comes from Maguire et al. (2001), who carried out a long-term study on the development of trust among interorganizational actors. The data collection process took three years and was focused on the collaboration between a community organization that advocates on behalf of people living with HIV/AIDS and a pharmaceutical company that produces medicine to treat HIV/AIDS. Notably, there had been a high degree of enmity and distrust between these two organizations leading up to their collaboration. The research by Maguire et al. (2001) was based on the three forms of trust theorized by Lewicki and Bunker (1995), and it found that the actors in the collaboration could actually generate identification-based trust, even if they were “new to working together” (Maguire et al., 2001, p. 290). According to Maguire et al. (2001), identification-based trust can be developed “through the construction of particular identities” (p. 290):

If actors can credibly construct themselves and others as possessing particular identities – and hence as subject to particular normative controls – then trust is possible. This trust leads actors to exhibit goodwill and to tolerate situations of exposure to risk, harm and opportunism (Ibid, p. 304).

Maguire et al. (2001) found that, in essence, the actors deconstructed old “myths” about each other and formed new, complimentary identities. For example, in the old myth, the community groups were originally constructed as being extreme activists who “were associated with media savvy protests... like hurling fake blood at pharmaceutical company representatives” (Ibid, p. 297), and the ““pharmaceutical companies’ [were] constructed as opportunistic, profit-seeking private entities who are skilled ‘marketers’” (Ibid, p. 295) and “pill-pushing profiteers” (Ibid, p. 297). In the new myths that were constructed by the

parties, the community groups became “treatment advocate[s]... constructed as professionals... and as being far more amenable to collaboration than activists” (Ibid, p. 298) and the pharmaceutical companies became “compassionate and consultative partner[s]” who are “working with all players in healthcare to find solutions that will enable them to prevent and treat health problems” (Ibid, p. 299). Research showed that it was actually the “normative controls associated with these identities [that] produced behavior conducive to trust relationships” (Ibid, p. 299).

Interestingly, while the construction of complimentary identities helped develop trust between boundary spanners, it also affected the relationships they had with their home organizations. Maguire et al. (2001) noted that “these identifications with their collaborative partners simultaneously created dis-identification with the constituencies they represented” (Ibid, p. 301). The boundary spanners from pharmaceutical companies “became increasingly aware of their difference from other employees” within their firms (Ibid, p. 301). Likewise, the boundary spanners that represented the community groups also became aware of their “other-ness” from the very people they represented – people living with HIV/AIDS (Ibid, p. 301).

According to Maguire et al. (2001), these identities were shaped through discursive processes. The researchers noted “that, to fully understand the process of identity construction, one must refer to post-structuralist sociological theories of identity construction” (Ibid, p. 303), which “focus on the socially constructed meaning” that “emerges from the productive power of discourse and is continuously created and recreated through conversation and narrative” (Ibid, p. 304). Therefore, according to these theories, identification-based trust “arises from an inter-subjective social ‘reality’ based on shared meanings between trusted partners” (Ibid, pp. 304-305).

4.2. *Presumptive Trust*

There is an additional perspective on trust development that can supplement the model by Lewicki and Bunker (1995). It comes from recent work by Kramer and Lewicki (2010), who theorized the concept of *presumptive trust*. This form of trust can be described as an expectation of “likely trustworthiness” in another person or group (Kramer and Lewicki, 2010, p. 257), and it is based on “a generalized social expectation perceivers confer on the collective as a whole... encompassing all the members of that collective... who are

considered ‘ingroup’ members” (Ibid, p. 259). This perspective of trust is especially useful in complex organizational matrices in which “a more impersonal or indirect form of trust is required” (Putnam, 1993, p. 171, as cited by Kramer and Lewicki, 2010, p. 258).

Furthermore, presumptive trust “constitutes a diffuse expectation” (Kramer and Lewicki, 2010, p. 259), which is “akin to a collective resource pool or reservoir within the organization... a form of ‘social capital’ that is available to all members of the collective and from which all benefit” (Ibid, p. 269).

Presumptive trust springs from three different sources within an organizational context. The first source is based on the roles that organizational actors play. If those actors are in particular roles, then they are thought to be capable of meeting the obligations associated with those roles. The second source of presumptive trust springs from the system of rules that shape the expectations, conduct, and perceptions of the actors. The rules are thought to ensure trustworthy behavior in the trustees. The third source of presumptive trust is shared organizational identities, such as social groups, clubs, or other organizations. The ingroup status is thought to attribute a sense of trustworthiness upon the the trustee.

Kramer and Lewicki (2010) explained the essence of presumptive trust by using an example of a medical patient and her doctor. The patient has never met her new doctor, yet she believes she can trust the advice and care she will receive in the relationship. The doctor is a member of a professional group (a national medical association), which has strenuous membership requirements and strict rules that its members must follow if they are to remain in the group. The doctor’s membership in that group encourages a presumptive trust within the patient before the two have even met. The new patient trusts the doctor simply because doctors are supposed to be knowledgeable and behave in a way that is beneficial to patients.

4.3. A Way Forward for Examining Forms of Trust

This chapter has presented literature on four forms of trust. The first three forms are from the model of Lewicki and Bunker (1995), who proposed that calculus-based trust, knowledge-based trust, and identification-based trust are progressive levels of trust development within a historical and interpersonal relationship. The last form of trust added a missing element to their model by categorizing a type of trust that does not require a shared interpersonal history to develop: presumptive trust (Kramer and Lewicki, 2010). This literature has contributed to the second foundational element of this case study: boundary

spanners can hold various forms of trust in their counterparts, and their trust can be based upon multiple factors.

The next chapter outlines the theoretical framework used in this case study on interorganizational trust within an NGO partnership. It combines the first foundational element, the boundary-spanner framework of Janowicz and Noorderhaven (2006), and the second foundational element, the forms of trust by Lewicki and Bunker (1995) and Kramer and Lewicki (2010), to answer specific research questions about interorganizational trust.

5. Theoretical Framework

The following chapter presents a theoretical framework for meeting the objective of this case study: exploring the sources and impacts of interorganizational trust within a partnership of NGOs. The research process has been guided by four research questions, which are listed below. These questions were inspired by the boundary-spanner framework of Janowicz and Noorderhaven (2006), and they break down research on interorganizational trust into the held by three groups of boundary spanners: operational-level boundary spanners, strategic-level boundary spanners, and board members. It is their trust that jointly constitutes interorganizational trust within the partnership.

Immediately following the four research questions are two models of trust, which provided the “theoretical lens” (Creswell, 2007, p. 37) through which the boundary spanners’ trust would be examined. The first model of trust comes from Lewicki and Bunker (1995), and it includes three forms of trust and a set of independent variables that contribute to those forms of trust. The second model of trust is from Kramer and Lewicki (2010), which provides additional theoretical material for analysis.

5.1. Research Questions

1. Why do operational-level boundary spanners (the program leaders and workers) within the partnership trust or distrust their counterparts, and what form(s) of trust exist(s) between them?
2. Why do strategic-level boundary spanners (the general secretaries of the three organizations) within the partnership trust or distrust their counterparts, and what form(s) of trust exist(s) between them?
3. Why do the board members of the partnership trust or distrust their counterparts, and what form(s) of trust exist(s) between them?
4. How does the trust held by the three groups of boundary spanners (which constitutes interorganizational trust) impact the partnership?

5.2. Lewicki and Bunker’s (1995) Model of Trust

The first model of trust in this study’s framework is from Lewicki and Bunker (1995), who described three different forms of trust that can develop between actors who have a shared interpersonal history. Their model of trust development has been used in previous

organizational research (Askvik, 2003; Maguire et al., 2001; Panteli and Sockalingam, 2005), and as such, these three forms of trust provided a frame of reference and a set of cases for further comparison. In this model, trust is comprised of the three following forms: *calculus-based trust*, *knowledge-based trust*, and *identification-based trust*.

In this case study, each of those three forms of trust have two independent variables that could contribute to that form of trust's development. The three forms and their independent variables are described in the following subsections.

5.2.1. *Calculus-Based Trust and Its Independent Variables*

Calculus-Based Trust is the first form, and it is described as “a transactional view of trust” that is similar to an “economic calculation” (Lewicki and Bunker, 1995, p. 145). It is based on the “benefits to be derived from staying in the relationship... benefits to be derived from cheating... costs of staying in the relationship...and costs of breaking the relationship” (Ibid, p. 145). Askvik (2003) noted that calculus-based trust assumes a level of “control”, in which the trustor can “punish” the trustee “if he defects and does not fulfill his obligations, or remunerate him if he meets the expectations” (p. 12). For that reason, Askvik (2003) called it “a ‘thin’ form of trust” (p. 13). In this study, calculus-based trust could be considered the weakest form of trust between boundary spanners within the partnership. There are two independent variables that can contribute to calculus-based trust within a partnership, and each of them is related to control mechanisms that are in place protect the trusting parties.

The first independent variable that could lead to calculus-based trust is *Relying on Established Control Mechanisms*. As trustors rely on previously established control mechanisms that are in place to protect them, they are more likely to extend calculus-based trust to trustees. These control mechanisms can ensure that trustees are punished when they do not “fulfill [their] obligations” and “remunerat[ed]” when they meet “expectations” (Askvik, 2003, p. 12). These control mechanisms are the kinds of rules, systems, or routines that help to ensure accountability on the part of the trustees. They could take the form of contracts, evaluations, power-sharing agreements, or remuneration schemes. In essence, these control mechanisms can be any system of rules or organizational structures that are there to help ensure that one party will not hurt the interests of another party.

Another independent variable that could lead to calculus-based trust is *Establishing New Control Mechanisms*. This may occur when trustors do not believe that adequate controls are in place; therefore, they actually develop the systems, routines, agreements, or rules that enable them to hold the trustees accountable for their actions. One example of *Establishing New Control Mechanisms* within an alliance might be creating a routine for partnership evaluations, in which boundary spanners can report the ways that their counterparts have met their obligations or how they have failed to do so. These evaluations and reports could then lead to either rewards or some form of punishment for the trustee.

5.2.2. Knowledge-Based Trust and Its Independent Variables

Knowledge-Based Trust is the second form of trust in the study. It “is based on an ongoing confirmation of the predictability of the others’ behavior” (Askvik, 2003, p. 2), and it generally occurs after the trustor has been able to observe the behavior of the trustee and determined that he or she has a proven record of fulfilling obligations. Knowledge-based trust “does not imply goodwill” on the part of the trustee, as noted by Maguire et al. (2001). It simply stems from being able to predict positive and competent actions of the trustee. Therefore, trust remains as long as the trustee continues behaving in that way (Lewicki and Bunker, 1995). In this study, there are two independent variables that can lead to knowledge-based trust.

The first independent variable that could lead to knowledge-based trust is *Observing Predictable Behavior in Trustees*. As a trustor observes the behavior of trustees, he or she can “accurately predict how they will respond in most situations” (Lewicki and Bunker, 1995, p. 149). This creates a “track record”, on which the trustor can base his or her future decisions (Askvik, 2003, p. 13). An example of that taking place within a partnership might be when boundary spanners observe that their counterparts continuously do quality work on the projects that are assigned to them. If that is the case, then the trustors know that when trustees are assigned to a project, they will most likely produce high-quality results. Therefore, those trustees can be deemed “trustworthy”.

Another independent variable that could lead to knowledge-based trust is *Building Competence in Trustees*. It is based on the idea that trust is more likely to exist whenever trustees are capable of carrying out the expectations of the trustor. Askvik (2003) observed this phenomena in his study of South African schools. He found that trustors (in his case,

principals) were actually able to develop a basis for knowledge-based trust in trustees (in his case, governing bodies) through “teaching them the skills” they needed to fulfill their obligations (Ibid, p. 19).

There are many activities that can build competence in trustees. A few examples of these activities could be coaching, formal training, or implementing a knowledge management system. It may often be that the actors who are in leadership roles would be responsible for these competence-building activities and developing the capacity of staff members. However, it can also be actors on the same level within the organization who build competence within each other and thus increase each other’s capacity to fulfill their obligations. For example, there may be an informal setting in which collaborators can share knowledge about how to effectively perform different tasks. That exercise could increase the other’s competence levels and, in turn, develop knowledge-based trust since they are more likely to produce high-quality results.

5.2.3. Identification-Based Trust and Its Independent Variables

Identification-Based Trust is considered the “highest order of trust” (Shapiro et al., 1992, p. 371). Lewicki and Bunker (1995) described it as “a full internalization of the other’s desires and wants” in which “the parties effectively understand, agree with, and endorse each other’s wants” (p. 151). One major difference between identification-based trust and knowledge-based trust is in the trustor’s perception of the trustee’s goodwill. With identification-based trust, the trustor actually “believes in the goodwill of the trustee” (Askvik, 2003, p. 2).

According to Shapiro et al. (1992) the presence of identification-based trust makes it “possible for your partner to act in your stead... to act independently – knowing your interests will be met” (p. 373). Lewicki and Bunker (1995) added:

A true affirmation of the strength of identification-based trust between parties is found when one party acts for the other even more zealously than the other might. For example, if Party A is hesitant to defend himself against criticism from an outsider but Party B is willing to take on the outsider and aggressively protect A, A’s trust in B may be affirmed and enhanced by B’s willingness to do for A what A could not do for himself (p. 151).

Identification-based trust is developed when the trustor and trustee hold common or complimentary identities and therefore have similar desires or goals. These common identities can be passively discovered through interactions over time, or they can be actively shaped through discourse. These processes are explained in the next two independent variables.

The first independent variable that can lead to identification-based trust is *Discovering Common or Complimentary Identities*. This is a passive learning process that occurs over time, in which trustors and trustees discover that they have “an inter-subjective social ‘reality’ based on shared meanings between trusting partners” (Maguire et al., 2001, pp. 304-305). They may find that they have similar goals, values, or ambitions; therefore, they can trust each other “to behave predictably with goodwill because... it is appropriate behavior” within their “shared reality” (Ibid, p. 305).

The second independent variable that can lead to identification-based trust is *Shaping Common or Complimentary Identities*. Both Askvik (2003) and Maguire et al. (2001) found that identification-based trust could be developed through discursive interactions that shape common and/or complimentary identities. Maguire et al. (2001) found that this occurs when a sense of shared “meaning is constructed through communicative events or conversations” (p. 305).

Foucault (2002, original printing 1969), who was instrumental in developing the theory of discourse, defined discourse “sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements” (p. 90). Therefore, in this study, discursive structures will be any *statements* that shape organizational members’ identities. These statements could be acts of speech, texts, pictures or symbols, or even “exclusions” that “limit what can be said” (Mills, 2004, p. 57).

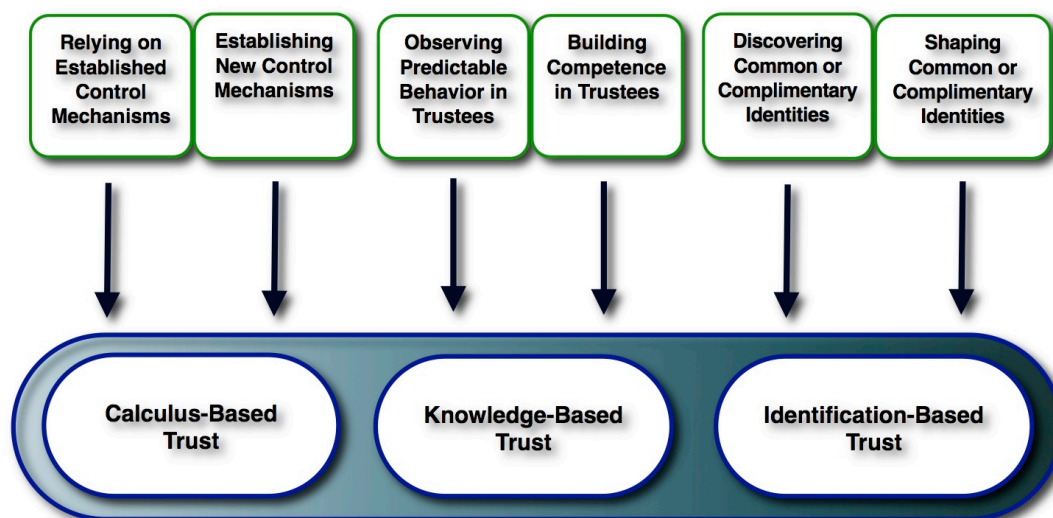


Diagram 2: Variables for Lewicki and Bunker's (1995) Three Forms of Trust

5.3. A Complimentary Model of Trust: Presumptive Trust

The second model of trust used in this study is Kramer and Lewicki's (2010) presumptive trust. In contrast to Lewicki and Bunker's (1995) model, presumptive trust does not require shared interpersonal history to develop. Thus it adds a missing explanatory element to the theoretical framework. As this study on interorganizational trust between the three NGOs started to unfold, it became clear that the theoretical model by Lewicki and Bunker (1995) had limitations and needed an additional perspective. It was initially expected that all of the boundary spanners would have had a shared interpersonal history. That shared history would have been essential for developing trust along the lines of Lewicki and Bunker's (1995) relational model. However, that was not the case, as some of the boundary spanners within the partnership were actually new to their roles, yet they still exhibited trust within their counterparts. It was an unexpected situation, but it also made the case more interesting, as it demonstrated trust development within a more dynamic organizational context.

Therefore, the model of presumptive trust from Kramer and Lewicki (2010) was added. Presumptive trust dovetails nicely with the first three forms of trust by Lewicki and Bunker (1995), because it adds a vital missing element. It adds a form of trust that is not based on shared interpersonal history. It is a form of trust that can actually be presumed before the trustor and trustee even meet. Kramer and Lewicki (2010) described presumptive trust as the

expectation of “likely trustworthiness” in another person or group (p. 257), and it can be based on three different sources: organizational roles, organizational rules, and/or organizational identities.

The first basis for presumptive trust can be the roles that trustees hold within an organization. In this situation, “role occupants are expected to fulfill the fiduciary responsibilities and obligations associated with the roles they occupy – and experience suggests that they frequently do” (Kramer and Lewicki, 2010, pp. 262-263). Therefore, “roles can serve as constructive proxies for personalized knowledge about other organizational members” (Ibid, p. 262) and the “individuals can trust presumptively on the basis of their knowledge of role occupancy and the system of role relations, even in the absence of personalized knowledge regarding the individual in the role” (Ibid, p. 263). An example of basing presumptive trust on roles can come from the illustration about the doctor-patient relationship from the previous chapter. Even though the patient had never met the doctor, she still trusted him because of the role he was in, not necessarily because of who he was as an individual.

The second basis for presumptive trust can be the rules within an organization, since “[o]rganizational rules constitute codified norms for conduct. As such, they provide a formal enunciation of collective expectations about how organizational members ought to and will behave” (Kramer and Lewicki, 2010, p. 263). Those norms of conduct communicate to trustors and trustees what the likely actions of other organizational actors will be. In essence, there is a “socialization into the structure of rules” (March and Olsen, 1989, as cited by Kramer and Lewicki, 2010, p. 264), which can “influence their self-perceptions and expectations” and results in presumptive trust (Kramer and Lewicki, 2010, p. 265). In the previous illustration of the doctor-patient relationship, the patient trusted the doctor because of the rules involved in becoming licensed to practice medicine and also the rules involved in keeping that license. If he was a doctor, he must have been following all of those rules, which were there to protect the patients. Therefore, the patient could presume that her doctor was trustworthy.

The third basis of presumptive trust can be organizational identity. Kramer and Lewicki (2010) noted that “a shared organizational identity provides one important basis for presumptive trust in others” (p. 261). In this case, a trustor places positive expectations on a trustee on the basis of positive stereotypes associated with ingroup membership. Research

has shown (Brewer, 1996; also Foddy and Yamagishi, 2009) that “individuals tend to attribute favorable characteristics such as honesty, cooperativeness, and trustworthiness to other ingroup members” and that “stereotypes of ingroup members are generally more positive than stereotypes of outgroup members” (Kramer and Lewicki, 2010, pp. 260-261). If boundary spanners are common members of some type of club, organization, or other social group, they are more likely to exhibit presumptive trust.

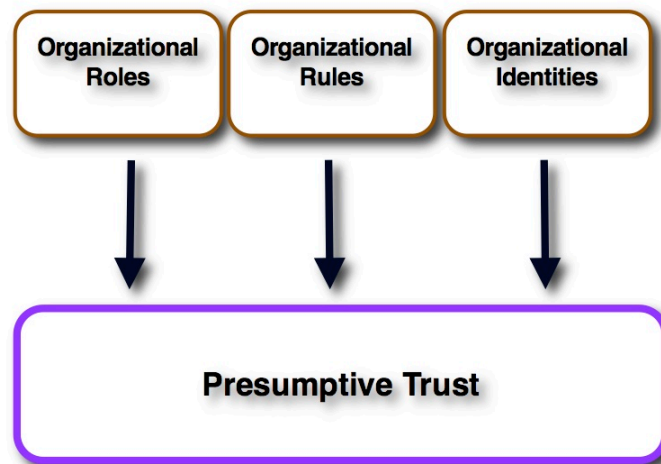


Diagram 3: Kramer and Lewicki’s (2010) Presumptive Trust

5.4. Moving Toward the Research of Interorganizational Trust

This chapter has provided a theoretical lens through which the trust between boundary spanners can be examined. This trust can be developed within the context of a shared interpersonal history, or it be developed presumptively, before the boundary spanners even meet. It is the trust held by boundary spanners that jointly constitutes interorganizational trust. The next chapter describes the research methodology in this case study on interorganizational trust between NGOs.

6. Research Methodology

The following chapter presents the research methodology used in this study on the development of interorganizational trust. It specifies what is covered in the case study and describes the scope and units of analysis. It also gives an overview of the analytic strategy used in the case study. It describes a method proposed by Layder (1998) called the adaptive theory approach. This approach combines multiple sources of data and theories into a *research mix*, which contributes to a more robust theoretical analysis and adds valuable perspectives to each source. This chapter also makes an argument for using qualitative data in order to add depth of insight and understanding to the analysis. Lastly, the chapter describes the three main sources of qualitative data that were used and the way the data was processed and analyzed.

6.1. Units of Analysis

The partnership in this case study was comprised of various actors from multiple organizations who formed an interorganizational matrix. Boundary spanners who represented one organization interacted with their counterparts who represented other organizations within the partnership, and in this study they were organized into three groups of boundary spanners. Therefore, in order to answer the research questions and assess the nature of trust within the various relationships, the study needed to include multiple units of analysis (see diagram 4 on the next page). The first unit of analysis was the overall partnership, and it encompassed everyone who was involved in it. The second unit of analysis was the group of strategic-level boundary spanners from the three different organizations (the general secretaries). The third unit of analysis was the operational-level boundary spanners (the program leaders and workers). The final unit of analysis was the board members. All the units of analysis were interrelated to one another, either through their work in the partnership or their connection to one of the three organizations.

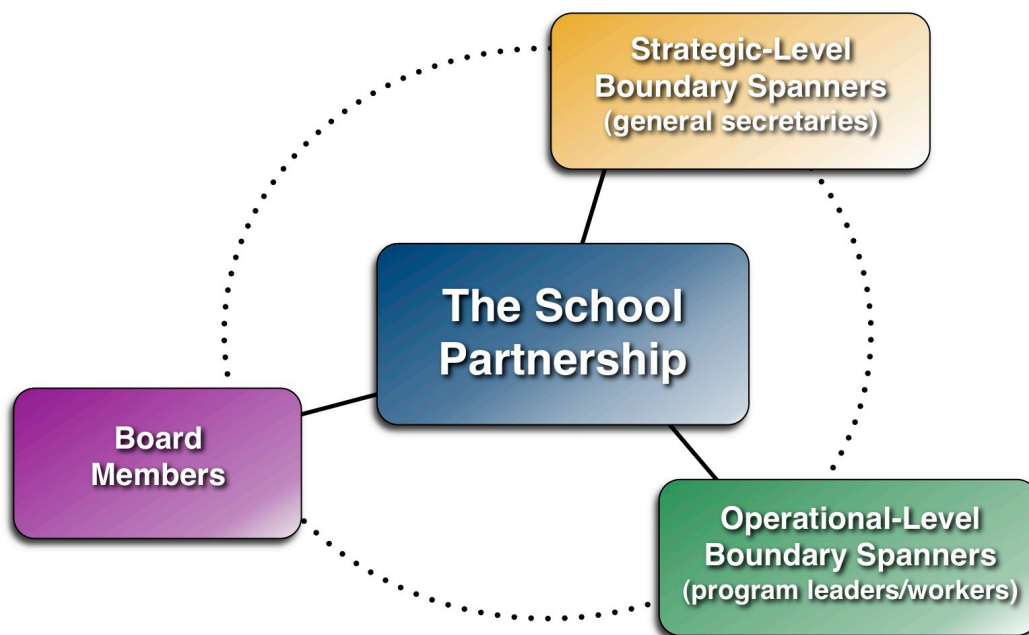


Diagram 4: Units of Analysis

6.2. *Scope of the Study*

The units of analysis that were described above helped to provide some delineation for the scope of the study. The actors that could be included are all of those currently involved in The School Partnership. That would include the general secretaries from the three NGOs, as well as the school staff members and the board members from the three organizations. The study will not include individuals who are part of the three partnering organizations but are not involved in The School Partnership.

6.3. *Case Study Type*

Research was conducted within an embedded, single-case design, which allowed a detailed investigation of trust within the partnership. The main case was The School Partnership, which also included three interrelated subunits (see diagram 5 on the next page). The first subunit is the trust relationship between the operational-level boundary spanners. The second subunit is the trust relationship between the strategic-level boundary spanners. The third subunit is the trust relationship between the board members.

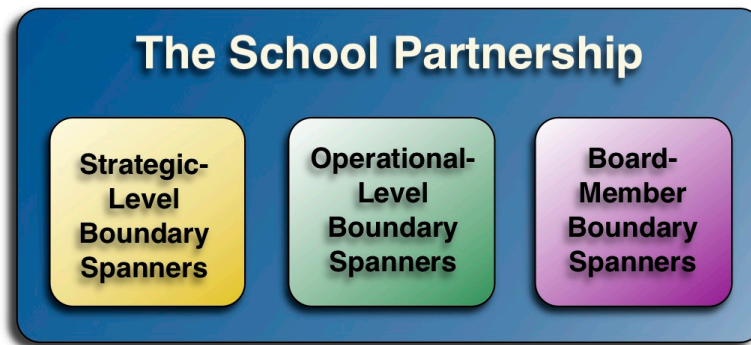


Diagram 5: An Embedded, Single-Case Study

Yin (2003) noted some potential weaknesses of embedded, single-case studies. One common mistake “occurs when the case study focuses only on the subunit level and fails to return to the larger unit of analysis”, and when that happens, “the original phenomenon of interest... has become the context and not the target of the study” (p. 45). Therefore, it has been important to answer the fourth research question: “How does the trust held by the three groups of boundary spanners (which constitutes interorganizational trust) impact the partnership?” That question brings the investigation back to the main case - The School Partnership.

6.4. Analytic Strategy

In order to examine the case and answer the four research questions on interorganizational trust, it was important to have an analytic strategy in place before the data was even collected. Yin (2003) noted the importance of analytic strategies, especially for case studies, which can “easily become stalled at the analytic stage” when investigators do not “[know] what to do with the evidence” that was collected (pp. 109-110). An analytic strategy for this case study is outlined in the following sections.

6.4.1. Adaptive Theory Approach

This research project employs Layder’s (1998) adaptive theory approach, as it uses existing theories and data, and it also adds new data and theoretical insights to the research field of interorganizational trust. Layder (1998) described the adaptive theory approach in the following:

Adaptive theory uses both inductive and deductive procedures for developing and elaborating theory... Adaptive theory both shapes, and is shaped by the empirical data that emerges from research. It allows the dual influence of extant theory (theoretical models) as well as those that unfold from (and are enfolded in) the research. Adaptive theorizing is an ever-present feature of the research process (p. 133).

This case study can be considered “adaptive” because it uses extant theoretical models and perspectives while, at the same time, it sets out to shape and develop theoretical perspectives on interorganizational trust. As Layder (1998) noted, “Adaptive theory is a synthetic approach which borrows from a number of others but also provides a distinctive alternative to them” (p. 132). This synthesis of resources is summarized in the following paragraphs, and it is described in further detail within chapter 8.

This study based some preliminary expectations on the studies of Zaheer et al. (2002) and Janowicz and Noorderhaven (2006), who proposed that the trust of strategic-level and operational-level boundary spanners have different forms, sources, and outcomes. It also used the theoretical model of Lewicki and Bunker (1995) to serve as a framework and categorization scheme for three different forms of trust. However, it later became clear that Lewicki and Bunker’s (1995) model lacked some explanatory power. Therefore, the model of presumptive trust from Kramer and Lewicki (2010) was used to add helpful perspectives on the development of trust.

This study has also set out to develop and expand theoretical perspectives about how boundary spanners can actively generate interorganizational trust. To do so, it borrowed from the research of Maguire et al. (2001) and Askvik (2003) the ideas that trustors can generate identification-based trust through engaging in a discursive narrative. This process unfolds through communicative acts that introduce or reinforce the idea that the boundary spanners have a shared organizational identity, which could lead to identification-based trust.

Thus, discourse theory has become an *orienting concept* in this study. Orienting concepts, as described by Layder (1998), are the “provisional means of ordering data... enabl[ing] the researcher to impose meaningful patterns on the data in a provisional way” (pp. 108-109). Foucault’s (2002, original printing 1969) concept of discursive statements helped to provisionally order the data that was collected during the field research, and it provided a foundational perspective about how particular narratives unfold and serve functions within a discourse.

Another orienting concept in this study is *collective intentionality*, which came from Searle's (1995; 2006) theory of social ontology. "Collective intentionality is the intentionality that is shared by different people, and just as there can be shared intentions to do things, so there can be shared beliefs and shared desires" (Searle, 2006, p. 16). Collective intentionality produces what Searle (1995) called "social facts" and "institutional facts" (p. 26), a "we consciousness" (p. 24), which can help describe a basis for identification-based trust between boundary spanners. Searle's (1995; 2006) concept has been useful in exploring and understanding the common and complimentary identities that can be shaped through discourse.

6.5. *Qualitative Data Sources*

Trust is a complex phenomena which is internal to the individuals who are placing their trust in another individual. The inherent complexity and internal subjectivity of trust requires the collection and use of qualitative data in this case study. Creswell (2007) noted the usefulness of qualitative methods when researchers "need a *complex*, detailed understanding of the issue... established by talking directly with people, going to their homes or places of work, and allowing them to tell the stories" (p. 40, original italics). Creswell (2007) also added that researchers should use qualitative sources when they "want to hear [the participants'] voices and minimize the power relationships that often exist between a researcher and the participants in a study" and whenever "quantitative measures and the statistical analyses simply do not *fit* the problem" (p. 40, original italics).

The data was collected from three sources of information: interviews, documents, and observations. The use of three types of sources has aided in what Yin (2003) called "the development of converging lines of inquiry" (p. 98) in which "multiple sources of data essentially provide multiple measures of the same phenomenon" (p. 99). The descriptions of each of the three different data sources are provided in the following sections.

6.5.1. *Documentary Data*

Documentary data was used as one source of information in this case study. It is, perhaps, the least significant of all three sources, yet it was still helpful for giving an accurate and complete picture of The School Partnership. As Yin (2003) noted, documents are valuable because they are readily available, "stable... unobtrusive... [and] exact" (p. 86).

They are also “helpful in verifying correct spellings and titles or names of organizations that might have been used in an interview... [and] can provide other specific details to corroborate information from other sources” (Ibid, p. 87). The first documentary source is data from websites: The School Partnership’s website, which gives descriptions of the three partners’ programs, staff bios, and the organizational structure employed by the school; and also the three owning organizations’ websites that provide details about each organization. The second documentary source is newsletter articles from the partnering organizations and the school, which provide of narrative of the shared goals, objectives, and mission of The School Partnership. The last source of documentary evidence comes from archived documents such as the *selskapsavtale*, the original partnership agreement.

6.5.2. Observation Data

The second source of data came from observations that took place during the first week of an academic year. Observations were made at some of the meetings in which strategic leaders and operational leaders were present. The interactions between boundary spanners, as well as presentations made by the strategic-level leaders, were observed and noted. These observations were usually brief and only took place in the moments between the scheduled interviews; however, some useful information was derived from them. For example, it was possible to note the unspoken ways that boundary spanners interacted with one another and the ways that the three general secretaries acted within the context of The School Partnership.

6.5.3. Interview Data

Interviews were the main source of data in this case study. There were twelve open-ended interviews, which offered the opportunity to delve deeply into the subject of trust, the relationships between the boundary spanners, and their intersubjective lifeworlds. In essence, the interviews allowed the questioner “to tap into their lived experience and the meanings with which they construct their everyday worlds” (Layder, 1998, p. 52).

Two of the interviewees were not boundary spanners, but they were key informants who had substantive, first-hand knowledge of the partnership. One was the current managing director/principal of the school, and the other was one of the founders of The School Partnership. Those interviews with the two key informants were important for getting

relevant background information, seeing the interaction of boundary spanners from a different perspective, and filling in any gaps of information.

Each of the twelve interviews lasted between forty-five minutes and one hour, except for one of the key informant interviews, which lasted two hours and fifteen minutes. The interviews have been summarized in diagram 6 on page 47.

6.6. Interview Themes

The interviews with boundary spanners were open-ended and generally focused on six main themes: the interviewees' relationships with their counterpart boundary spanners; their organizational role and their identity within the context of The School Partnership; the risks that might be involved in the partnership; their descriptions of the trust they hold in counterpart boundary spanners; the reasons for their trust (or distrust); and finally, the impacts of their trust (or distrust) on the partnership. It was important to cover those six themes because they linked back to existing theories and, perhaps, they could lead to some new and interesting theoretical concepts or perspectives. In addition, each interview ended with a time for closing comments from the respondents in which they could add whatever they would like to the conversation. The interviewees' ability to take control of the end of the conversation often led to extemporaneous comments that were fruitful for the data collection process. Many times they expressed their appreciation of their colleagues and the value of the partnership.

6.6.1. Roles and Identities

Much of the conversation during the interviews focused on the interviewees' role and sense of identity within the context of the partnership. These discussions were important to the study, as they linked back to Lewicki and Bunker's (1995) identification-based trust and also to the discursive construction of common or complimentary identities (Maguire et al., 2001). The discussions about identities also probed into the orienting concepts of discourse theory (Foucault, 2002, original printing 1969; Mills, 2004) and collective intentionality (Searle, 1995; 2006). Those orienting concepts were useful in determining the bases for identification-based trust between boundary spanners, and particularly they helped pinpoint the discursive structures that shaped identification-based trust.

6.6.2. Relationships with Counterparts

It was also important to determine the depth of relationships between the boundary spanners, because the theoretical model by Lewicki and Bunker (1995) is based on a shared interpersonal history, in which “trust between interdependent actors increases or decreases as a function of their cumulative history of personal interaction” (Kramer and Lewicki, 2010, p. 258). It became obvious throughout the course of interviews, that there was a wide range in the history and depth of the relationships between the boundary spanners. Some of them were new in their roles within the partnership and had never even met their counterparts at the time of the interview, and in that case, Kramer and Lewicki’s (2010) presumptive trust was a more useful perspective for describing the bases of their trust. Other boundary spanners had shared a long history and friendship with their counterparts. The variety of responses led to some interesting conclusions that will be discussed in chapters 7 and 8.

6.6.3. Risks

Before broaching the subject of trust, it was also important to talk about the potential risks involved in the partnership. As scholars have noted, “trust is inherently risky” (Askvik, 2003, p. 2; see also Luhmann, 1988; Deutsch, 1958; Lane, 1998). If there is no risk, then there is no need for trust. During the interviews, the conversations about risk seemed to pave the way for the conversations about trust. It also lent credence and weight to the concept of trust, and it presented a challenge to the interviewees to consider how and why they actually trust their counterparts in the face of risk.

6.6.4. Forms of Trust

After talking about risk, the conversation moved on to a description of the trust or distrust that the respondents held in their counterparts. This began with a conversation about the definition of trust to ensure that the interviewer and interviewee were working from the same construct. The conversation proceeded by asking the interviewee to describe the trust or distrust they held in their boundary-spanner counterparts. The interviewees’ answers were critical for linking back to the initial research questions about the forms of trust among the different levels of boundary spanners. Their responses indicated if they held calculus-based, knowledge-based, identification-based trust, or presumptive trust.

It was often useful to talk with the interviewees about each individual counterpart. However, sometimes the interviewees were also able to make general statements about the level of trust they held in the entire group of boundary spanners. These conversations about the bases of trust then naturally unfolded into the next interview theme, which is the reasons for trust or distrust.

6.6.5. *Bases of Trust*

After talking with the interviewees about their forms of trust, it was natural to talk about the bases for their trust. The question was posed either as *why* questions or as less threatening *how* questions (Yin, 2003, p. 20). For example: “How did you come to trust this individual? How is that different or the same as the way you came to trust another individual?” The interviewees could then go into detail about the process of developing trust or distrust in their counterparts and why they trust. This discussion linked back to the research questions and the variables in the study. For example, if interviewees talked about trusting their counterparts because they came to realize, over time, that they shared the same goals and mission, then it could point to the dependent variable of *Identification-Based Trust* based on the independent variable of *Discovering Common or Complimentary Identities*.

6.6.6. *Impacts of Trust*

Toward the end of each interview, the respondents were asked to describe the impacts that trust had on the partnership. This line of questioning linked their trust back to the partnership as a whole, and it answered the fourth research question. That was an important element in an embedded, single-case study design such as this one, in which the three groups of boundary spanners are *subunits*, and the *main case* is The School Partnership. Linking the issue of trust back to The School Partnership helped to avoid focusing on the subunits, what Yin (2003) described as one of the “pitfalls” of embedded design (p. 45).

6.6.7. *A Quick Reference for the Interview Data*

The following table can be used as a quick reference for the interview data used in this study. It compiles the six themes that were described in the previous sections and combines it with information about the specific actors in the three boundary-spanner groups who were interviewed.

Boundary-Spanner Group	Actors that Were Interviewed	Focus of The Interviews	Number of Interviews
Operational-Level Boundary Spanners	program leader and program worker for The Humanitarian Aid Organization's program; program leader and program worker for The Christian Mission and Aid Organization's program; program leader for The Christian Student Organization's program	<i>open-ended interview questions about:</i> relationships with other operational-level boundary spanners; risks of partnership; descriptions of trust levels; reasons for trust; organizational roles and identities; impacts of trust. Plus an opportunity for any additional comments from interviewees.	5
Strategic-Level Boundary Spanners	general secretary of The Humanitarian Aid Organization; general secretary of the Christian Mission and Aid Organization; general secretary of the Christian Student Organization	<i>open-ended interview questions about:</i> relationships with other strategic-level boundary spanners; risks of partnership; descriptions of trust levels; reasons for trust; organizational roles and identities; impacts of trust. Plus an opportunity for any additional comments from interviewees.	3
Board Members	chairman of the board (representing The Christian Mission and Aid Organization); board member (representing The Humanitarian Aid Organization); board member (representing the Christian Student Organization); two board members, <i>ex officio</i> (representing the school staff)	<i>open-ended interview questions about:</i> relationships with other board members; risks of partnership; descriptions of trust levels; reasons for trust; organizational roles and identities; impacts of trust. Plus an opportunity for any additional comments from interviewees.	5
Key Informants	the <i>daglig leder/rector</i> (managing director/principal) of the school; one of the key founders of the school (no longer active)	<i>open-ended interview questions about:</i> background information; impacts of trust; discursive structures. Plus an opportunity for any additional comments from interviewees.	2
			Total 12 ¹

Diagram 6: Interview Data Table ¹

¹ Note that the total number of interviewees is three less than the sum of all interviews. The reason for the difference is that one of the operational-level boundary spanners and one of the strategic-level boundary spanners were also representatives on the board. Also, the managing director of the school who is one of the key informants, is also on the board.

6.7. Coding the Data

The interviews were recorded and stored as digital audio files for later examination and analysis. The audio files were added to a software package for Mac, called TAMSanalyzer, and as the interview audio was replayed, key segments of the interviews were then transcribed verbatim. Those interview segments were the statements that linked to the research questions or “notations of ‘interesting’ answers or quotations” (Layder, 1998, p. 53). Codes were then added to the interview segments, as the analytical process unfolded. These codes helped to bring some order to the data provided by interviews, and they pointed toward recurring themes, theoretical concepts, or anything else that was noteworthy that came up during the interview audio.

The first codes that were added were *provisional codes*, which Layder (1998) described in the following statement:

I would use ‘provisional’ code labels or names to indicate parts of the transcript which triggered some association with a particular concept, category, or idea. In essence, the provisional code indicated a tentative attempt to order and classify the data in some way which could be revised or confirmed at a later date (pp. 53-54).

Some of the provisional codes used in the early phases of analysis were *risks* (interview excerpts that expressed some potential risks involved in the partnership), *different_identities* (interview excerpts that described different or even opposing identities among counterpart boundary spanners), *common_identities* (interview excerpts about common identities between the boundary spanners, which could be common values, goals, mission, vision for example), *cross_orgs* (statements that described previous experiences of counterpart boundary spanners working together in another organization), and *relationships* (statements that described the relationships between counterpart boundary spanners).

As the analysis progressed, *core codes* were added. Layder (1998) described core codes in the following:

Coding in this sense helps to develop a more specific focus on the emerging data and gives direction to the analysis by highlighting relevant questions that one might want to ask about the data. Giving names to the ‘main points’ also helps the researcher to become more familiar with what the findings include or contain... Overall, coding in this sense helps to answer the questions such as what themes and patterns give shape to this data (p. 56).

Some of the core codes used in the study were: *collective_intentionality* (interview excerpts that indicated the “we consciousness” [Searle, 1995, p. 24] - the goals and values that are shared collectively by the group as a whole - not just the sum of individuals), *identification_based_trust* (interview excerpts that pointed toward Lewicki and Bunker’s [1995] highest order of trust), *shaping_common_comp_ident* (interview excerpts that point toward a discursive construction of identity), and *presumptive_trust* (excerpts that point toward Kramer and Lewicki’s [2010] theoretical concept of an *a priori* trust that exists without a shared historical relationship between actors). As the code, *presumptive_trust*, kept surfacing in the emerging interview data, it became evident that Kramer and Lewicki’s (2010) model of presumptive trust should be added to the theoretical framework and used to help understand the development of interorganizational trust.

This coding process helped to pare down an inordinate amount of data and to organize it for later analysis. This was especially useful when it was time to recall particular data as the study’s findings were developed and analyzed. It was helpful to have a database that included the interviews, which could be easily searched to find relevant interview excerpts that correlated with particular forms of interorganizational trust.

6.8. Theoretical Memos

As Layder (1998) aptly noted, “devising codes and applying them, in and of itself, does not add up to theory” (p. 58). That is where theoretical memos are helpful, as they track the process of theory testing and theory generating throughout the span of research activities. The memo-writing process allows the researcher to “ask questions, pose problems, suggest connections, and so on about how the properties of concepts or categories are revealed, exemplified or contradicted in some way by the incoming data and the process of coding” (Ibid, pp. 58-59).

The research analysis for this case study began with a theoretical memo, which started the process of linking data with theory. As the research data grew and the analysis began, thoughts, ideas, and repeating themes were noted in the theoretical memo. Those ideas and themes then began to emerge into something more substantial, the findings and the analysis of chapters 7 and 8.

6.9. Addressing Concerns of Research Quality

The research design, which was described in the previous sections, has produced useful data and analysis about the development of interorganizational trust. However, any research design should be tested to establish its quality and usefulness to the academic community. Yin (2003) presented four tests of social research quality that are explicated in the following sections.

6.9.1. Construct Validity

Construct validity is one important element in the overall quality of a research project, and it is achieved by “establishing operational measures for the concepts being studied” (Yin, 2003, p. 34). This is a major challenge due to the fact that this research project investigates the internal attitudes of individuals – not their external behaviors. Since the primary source of data was interviews, it was important to explain to the interviewees the concepts that were being covered. The interviewees needed to understand and use the same definition of trust that the interviewer was using whenever they responded to the questions, and they also needed to understand major concepts, such as *boundary spanners*. These explanations were given at the beginning and throughout the interview, and the explanations were made with caution in order to preclude bias in the interviewees’ responses.

It was also helpful to use some of the constructs that were provided by previous researchers such as Askvik (2003) and Maguire et al. (2001). They demonstrated the ways in which they were able to operationalize the different levels of trust. For example, Askvik (2003) noted that the interviewees who exhibited *identification-based trust* made statements about the “goodwill” of trustees, such as they were “good parents” who have a “positive, helpful attitude” (p. 16). By looking for similar constructs as Askvik (2003) and Maguire et al. (2001) had previously used, this study has been more likely to maintain construct validity.

Two other methods for increasing construct validity were “the use of multiple sources of data” and having “the draft case study report reviewed by the key informants” (Yin, 2003, p. 36). In this study, the triangulation of interviews, observations, and documentary evidence all converged toward the findings and served to strengthen its validity. A draft of this case study report was presented to the participants in the study “as a way of corroborating the essential facts and evidence presented in the case report” (Ibid, p. 159). Any “exceptionally

helpful” comments from the participants could then be added to the final draft before it was submitted (Ibid, p. 159).

6.9.2. Internal Validity

Internal validity addresses the causal relationships of the study, “whereby certain conditions are shown to lead to other conditions, as distinguished from spurious relationships” (Yin, 2003, p. 34). Admittedly, this case study has some inherent weaknesses regarding internal validity. There are no strong concept indicator links that can ensure perfect validity. As Layder (1998) noted, “the important point to bear in mind... is that the empirical indicators of behavioral concepts are primarily to do with illuminating the subjective worlds of people from a broadly ‘insider’ point of view” (p. 87). Therefore, the validity of the data in this case has ultimately depended on the answers that came from the interviewees and the observations of the researcher to determine the level of trust and its causes. Once again, in order to help ensure this study’s validity, it was important to make sure that the interviewees had a clear understanding of key concepts and definitions.

6.9.3. External Validity

External validity refers to analytic generalizations that can be developed from the study. The results of this study can be generalized to other NGO partnerships. Most of these partnerships would have strategic-level and operational-level boundary spanners, and most of them would have a board of directors. It is presumable, therefore, that the boundary spanners within them would develop and maintain trust in ways that are similar to the boundary spanners in this study. However, it should be noted that future studies are required for ensuring the external validity of these findings, particularly since this was the first study of its kind that focused on NGO partnerships in particular.

6.9.4. Reliability

Reliability is the last of four quality tests presented by Yin (2003). This test concerns the repeatability of the case study’s procedures, and its goal “is to minimize the errors and biases in the study” (Ibid, p. 37). This is a situation in which the software package, TAMSanalyzer, was especially useful. It built a research database of data from the field and a theoretical memo that traced the early processes of theory development.

Another method of ensuring reliability was the case study protocol (Yin, 2003). The protocol was developed as the research project progressed, and it included important information for current and future researchers. First, it included a broad overview of the project: objectives, the propositions about trust development, and references to other key studies. Second, the protocol included basic information about field interviews: which organizational actors were interviewed (not including the individuals' names), the level of access that was granted, and the procedures used in the interviews and observations. Third, the protocol included an interview guide with list of preliminary interview questions that were asked of the various boundary spanners. Fourth, it included guidelines for reporting the data. Notably, a major limitation with the protocol is the anonymity of the sources, which would preclude another researcher from actually returning and repeating the exact same case study some time in the future.

6.10. Challenges

There were some challenges in carrying out this research project. The first challenge was the discontinuity of boundary spanners within the time span of analysis; i.e., some boundary spanners have come and gone throughout the past decade. Therefore, the development of trust among these groups was difficult to track. However, that also shed some insights on what new boundary spanners may experience when they enter into a partnership.

The second challenge was the measurement of trust and its causes. This was largely dependent upon the subjective viewpoints of the interviewees and their use of descriptive language. Their responses and descriptions were coded and categorized in TAMSA Analyzer and grouped according to the forms of trust. However, it was not possible to be absolutely certain when determining their level of trust and its causes. Thus, the statement by King et al. (1994) applies: "The conclusions are uncertain... Indeed, uncertainty is a central aspect of all research and all knowledge about the world" (p. 9). The results of the investigation can not be completely certain due to the subjective nature of trustors' attitudes and their responses to the interview questions. However, the reporting of the actors' trust is done with clarity and as much detail as possible.

The final challenge in the study involved language. The case study involved Norwegian organizations and Norwegian boundary spanners, yet it was conducted entirely in English. Therefore, some of the meaning may have been lost, either by the interviewer or the interviewees.

7. Empirical Evidence of Interorganizational Trust Development

The empirical evidence from the field interviews, observations, and supporting documents are presented in the following chapter. The data from each group of boundary spanners is presented, and it is compared with the theories and frameworks that have been stated in previous chapters. That data is reported in the same order as the interview themes from section 6.6 (see also diagram 6 on page 47). Those six themes were important tools because they helped link the emerging research data back to the theoretical models and four research questions.

The first theme in each of the reports that follow is *Roles and Identities*, which helped identify the characteristics of identification-based trust and also pointed to clues about the discursive construction of identification-based trust. The second theme is *Relationships with Counterparts*, which links back to theories of trust (i.e., the three forms by Lewicki and Bunker (1995) that are based on historical relationships, and presumptive trust by Kramer and Lewicki (2010), which can develop in the absence of shared interpersonal history). The third theme in the following reports is *Risks*, because as researchers have noted, a situation entailing risk is required for trust to be relevant (Askvik, 2003; Luhmann, 1988; Deutsch, 1958; Lane, 1998). The fourth and fifth themes are combined in the following reports because they are so closely interrelated: *The Forms of Trust* and *The Bases of Trust*. They are essential in answering the first three research questions about how and why the boundary spanners trust one another. The final theme, *Impacts of Trust*, links back to the fourth research question about how interorganizational trust affects the overall partnership. Finally, after all the data has been presented for each group of boundary spanners, the chapter ends by summarizing the findings and answering the four research questions.

7.1. Operational-Level Boundary Spanners

The first subunit in the case study is the operational-level boundary spanners (for a review on subunits within the embedded single-case study, refer to section 6.3 and diagram 5 on page 40). This group included three program leaders and three program workers, who shared responsibility for teaching and the day-to-day operations of The School Partnership. The program leaders were each responsible for overseeing their respective programs, while the program workers were responsible for administration of the program and working closely with the international students. The interviews with the operational-level boundary spanners

began with each of them talking about the way they saw their individual role and their sense of identity within the partnership. This was a fruitful discussion that led to empirical evidence for identification-based trust as well as the discursive construction of identity, which can be a factor in generating identification-based trust (Maguire et al., 2001). Those discussions are noted in the next section on the operational-level boundary spanners' roles and identities.

7.1.1. Roles and Identities: We are, together, The School Partnership.

Several of the operational-level boundary spanners talked about the cohesive group identity they shared. One of the program leaders talked about it in this way:

I think we all have this [School Partnership] identity. First of all, we are [The School Partnership]. We are not just [The Christian Mission and Aid Organization] or [The Humanitarian Aid Organization] or [The Christian Student Organization]. We are [The School Partnership]. So [The School Partnership] is our focus, and we really want to make [The School Partnership] good, and I think that has helped us to keep this focus that we make each other better and we help each other.

It seemed the managing director/principal of the school has played an active part of shaping a common identity among the school's staff, by giving them a sense of ownership in the school and its future direction. One of the program leaders described the principal's leadership style in this way:

It's very crucial that we have a principal and this [School Partnership] identity... [The principal] spends a lot time, sometimes I think too much, but she really wants us to have a say in where we are going now and what's the next move. Even though we can't always agree on how to do it, we all want things to improve.

The operational-level boundary spanners' sense of shared identity has been discussed openly among them. As one of the program workers noted, "We all need the success of the other programs, and we all become better when the others become better. That thought is much stronger than the wish for getting everything yourself. It's something we have actually discussed". Statements such as that one demonstrated a strong sense of shared organizational identity among the operational-level boundary spanners.

In fact, one of the program leaders felt that there was too much time and emphasis placed on developing common identity and gave the following response:

I feel that we have worked too much on the identity of the school, giving less space to develop the different programs... there is no space in the schedule... we need more space for the three of us [the program leaders] to work together and also for us to develop and increase... or to work on our programs.

Clearly, there have been several discussions about the school identity that have taken place between the operational-level boundary spanners and the principal. According to Maguire et al. (2001), those discussions are part of a discourse narrative that generated “socially constructed meaning” (p. 304) and gave them a sense of shared ownership and belonging within the partnership. Their sense of shared meaning and togetherness, according to Maguire et al. (2001), “emerges from the productive power of discourse and is continuously created and recreated through conversation and narrative” (p. 304). Therefore, the more the operational-level boundary spanners talked about their common goals, responsibility, and mission; the more they developed a common sense of organizational identity. Thus, they are able to develop identification-based trust in the process.

From the perspective of Foucault (2002, original printing 1969), those ongoing discussions that took place between the operational-level boundary spanners and the principal produced a “statement... the elementary unit of discourse” (p. 90). That discursive statement could be labeled: *We are, together, The School Partnership*. The label encapsulates all of the discursive narrative about their shared organizational identity. At this point, it is important to note a discursive statement is much more than just the singular sentence that represents it (in this case the sentence, *We are, together, The School Partnership*). As Foucault noted (2002, original printing 1969), “the statement is not the same kind of unit as the sentence, the proposition or the speech act; it cannot be referred therefore to the same criteria” (p. 97). He further clarified what a statement is and what it is not. He noted it is ultimately something that serves a function:

The statement is not therefore a structure; ... it is a function of existence that properly belongs to signs and on the basis of which one may then decide, through analysis or intuition, whether or not they ‘make sense’, according to what rule they follow one another or are juxtaposed, of what they are the sign, and what sort of act is carried out by their formulation (oral or written). One should not be surprised, then, if one has failed to find structural criteria of unity for the statement; this is because it is not in

itself a unit, but a function that cuts across a domain of structures and possible unities, and which reveals them, with concrete contents, in time and space (Ibid, pp. 97-98).

Therefore, the statement, *We are, together; The School Partnership*, serves a function within the group of operational-level boundary spanners. It helps create a common identity among them, or in Foucault's (2002, original printing 1969) words, "the statement circulates" among them (p. 118) and it "allows or prevents the realizations of a desire, serves or resists various interests, participates in challenge and struggle, and becomes a theme of appropriation or rivalry" (p. 118). As the discussions about common goals for The School Partnership continued to unfold between the operational-level boundary spanners, the discursive statement served its function and created a strong sense of shared organizational identity between them.

Searle's (1995; 2006) concept of "collective intentionality", another orienting concept in this study, helps describe what came to exist through the statement, *We are, together; The School Partnership*. Searle (1995) wrote, "the crucial element in collective intentionality is a sense of doing (wanting, believing, etc) something together, and the individual intentionality that each person has is derived from the collective intentionality they share" (p. 24). Each operational-level boundary spanner in the partnership intended to accomplish the goals of the partnership. Yet, according to Searle's (1995; 2006) concept, their own intentions actually sprang from shared goals, the collective intentionality, that existed between them.

7.1.2. Relationships with Counterparts: "almost like friends"

All of the operational-level boundary spanners interviewed said that they had good relationships with the others. They do "fun things" like "play squash together" during breaks, share meals during work days, and most of them ride in the same car back and forth to work together, which gives them time to talk about work, as well as their personal lives. One of the program leaders described the working relationships this way:

From the start, I thought it was challenging to work so closely with people in a way that we had to be personal... it would not be possible to only relate to people in a professional way and then go... So it was scary in the beginning when I didn't know this culture, but now I really appreciate it.

Even though the relationships between the operational-level boundary spanners were close, they could still not be considered intimate friendships. One of them described it by

saying, “we are very good professional colleagues and almost like friends, but I don’t use my spare time with them... we belong to different churches and we have different backgrounds”.

Another program worker also said,

I would describe it as a very good relationship. I’m not so interested to have them as friends... We are more than just professionals. When we drive in the car.... we can discuss so much... and we have fun, and we are very different but it’s no problem. I like it!

The level of relationships between the operational-level boundary spanners were rather consistent throughout the group. They all seemed to be on good terms with each other, but, at the same time, not especially close friends outside of the workplace. However, it was clear that they had spent enough time together to develop Lewicki and Bunker’s (1995) identification-based trust in an “interpersonal framework... [in which] trust changes character and texture as the relationship develops” (p. 167).

7.1.3. Risks: Competition and damaged reputation

There were some risks within the partnership that operational-level boundary spanners felt were important. One of the risks they talked about was related to the way that the programs receive their funding. The funding comes through student fees. Therefore, it is important for each program to reach a minimum number of students to be able to cover the expenses for the year. At the same time there is also a maximum number of students each program can handle. Every year since The School Partnership began, one program has had too many student applications while the other two programs have not had quite enough. Therefore, the program leader who had too many applications began a process of handing over the extra applications to the program leaders who needed more students to meet the minimum requirements. Through that process of sharing applications, each program has always been able have enough students to meet the minimum requirements.

Some of the staff members brought up the challenges associated with the issue of student enrollment and funding. One of them said,

I think, as a school, the risk is that we ‘steal’ each other’s students, that we compete for who gets the students. We see that students don’t often know so well why they apply for one program and not the other. Sometimes it’s actually possible for us, when we see the application to say, ‘You really don’t fit our program. You should be in the other

program.’ But of course, if one program gets a much higher amount of applicants, then the risk is that this program will not give away applicants just because they want the best ones.

Regarding the same issue, another one of the operational-level boundary spanners said,

[My program] is getting sixty applicants to come in the program, and we have sixteen seats. We have enough, when the other two programs are struggling. They only get ten or fifteen applicants. When I interview people, I kind of keep it in mind that these people can go [to the other programs]. But I, of course, pick the best, but I think they [the other program leaders] also trust me that I am working with them. I’m not giving them someone I wouldn’t take in myself.

Another risk that operational-boundary spanners considered important was the possibility of losing their reputation due to problems faced by the other organizations. One of them said, “let’s say that a scandal occurred in one of the programs..., then it would probably be bad for the whole school - [my program] included”. One of the program leaders framed it this way,

Being in a “trinity” with the two other programs, it’s more like if something bad happens in [one of them], it affects the whole [school], because [the school] is known as one, so if there is a bad publicity from any of the students, it will attack us as well. So that’s the risk of being together.

However, there can be positive effects that come from shared publicity, too. The same interviewee was quick to point out, “Mainly the P.R. [public relations] that we are getting is very positive so that helps us as well”.

7.1.4. Forms and Bases of Trust: “I really trust that people give their best.”

All of the operational-level boundary spanners said that they trusted their counterparts, especially when it came to their motivation to do the right thing and to do what is good for the school. One of them said,

I really have very high thoughts about my colleagues, when it comes to believing that they invest as much as they can in their work... [However,] it’s different from person to person and from period to period in their life, how much is possible [for them] to give, but I really trust that people give their best.

Likewise, another of them also said,

We have a kind of competition, you know, but at the same time I really trust that [the others] want the best for the school. I do. But it is a very difficult balance, of course. They want the best for their program, but when it comes to resources, when it comes to recruitment, when we have to share all the students that are here, it's difficult. But I trust that they have good intentions, and I also trust that they accept me as a person.

a) Identification-Based Trust

The operational-level boundary spanners displayed traits of identification-based trust in one another. They spoke of the common values, common struggles, and common goals; and those commonalities all correspond with Lewicki and Bunker's (1995) model of identification-based trust. For example, one of the program leaders talked about the other leaders and said, "I trust that both of them have good intentions, both, when it comes to their work, they do this not because they need a salary, but because they have a vision". Another one of the leaders talked about how they set aside minor differences and focus on their common goals and vision. He said, "I still trust my colleagues that they really want to move the school to a better place, but we disagree on how we should do it. I really trust that we have this common goal, but how to get there is different".

One of the strongest indicators of identification-based trust is visible whenever a trustee ensures that the interests of a trustor are protected, even when the trustor is not around to monitor the situation. As Lewicki and Bunker (1995) noted, "Identification-based trust thus permits a party to serve as the other's agent and to substitute for the other in interpersonal transactions" (p. 151). This unmonitored protection of interests is seen in this response from one of the program leaders,

I can be away sick, and I know my colleagues will take over... even though I am a very strong leader and keep my vision clear, but if I'm sick or anything and am not here, I trust my colleagues to take over the whole program and run it as I wanted them to do it, and I think they want me to do the same... Even though we are doing things differently, we respect each other, and I would follow [another program leader's] way of doing his program if I was taking over it.

One basis for identification-based trust among operational-level boundary spanners was their commitment to common goals. When they were asked for the reasons why they trusted the others, one of them answered in this way:

I think by the commitment they show in making this a good school, because we have regular meetings with the staff, and the way they are showing their concerns to raise the standards and make the school better. I mean we don't have to agree on how to do it, but they are sincere... I think the dedication that they show to the work is very important for me to trust them. They are actually walking the extra mile if it's needed... They are really dedicated to the work, no one is opting out. I mean, if you have to go and do these evening classes or something, they turn out. They are dedicated people, so I know where their heart is, and [I know] they are not here to earn money.

Some of the operational-level boundary spanners said that their trust in the others was based on common values. For example, one of them talked about trust and said, "It's based on knowledge about their lives and their values". Some of the boundary spanners also talked about the importance of all three organizations being based on Christian religious ideals. One of them said, "being faith-based organizations, that's kind of the supreme goal that we all have. We don't even have to talk about it. We know what we want, so it's the agenda that's always there". These bases of trust align with Lewicki and Bunker's (1995) model, which posited that identification-based trust is developed when the actors have a sense of "collective identity... work toward joint products or goals [and] come to believe in and stand for the same core values" (Lewicki and Bunker, 1995, pp. 152-153).

The bases of trust described above and also in section 7.1.1. (*Roles and Identities: We are, together, The School Partnership*) point toward two of the study's independent variables: *Discovering Common or Complimentary Identities* and *Shaping Common or Complimentary Identities*. In one way, operational-level boundary spanners passively discovered a common sense identity because they had particular similarities, such as their Christian faith and common values. In other ways, there was clearly the discursive process described in section 7.1.1, which produced the statement, *We are, together, The School Partnership* and the collective intentionality that moved them toward common goals for The School Partnership. The more they developed the shared commitment to the goals, values, and vision of The School Partnership, the more they could rely upon each other to meet those goals.

b) Knowledge-Based Trust

Some of the members of the group also displayed traits of knowledge-based trust in each other. They talked about placing their trust in their counterparts after watching them and seeing that they are “doing their job and the tasks that they are supposed to do”. Their trust was “grounded in the other’s predictability” (Lewicki and Bunker, 1995, p. 149). It did not seem to be based on goodwill or any sense of the internal motivations of the trustee, just as Askvik (2003) found, “the trustor’s knowledge does not imply any comprehension of the incentives behind the [trustee’s] behavior” (p. 2).

However, this trust among operational-level boundary spanners was not perfect. While all of them that were interviewed said that they trust, at least, “the intentions” of the others, not all boundary spanners could say that they trust each other on every level. It seems that there is also some level of distrust among some of them, which “is more about details” than issues of vision, goals, or motivations. One of them said, “they don’t always show up when we agree that they will show up... it’s just because they forget... and that’s frustrating sometimes”. One common issue that came up among some of the operational-level boundary spanners was that some of them “don’t always follow until the task is finished”. One of the program leaders wanted to make something clear, however: “It’s important for me to say that this is more often about things like this, details and so-on, but if a big crisis occurs abroad... they work for 24 hours if it’s necessary”. In those cases, there seemed to be trust in the intentions of the other person, but not necessarily high expectations about their performance. One of the operational-level boundary spanners was able to articulate this separation between trusting a counterpart’s intentions while not always expecting certain outcomes:

I would say that I trust all of them, but I wouldn’t always be confident that all tasks would be completed by everybody even though I trust them... it could be that I know that they prioritize differently, based on things that have happened before, it could be that I know things about their life situation that makes it easier for me to know that they might not be able to complete this.

Overall, the operational-level boundary spanners did display trust in one another, even though there were some doubts about whether or not certain members of the group would always follow through with assigned tasks.

The empirical data suggests that operational-level boundary spanners based that trust on observations and knowledge of trustees' behavior, which helped predict future behavior. One boundary spanner noted,

I'm basing my trust on them doing their job and the tasks that they are supposed to do, that they do it on time and that they do it well. Then I feel okay. It's easy to play ball with them because they do what they are supposed to do.

As some operational-level boundary spanners based their trust on the track record of their counterparts, it pointed to the independent variable: *Observing Predictable Behavior in Trustees*.

The following diagram illustrates the forms and basis of trust between operational-level boundary spanners. The diagram follows the same layout as diagram 2 (refer to page 35), which illustrated the variables of Lewicki and Bunker's (1995) model of trust. The diagram below adds examples of the study's independent variables: *Observing Predictable Behavior in Trustees*, *Discovering Common or Complimentary Identities*, and *Shaping Common or Complimentary Identities*.

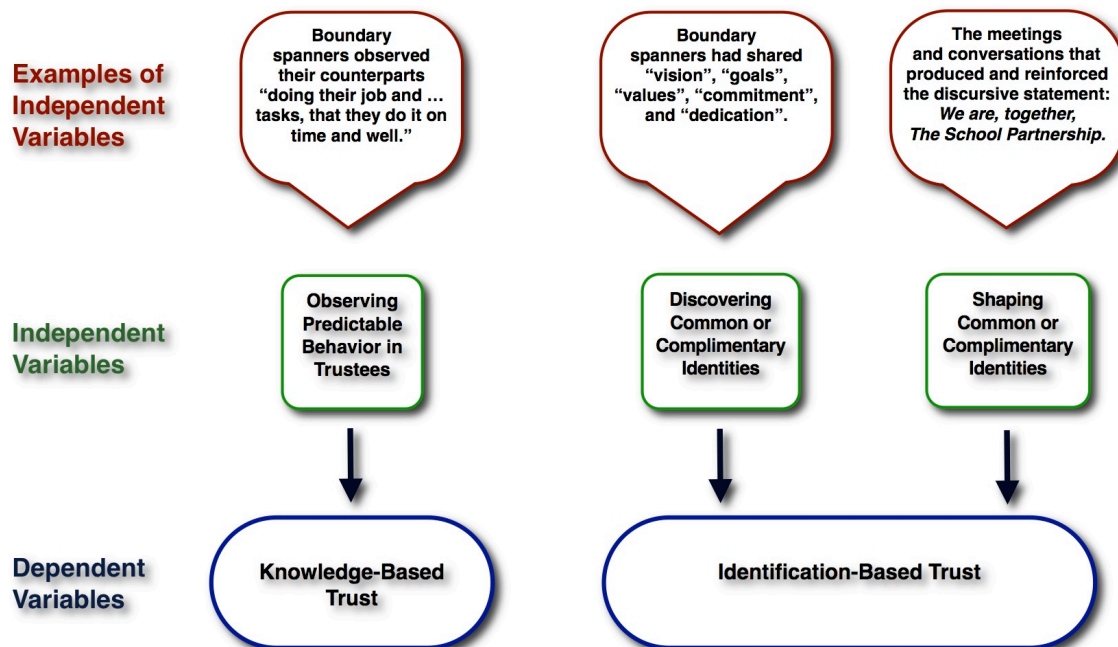


Diagram 7: Forms and Bases of Operational-Level Boundary Spanners' Trust

7.1.5. Impact of Trust: “We dare to give more.”

When the operational-level boundary spanners were asked to talk about the ways in which interorganizational trust had impacted The School Partnership, they were keen to talk about the impact it had on their work environment and also the way it impacted the students. They agreed that it was “very important for the quality of the school”. One of them talked about the ways in which trust helped to create an open environment: “First of all, I think it’s improving the program in many respects when we bring out our opinions in an honest way.... so it’s fruitful for good solutions and its very fruitful for having fun when you are at the workplace”. Another staff member talked about the way that trust enabled them to give more of themselves in their work - without fear of being taking advantage of.

I think that it definitely makes us better because we dare to give more, both of ourselves and also our qualifications, in the group. When I work on something, and I give my work to someone, I trust that they will use it for the best of the students - not to make themselves higher. Our main focus is the students, and that they would get the most out of their stay here. Of course, it’s much nicer to be on the staff where people trust each other. We have a good relationship and social life at work. If someone has a problem with something, it’s easy to talk with one of the others, because you trust them. Not only trust, but you also have high thoughts of them, when it comes to their ability to give advice.

Finally, operational-level boundary spanners talked about how trust can have a direct impact on the students that are in the school, especially since a major topic that is taught is actually trusting and being trustworthy. One of the program workers aptly noted, “I think because we teach the students about trust, if we cannot do it ourselves, then we should stop teaching about it”. Therefore, the trust that was displayed by the operational-level boundary spanners actually served as a real-world example for the students that they were teaching within the school.

7.2. Strategic-Level Boundary Spanners

The second group in the study was the strategic-level boundary spanners, which were the three general secretaries of the organizations that owned the school. All of them began serving in that role after the formation of The School Partnership in 2001. At the time of the field interviews, the general secretary of The Humanitarian Aid Organization had served in

the position for four years, the general secretary of The Christian Student Organization had served for nine months, and the general secretary of The Christian Mission and Aid Organization had served for five months. There was little time for two of the general secretaries to familiarize themselves with the partnership and the other leaders. In fact, at the time of the interviews, the general secretary of The Christian Mission and Aid Organization had not yet had the opportunity to meet either one of the other two general secretaries because of the short amount of time in that position. Therefore, those relationships were new.

7.2.1. Roles and Identities: "proud to be a part of this!"

When the strategic-level leaders were interviewed and asked to openly discuss the way that they viewed their roles and identities, they talked first and foremost about their roles as general secretaries within their own organizations. They talked about their loyalty to their organizations and their accountability to the boards that govern them. They made it clear that their first responsibility was to lead their own organizations, but at the same time they also considered The School Partnership to be another important part of their responsibilities.

One of the general secretaries was effusive as he described his identification with The School Partnership. He stated, "I'm proud to be part of this!" He went on to note, "I'm very, very happy with this cooperation, and I would like to strengthen it, and that's why I am also giving priority to come here and teach." His comments were corroborated during a presentation he made to the student body. He heartily welcomed the students to the campus and later told them, "I am proud to be a part of [The School Partnership's] community".

When another general secretary was asked about his role and identity in the partnership, he was thoughtful and gave careful consideration to his answers:

Well, it's important for me to try to be precise and to try to think through that question, because I am also the leader of the board that owns the place, and as you can imagine, there could be situations where you have a conflict between the property which has one leader and the school which has another leader. It has been very important for me, what should I say, to be intentional on who I am in different roles. So when I am on the board, I am there on the board, and I am... trying to separate the two and not mix them. So if there is a conflict, well, then I am interested in having that conflict come to the surface. I understand that the way I conduct my role here is important because I can

stop it, sort of put a wet carpet on top over the conflict, if that is my aim, but my aim is the opposite actually.

Although the general secretaries see their organizations as having different purposes and visions and at times even conflicting, they still share common ground when it comes to The School Partnership. They made comments that can point to one of the independent variables in this case study, *Discovering Common or Complimentary Identities*. That is what Maguire et al. (2001) called the “different identities [that] are complimentary and mutually understood to imply normative controls on behavior that evoke predictability and goodwill” (p. 304). One of the general secretaries said,

I think that we are aiming at the same goal, and we are not in competition. We have a common desire to make a difference in the world... Of course, if we have some common interest with other people or organizations, it makes us reach longer in our efforts. It's good to cooperate.

Another general secretary said, “So, there are no boundaries between our three organizations. We are a little bit different, but for us it is a strength”, and the third general secretary also noted, “What we can accomplish together is much more than what we can accomplish alone”. In spite of the differences between the three organizations, the general secretaries all had a sense of common ground and an awareness that they would all benefit from working together in The School Partnership.

7.2.2. Relationships with Counterparts: Optimistic about getting acquainted

The relationships between the strategic-level boundary spanners were notably different than the relationships between the operational-level boundary spanners. Two of the three general secretaries in the partnership were actually new to their roles, each serving for less than a year. Therefore, they did not have time to get to know the general secretaries from the other organizations in the partnership. Only two of them had a previous relationship with each other before becoming general secretaries. The other relationships were yet to be established at the time of the field interviews. It is helpful to view diagram 8 on the following page, which illustrates the relationships between the three general secretaries.

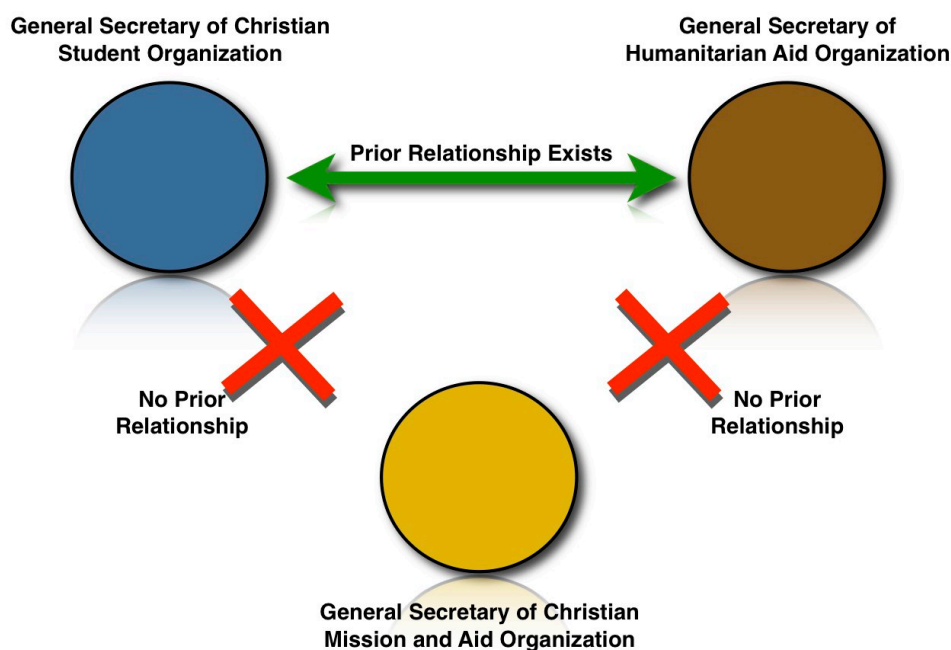


Diagram 8: Relationships between Strategic-Level Boundary Spanners

Two of the general secretaries actually knew each other previously, when they both worked in another organization. One of them described the previous relationship in this way: So we have actually met once or twice at a cafe just to chat. We were both in a big organization... and we could discuss issues and we sort of related to each other's opinions, and I would say it was on a deep level... and it was more on a relational deep level than on issues I would say. So I can remember those meetings, and he was also very encouraging to me when I was a young leader in [the organization]... I can remember that he was telling me to have courage. He was supportive as a person... and I didn't find any purpose other than just being there and an honest wish for me to succeed, so to say. So I base my good feelings on him from the past.

The other strategic-level boundary spanners who had not yet met talked positively about getting to know their counterparts. They mentioned future meetings for The School Partnership, in which they could talk to one another. They also talked optimistically about other meetings, outside of the partnership, that would serve as opportunities to become better acquainted with each other.

7.2.3. *Risks: A radical change in views*

It seemed difficult for the strategic-level boundary spanners to talk about risk. It took them some time to think of any possible risks from being involved in The School Partnership - either risks to their respective organizations or to themselves personally. One of them even said emphatically, “To be very honest, there is no risk for us to be here. It is no risk at all... We don’t risk anything”. That one general secretary described it as a “win-win” proposal.

Another one of the general secretaries was finally able think of one risk. When pressed to give a hypothetical danger that could possibly arise from the partnership, he brought up the risk of losing their good reputation if things changed for the worse:

Of course our risk is to lose our reputation if we cooperate closely to an organization and they, sort of, make some action or change their theological view quite differently or something like that... Maybe some examples... the basic common understandings... how to do things... what teachings the students would attend and so on... In Norway, there are many theological views and what Christian belief is and how to become a believer... of course some theological questions about ethics... In Norway, as in other countries for many years, we have had a very intense discussion about homosexual practices and homosexual marriage and all this, so that was just one example... In some cases, such questions have made it difficult for churches to relate to others and for organizations to cooperate with others.... The bottom line is sort of that there could be some kind of discomfort or maybe even mistrust if one of us would change radically from our theological view.

The general secretaries of the three organizations did not seem to perceive many risks in the partnership. According to scholars of trust, the absence of risk leads to a question of the very relevance of trust. For example, Askvik (2003) noted that trust is “inherently risky” (p. 2), Luhmann (1988) wrote that trust “presupposes a situation of risk” (p. 96), and Deutsch (1958) declared that “risk-taking and trusting behavior are thus really different sides of the same coin” (p. 266). In this case, the strategic-level boundary spanners may not have seen much risk in the partnership. Therefore, they may not have had a great need to trust their boundary-spanning counterparts. However, they still talked about the trust that they held in each other during the interviews, and the statements they made are in the following sections.

7.2.4. *Forms and Bases of Trust: Solid organizations choose solid leaders*

When the general secretaries of the three organizations were asked to describe the trust they held in their counterparts, they all said they trusted the others. One of them described the trust as “quite high”. Another one of them described it as “a high-level of trust”, and the third one said “the level of trust is very high”. It is interesting that all three of them used the same term “high” to describe their trust, even though they did not discuss it prior to the interviews. One of the leaders took it a step further and stated, “I have absolutely full confidence and trust in them as individuals and also in their works and organizations”.

a) Identification-Based Trust

The trust that is shared between the two general secretaries who had previously worked together could be considered identification-based trust, especially since they have a shared history and talked about some common identification with one another (Lewicki and Bunker, 1995). They made comments about the ways in which they “related to each others’ opinions... on a deep level” and both share a “heritage in the same organization” and “part of a network”. Their comments resonate with Lewicki and Bunker’s (1995) discussion about shared goals and values, in which, “the parties can come to believe in and stand for the same core values, beliefs and concerns... the parties’ joint goals and interests can be effectively leveraged and enhanced” (p. 153).

One of the general secretaries said, “I would describe it as a high-level of trust. And I think that we are aiming at the same goal, and we are not in competition. So I have absolutely full confidence and trust in them”. In that statement, a collective intentionality can be seen, “the intentionality that is shared by different people, and... shared beliefs and shared desires” (Searle, 2006, p. 16). The statement also links “not [being] in competition” and “aiming at the same goal” directly to identification-based trust, which Lewicki and Bunker (1995) described as springing from “shared values” and “joint products and goals” (pp. 152-153). Therefore, there is some sense of identification-based trust shared among the strategic-level boundary spanners. However, the fact that two of them had never met and still trust one another calls for further explanation, which is provided in the next section on presumptive trust.

b) Presumptive Trust

The trust that was shared between the general secretaries who had never met can be best described by Kramer and Lewicki's (2010) "presumptive trust", which "is conceptualized as a positive expectation that is founded upon, and coextensive with, knowledge of shared membership in an organization" (p. 259), "a shared social category" (p. 260), "organizational rules" (p. 263) and role occupancy, or the idea that "if you are in the role, you are presumed to be up to the task" (p. 263). In spite of the fact that the leaders had never even met, they still had positive expectations of each other.

One general secretary based his trust on the roles of his counterparts within organizations that have a good reputation and board of directors. When he talked about his trust in them, he said:

You wouldn't become a secretary general of [either one of the other partnering organizations], if you don't have the trust of a solid organization. Members of the boards are solid people with reputations in Norwegian society. So, I have full confidence in them!

Another general secretary made similar statements linking his trust to the counterparts' roles in solid organizations:

Well, I would base [my trust] on what I know of the organizations, and I would assume that they choose and pick a good leader to lead their organization... So it is more like knowing the organization knowing their philosophy, vision, ethics and their purpose...

So I base my level of trust on what I know from before... knowing these organizations.

Those comments about roles highlight what Kramer and Lewicki (2010) described as a presumptive trust that is based on roles, in which "it is not the person in the role that trusted so much as the system of expertise that produces and ensures the role-appropriate behavior of the role occupants" (p. 263).

Another basis for strategic-level boundary spanners' presumptive trust was ingroup membership, which is based on the individuals "social or relational ties that exist between them" (Kramer and Lewicki, 2010, p. 257). In that case, "membership in a shared social category or group might constitute the foundations for trust in other group members" (Ibid, p. 260). Kramer and Lewicki (2010) expanded upon Lewicki and Bunker's (1995) original identification-based trust, which is based on a shared history. They contended that identification-based trust does not have to be based on shared history. Instead, it can be

“depersonalized” and bypass the need for previous relational ties (Kramer and Lewicki, 2010, p. 260).

One of the general secretaries talked about that type of depersonalized ingroup identification. He described his own membership in a social group that is comprised of general secretaries of religious organizations in Norway. They regularly meet to offer each other encouragement, with a common understanding that “it’s a lonely job being a general secretary”. He expects the other general secretary “to join in with that group” and to participate in the informal gatherings, because the previous general secretaries from his organization were members. He also said, “the expectation of him being a part of that group is adding color to the expectations of trust or the notion of him being a person I’ll trust”, which indicates that there is presumptive trust based on common membership in a social group.

Diagram 9 illustrates the forms and bases of trust between the strategic-level boundary spanners. It gives an overview and examples of the independent variable *Discovering Common or Complimentary Identities*. It also illustrates presumptive trust and shows the examples of how *Organizational Roles* and *Organizational Identities* contribute toward its development.

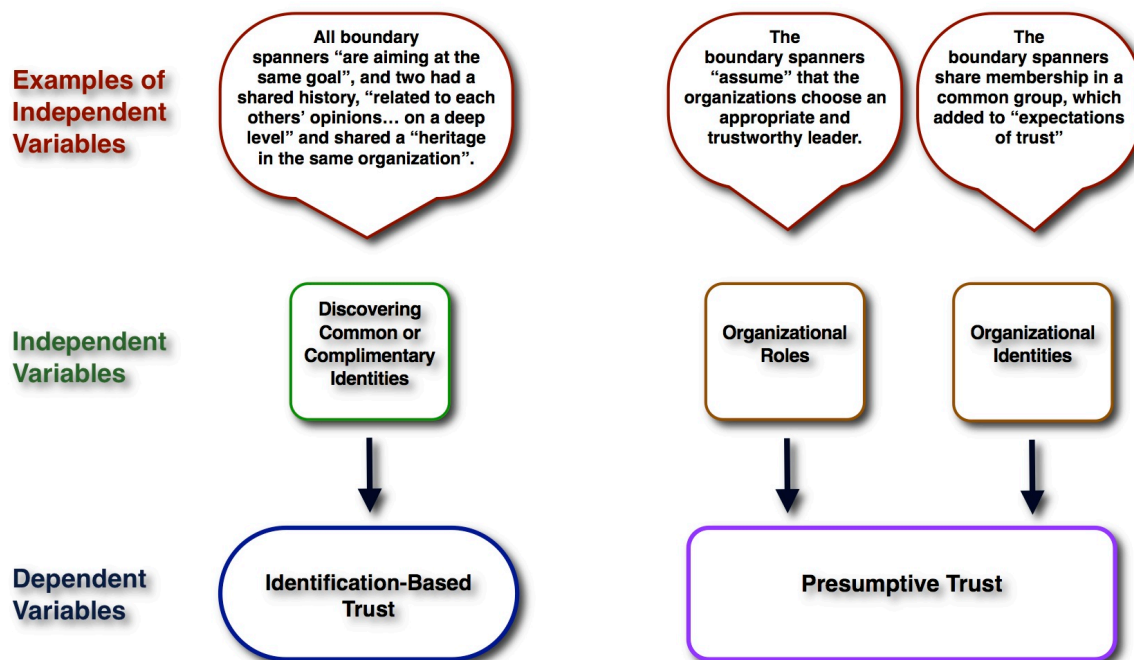


Diagram 9: Forms and Bases of Strategic-Level Boundary Spanners’ Trust

7.2.5. Impact of Trust: “a sign of hope... a story to tell”

The final question asked of the strategic-level boundary spanners was the way they viewed the impact of their trust in each other. Each one of the general secretaries talked about the impact trust has on the day-to-day operation of the partnership and on the staff. The first one said:

I believe that the way we speak about each other and the way we act actually shows our surroundings how the level of trust is among us, and I believe that makes it easier for people on this level [the operational level] to cooperate - if we are able to have a high level of trust with each other.

The second general secretary said: “I would say that if distrust was an issue here, and if I was suspicious of the other leaders and other organizations that would harm the cooperation with the staff at the school”. Finally, the third general secretary said, “It has created some kind of stability with the staff. You see that people keep on working here. There’s not much tension on the higher level, so there is not much tension on the lower level”.

One of the general secretaries also talked about the example that they are setting by trusting one another.

As Christian organizations, we should not always give the impression that we compete. I would say that this is a sign of hope. This is a symbol, having three different organizations doing something together. It’s now only ten years that we have been a school, but the story that we are telling is a story of quite complex structure, looking at it with different partners internationally and different partners in Norway. And I think it is not a coincidence that FK Norway [the Norwegian Peace Corps] funds it year after year... I think that is because it is a success, and it is a story to tell of interaction and of good relationships over borders.

The strategic-level boundary spanners saw their trust in one another as an example to the operational-level boundary spanners within the partnership, and they also saw it as an example to other organizations in Norway and around the world.

7.3. Board Members

The third group of boundary spanners in the study is the board members that represent the three NGOs and govern the partnership. Five of the eleven board members were interviewed about trust within the partnership. Two of the interviewees were school

employees who serve on the board, *ex officio*. The other three board members were from each of the three organizations that own The School Partnership. The length of time that they spent on the board ranged anywhere from nine months to ten years. Two of them have served as board chairperson at some point, which is a position that rotates between the three organizations every two years.

7.3.1. Roles and Identities: Linking organizations and school

The board members were quick to talk about their role and identity on the board, although they did not talk at great length about it. The board members did not seem to have as strong a sense of identification with The School Partnership compared to the operational-level boundary spanners. That makes sense, because they do not spend as much time on the partnership as other boundary spanners presumably would. They spend much more time in their own organizations. One of the board members mentioned, “in our jobs, from day to day, we are on other tasks than here”. The board members serve a purpose and have a task to complete, namely to govern The School Partnership and “to see that it goes in the right direction”. One of the board members considers it their role to “make sure that it’s a good place to work and a good place to be a student” as well as to make sure the partnership remains connected to the owning organizations. That same board member said, “I’m very focused on the strong link between the organizations and [The School Partnership]. I think that [The School Partnership] and the three programs are so much better if we can keep that close connection”.

There was some evidence of collective intentionality or common identities among the board members. It was the original, *selskapsavtale*, the partnership agreement that they relied on to guide them and remind them of their goals and mission. In a sense, that document was part of the discursive narrative to the board members. It reinforced the statement, *We are, together, The School Partnership*.

7.3.2. Relationships with Counterparts: “friends, but we are not so close”

The board members did not describe their relationships with the other board members as close. For one thing, “people are changing their positions” on the board on a regular basis. One of them described it is “not a friendly situation... we are friends, but we are not so

close”. However, another one of the board members said, “those that have been there for many years I know well... I know them well as professional colleagues... I do feel also that I can discuss other things... that it goes beyond just what we are doing here”.

One challenge to building relationships on the board is that “there have been many changes in who has been on the board”, especially with one of the three organizations who has changed board members regularly. Another challenge to building relationships is the amount time the board spends together. They have a job to do when they come together, and they generally focus on the agenda. One of the members noted, “many of us spend a lot time in boards. So we can’t talk about everything all the time. We have to do a job”.

7.3.3. Risks: Conflicts of Interest

One of the risks that board members discussed was economic. Even though each of the organizations originally put in NOK 200,000 to start the program without any commitments for more money, it is still possible that a need could arise in which one or more of the organizations would consider putting more money into the partnership. One board member said, “We risk a lot of our economy, if we have to go with our own money to keep the school going... and I think that the organizations will not do that... for many years. So we can risk in the economic situation, and that’s very hard”.

Another risk had to do with the conflict of interests in which one of the partners owns the land on which the school operates. One of the board members said,

There is one tricky issue: that one of the organizations is also the owner of this place. So there is one organization having two hats. And that is, for one it’s a good thing, because if it wasn’t for that, there would never be [The School Partnership]. On the other hand, after ten years, that is something that could be a problem. I don’t see [that] it is today, but I think it has been, for some years, difficult to do something about actually being able to discuss, in a professional manner, how to deal with this situation, because we are growing, and as board members we have to think about whether this is the right place to be. I think that this is easier today than it has been especially because of a new board member. One of the board members is new to that owning organization and doesn’t have that history. So it’s a natural thing really, that he sees this with other eyes, and it’s easier to be professional when you don’t have the whole history.

There is another potential risk that a board member talked about, and it is similar to a risk that was also pointed out by the other two boundary spanner groups - losing reputation.

We always have the risk of the press. What if one of the three organizations would really have difficulties in the press... I have been thinking sometimes about, what if the press were to gang up on [one of the partnering organizations]. That is a potential threat, I think, when it comes to that organization being conservative on Christian values, and conservative in a completely different way than [my organization]. It is a potential threat for an organization, that it can come out negative... That could, again, effect [The School Partnership] and [my organization]. I have been thinking about it earlier, and now it's a long time since I've been thinking about it. But, yes, I guess you could see it as a potential threat.

7.3.4. Forms and Bases of Trust: A broad spectrum of trust

According to the statements made by the board members, they have a broad-based trust in one another, and their trust has improved as new members have recently joined the board. The forms and bases of trust among the board members were varied. In fact, their trust covered the entire span of Lewicki and Bunker's (1995) model: from calculus-based trust, to knowledge-based trust, to identification-based trust.

a) Calculus-Based Trust

Some of the board members seemed to display calculus-based trust, which is the weakest form and "requires monitoring to work" (Lewicki and Bunker, 1995, p. 148). Calculus-based trust is primarily dependent upon "collective control mechanisms" that help to ensure proper behavior among trusting parties (Askvik, 2003, p. 13).

One of the board members talked about the control systems in place and noted:

I think it's important that the leader have the confidence from the other board members. We have a rotating system in which the chairman changes every second year. So, you don't vote who becomes the leader. It rotates through the organizations... I think when we have this structure for the board, we have a basic trust of each other.

That control system helped to protect the interest of each organization, since it ensured that power was shared and that each organization could be assured of holding the position for two out of every six years.

The same board member talked about another control system in place, which is the *selskapsavtale*, the original partnership agreement that all three organizations signed at the beginning of the partnership. The board member said, “it’s important to make the agreement when you start the project. Also, the agreement we can go back to and ask each other, ‘Are we going the right way?’”

b) Knowledge-Based Trust

Another board member talked about observing the behavior of other board members and knowledge about their organizations as being an important basis for the trust between counterparts. According to that board member, trust can be based on “experience and knowledge. Knowing these people and the organizations they represent. But most of all, experience, having seen that this has been for ten years and we do have the same goal”. Those statements about experience and knowledge point toward knowledge-based trust, which springs from what that board member called “the basis of experiences and previous observations”. In turn, those observations help the trustor predict the likely behavior of the trustee.

c) Identification-Based Trust

Finally, board members displayed traits of identification-based trust in each other. This became clear as they talked about the goodwill and positive intentions of their counterparts (Askvik, 2003; Maguire et al., 2001). They talked positively about their counterparts’ desire to do what is right for The School Partnership.

I think I can say that I trust that they really believe that the school is important and that they want it to be as good as possible and that when they make choices, they do their best to make good choices for [The School Partnership].

One board member seemed to stop and consider the scope of the partnership and then talked enthusiastically about their trust:

First of all, I would just like to say that I think there is a high level of trust. Thinking that it really is three organizations, I think there is a very high level of trust. I absolutely have assurance that the other organizations are in there with a good intention.

An argument can also be made about the discursive construction of identification-based trust among the board members. The *selskapsavtale*, the partnership agreement that binds the organizations together could be more than a control system. As one of the board members said, when they look at the agreement, they “go back to and ask each other, ‘Are we going the right way?’” In essence, they are actually reinforcing the discursive statement, *We are, together, The School Partnership*. That statement serves the function of creating a common identity and thus building identification-based trust, just as it did with the operational-level boundary spanners.

Diagram 10 below illustrates the three forms of trust among the board members. It gives some examples of the independent variables *Relying on Established Control Mechanisms*, *Observing Predictable Behavior in Trustees*, and *Shaping Common or Complimentary Identities*.

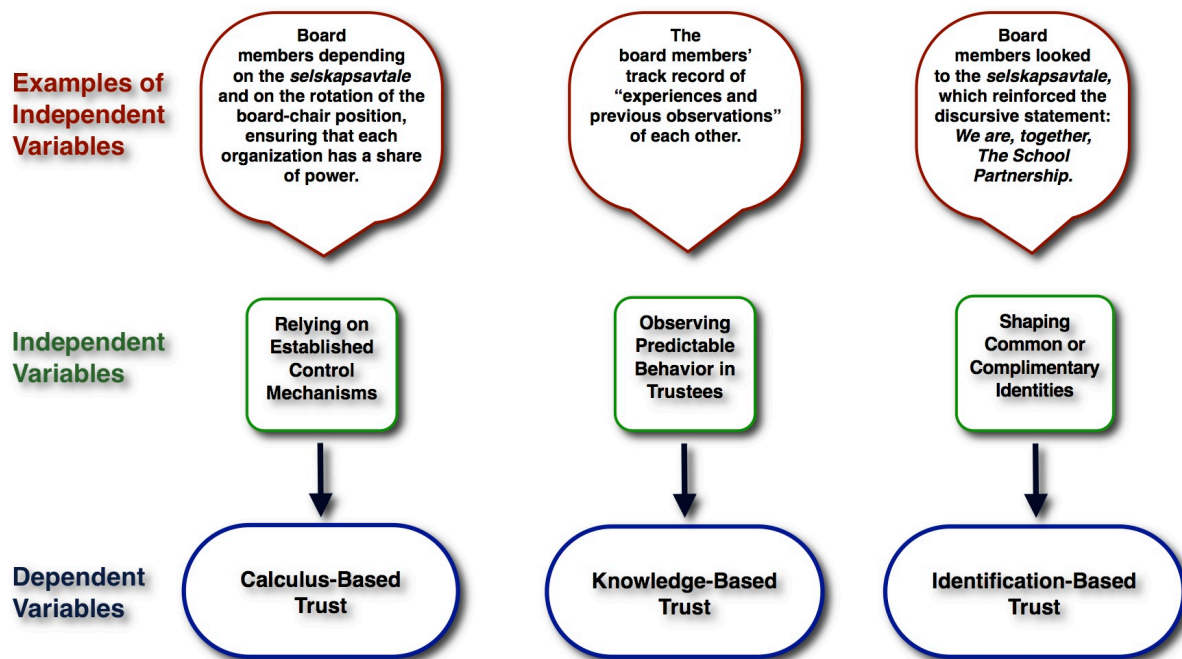


Diagram 10: Forms and Bases of Board Members' Trust

7.3.5. Impact of Trust: “That is the cornerstone”

The board members were asked to talk about the ways in which trust had impacted the partnership. It was more difficult for them to describe the effects of trust, because they did not spend much time being directly involved with the partnership, but they did offer some

ideas. They talked about their own trust, and how it impacted the operational-level boundary spanners who run the day-to-day operations of the school. One of them said, “I think it’s important for the staff” and then linked it to the students in this way, “but for the students who come here for a few weeks at a time, maybe they don’t know me... So, I think it’s important for the staff, and the staff are important for the students”. This was corroborated by one of the key informants, who said that the board members’ trust “makes the school run smoothly” because the board members “give us freedom. They trust in me... We get creativity in the staff because of that”, and in turn, “the learning environment is better”.

Similar to the answers from the strategic-level boundary spanners, one of the board members talked about two large scale benefits of trust among board members: being a positive role model and reaching further together. When asked about the impacts of trust among counterparts on the board, the board member said:

I think it is a good role model for the students to see that different organizations work well together. I think that young people nowadays don’t have the same loyalty to one organization. It’s more of a mix. To them it is more natural, but they would have noticed if we were not working well together. I think also to other NGOs and so on, and in Fredskorpset [the Norwegian Peace Corps], it has been a positive role model, and I am proud of being a part of that.

That board member also talked about the impact that trust has on the success of the partnership and extending the reach of the three organizations.

I do think we can reach further cooperating and that this is an example of that. It’s evident that these three organizations would not have had such successful exchange programs on their own and also there are so many benefits of being a staff together, and so on... That is the cornerstone. If we don’t trust the other organizations it would be very difficult to maintain cooperation.

7.4. In Summary: Answering the Research Questions

This study set out to answer four research questions about the development of interorganizational trust within The School Partnership. The first three questions regarded the bases and forms of trust held by the different groups of boundary spanners. The last research question regarded the varying impacts of the trust that was held by the groups of boundary spanners, which constitutes the interorganizational trust in the partnership. The

following sections present a summary description of the forms, bases, and impacts of trust among the three groups of boundary spanners.

7.4.1. Trust and Operational-Level Boundary Spanners

The first research question focused on the operational-level boundary spanners: *Why do operational-level boundary spanners (the program leaders and workers) within the partnership trust or distrust their counterparts, and what form(s) of trust exist between them?*

Based on the statements that operational-level boundary spanners made in the interviews, they displayed identification-based trust with one another, especially among the three program leaders. This corresponds with Lewicki and Bunker's (1995) description of the trust that "exists because the parties effectively understand, agree with, and endorse each other's wants", and the other party "can effectively act for the other" (p. 151). There was also evidence that these boundary spanners strongly believed in the goodwill of their counterparts and were mutually concerned about their well-being (Askvik, 2003). The operational-level boundary spanners' identification-based trust was based on the "collective identity" that comes along with "shared values" and "joint goals" (Lewicki and Bunker, 1995, pp. 152-153). There were indications that their common identity was shaped through discursive structures. The discursive statement, *We are, together, The School Partnership*, served an important function in shaping their common identity and thus generating identification-based trust.

The operational-level boundary spanners also displayed knowledge-based trust. This form of trust, according to Lewicki and Bunker (1995) is "grounded in the other's predictability" and allows them to "anticipate [the other's] behavior" (p. 149). The boundary spanners based their trust on observations of their counterparts' actions. In some cases those observations generated positive expectations. However, in other cases the observations actually generated some mildly negative expectations, such as not following through with responsibilities or double booking appointments.

7.4.2. Trust and Strategic-Level Boundary Spanners

The second research question of the study focused on the strategic-level boundary spanners: *Why do strategic-level boundary spanners (the general secretaries of the three*

organizations) within the partnership trust or distrust their counterparts, and what form(s) of trust exist between them?

The strategic-level boundary spanners all stated that they had a high level of trust in their counterparts. Two of the general secretaries previously worked together in another organization, and they displayed identification-based trust in one another. That trust was based on shared values and a common “heritage in the same organization”. Over time, they had discovered common identities, “an inter-subjective social ‘reality’ based on shared meanings” (Maguire et al., 2001, pp. 304-305).

The other trust relationships among the strategic-level boundary spanners seemed to indicate that they shared a presumptive trust, which was a positive expectation based on social or organizational cues rather than a historical relationship. In this case, the general secretaries based their trust on membership in a small social group of general secretaries and the roles each of them held in “a solid organization”.

7.4.3. Trust and Board Members

The third research question of the study focused on the board members: *Why do board members of the partnership trust or distrust their counterparts, and what form(s) of trust exist between them?*

The interview data from the board members was less conclusive than the data from the other two groups. The findings are not totally clear, but there are some interesting points to be made. The board members seemed to exhibit all three major forms of trust: calculus-based, knowledge-based, and identification-based trust. On one hand, they talked about believing in the “good intentions” of their counterparts and having a “high level of trust”. On the other hand, they didn’t describe their relationships as very close or intimate; they were there “to do a job”. This ambiguity could stem from them not spending much time together and also from the instability of the group, with new members cycling through every so often.

The board members based their trust on a variety of cues. They based calculus-based trust on control systems such as the regular rotation of the chairperson through all three organizations. They developed knowledge-based trust through the “experience and knowledge” of serving on the board together over the years and the opportunities that time provided to observe their counterparts. Finally, their common identity as members of a partnership helped generate a sense of identification-based trust. The partnership agreement

that they use as their guide could be considered part of the discursive statement, *We are, together, The School Partnership*. That statement serves the function of constructing a common identity among the representatives of the three organizations on the board and generating identification-based trust.

7.4.4. *The Impacts of Trust*

The fourth research question in the study dealt with the impacts of all three groups of boundary spanners' trust on the overall partnership: *How does the trust held by the three groups of boundary spanners (which constitutes interorganizational trust) impact the partnership?*

All three groups of boundary spanners talked about some of the impacts of their trust. The operational-level boundary spanners considered that their trust created an open, safe, and honest environment. To them this environment was “fruitful for good solutions” because they could speak openly to one another about whatever issues may arise. That environment also made it more fun and engaging to be at work with their colleagues. One of them talked about the ways in which their trust allowed them to give more of themselves to the students and the school, without fear of being hurt in the process. They considered that, overall, their trust was “very important for the quality of the school”.

The strategic-level boundary spanners talked about the impact of their trust on the operation of the school. They contended that trust or distrust among themselves would work its way through the partnership and toward the operational-level boundary spanners. That would impact the way that the operational-level boundary spanners would act toward each other and thus impact the operation of the school itself.

The board members had a similar view about the impact of their trust. They considered that it “makes the school run smoothly”. Their trust also links its way to the students because “it’s important for the staff, and the staff are important for the students”. One of the board members even considered trust “the cornerstone” of the partnership, that without trust, “it would be very difficult to maintain cooperation”.

Finally, there was one interesting commonality in what the three groups of boundary spanners considered an impact of their trust. They all said that it created some sort of image. The operational-level boundary spanners' talked about their trust presenting a real-life model to the students who are also learning about trust through the lectures. The strategic-level

boundary spanners considered that trust presented an image to other organizations - “a sign of hope... a story to tell of interaction and of good relationships over borders”. Finally, one of the board members talked about their trust relationship as a “role model” for the students and also “other NGOs” to observe.

In summary, interorganizational trust within The School Partnership had several significant impacts, according to the boundary spanners. It impacted the daily operation of the school, by creating an open, engaging, and fun working environment for the staff. It proved to be a “cornerstone” of the partnership by enabling it to run smoothly and “maintain cooperation” even in the midst of challenges. Finally, it presented a positive image of the partnership, both to the students within the school and to other organizations in Norway and around the world.

8. Concluding Analysis and Discussions

This study has explored interorganizational trust by investigating a partnership of three Norwegian NGOs. It provided a useful example of the theoretical framework by Janowicz and Noorderhaven (2006), which conceptualized interorganizational trust as the trust that is held by two groups of key individuals within the partnership: the operational-level and strategic-level boundary spanners. It contributed to their framework by adding a third group of boundary spanners: the board members. This study has also contributed to various theories about the development of trust, such as Lewicki and Bunker's (1995), which espoused three forms of trust; and Kramer and Lewicki's (2010), which theorized a form of trust that can be developed without a shared history of interpersonal relationship. Finally, this study has discussed the discursive development of interorganizational trust, which can take place within an interorganizational setting. That discussion on discourse has contributed to the studies by Maguire et al. (2001) and Askvik (2003) as well as Foucault's (2002, original printing 1969) theory of discourse and Searle's (1995; 2006) theory of social ontology.

The forthcoming sections will give more detailed descriptions of the analytic generalizations and the theoretical contributions that this study made. Those sections will also argue the case for a research method that combines multiple sources of theory and data into a *research mix*, which contributes to robust theoretical analyses and adds valuable new perspectives to the sources that are used. The next section leads into these theoretical discussions with a description of the scope and limitations of this study.

8.1. The Scope and Limitations of the Study

It is important to note the scope and limitations that are inherent to the findings of this study. First, it only involved a partnership of NGOs. It did not include governmental organizations or businesses. Accordingly, the findings are meant to be applied to NGO partnerships and not to partnerships that are comprised of businesses, governmental agencies, or cross-sector partnerships that combine NGOs with organizations from the other sectors. There are some inherent differences between partnerships of NGOs and partnerships of businesses or governmental organizations. First, NGOs are less likely to focus on financial profits than business partnerships would be, because NGOs are "organizations that provide a service without a profit" (Turner and Hulme, 1997, p. 209) and are "driven by [their] mission,

not the bottom line” (Pappas, 1996, p. 10). Second, NGOs will have less stable resource bases than government agencies would have (Sagawa and Segal, 2000). Therefore, the NGOs may be more susceptible to the influence and inclinations of their funding base than government organizations would be.

The second limitation regards the design of this study. It is a single case (The School Partnership) with embedded subunits (the three groups of boundary spanners), not a statistical study with a large sample (refer to section 6.3 and diagram 5 on pp. 39-40). Therefore, the methods for generalizing the results of the study should not be confused with statistical generalizations, which would draw an inference about a population through data gathered from the sample. The method of generalization in this case study is “analytic generalization”, which Yin (2003) described as a “mode of generalization... in which a previously developed theory is used as a template with which to compare the empirical results of the case study” (pp. 32-33). In that sense, this case study may replicate the findings of the previous studies and support those theories, or it may present new findings and provide alternative points of view that point toward new theory about trust in NGO partnerships.

Layder (1998) described the process of analytic generalization as a “move from the concrete and particular (detailed observations or factual information) to more general and abstract concerns and ideas” (p. 100). This process results in a “shift to a concentration on the more general characteristics of the things one observes” (Ibid, p. 100). The following sections are an attempt to present general characteristics of the development of interorganizational trust in NGOs and the impacts of that trust in light of the theoretical constructs presented throughout this case study.

8.2. A Framework for Studying Interorganizational Trust

This study has demonstrated the usefulness of Janowicz and Noorderhaven’s (2006) framework for examining interorganizational trust. Their study proposed that interorganizational trust is collectively held by groups of individuals who represent the partnering organizations. Therefore, in order to study interorganizational trust, researchers should look at key individuals within the partnership.

This study examined interorganizational trust by focusing on the boundary spanners, those representatives of the partnering organizations who cross organizational boundaries to cooperate with representatives of the other organizations within the partnership. After all,

according to Janowicz and Noorderhaven (2006), “it is usually only the boundary spanning individuals of the collaborating organizations that interact with each other, rather than all members of the organizations” (p. 270). Furthermore, using boundary spanners to measure interorganizational trust is more “pragmatic”, because the data is “easier to obtain in field research”, since “well-positioned actors can be reliable sources of information concerning interorganizational trust” (Ibid, p. 277). Those notions espoused by Janowicz and Noorderhaven (2006) held true in this case study, as the boundary spanners provided valuable information about the partnership and their respective organizations, and the data was easily obtainable through interviews, documentary evidence, and observations.

Furthermore, this study has also added to Janowicz and Noorderhaven’s (2006) original framework, which used only two groups of boundary spanners to conceptualize interorganizational trust: the operational-level boundary spanners, who are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the partnership (in this case, the program leaders and program workers); and the strategic-level boundary spanners, who are the top executive leaders of organizations (in this case, the three general secretaries of the NGOs). This study added a third group of boundary spanners, the board members, each of whom represented their home organizations within the partnership. Consequently, this study has added a new perspective to the original framework, and it has also offered an additional ingredient for examining interorganizational trust. The board members were added because they play an important role in the governance of NGO partnerships. They make crucial decisions that can have significant and far-reaching implications on a partnership. They promote the collaborative effort, while at the same time, they protect the interests of their own organizations. Therefore, trust development among board members is an important ingredient within interorganizational trust, a valuable topic of research, and an essential element in seeing the whole picture of an NGO partnership.

8.3. How Is Interorganizational Trust Developed?

This study demonstrates ways in which interorganizational trust can be developed by boundary spanners. It describes forms of trust that they can hold, and it demonstrates ways in which each of those forms of trust can be developed. The following sections present arguments along those lines. First, they describe the development of four different forms of trust, with a special emphasis on discourse within the development of identification-based

trust. Then, subsequent sections suggest ways in which trust can be developed among each of the three groups of boundary spanners, which collectively constitute interorganizational trust.

8.3.1. How Is Calculus-Based Trust Developed?

Calculus-based trust exists when actors believe that they have a sense of control over the actions of the other individual. They have the ability to reward trustworthy behavior or punish untrustworthy behavior in some way. Lewicki and Bunker (1995) described it like this: “I trust you because I can control what I want you to do and eliminate the risk of your unpredictably” (p. 153).

Notably, this study generated only a minimal amount of data on calculus-based trust, because it was not a form of trust held by many of the boundary spanners in the case. The one exception was when board members talked about their reliance upon power-sharing agreements, in which the chairperson position within the board rotated between each organization every two years. This arrangement provided a system of checks and balances on the power that the chairpersons hold, and it distributed that power across all of the organizations that were a part of the partnership.

Even though there was minimal data about calculus-based trust, this study still makes suggestions about how this form of trust is developed within a partnership. Calculus-based trust can be developed through the use of control systems. These control systems can take many forms, as long as they provide some sort of protection for the organizations against harmful actions by other organizations within the partnership.

8.3.2. How Is Knowledge-Based Trust Developed?

Knowledge-based trust is founded on information and predictability. According to Lewicki and Bunker (1995), knowledge-based trust looks something like this: “I trust you because I know enough about you to know what you will do, even if I cannot or will not try to control it” (p. 153).

The findings from this study point to some ways in which knowledge-based trust can be developed in a partnership of NGOs. First, this form of trust takes time and close proximity to develop. That allows trustors to observe the ways in which trustees will act in a variety of situations. Second, it requires the trustees to consistently demonstrate trustworthy behavior

so that the trustors can make a series of observations and then extend knowledge-based trust to the trustees based on those observations. In that sense, the trustee is slowly building a “track record” to which the trustor can refer and use as a gauge for extending knowledge-based trust to the trustee (Askvik, 2003, p. 13).

8.3.3. How Is Identification-Based Trust Developed?

Like knowledge-based trust, identification-based trust also takes time to develop, and it occurs as boundary spanners realize that they hold common or complimentary identities. The actors come to develop a mutual understanding, and “this mutual understanding is developed to the point that each one can effectively act for the other... without surveillance or monitoring” (Lewicki and Bunker, 1995, p. 151). Identification-based trust could be developed passively, in which the actors come to recognize, over time, their common or complimentary identities. This could be based on their shared goals, interests, and, perhaps, on the common religious and/or ethical values they hold. Identification-based trust could also be developed actively, through a discursive process, which is described in the following section on discourse and the generation of identification-based trust.

8.3.4. Discourse and the Generation of Identification-Based Trust

This study has demonstrated ways in which identification-based trust can be actively generated through the discursive construction of identity. These findings support the propositions and findings from Maguire et al. (2001) and Askvik (2003), who found that counterparts could develop identification-based trust in one another by engaging in an ongoing narrative and discursively shaping common or complimentary identities. Maguire et al. (2001) called the elemental unit of this discursive process “a myth”; which is the “shared reality” that arises between counterparts as the narrative between them unfolds (p. 305). According to Maguire et al. (2001), “Within these myths, certain identities can trust certain other identities to behave predictably with goodwill because, within the myth, it is appropriate behavior” (p. 305).

This study presents a different perspective from Maguire et al. (2001), as it uses different concepts and terminology. Instead of a “myth”, the elemental unit of discourse has been called a “statement”, which is taken from Foucault’s (2002, original printing 1969) writings on discourse theory. The chosen term, “statement”, does not have the same negative

connotations that the term, “myth” can carry. Typically, a myth is a false or exaggerated story, whereas a statement is value-neutral. Furthermore, Foucault’s (2002, original printing 1969) concept of the statement is broad enough to cover any type of discursive device or signal that serves a function within the narrative. Foucault (2002, original printing 1969) described his open-ended definition of discursive statements in the following:

One should not be surprised, then, if one has failed to find structural criteria of unity for the statement; this is because it is not in itself a unit, but a function that cuts across a domain of structures and possible unities, and which reveals them, with concrete contents, in time and space (pp. 97-98).

Therefore, Foucault’s (2002, original printing 1969) concept of the statement allows more extensive interpretive capability when examining discourse, and it also helps by keeping the investigative focus on the actual function that results from the discursive process.

In this particular study, counterparts were part of a discursive process that produced the statement, *We are, together, The School Partnership*. This statement served the function of producing a “collective identity” that Lewicki and Bunker (1995) described as the basis of identification-based trust (p. 155). Lewicki and Bunker (1995) went on further to use metaphors like “a cappella choirs, string quartets... or mature basketball teams” (p. 155) to illuminate the collective identity that is found among trusting partners. In this case, that collective identity was reached through discursive processes between members of a group of boundary spanners.

This study suggests that counterparts within a partnership can actively generate identification-based trust through discursive processes that shape common or complimentary identities. It also contributes to the theory espoused by Maguire et al. (2001) by testing its main proposition and adding alternative concepts and terminology to its framework. This study’s findings concur with those by Maguire et al. (2001) and allow the following analytic generalization: Boundary spanners within an NGO partnership can discursively generate identification-based trust. As the process unfolds, common discursive statements arise that lead the boundary spanners toward a collective identity, and this collective identity forms the basis of identification-based trust.

8.3.5. *How Is Presumptive Trust Developed?*

This study demonstrated that boundary spanners do not necessarily need to have a shared historical and interpersonal relationship in order to develop trust. The data and findings give credence to the theories of Kramer and Lewicki (2010), who explored the “antecedent conditions that support the development and maintenance of what [they] term presumptive trust” (p. 246). Presumptive trust is “less personal and less direct” than the “history-based trust” (Ibid, p. 258) of Lewicki and Bunker’s (1995) three forms: calculus-based trust, knowledge-based trust, and identification-based trust. Presumptive trust is “a diffuse expectation” that is based on group membership, rather than being based on personal knowledge (Kramer and Lewicki, 2010, p. 259).

The findings from this case study support the theory of Kramer and Lewicki (2010) and propose that the boundary spanners in an NGO partnership can develop trust in one another before they actually meet. In such a case, they would base their trust on an ingroup status that they share; for example, it could be some type of social or professional group or a club. They could also base their trust on the organizational roles that their counterparts hold within a trustworthy organization.

8.3.6. *How Do Operational-Level Boundary Spanners Develop Trust?*

Of all three groups, the operational-level boundary spanners are most likely to spend enough time together to develop a strong form of trust, such as knowledge-based trust or identification-based trust. They can develop knowledge-based trust as they observe the actions of their counterparts during the day-to-day activities of the partnership. Those activities would provide a rich diversity of situations in which the trustees would respond. The trustees’ responses would build a track record that the trustors would use to gauge the likely trustworthiness of their counterparts.

Operational-level boundary spanners can also develop identification-based trust as they discover that they have common goals, vision, or values with their counterparts. As Zaheer et al. (2002) proposed, trust may begin as a weaker form, but over time, “interpersonal interaction... creates the basis for goodwill trust” (p. 361). Furthermore, operational-level boundary spanners could play a more active role in generating identification-based trust, such as engaging in a discursive narrative in which they actually create common or complimentary

identities. The meetings they attend together, their side-by-side working relationships, and even official documents provide fertile ground for such discursive statements to develop.

8.3.7. How Do Strategic-Level Boundary Spanners Develop Trust?

This study shows how strategic-level boundary spanners can develop trust, and these findings are actually in contrast to the propositions of Zaheer et al. (2002). The previous study found that the boundary spanners on a strategic level (the CEOs in their case) developed trust based on “personal aspects of the counterpart CEO, rather than on the CEO’s role as an organizational representative or leader” (Zaheer et al., 2002, p. 356). This trust was also based, “in part, on their assessments of their counterpart’s achievements and competence” (Ibid, p 357). Zaheer et al. (2002) proposed that trust between these leaders “is based on a comprehensive set of personal factors that are only slightly related to the CEO role. These factors include prior interaction, common interests, individual achievements, and personal commitment to the project” (Ibid, p. 358). While those factors might have been present when the partnership began in 2001, the study was conducted 10 years after it was established, and the findings are in contrast to the study by Zaheer et al. (2002).

This study has actually produced findings that were markedly different from what Zaheer et al. (2002) proposed. It demonstrated that some of the strategic-level leaders (general secretaries in this case) actually did base their trust on the roles that their counterparts held, rather than on personal factors or characteristics. They did not even have time to learn to trust their counterparts through prior interactions and by getting to know them on a personal level, since they were new to their positions as general secretary. Instead, these strategic-level boundary spanners actually based their trust on the fact that their counterparts were general secretaries of “solid organizations” that would certainly choose qualified leaders to fill the role of general secretary.

Therefore, contrary to the theory proposed by Zaheer et al. (2002), it is possible for strategic-level boundary spanners to generate trust without having prior knowledge of their counterparts and without basing that trust on personal aspects about them. That type of situation is where presumptive trust provides significant explanatory power, as the boundary spanners based their trust on role categorizations and their knowledge of the organization that hired their counterparts in the first place.

8.3.8. How Do Board Members Develop Trust?

Board members hold a vital role in partnerships. Trust is critical in their roles, because they make important decisions together that have far-reaching implications. However, it can also be a greater challenge for them to develop trust, since they typically have fewer interpersonal interactions than operational-level boundary spanners would have.

This study shows that board members can develop trust in a variety of ways and through a wide variety of social cues. They were the only group of boundary spanners that held all three forms in Lewicki and Bunker's (1995) model: calculus-based, knowledge-based, and identification-based trust. At times, board members may come to rely on control mechanisms that are in place to protect their organizations, which can lead to calculus-based trust. At other times, board members may come to rely on observations and knowledge about the predictability of the other board members, which can lead to knowledge-based trust. Finally, some board members, who serve year after year together, may actually develop identification-based trust. They develop this strong form of trust as they realize they have common or complimentary identities or as they discursively shape them. Notably, this study did not generate findings that showed presumptive trust between board members, but it is conceivable that they could also hold that form of trust with one another. For example, board members could belong to the same club or professional society, or they could base their trust on the particular organizational role that their counterpart holds in a trustworthy organization.

8.4. What Are the Impacts of Interorganizational Trust?

Interorganizational trust can have significant impacts on NGO partnerships. The findings in this case study support the theories of Zaheer et al. (2002) and Janowicz and Noorderhaven (2006), who proposed that trust between boundary spanners will have a positive impact on the day-to-day operation of the partnership. All of the boundary-spanner groups in this study believed that their trust in one another had a positive impact on the overall school partnership. They talked about ways that interorganizational trust created a good work environment for the operation of The School Partnership, which, in turn, made it more effective for the students who were enrolled.

The trust held by strategic-level boundary spanners and board members can have an effect on the operational-level boundary spanners, who actually facilitate the work of the partnership. It creates more stability in the partnership and sends a message of unity to all

levels within the partnership. Likewise, trust among the operational-level boundary spanners can also impact their own work environment and create an open and honest atmosphere. As some of the subjects in this study noted, this open atmosphere brings out the best in the team members, and it contributes to effective problem solving.

An unexpected finding in this study points to another impact of interorganizational trust within NGO partnerships: Trust between separate organizations presents an image that others will notice and, perhaps, it will even provide a positive example for others to follow. The operational-level boundary spanners in this case saw it as an example to the students, whom they were teaching about the concept of trust. The board members and strategic-level boundary spanners looked beyond the context of The School Partnership, and they saw their trust relationship as a type of example for other NGOs to observe and, perhaps, to follow. Therefore, it is conceivable that trust between NGO partners can make a positive impact, both on the stakeholders within the partnership as well as on outside observers.

8.5. What Are the Risks in Partnerships?

Risks are an inherent part of the equation of trust (Askvik, 2003; Luhmann, 1988; Deutsch, 1958). This case study has noted the risks that the different groups of boundary spanners felt were immanent in an NGO partnership. Some of them mentioned the risk of competing for resources and the potential for a conflict of interests when one organization or program has more access to those resources. All three boundary-spanner groups also mentioned the risk of tarnishing their reputations as a result of a public relations disaster. On the other hand, boundary spanners also saw the flip side of public perceptions. They believed that the public relations from the partnership had so far been positive, which actually strengthened their organization's standing within the community.

It is possible to draw some generalizations about the inherent risks of an NGO partnership. The organizations involved in the partnership will be at risk of being in competition over the scarce resources that they must inevitably share, and, in essence, there is a chance that they could lose out and not receive enough from the limited shared resources. The partners will also be at risk of losing their reputations as a result of some type of public relations failure that their partners could possibly make.

8.6. *Ambiguity, Typologies, and Interorganizational Trust*

One notion that has become clear throughout the course of this study is that interorganizational trust is not a tidy concept in which individuals or groups can fit unambiguously into singular categories within frameworks or models. The responses from interviewees were often broad-based and, at times, defied conventional classifications. As Askvik's (2003) study demonstrated, some forms of trust can be difficult to distinguish from others, because trustors tend to have varied reasons for trust or distrust, which cut across the different categories within theoretical models. Indeed, theoretical models are abstract by their very nature, as Layder (1998) noted, because they "present ideal types" that contain "accentuated and exaggerated features found in empirical reality" (p. 161). However, these abstract models hold strong explanatory power:

Building and using typologies helps to generate and stimulate theoretical thinking by encouraging the researcher to make comparisons between phenomena which are similar as well as different from the one under scrutiny. The questions 'why and how is this different?' and 'how or why is this similar or the same?'... stimulate further conceptual analysis and linkages (Ibid, p. 162).

In this particular case study, some of the boundary spanners simultaneously exhibited multiple forms of trust in a counterpart. That does not necessarily reveal a weakness in the theoretical frameworks that were used. Rather it supports a statement by Kramer and Lewicki (2010), that individuals are "vigilant social perceivers who are attentive to a variety of ambient cues within their environment. These cues include an impressive variety of personal, social, and situational factors that are construed as diagnostic or predictive of others' likely trustworthiness" (p. 256). Trustors look at the whole picture of the trustees and the situations that surround them, and then they will determine whether or not to place their trust in the other.

Due to the sometimes-ambiguous nature of interorganizational trust and the broad array of its bases, this study ultimately combined multiple theories in an effort to comprehensively illustrate interorganizational trust development. The following sections describe the process and outcomes of blending these theories into one research mix.

8.7. *The Blending of Theories in Research*

One significant contribution made by this study, as well as an inherent characteristic of Layder’s (1998) adaptive theory approach, is the combination and usage of multiple sources of data and theories into a research mix. This mix of theories and data contributes to a more robust theoretical analysis, and it adds valuable perspectives to each of these sources. This study combines elements of general theory, substantive theory, extant data, and emergent research data. The result is what Layder (1998) called “the cross-fertilization of ideas” (p. 164). As one source of data or theory is juxtaposed to another, its descriptive power can be enhanced and clarified. Likewise, this juxtaposition of ideas can also highlight weaknesses in some of the theoretical concepts, and it can convoke different perspectives that are more useful in the research process. The table below (diagram 11) lists the main sources that were used in this study, and the forthcoming sections provide more detail about “the cross-fertilization of ideas” that has taken place during the process of research (Ibid, p. 164).

Theoretical Sources	Empirical Sources
<p>Elements of General Theory:</p> <p><i>Discursive Statements</i> from Foucault’s (2002, original printing 1969) Theory of Discourse</p> <p><i>Collective Intentionality</i> from Searle’s (1995; 2006) Theory of Social Ontology</p>	<p>Extant Data:</p> <p>Study on the Development of Trust in South African Schools (Askvik, 2003)</p> <p>Study on the Discursive Construction of Identification-Based Trust between HIV/AIDS Groups and Pharmaceutical Companies (Maguire et al., 2001)</p> <p>Study on Interorganizational Trust and Boundary Spanners in Biotech Firms (Zaheer et al., 2002)</p>
<p>Substantive Theory:</p> <p>Three Forms of Trust: Calculus-Based, Knowledge-Based, and Identification-Based Trust (Lewicki and Bunker, 1995)</p> <p>Presumptive Trust (Kramer and Lewicki, 2010)</p> <p>The Conceptualization of Interorganizational Trust As that which Is Shared by Boundary Spanners (Janowicz and Noorderhaven, 2006)</p>	<p>Emergent Research Data:</p> <p>Findings presented in chapter 7 of this study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The bases of interorganizational trust among the three groups of boundary spanners • The impacts of interorganizational trust held by the three groups of boundary spanners • The discursive construction of identification-based trust among board members and operational-level boundary spanners

Diagram 11: Adaptive Theory Research Mix

8.7.1. General Theories

General theories from Foucault (2002, original printing 1969) and Searle (1995; 2006) were a critical element in the research process in two ways. First, because they provided useful perspectives for examining the development of identification-based trust. Foucault's (2002, original printing 1969) concept of discursive statements was especially helpful in examining the narrative processes that generated the statement, *We are, together, The School Partnership*. This gave a complimentary framework for examining the discursive construction of identity in addition to Maguire et al. (2001), and it also provided divergent perspectives on what discursive statements are and the functions they can serve among the boundary spanners of a partnership. Likewise, Searle's (1995; 2006) description of collective intentionality provided an ideal type, which can result from the discursive processes. Searle's (1995) typology helped identify the "social facts" and "institutional facts" (p. 26) that boundary spanners developed in the process. The result of their discourse was their common "sense of doing (wanting, believing, etc.) something together" (Ibid, p. 24) and their individual desires to accomplish their collective goals - in other words, their *collective intentionality* to make The School Partnership the best it could be.

The second way in which general theories were an important element in this study, was the ways that those theories were actually enhanced in the process. The research not only benefited from them; it also contributed to them, in Layder's (1998) words, by "providing unusual empirical materials by which to judge [their] explanatory usefulness" and by "enhanc[ing] the explanatory reach and power of the typology" (p. 128). By using Foucault's (2002, original printing 1969) discourse theory to examine the development of identification-based trust, this study has demonstrated the usefulness of statements as the elemental unit of discourse, and it has shown how statements can generate a shared identity among interorganizational actors and thus generate interorganizational trust. The analyses from this study also provided additional context for Searle's (1995; 2006) notion of collective intentionality by demonstrating its development among actors that span across organizational boundaries.

8.7.2. Substantive Theories

Substantive theories, likewise, played an important role in this study. Layder (1998) described a substantive theory as that which "applies very much to specific empirical areas..."

limited in scope, centering on the substantive area itself and limiting its references to wider areas” (pp. 163-164). This study used substantive theories from three main sources. The first source was Janowicz and Noorderhaven (2006), who theorized that interorganizational trust is conceptualized as the trust held between two levels of boundary spanners - the operational level and the strategic level. The second source of substantive theory was from Lewicki and Bunker (1995) who provided a framework of three forms of trust - calculus-based trust, knowledge-based trust, and identification-based trust. The third source was from Kramer and Lewicki (2010) who theorized presumptive trust, which is not based on a shared history, rather it is based on organizational identity, organizational rules, and/or organizational roles. In this study, the three substantive theories complimented and contrasted with one another, which resulted in “the cross-fertilization of ideas” (Layder, 1998, p. 164) that adds to the explanatory power of each theory.

Janowicz and Noorderhaven’s (2006) conceptualization of the levels of interorganizational trust formed the core of this research. It determined the objects and subjects of trust that were to be studied; however, it did not provide a framework for examining their trust development. What it lacked in that regard was provided by Lewicki and Bunker’s (1995) model of trust development, in which the boundary spanners could display calculus-based, knowledge-based, or identification-based trust depending on their current situations. Ultimately, however, Lewicki and Bunker’s (1995) model also had a weakness, because it did not consider any type of trust that could exist between agents without some type of prior historical relationship. That weakness in Lewicki and Bunker’s (1995) model became clear as the research process unfolded and the data revealed the phenomenon of boundary spanners who actually exhibited trust in each other without having a historical relationship. In order to explain that *a priori* trust displayed among the strategic-level boundary spanners, Kramer and Lewicki’s (2010) model of presumptive trust was added as another resource in the research process.

8.7.3. Extant Data

Extant data also played a critical role in this study. These empirical studies provided some expectations about the ways in which interorganizational trust should be developed. For example, the study by Zaheer et al. (2002) proposed that the operational-level boundary spanners would begin their relationships with a weaker form of trust, and they would have

the potential to develop a stronger form of trust as the partnership continued. The trust shared by the operational-level boundary spanners should aid in the day-to-day operation of the partnership. Furthermore, according to Zaheer et al. (2002), the strategic-level boundary spanners should display a strong form of trust that was based on a historical personal relationship between them. According to their findings, this strong trust would lead to the initiation of the partnership, and it would also keep the partnership moving forward during difficult times. However, as the emergent data in this study revealed, some of the strategic-level boundary spanners were actually new to their roles, and they did not have a shared history with one another, contrary to the propositions of Zaheer et al. (2002). The partnership may have initially begun with the strategic-level boundary spanners holding identification-based trust in one another, but after ten years of partnership, the dynamics of trust development had changed as the original general secretaries had moved on to other organizations and new individuals had come in to take over their roles.

The two other sources of extant data were the studies by Askvik (2003) and Maguire et al. (2001), which led to an expectation that interorganizational trust could be developed through discursive narrative. According to their empirical research, this narrative would generate common or complimentary identities among boundary spanners and would thus lead to identification-based trust. The emergent research data actually confirmed those expectations about the discursive construction of identification-based trust, and it contributes additional contextual evidence for the theoretical assumptions made by Askvik (2003) and Maguire et al. (2001).

8.7.4. Emergent Research Data

The emergent research data is that which unfolded throughout the course of field study. It developed as the potential interviewees were contacted, observations were made, documentary evidence was examined, and open-ended interviews were conducted. As the emergent research data continued to grow, it either confirmed the sources of extant data, substantive theory, and general theory; or it demonstrated the need for new perspectives to explain various phenomena. It also focused the line of questioning that was used in each interview.

The incoming data confirmed the findings of Maguire et al. (2001) and Askvik (2003), who proposed that identification-based trust could be generated through a discursive process.

It also demonstrated some potential weakness in the propositions of Zaheer et al. (2002) and Lewicki and Bunker (1995), that trust is based on a historical relationship. As a result, the substantive theory of Kramer and Lewicki (2010) was brought into the research mix, which offered the concept of presumptive trust that can exist without prior interpersonal exchanges. Finally, the emergent data interacted with the general theories of Searle (1995; 2006) and Foucault (2002, original printing 1969). Those two theories offered perspectives for viewing the incoming data, and, likewise, the explanatory power of those two general theories was enhanced in the process.

8.8. Future Research

Further research can be done on interorganizational trust within an NGO partnership, which would add insight to a complex topic. It would be interesting to see a comparison of multiple NGO partnerships, in which one or more of the partnerships was entirely new and also one or more of the partnerships was well established. The examination of a new partnership could present more of an opportunity to look at presumptive trust across multiple groups of boundary spanners, not just the strategic-level boundary spanners as in this case study. It would be interesting to see if operational-level boundary spanners and board members would build presumptive trust in similar ways to the strategic-level boundary spanners in this study: by relying on ingroup membership and role categorizations. It would also be interesting to more thoroughly examine the trust development of a group of well-established strategic-level boundary spanners who had a shared history and to note the impacts of their trust on the overall partnership, which was not possible in this case study since two of the three general secretaries were new in their roles.

Additionally, it would be useful to develop a model of trust that effectively combines two models into one. This study demonstrated the usefulness of Lewicki and Bunker's (1995) model that is based on shared interpersonal history and also Kramer and Lewicki's (2010) model of presumptive trust that does not require a shared history between trustor and trustee. If these two models could be combined into one model, it would cover the likelihood that some boundary spanners in a partnership would be well-established while others might be relatively new.

Finally, further research can be done on the discursive construction of identification-based trust. First, a detailed investigation could be performed on the various forms that a

discursive statement can take. This particular study found that the statement, *We are, together, The School Partnership*, came from discussions about the partnership that took place within staff meetings as well as from documents that reinforced the unity of the partnership. Going forward, it could be useful to explore additional forms of these discursive statements and the specific processes that unfold within the discursive narrative. For example, are there team-building exercises, vision-casting meetings, or some other types of discursive methods that are often found to create collective intentionality between interorganizational boundary spanners? Second, it would also be interesting to examine whether or not a member's identification with the partnership can cause dis-identification with his or her home organization. For example, is it likely that boundary spanners from one organization begin to see themselves as more aligned with the partnership than with the organization that they represent within the partnership? Maguire et al. (2001) found evidence of such dis-identification, when members of a partnership began to feel like outsiders within their home organization. However, this study did not focus on that phenomena, nor did it gather conclusive data to that regard.

8.9. Conclusion

This paper has presented a case of interorganizational-trust development between three anonymous Norwegian NGOs. The three NGOs have cooperated together in a school partnership for the past ten years with the goal of developing cross-cultural understanding and international work. The partnership has displayed a high level of interorganizational trust and has, therefore, provided an interesting case study on how trust can be developed within an NGO partnership.

This case study report offers several elements that can be used in future research as well as used by practitioners of interorganizational partnerships. First, it provided an introduction to the research field of interorganizational trust, surveying the breadth of available literature, as well as narrowing the field down for a more cohesive framework. Second, it provided a research methodology based, in part, on Layder's (1998) adaptive theory approach, in which a mix of general theory, substantive theory, extant data, and emerging research data were combined to explore the development of interorganizational trust. To that end, a case has been made for the combination of various sources of theory and data into one research mix, which not only provides theoretically rich explanations but also contributes to the theories

already being used. The results of this study are empirical findings about the bases, forms, and impacts of interorganizational trust and also some suggestions about how interorganizational trust can be developed within an NGO partnership.

One thing can be certain, however; the boundary spanners within a partnership will not usually spend much time thinking about the categories, forms, or conceptualizations of interorganizational trust. Perhaps they will not even think overtly about trust development at all (Möllering, 2006; 2006b), even though it underlies many of the decisions they make. As Kramer and Lewicki (2010) aptly noted, trust “is akin to being in a gravitational field: we experience fully gravity’s invariant tug but remain oblivious to its presence as we go about our routine activities on the face of the earth” (p. 256). Likely, the boundary spanners will intuitively respond to the situations in which they find themselves, and they will determine the expectations they have in their counterparts - either positive or negative (Kramer and Lewicki, 2010). Therefore, it is the role of the researcher to examine the theory or, in this case, the collection of theories that can help explain the phenomena of interorganizational trust. Hopefully, in the end, this case study has helped to clarify an “elusive topic” (Möllering, 2006b, p. 1) and has presented some useful explanations about how and why interorganizational trust is developed within NGO partnerships.

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