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**Doctoral Thesis**

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Guðrið Weihe

Public-Private Partnerships

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Meaning and Practice

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Guðrið Weihe  
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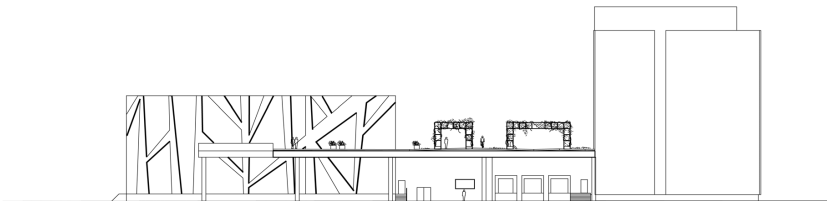
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# PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

## Meaning and Practice



*PhD Thesis by*

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**The first state level PPP contract in Denmark**

On the 29th of June 2007 the Danish central Government entered its first PPP deal. A Special Purpose Vehicle, Pihl Arkivet A/S, has been contracted to finance, build, operate and maintain the new archive facilities for the Danish State Archives. The facilities are built on the old goods station site by Kalvebod Brygge in Copenhagen. It is the Palaces and Properties Agency, which belongs under the auspices of the Danish Ministry of Finance that on behalf of the State has entered the PPP contract with OPP Pihl Arkivet A/S. OPP Pihl Arkivet A/S has been designated by the Ministry of Culture, the Danish State Archives and the Palaces and Properties.

*List of Tables and Figures*

*Preface*

*Acknowledgements*

## **CONTENTS**

### **PART I COVER INTRODUCTION**

1	INTRODUCTION .....	1
2	RESEARCH FINDINGS .....	15
3	METHODOLOGY.....	19
4	COMING TO TERMS WITH PPP.....	30
5	BEYOND CONTRACTS – UNRAVELING PPP PRACTICE.....	36
6	CONCLUSION .....	52
7	FUTURE RESEARCH.....	58
8	REFERENCES.....	61

### **PART II ADDRESSING THE MEANING OF PPP.....73**

Article 1 Ordering Disorder – On the Perplexities of the Partnership Literature

Article 2 Offentlig-private partnerskaber: et mangetydigt begreb

PART III BEYOND CONTRACTS – ADDRESSING PPP PRACTICE..... 101

Article 3 Public-Private Partnerships and Public Private Value Trade-Offs

Article 4 Beyond Contracts: Utilizing Alliances Research vis-à-vis Public-Private Partnership Research

Article 5 Unravelling Cooperation: Do Infrastructure Partnerships Involve Collaborative Behavior?

**Appendices**

Appendix 1 Interview guide I

Appendix 2 Interview guide II (questionnaire)

**Danish Abstract**

**Faroese Abstract**



## TABLES AND FIGURES

### TABLES

Table 1 Overview of article contributions .....	13
Table 2 Variety of PPP formal structures .....	34
Table 3 The cooperation continuum .....	41
Table 4 Two perspectives on inter-organizational cooperation .....	59

### FIGURES

Figure 1 Structure of the Dissertation .....	12
Figure 2 Research design .....	27
Figure 3 Overview of PPP approaches (clusters of PPP research) .....	32
Figure 4 Chronology of study .....	37
Figure 5 Actors in the infrastructure PPP .....	44
Figure 6 Case overview – distribution of cases according to cooperative practice ....	45
Figure 7 Case differences vis-à-vis ratings of trust, reciprocity, joint-decision making and performance .....	48

## Preface

In the past three decades significant reorganization of public administrations has taken place in most Western countries. This change has been captured in scholarly titles such as ‘Public Administration: Lost an empire, not yet found a role’ (Hood 1990), ‘The New Governance: Governing without Government’ (Rhodes 1996), ‘Fundamental shifts in thinking about public administration’ (Peters and Wright 1996) and ‘Reinventing Government’ (Osborne and Gaebler 1992). There has been a shift away from traditional public administration towards more management oriented (managerial) organizing styles together with a greater inclusion of markets and competition in the public service production. In brief, from the 1980s and onwards, there has been a shift away from nationalization towards neo-liberal policies in the shape of various forms of privatization. During the mid-1990s, a new policy tool emerged on the global public management agenda – public-private partnerships (PPP) – and PPP has today gained a similar position that privatization and contracting out had in the 1980s and 1990s. However, although widely disseminated, the defining features of PPP remain obscured, and our knowledge about how PPP functions in practice is dreadfully limited. The PPP term is popular but imprecise. This study seeks to expose, first, the different meanings attached to the PPP label and, second, to disclose how public and private actors cooperate (in practice) in implemented PPP projects. The ambition of this study is to bring forth the basis for a deeper understanding of PPP by unravelling the features of cooperation in operational projects. In addition to the enclosed cover introduction, this work has resulted in the following five articles:

- Weihe, Guðrið. Forthcoming. Ordering Disorder – On the Perplexities of the Partnership Literature. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*.
- Weihe, Guðrið. 2007. Offentlig-private partnerskaber: et mangetydigt begreb [Public-Private Partnerships: an Ambiguous Term]. *Tidskriftet Politik*.
- Weihe, Guðrið. 2008. Public-Private Partnerships and Public-Private Value Trade-Offs. *Public Money and Management*.
- Weihe, Guðrið. Under Review. Beyond contracts. Utilizing alliance research vis-à-vis public-private partnership research. *International Public Management Journal*.

- Weihe, Guðrið. Under Review. Unravelling Cooperation: Do Infrastructure partnerships involve cooperative behaviour? *Public Management Review*.

The articles build on earlier and lengthier working papers that have been presented at public management conferences and seminar during the course of the past three years (see Weihe 2005; Weihe 2006; Weihe 2007a; Weihe 2007b; and Weihe 2007c). This process from working papers to articles has distilled the arguments making them more concise and straight to the point.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who in different and important ways have contributed to this project. First, I would like to thank my colleagues at International Center for Business and Politics (CBP), Copenhagen Business School, who have made the past three years a wonderful and educating experience. Thank you for your kind support and for your valuable input to my work. Special thanks to my supervisor, Carsten Greve, who was always available with priceless input and advice. Also a particular thanks to Ove Kaj Pedersen, who encouraged me to undertake the PhD journey in the first place. Thanks also to the Public Management Department of Erasmus University, Rotterdam, for providing me with a writing retreat in April-July 2007. In particular I would like to thank Erik-Hans Klijn for organizing the visit.

I am indebted to all the practitioners who were willing to participate in this study. Without their valuable help and input, this project would not have been possible. Thank you for taking your time to answer all my questions – not only on one but two occasions. Special thanks are directed to Grahame Baldock who was particularly helpful at the early stages of this research. Further my gratitude goes to the Greater Copenhagen Authority (HUR) for funding the project.

On a personal level, I would like to thank my friend and partner in life Morten, my parents, my sister and my brother, and my friends for their indispensable support given in many different but yet important ways. None mentioned, none forgotten. Thanks!

PART I  
Cover Introduction



*“Everybody is talking about public-private partnerships but to be honest nobody knows what it really is.”*

(Danish Member of Parliament)

## 1 INTRODUCTION

This study departs from the observation that public-private partnerships (PPP) have hit the public management agenda globally, that it is widely spread, and that massive public as well as private resources are devoted to the implementation of PPPs. In the period 2004-2005 alone, around 206 PPP deals were closed worldwide with a value of approximately US\$52 billion (PricewaterhouseCoopers 2005, 37). In the United Kingdom, more than 750 PPP projects with a total capital value of £37.6 billion were implemented in the period 1995-2007 (Partnerships UK 2007, 3).<sup>1</sup> According to the Financial Times, the Australian PPP market is expected to grow from AUD \$9 billion between 2000 and 2006 to AUD \$100 billion in 2016 (The Allen Consulting Group 2007, 12). In Denmark, although currently only two PPP projects have reached financial close, the potential marked for PPP has been estimated to be somewhere between DKK 22.4 billion and DKK 27.1 billion in the period 2005-2010 (i.e. approximately £2.4-2.9 billion) (KPMG 2005). Throughout the Danish landscape, numerous ex ante PPP evaluations are currently being made; i.e. pre-studies intended to estimate whether or not a project is suitable to be implemented as a PPP.<sup>2</sup> These ex ante evaluations are typically co-funded by the Danish Central Government which until 2010 has earmarked approximately DKK 12 million for that purpose. In 2007 alone, the Danish Government co-financed 11 ex ante PPP evaluations (www.ebst.dk). Moreover, in 2004, the Danish Government made it obligatory to consider PPP as a procurement route in all construction projects

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<sup>1</sup>This number does not include the Buildings Schools for the Future Program (BSF), the Local Improvement Finance Trust programme (LIFT) and the London Underground PPPs which taken together add several billion pounds to the above figure.

<sup>2</sup> Ex ante evaluations are appraisals of whether or not infrastructure projects are suitable to be procured as PPPs or if more traditional procurement models should be applied. The Danish term for this exercise is PPP ‘forundersøgelse’; which loosely translated means PPP pre-studies.

covered by the Danish law on state building activity.<sup>3</sup> Thus although Denmark can be considered to be a latecomer to the PPP field, and although regulatory barriers for the implementation of PPPs have been identified (Petersen 2007), there are signs that PPP activities are about to intensify in the Danish case too.

While PPP activity around the world is intensifying, in the literature on the subject matter, there is however little agreement on what constitutes a PPP. As harshly formulated by some scholars the word partnership is “little more than a jargonistic buzzword, ...used, not for its intrinsic meaning, but as a hurrah-word” (Beckett 1998; quoted in van der Wel 2004: 3) and further that the “methods for carrying out such (private-public) partnerships are limited only by the imagination...” (Lyons and Hamlin 1991, 55; quoted in McQuaid 2000, 10). This gives occasion for the first research question which this study addresses:

### **Research questions 1: *What does PPP mean?***

The first objective of this study is to create an overview of the various uses of the term and in that way expose the different meanings attached to the PPP label. By unravelling the conceptual ambiguity of PPP, the study addresses a serious shortcoming in the literature which relates to that the international discussion on PPP takes place in a number of ‘watertight compartments’, where there is little communication between the different compartments, and further little awareness or acknowledgement within each compartment of the existence of other compartments (van der Wel 2004, 21). The Babylonian variety (Börzel 1998) of PPP concepts and applications is unfortunate since it impedes theoretical development and further obstructs the accumulation of clear policy guidelines. This part of the analysis goes beyond the usual conceptual exercises, and constitutes in itself an independent contribution to the field. The results of this part of the study are available in Section 4, and in article 1 and article 2.

In addition to clarifying the meaning of PPP, the staggering amount of resources spent on PPP programmes around the world also necessitates and justifies research that addresses how this policy tool functions in practice. How are these long-term public-private arrangements operating ex post contract signature? Regardless of whatever pros and cons there may be associated with PPP, it is important to understand not only formative and structural aspects of cooperation but

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<sup>3</sup> Government announcement no. 1394, 12 December 2004.



also the operational and social dimensions. Hitherto, research on PPP has been biased towards the former type of issues. There is therefore a gap in the scholarly literature vis-à-vis operational practice and our knowledge about how PPP projects unfold is limited. By studying the character of the cooperative relationship, this study is an effort in the direction of closing that knowledge gap. The second research question that is addressed here is the following:

**Research question 2:** *How do public and private partnership actors cooperate in practice in PPPs?*

In the context of this study ‘practice’ refers to the features of the interaction processes that take place in the operational stage of cooperation; what is studied here is thus the character of the inter-organizational relationship. The key aim is to uncover how the involved actors cooperate ex post contract signature. For a similar approach see Ysa (2007) and Reeves (2006). Understanding PPP practice is central to the testing of the general *global idea* about PPP.<sup>4</sup> By global idea, I refer here to the general assumption in the literature and in policy practice that PPP presents a shift in governance style from hierarchical command-and-control based practices towards horizontal and trust-based public-private relations (more on this in Section 1.1).

When investigating PPP practice, the UK can be considered to be a benchmark case which is particularly relevant to study because it is exemplary of the

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<sup>4</sup> Note that the ‘testing of theory’ should only be loosely understood here, as theory in this context loosely refers to the global idea about the phenomenon under study (i.e. PPP practice) and not to systematized confirmed experiences that can explain and/or predict certain outcomes as a more narrow definition of theory would imply (Andersen 2005, 29). Moreover, this exercise is not a matter of testing whether or not a global notion of PPP is true or false. Rather the ambition is much more modest aiming at exploring how our ideas about PPP fit with PPP practice. In that sense, this study differs from a traditional crucial-case design because it is not a deductive analysis aiming at testing a theory which is law-like in its precision, degree of elaboration, consistency and scope (Gerring 2007, 235). The crucial case method was first proposed by Harry Eckstein several decades ago who, like many social science researchers at that time, was influenced by a deductive-nomological model of science (Gerring 2007, 235). Contrary to this, this study is influenced by an interpretative model of science. Rather than embracing the notion of covering-laws within social sciences, I am more attracted to the idea that social behavior is essentially irregular, complex and multifaceted.

particular phenomenon under investigation (Barzelay 2001).<sup>5</sup> In addition to being a first mover (launching its first PPP programme in 1992), the UK also has the most extensive PPP programme to date both in terms of capital value and number of PPP projects implemented. Additionally, the UK model acts as a source of policy inspiration for other countries; PPP programmes and PPP policies around the world are being modelled after the UK experience.<sup>6</sup> Choosing the UK case thus to some extent represents an example of a “crucial” case strategy (on the logic of crucial case studies see, for instance, Eckstein 1975; George and Bennett 2004; and Gerring 2007). The crucial case can be described as one “that *must closely fit* a theory if one is to have confidence in the theory’s validity, or, conversely, *must not fit* equally well any rule contrary to that proposed” (Eckstein 1975, 118). If the facts of a particular case are crucial to the testing of a theory then that case can be considered a crucial case (Gerring 2007, 231). When the aim is to examine how PPPs unfold ex post contract signature, the relevancy of the UK case is further emphasised by the fact that the largest amount of operational PPP projects can be found within this particular country case. In brief, the UK case can be argued to be particularly informative for theory development vis-à-vis PPP. To the extent to which UK PPP practice fits the general, although vague, global idea about the nature of cooperation in partnerships, we can have confidence in the validity of those ideas.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The idea of a ‘benchmark case’ is a methodological resort to study occurrences of specific instances in specific cases that are highly exemplary. The concept was developed by Michael Barzelay in his study of public management policy changes in the UK, Australia and New Zealand where the mentioned three countries serve as benchmark cases (2001).

<sup>6</sup> For instance, the ideas of the Dutch public expert centre on PPP have for the most part been adopted from the UK PFI/PPP model (Klijn and Teisman 2005, 99). Similarly, in the Australian context, the development of PPP policies has been influenced by the UK PFI/PPP model (English 2007, 314-315).

<sup>7</sup> It is appropriate to point out here that a number of scholars reject a priori that the global idea about PPP fits with the type of PPP investigated here (for instance, Klijn and Teisman 2005). These claims are however not based on empirical observations about cooperative practice. Instead they are based on the formal structures of cooperation and assumptions about the character of cooperation are derived from the formal governance structure. A key argument here is that in order to determine the nature of governance, it is vital to look not only at governance structures but also at governance processes.

Below, the background and motivation for this study is delineated (Section 1.1). Subsequently, an account is given of how the study contributes to the PPP literature (Section 1.2). The introductory section is concluded with a summary of the five article contributions (Section 1.3) and an overview of the content of the cover introduction (Section 1.4).

## 1.1 Background and motivation

Some years ago, on an inbound plane to Copenhagen, Denmark, I was sitting next to a Danish parliamentarian (MP). As a spokesman on transport, the MP was keen to know more about public-private partnerships (PPP). He told me that PPP was a topic which occupied many of his colleagues, including him, and that there was a demand for more knowledge about PPP. How it works? What the barriers are for implementation? And what the promises and disadvantages of this particular organizational form are? These were some of the questions and concerns that he raised. However, shortly after, he added that although PPP received quite some attention it was not entirely clear to him exactly what a PPP is.

Subsequently, I have experienced similar situations in different contexts. At PPP conferences, seminars and workshops, oftentimes the debates centre on conceptual clarification rather than on, for instance, questions of substantive nature such as those raised above. Similarly, in the literature there has within the past five years been an increasing amount of publications dealing with the conceptual boundaries of the term (Hodge and Greve 2005; Linder 1999; Tvarnø 2005; Van der Wel 2004, Klijn and Teisman 2005; Wettenhall 2003). While publications on PPP have proliferated, and PPP has entered the public management agenda globally, there has not been a comparable reduction in the ambiguity of the term. This is the first general puzzle (of two) that has motivated this study.<sup>8</sup> It relates to the first research question concerning the meaning of PPP (what does PPP *mean*)? Although PPP has received much attention in the public management literature as well as in policy practice, there is, or until recently was, little clarity about the

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<sup>8</sup> A puzzle should in this context be understood as a question or a theme which is difficult to understand, and which has activated the motivation for addressing the research questions raised here.

meaning of the term.<sup>9</sup> Thus, at the point when this study was implemented, there was no commonly accepted definition of PPP, and there was no commonly accepted classification of different forms of PPP. Moreover, the literature was unorganized in the sense that there was a lack of overview of the field. As noted earlier, different streams of PPP research existed with little acknowledgement of one another. By addressing these shortcomings, this study constitutes an important contribution to the advancement of the PPP literature.

Now, let us turn to the second puzzle or brainteaser which has motivated this study. It relates to the second research question put forward above and concerns the character of cooperation in PPPs (how to PPP actors cooperate in *practice*). In recent times, I participated in a government sponsored workshop on PPP. The objective of the workshop was to educate civil servants in relation to using PPP as a policy tool. I was invited to speak about the meaning of PPP and also about the skills necessary to successfully manage PPP projects. The workshop was opened with an exercise where the participants, in groups of four to five people, were asked to describe what they understood by the term PPP. This resulted in a list of PPP characteristics. From the list, it became obvious that what the participants associated with PPP was some sort of close-knit, dialogue- and trust-based relationship with private sector organizations; the assumption was that this type of relationship would produce added value (synergy), which otherwise could not have been achieved. Unmistakably, the participants viewed PPP as a jump ahead compared to previous contracting practices; a shift from zero-sum to plus-sum arrangements where the involved actors cooperate more effectively than in the past. The type of relationships involved is expected to bring about added value in the form of some level of synergy. Similar assumptions can be identified in the literature (Huxham and Vangen 2000; Huxham and Vangen 2004; Klijn and Teisman 2005). The expectation is that precisely because of the closer and more collaborative relations more synergy and innovation can be achieved (for instance, Klijn and Teisman 2005, 97). Some

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<sup>9</sup> It may be precisely because of the conceptual vagueness that the PPP idea has travelled so far and has been implemented so extensively – much in a similar way as other ‘institutionalized super standards’, such as performance management and total quality management (TQM), have been diffused globally because of their nature as generalized ideas rather than specific step-by-step recipes (Rovik 1998). Regardless of the reasons why PPP activities have proliferated within the past 10-15 years, it still remains important to address the *meaning* of the term as clear analytical constructs are crucial to theory building.

scholars emphasise that in order to be a 'genuine' PPP cooperation between the involved public and private organizations necessarily has to be close, trust-based, draw on social capital, involve principal-principal relationships and joint responsibility for project outcome and risk (Wettenhall 2006; Wettenhall 2007; Klijn and Teisman 2005). Only then, it is suggested, is it 'semantically legitimate' to apply the partnership term (Wettenhall 2005, 36). Similar lines of reasoning can be found elsewhere in the literature; some suggest that partnerships need to be enduring and relational (Grimsey and Lewis 2005, 13), others that they involve principal-principal relationships based on cooperation and trust (Mörth and Sahlin-Andersson 2006, 11-12) and that PPP contracts are different from previous contracts in the sense that they constitute 'second order contracts' that can be viewed as 'engines of possibilities' (Andersen 2006). Thus in the literature on PPP there is a common assumption that PPPs break with previously known public-private arrangements such as contracting out and various forms of privatization.

Similar assumptions – i.e. inferences about the nature of cooperation – are present among policy makers. On January 25<sup>th</sup> 2008 the current Danish Minister for Transport, Carina Christensen, held a speech about the Danish Government's view on PPP. The Minister of Transport stressed that PPP should not in advance be locked as a predetermined process but that it instead should be adapted to individual projects. More importantly, she emphasised that the key thing was the bringing about of *increased or more cooperation* between public and private sector organizations. Other similar examples could be given but here it will suffice to simply point out that in academia, as well as in policy practice, there is a widespread belief, that PPP, relative to previous cooperative practices, presents something *new*, different and better compared to traditional modes of public-private interaction; i.e. that it implies more cooperative relations between the two sectors. Thus on the face of it, PPP heralds a new age of closer and more horizontal relations between the public and private sectors of society. This is what was coined the global idea of PPP on the opening pages of this cover introduction.

Conversely, elsewhere, PPP is argued not to break away from previous contracting practices (for instance, Reeves 2006), and to be merely a continuation or another element of the already well-known New Public Management reforms of the 1980s and 1990s (Broadbent and Laughlin 1999, 96 and 107). Thus it has been suggested that there is nothing new about the type of public private mixes that we today label PPP (Wettenhall 2005), and that it is merely a revamped form of tendering (Klijn and Teisman 2005, 103), yet another chapter in the privatization book (Hodge 2004, 37; Hodge and Bowman 2000, 213), rebadged privatization (Coghill and Woodward 2005, 81) or merely a matter of back-door-privatization as proposed by the British trade unions (Flinders 2005, 220). Some of the PPP

managers interviewed during the course of this study further suggest that PPP is more aggressive and inflexible than traditional procurement projects. This is the puzzle from which the second research question is derived: i.e. that while for some PPP is associated with horizontal and trust-based relations, for others it is a rigid, inflexible and aggressive organizational form. The second research question relates to the rhetorical promise, inherent in the partnership label; i.e. that PPP to some extent implies a partnership between the involved actors in the conventional understanding of the word.

Thus the inconsistency in the theoretical and practical ideas about PPP begs the research question about what characterizes the nature of cooperation in a PPP. Is it different from previously known practices? If yes, how is it then different? What does cooperation actually look like ex post contract signature? Are the implicit promises about better and improved relationships between the public and private sector manifested in practice? Is cooperation in PPP more dialogue- and trust-based and less contractual than traditional public-private arrangements such as contracting out? The key objective in relation to the second research question is to uncover what characterizes cooperative practices in PPP projects. By exploring what cooperation actually looks like in practice, a discerning between expectations (ideas) about the cooperative processes in PPP on the one hand, and the actual processes that do take place in real life on the other hand is enabled. This is something, which has not been investigated systematically in the literature thus far.

Immediately, it is tempting to ask: what is the use and relevance of studying PPP practice? Why be bothered to investigate the nature of cooperation? There are at least three important reasons for this. First, it is important in relation to enhancing conceptual clarity and the general understanding of PPP as a phenomenon. If the common conception is that PPP is a new and improved way of public-private cooperation; that it is a third way between nationalization and privatization entailing, for example, features such as high levels of trust, close relations and dialogue then it is important to clarify whether or not these expectations are founded in reality. This becomes particularly relevant when keeping in mind that these positive associations make PPP a very attractive policy tool. Who can, for example, be against working together in partnership? “Like ‘progress’ or ‘improvement’, the warm glow of the partnership ethos cannot easily be dismissed” (Hodge and Greve 2005, 335). The political power of the PPP label is strong and, immediately, it seems to dissolve the traditional left-right ideological debates about pro-against private service delivery and ownership of public assets. “PPP, indeed, has the virtue of claiming a sort of middle ground between the hard-line positions occupied by nationalization at the left pole and privatization at right pole of the public-private spectrum” (Wettenhall 2005, 22). Keeping in mind the strong

rhetorical power of the PPP label it becomes only the more crucial to empirically determine the features of cooperation. If the popular wisdom is that PPP is qualitatively different relative to previously cooperative practices, then politicians and other decision-makers may easily be persuaded to implement PPP. However, since the accumulated knowledge about the character of cooperation is limited, and also because PPP can mean so many things, there is the potential danger that PPP will be implemented on a false basis. Although improved conceptual clarity is an important rational in its own right, the persuasive rhetorical power of PPP makes it only the more critical to study cooperative practices. A second reason for studying the nature of cooperation is that a widespread assumption is, as noted earlier, that precisely because of the features of cooperation, such as more intense interactions, knowledge exchange and coordination, that extra value in the form of *synergy* is expected to be realized. In other words, the relational characteristics of PPP are expected to have important performance implications. The mantra is, implicitly or explicitly, that due to the closer, horizontal and improved relations between public and private actors added value (synergy/collaborative advantage) can be generated which would not have been possible without cooperation. “It is important to recognize that having higher ambitions for achieving surplus value, [...], also requires a more complicated and sophisticated organizational form” as argued by some scholars (Klijn and Teisman 2005, 97). This is also a viable justification for examining PPP practice. If features of the relationship are important performance antecedents, then certainly this aspect of cooperation should be explored further.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, the third reason for studying PPP practice is simply that our knowledge about this dimension of cooperation is limited. There is a knowledge gap concerning how PPPs materialize in practice. For the same reason, there is a lack of guidelines concerning how to manage PPPs ex post contract signature. This also constitutes an important rationale for examining PPP practice.

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<sup>10</sup> In the context of this study, the sister discipline of alliance research is utilized in order to extract relevant analytical proxies for the empirical analysis; i.e. the alliance literature has informed the empirical analysis of PPP practice.

## 1.2 Contribution to the literature

The overall aim of this study is twofold. First, to enhance the scholarly PPP field by offering novel and much needed input concerning the *meaning* of PPP. Second, the aim is to clarify how PPPs unfold in *practice*, and in that manner to test the idea and rhetoric of PPP against PPP reality. By doing so, this dissertational work constitutes valuable input to the scholarly debate and theory development on PPP. The dissertation contributes to the literature in two important ways. First, by mapping the literature as well as different usages and definitions of the PPP term, the analysis offers a number of PPP categories and definitions, which bring about increased conceptual clarity. Conceptual clarity and definitions are a prerequisite for theory development. Without some generally understood perspectives on PPP, studies of PPP are on shifting ground. Before analysing correlation between variables, it is indeed necessary to define and understand the dimensions of the particular variables that we are interested in.

Second, this study offers descriptive theory about the nature of cooperation in PPP.<sup>11</sup> This is something, which is currently missing in the PPP literature as most studies focus on formal aspects of cooperation, pre-contract signature issues (Ghobadian et al., 2004, p. 289; Reeve and Hatter 2004) and meso- or macro level aspects of cooperation: e.g. aspects relating to policy, societal or project level aspects of PPP (see Petersen and Weihe 2007 for an account of these levels). Micro-level studies of cooperative practice in PPP are however missing in the literature (Noble and Jones 2006), and key processual aspects of PPP have been neglected (Fischbacher and Beaumont 2003, 171). There is therefore a need for more academic reflection regarding the ways active PPPs operate (Ysa 2007, 51). It is rather paradoxical that so little scholarly attention has been devoted to exploring the nature of cooperation considering the aforementioned general assumptions about precisely this dimension of PPP (cf. the global idea about PPP). Effectively, the general assumptions about the nature of PPP are based on a rather limited number of observations.<sup>12</sup> This emphasises further the relevancy of studying operational PPP

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<sup>11</sup> In this context, theory should be understood in the broadest sense of the word meaning knowledge about the phenomenon under study (Andersen 2005, 29).

<sup>12</sup> As stated in article 5 and in the section below on operational practice (Section 5), there is a body of literature which deals with the issue of cooperation and collaboration more generically without relating the theoretical reflections and analyses of these terms to PPP. Collaboration as a concept is, for *(footnote continues on next page)*



projects. By illuminating how PPPs unfold in practice, and by mapping the characteristics of cooperation, further conceptual clarity can moreover be attained because this latter exercise allows us to inject some (empirically based) substance into the, at times, rather hollow ‘PPP container’. This is something, which has not been done thus far in the PPP literature. In other words, we go beyond contracts and look at cooperative practices in the form of interaction patterns, interaction frequencies, and relationship characteristics. In brief, we are opening up the black box of cooperation.<sup>13</sup>

Finally, this analysis contributes more broadly to the public management literature in the sense that it constitutes an important input to the ongoing debate about public vs. private delivery of goods and services for the public. By empirically uncovering the substance of PPP, a further chapter can be added to the history of organizing in the public sector: from nationalization, over privatization to public-private partnerships. Thus, this work contributes also more generally to ongoing public management debates about shifting trends and fads in public administration; does PPP present a break from previous privatization practices or is it perhaps just another step along the learning curve.<sup>14</sup> By scrutinizing PPP *meaning* and *practice*, and by developing models and taxonomies of PPP, the scholarly debate can be qualified further.

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instance, explored in the context of the garment industry and public policy initiation (see Wood and Gray 1991).

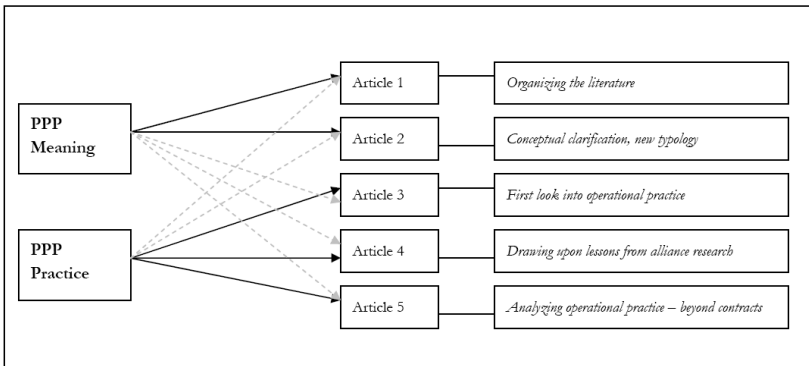
<sup>13</sup> The term ‘black box’ is used here in a similar way as it is used within political science in relation to demand-side models of the state. These have been argued to treat state institutions as ‘black boxes’ because they focus on political input processes. The internal operations of the state institutions is not analyzed directly but rather deduced from knowledge about the input processes (Dunleavy and O’Leary 1987, 108). A well known model of the political system that in a similar way treats the political system as a black box is the input-output model proposed by David Easton (see for instance, Easton 1957). In Eastons model, the political system is black boxed and analytical focus is directed at the inputs and the outputs of the political system. Similarly, in relation to PPP, research attention has primarily been directed at inputs (contracts, finances, and other technicalities pertaining to the pre-contract stage) or outputs (i.e. PPP performance). Thus here opening up the black box of cooperation means investigating how the involved public and private actors cooperate in the PPP operational phase. A similar use of the black box phrase is applied by the two alliance scholars Shenkar and Reuer (2006, 7).

<sup>14</sup> This is a phrase borrowed from Professor Grahame Hodge (mail circulated privately).

### 1.3 Delineation of article contributions

The findings of this study are reported partly in this cover introduction and partly in the five enclosed articles which have been published in and/or submitted to international peer-reviewed public management journals. Article 2 was published in a Danish peer reviewed journal. Some of the articles have already been published (articles 2 and article 3), some have provisionally been accepted for publication (article 1), and finally some are under review (article 4 and article 5). Figure 1 illustrates how the five articles relate to the two overall research questions of this study: i.e. *What does PPP mean?* and *How do public and private actors cooperate in practice in PPPs?* The first two articles (article 1 and article 2) relate to the research question concerning the meaning of PPP, and the three final articles relate to the research question concerning PPP practice (as indicated by the black arrows in Figure 1). The grey dotted arrows indicate that the two research questions are related.

**Figure 1 Structure of the Dissertation**



The five articles, which will be briefly described below (see Table 1 for an overview), are based on earlier working papers presented at various conferences and seminars (Weihe 2005; Weihe 2006; Weihe 2007a; Weihe 2007b and Weihe 2007c). Relative to the working papers, the final articles are more compressed. In journal articles there is not the same extent of space for extensive accounts of, for example, empirical data and theoretical arguments. In this sense there are certain trade-offs between choosing an article-based PhD thesis and the more traditional monograph.

**Table 1 Overview of article contributions**

	<b>Article 1</b>	<b>Article 2</b>	<b>Article 3</b>	<b>Article 4</b>	<b>Article 5</b>
<b>Title</b>	Ordering Disorder – On the Perplexities of the Partnership Literature	Offentlig-private partnerskaber: et mangetydigt begreb <sup>15</sup>	Public-Private Partnerships and Public-Private Value Trade-Offs	Beyond Contracts: Utilizing Alliance Research vis-à-vis Public-Private Partnership Research	Unravelling cooperation: Do infrastructure partnerships involve cooperative behaviour?
<b>Description</b>	The article maps different usages of the PPP term and identifies four PPP approaches	The article recaps the arguments in article 1 and proposes a new to-dimensional typology of PPP	The article reflects on the extent to which PPPs deliver public value based on case analyses of PPP practice	The article argues that strategic alliance research contains a learning potential vis-à-vis PPP	The article unravels what cooperation looks like ex post contract signature in operational UK based PPPs.
<b>Journal</b>	Australian Journal of Public Administration	Tidsskriftet Politik	Public Money and Management	International Public Management Journal	Public Management Review
<b>Status<sup>16</sup></b>	First submitted June 2007. Revised submission January 2008.	Submitted June 2007. Published in November 2007	Submitted July 2007. Published June 2008.	Submitted April 2008. Under review.	Submitted June 2008. Under review.

Article 1 addresses what can be labelled the Babylonian state of the PPP literature. By way of an extensive literature review, and by mapping various usages of the PPP

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<sup>15</sup> English translation of title: Public-Private Partnerships: an Ambiguous Term.

<sup>16</sup> Status by 13th June 2008.

term, a number of different PPP approaches (PPP research strands) are identified. These are the urban regeneration approach, the policy approach, the infrastructure approach and the development approach respectively. Within these approaches the PPP term takes on a variety of qualitatively different meanings. The article exposes these different understandings and approaches to PPP. The article concludes that due to these differences, an authoritative definition of PPP – one that can encompass all the different variations of the concept – is not logically possible. The article has been submitted to the Australian Journal of Public Administration, and the journal editor has expressed interest in publishing it.

The second article replicates the findings of the first article but adds another dimension to the classification and understanding of PPP. The argument is developed that PPP, in addition to being categorized along a number of formal structural traits, can be categorized alongside features of the cooperative process (informal process traits): i.e. characteristics of the relationship process. In this perspective, rather than being viewed as static formal structures, PPP is viewed as complex and dynamic processes which constantly change in a non-linear manner. By adopting a process perspective on PPP, it is argued, a more comprehensive understanding of PPP is enabled. This article was published in the Danish journal *Tidsskriftet Politik* in November 2007.

In the third article, PPP is approached from the perspective of public values. The article distinguishes between material (tangible substance values) and procedural public values (traditional values of public administration), and reflects upon the extent to which PPPs deliver public value. The characteristics of cooperation in five PPP cases are portrayed and on that basis the implications for the production and safeguarding of material and procedural public values respectively is considered. The article suggests that there may be an inherent contradiction between achieving material value while at the same time safeguarding procedural public values in PPPs. This article was accepted for publication in August 2007, and published in the June 2008 issue of *Public Money and Management*. The empirical part of the article draws upon an earlier working paper which addresses the operational practice in the five PPP cases (Weihe 2007a).

The fourth article substantiates the argument that strategic alliance research profitably can inform research on PPP. In particular, the alliance research dealing with informal aspects of cooperation are highlighted as being particularly relevant for PPP research. The article demonstrates that there is a demand for more knowledge about the managerial challenges pertaining to PPP and the people issues that may ultimately make or break a PPP. This article is based on a previous working paper which was presented the International Research Symposium for Public Management (IRSPM) in 2007 (Weihe 2007b). An earlier draft of the paper was

presented at a work-in-progress workshop at International Center for Business and Politics, Copenhagen Business School in 2006 (Weihe 2006). The article was submitted to International Journal of Public Management in April 2008 and is currently under review.

The fifth and final article exposes the character of cooperation in five operational infrastructure PPPs and demonstrates how, despite similar contract structures, PPP practice differs markedly from case to case. It demonstrates further that infrastructure PPPs sometimes develop relationship features which are normally not associated with this type of PPP in the literature. This article draws upon findings reported in earlier working papers (in particular Weihe 2007a) and brings together the data from the two data collection phases that make up the empirical base of this thesis. The article was submitted to the journal Public Management Review in June 2008 and is currently under review.

#### 1.4 Structure of cover introduction

The rest of the cover introduction is organized in the following manner: First, the key research findings are summarized in the section below (Section 2). Second, the research strategy and the methods applied are outlined (Section 3). Third, the findings relating to the first research question (PPP *meaning*) are reviewed and debated (Section 4). This is followed by a section on the findings pertaining to the second research question (PPP *practice*) (Section 5). Subsequently, the conclusions and the conceptual, managerial and methodological implications of this study are drawn up (Section 6). Finally, the cover introduction is concluded with a suggestion for the direction of future research on PPP (Section 7). The cover introduction has been written in a manner so that it can be read independently from the enclosed article contributions. References are continuously made to the articles so that the reader can consult these as required.

## 2 RESEARCH FINDINGS

In relation to the first research question (i.e. what does PPP mean), this study demonstrates that there are multiple understandings and usages of the PPP term. The label covers, for example, short-term and long-term contracting arrangements, joint ventures, and network relations between public and private actors as well as general public-private policy set-ups. For the same reason, it is argued that it is neither feasible nor expedient to search for an overarching and authoritative definition of PPP – i.e. one which is capable of capturing all the different variations of public-

private arrangements that the PPP label covers today. This is not logically possible without rendering the definition so broad that it in reality becomes meaningless. As demonstrated in article 1 and article 2, most of the PPP definitions that currently can be found in the literature effectively exclude some usages of the term. Rather than pursuing a unitary and excluding conceptual approach, i.e. limiting the PPP term to being applicable to only a subset of the large variety of public-private mixes that in practice are labelled PPP, a more inclusive and practical stance is taken here. Instead of dismissing some of the arrangements today called PPP as not being real PPPs (a stance which is somewhat prevalent in the PPP literature; for instance, Klijn and Teisman 2005; Wettenhall 2007), it is suggested that a better way forward is to organize the various types of PPP into different categories. Then within each category of PPPs knowledge accumulation and guidelines for best practice can be developed. Following this logic, this study organizes the literature into a number of PPP approaches; the local generation approach, the infrastructure approach, the policy approach and the development approach (see article 1; article 2; and Section 4 below). This practical stance has several advantages. It creates an overview of the multifaceted field, hence reduces conceptual bewilderment, makes the literature more accessible to newcomers as well as practitioners, and moreover moves us beyond conceptual quarrels and directs our attention instead towards understanding the logic of different PPP models, how they function, and the promises and pitfalls associated with each model. This enables us better to accumulate knowledge, to learn from past experience, and ultimately to develop guidelines for good practice. This perspective implies identifying approach specific lessons (content) as opposed to debating correct usages of the term (form). In brief, what is suggested here is an intermediate position between dismissing the PPP label altogether as lacking any specific meaning on the one hand, and reducing it to encompass only a subset of the many public-private mixes that are today labelled PPP on the other hand. Careful classification of different PPP families is a prerequisite for the development of an understanding of under which conditions the different types of PPP are more or less desirable as policy instruments.

Now, turning to the second research question (i.e. how do the involved actors cooperate in practice), some prefatory remarks about the type of PPP projects studied here is in its place. The studied PPP cases all belong to the infrastructure family of PPP, i.e. capital intensive long-term construction projects where finance, construction, service and maintenance-elements are bundled into one contract (see article 1, article 2; and Section 4 below for a description of the infrastructure category of PPP). There are two important reasons for studying this particular branch of PPP. First, this is the context in which the PPP term increasingly is being used (Evans and Bowman 2005, 62; originally Evans 2003). For instance, most PPP databases around

the world exclusively contain information about this type of public-private mixes.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, when government representatives talk about PPP, the infrastructure type is effectively what they are referring to. Similarly, when statistics are published on PPP, they most likely refer to the infrastructure version of PPP. The domination of this particular understanding of PPP renders it particularly relevant for closer scrutiny. The second rationale for studying infrastructure PPPs relates to a common conception that this particular type of PPP is the least collaborative type relatively to other PPP forms. Testing the general global idea about PPP against the infrastructure PPP thus constitutes a particular tough test. In that sense, choosing the infrastructure PPP for closer examination resembles somewhat the critical case study strategy as described by Flyvbjerg (1998, 149-151) as it enables the type of inference somewhat light-heartedly described by Levy as ‘the Sinatra inference’, i.e.: “if it can make it here, it can make it anywhere” (Gerring 2007, 237; originally Levy 2002). In other words, if systematic empirical analysis can demonstrate that cooperative practice in infrastructure PPPs entails the type of features generally affiliated with PPP, then it can be logically deduced that this type of cooperative relations are likely to occur in most or all other categories of PPP.

So what does cooperation look like in practice in the investigated PPP projects? Does the nature of cooperation correspond with the general sentiments about PPPs being close, trust-based, collaborative, dialogue-based and process-oriented?<sup>18</sup> The answer to this question is complex and ambiguous. On the one hand, the analysis reveals that the majority of the cases remain aspirational as opposed to practical. They do not present the expected shift towards cooperation based on trust, social capital and norms of reciprocity as the global idea about PPP would suggest. On the other hand, one of the investigated cases, the defence sector case (case 1), effectively displays features that converge with the conventional and widely spread ideas about PPP. In this particular case, a partnership has emerged in the sense that

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<sup>17</sup> See, for example, the PartnershipUK’s project database at <http://www.partnershipsuk.org.uk/PUK-Projects-Database.aspx> and the Australian National Public Private Partnership Forum at <http://pppforum.gov.au/home>

<sup>18</sup> Note that a distinction is made here between the two terms ‘cooperation’ and ‘collaboration’. They differ in relation to intensity and type of relationship where the latter signifies closer relationships and higher intensity and connection than the former (see for instance Keast et al. 2007 for an account of the differences between cooperation, coordination and collaboration; for a dissection of the collaboration term, see Thomson and Perry 2006).

the involved public and private actors share a strong sense of collectiveness and a highly trust-based and reciprocal relationship. Thus the empirical analysis reveals that the five examined PPP cases are dispersed in relation to the nature of cooperation. The findings are intriguing, since they suggest to us that PPPs with similar structures can materialize in different ways. This implies that governance structures and governance processes do not follow each other in a pre-established manner. Therefore this study suggests that there is strong reason to believe that partnership contracts in themselves are a limited source of information about PPP (see article 5). Moreover, the empirical material points in the direction that there is a connection between the features of the partnering relationship and partnership performance – even in an infrastructure PPP. Thus, although the written contract plays an important role in the infrastructure version of PPP, it is not the only determinant of the effectiveness of cooperation. As noted by one partnership manager; “The whole process is about people. That is a key thing actually! [...]... the essence of all this is; it doesn’t matter what you have got drafted or what contracts you’ve got. It still relies on the right people in the right place; you can’t really legislate for that.”

The empirical analysis here was informed by related research from strategic alliances. Deriving from this literature and from the research findings here, it is argued that more attention can profitably be directed towards cooperative processes as opposed to an exclusive focus on governance structures. It is further argued that distinguishing between different categories of PPP structures *and* different PPP processes (relations) can further mitigate conceptual ambiguity. By acknowledging that certain types of formal structures are not tantamount to certain types of relational features, conceptual clarity can be enhanced. This position allows us to escape the aforementioned debates in the theoretical discourse about PPP that concern whether or not something is a so called real PPP. According to the findings here, many of the features affiliated with a real PPP cannot be determined a priori.

Advances in organizational theory during the past century – from Taylor’s scientific management paradigm (1997 [1912]), and Fayol’s general principles of management (1997 [1916]) to later human relations theories recognizing the importance of people in organizations (e.g. Mayo 1997 [1949]) – generally support the overall argument proposed here. I.e. that it is important not only to take into account formal organizational structures but also informal organizational traits if we are properly to understand PPP. In the light of the small number of PPP projects analysed here, some reservations can be made concerning the overall application and generalizability of the findings. These issues are dealt with Section 6.4.



### 3 METHODOLOGY

On the following pages, the research strategy adopted here is delineated. First, a brief overview of the core elements of the study is offered (Section 3.1). Second, the research purpose of this study is outlined (Section 3.2). Finally, the key characteristics of the applied case study strategy are described (Section 3.3). Note that the enclosed five articles also contain short accounts of the methods applied.

#### 3.1 Overview of research strategy

This study is embedded within a public management research tradition that combines political science and organizational studies. It follows the footpaths of a string of public management scholars such as Hood (1991, 1998), Pollitt (1995, 2001), Pollitt and Bouckaert (2000), Kettl (2000), Osborne and Gaebler (1992), Ejersbo og Greve (2005), Christensen and Læg Reid (2001), and Hansen (2003) in their efforts to enhance our understanding of public management, new public management tools and public management reforms generally. This line of research often draws upon qualitative and comparative case study research strategies in its efforts to clarify and categorize different aspects of public management (for instance, Pollitt and Bouckaert 2000; Christensen and Læg Reid 2001; Barzelay 2001). By developing and utilizing typologies and classification schemes a middle-way between general explanatory (grand) theories and sheer description is achieved. The present study does in a similar way enhance our understanding of a recent development within public management, the appearance of PPP, and does so by combining theoretical discourse about PPP in the public management literature with insights from organizational research on strategic alliances.

The applied methodology is twofold. The first research question – What does PPP mean? – is addressed by way of an extended review of the literature on PPP, and by mapping different usages of the term. The criterion for inclusion of publications in the review was the presence of the use of the PPP terminology. In other words, a nominal approach was adopted which means that the explicit use of the term PPP was decisive for inclusion in the analysis (for a similar approach, see Hansen and Hansen 2000, 159).<sup>19</sup> The boundaries of the PPP term were hence not

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<sup>19</sup> In a study of Danish evaluation practice these two scholars include in their study reports and analyses that are labeled ‘evaluations’ by the practitioners. Thus terminology (the use of the evaluation *(footnote continues on next page)*

delineated a priori. This open-ended and inclusive search made it possible to ferret out different facets of the PPP label. This approach further enabled an extensive mapping of differing approaches to PPP in the literature. Some scholars, for instance, study macro-level policy phenomenon such as the public-private institutional set-up of a specific policy sector (non-time limited and non-project based relations), while others address project level issues such as how risk is shared between the involved parties in a specific contractual form (time-limited and project-based relations between the public and private sectors). These rather different organizational forms are studied under the same PPP heading. Hence, when aiming at clarifying the meaning of PPP, looking for definitions “leads nowhere” because many scholars use such abstract and broad definitions of PPP that it remains unclear what type of public-private arrangements are excluded from their definitions (van der Wel 2004, 7). Therefore, in this analysis, attention is directed towards different usages of the PPP concept in the literature.

The second research question – How do public and private partnership actors cooperate in practice in PPP? – is addressed by way of a multiple case analysis of five operational infrastructure PPPs (on case selection, see section 3.3.1). Data collection proceeded in two phases. First, exploratory phase-to-phase interviews were conducted with public and private partnership managers at different levels in each PPP (Kvale 1997).<sup>20</sup> For a profile of the interviewees, see table 1 in article 5. In these interviews, the partnership managers were asked to describe qualitatively the partnership relationship, the pattern of interaction and barriers/enabling factors in relation to cooperation (the interview guide is enclosed in Appendix 1). The key objective of the interviews was to gather detailed information about the cooperative characteristics, attitudes and approaches to working together in the selected cases. The qualitative interviews were subsequently transcribed and analysed for recurrent

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term) was decisive for what was included and excluded in this investigation of Danish evaluation practice.

<sup>20</sup> The following project representatives have been interviewed as part of this study: public sector partnership managers at the local level, public sector managers on the policy level, board members of the private sector consortia, project managers at consortia level, project managers on the prime subcontractor level, and finally project managers below prime subcontractor level. These partnership managers are key actors at the public-private interface and are therefore particularly relevant to interview when the objective is to uncover the features of cooperation at this interface.

themes pertaining to the cooperative relationship.<sup>21</sup> In the second phase of data collection, follow-up telephone interviews were conducted. This interview phase involved close-end questions about the features of cooperation. Prior to the telephone interview a questionnaire was distributed to the participants (see Appendix 2). For an overview of the participants in the second round of data collection, see table 2 in article 5.

Interviewing both public and private sector representatives in the investigated cases follows the recommendations by Madhok who suggests that it is expedient to interview both partners in a partnership (1995, 72-73). Similarly Aulakh et al. point out that data collection from only one partner does not capture all aspects of the relationship (1997, 188). Different actors might have different perceptions of cooperation and the character of the partnering relationship. Therefore, by interviewing both public and private sector representatives a more comprehensive picture of the characteristics of cooperation can be attained. It is suggested in the literature on inter-organizational cooperation that interviewing key project actors is a reliable approach when the aim is to pinpoint certain characteristics of partnerships. General Managers are for instance argued to be a practical and reliable alternative to multiple respondents when studying performance in partnerships (Büchel and Killing 2002, 758; originally Geringer and Hebert 1991).

The first round of face-to-face interviews took place in November 2005 and June 2006 and involved two field trips to the UK. Finally, the second round of interviews took place in the period August-October 2007. All in all, approximately 50 interviews have been conducted as part of this study.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> In some of the cases, the interviews were not transcribed. This was either due to bad sound quality or because the interview contained little relevant information about the research topic. This was in particular the case in one of the interviews, which contained primarily technical information about the project at hand. At the time this topic was concluded there was no time left for further questions.

<sup>22</sup> During the first phase of data collection, 17 face-to-face interviews (with 20 different persons) were conducted. The length of the face-to-face interviews varied from 42 minutes to two hours and 30 minutes (the average length of the interviews was one hour and 36 minutes). Additionally four interviews were made which were not directly related to the five cases; one interview with a representative from the PPP prison sector, one interview with two representatives from the National Audit Office, one interview with a representative from a PPP transport project which was not included in this study, and finally a telephone interview with a departmental level representative from the transport sector. These interviews contribute with general background knowledge about PPP  
*(footnote continues on next page)*

By collecting the data in two different phases, and by adopting differing data collection techniques (initial open-ended and subsequent closed-end follow-up questions), a comprehensive picture of cooperative practice was enabled in each of the five cases. Additionally, a variety of case related documents was included in the study in an ad hoc manner in order to enrich the understanding of each of the five cases (official documents on the cases, news paper articles, internal reports etc.). Drawing upon different sources of evidence in this manner is a major strength of the case study approach (Yin 1994, 91). By studying the nature of cooperation in the selected cases at two different points in time moreover enabled the analysis to capture the dynamics of cooperation, revealing how cooperative relationships can be fluid, nonlinear, emerging and changeable rather than stable and fixed by the nature of the formal structure of the deal (i.e. the contract).

Because much of the collected data consist of personal views, experiences and expressions of the involved partnership managers, the identity of the cases and the interviewed case representatives is not revealed. Retaining case anonymity has its advantages as well as disadvantages. The drawback is that detailed information about the cases cannot be revealed. On the positive side, however, an advantage is that by promising the participants anonymity, they may be more open and blunt in their accounts of the cooperative practices and further less urged to conceal problematic or sensitive issues.

### 3.2 Research purpose

This study is driven by an empirical motive aiming at uncovering how PPPs operate in practice, and in that way to contribute to theory development. This analytical effort is informed and guided by the scholarly literature on PPP and related research from the sister-discipline of strategic alliance research (private-private partnerships). More specifically, the subcategory of alliance research dealing with informal governance mechanism has been utilized in order to extract the analytical parameters that have been applied in the empirical part of the analysis.

There are two general approaches to theory development. These approaches are deductive theory testing and inductive theory building respectively

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policies. In the second interview phase 26 follow-up interviews were conducted over the telephone. These interviews varied in length between 30 minutes and one hour.

(Perry 1998). This study belongs primarily to the latter category of research. It is however difficult in practice to separate the two processes of induction and deduction. Such processes will always to some extent be intertwined (Perry 1998; originally Richards 1993, 40; Miles and Huberman 1994, 17; Parkhe 1993, 252, 256). The inductive processes of this study were, as noted above, informed by the PPP literature as well as strategic alliance literature. Finally, the data collected at the early stages of inquiry also fed back into the subsequent steps of data collection and analysis.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, it is the inductive theory building approach which is the dominant purpose here. Keeping in mind that this study enters into new terrain in the sense that it addresses aspects of cooperation that yet have not been addressed systematically, an inductive methodology is in its place. Inductive theory building is expedient in contemporary and pre-paradigmatic research areas where accepted principles and constructs have not yet been established (Perry 1998). This study is primarily descriptive with the aim to fill in an important gap in the literature. Ultimately the aim is to enhance our understanding of PPP by providing a descriptive theory of PPP practice. In other words building theory is of key concern here as opposed to the testing of existing theories. Rather than measuring causal relationship between variables, the interest here lies in exploring variables. A prerequisite for causal research is that we understand the variables we are measuring. Given the open-ended nature of the research issues addressed here, it does not require a cause-

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<sup>23</sup> Although being an explorative study there is of course always an underlying direction and rationale for addressing certain topics and not others (as argued above, induction and deduction are always to some extent intertwined). Over and beyond the fact that there is a knowledge gap in the literature, the research here is guided by a general expectation – derived from the PPP literature and strategic alliance research – that operational processes and the relational dimension of cooperation influence PPP performance. A degree of rationale and direction like this should underlie every explorative research, a point which is well captured in the following statement: “When Christopher Columbus went to Queen Isabella to ask for support for his “exploration” of the New World, he had to have some reasons for asking for three ships (Why not one? Why not five?), and he had some rationale for going westward (Why not south and then east?). He also had some (mistaken) criteria for recognizing the Indies when he actually encountered them” (Yin 1994, 22; originally Wilford 1992). Besides being informed by the literature, the direction and rationale of this analysis matured over the two phases of inquiry ranging from a low degree of formalization at the initial stage to a comparatively high degree of formalization at the final stage of data collection and analysis.

and-effect analysis to solve the two research questions which this study evolves around.

The analysis is embedded within the *interpretative family* of research paradigms. The first exploratory interview phase evolved mainly around interpreting meaning, expressions and beliefs put forward by partnership projects managers about the partnerships they are involved with. This resulted in a rudimentary description of the partnering relationship in the five analysed cases (Weihe 2007a; article 3). Arguably, other scholars may have interpreted the interview findings differently as, at this stage of the project, the depiction of cooperation in the investigated cases relied on subjective interpretations of the stories told by the interviewed partnership managers. Any given interpretation of a social phenomenon can be argued to be more or less viable. As suggested by the hermeneutic research paradigm, explanations and interpretations can be more or less probable or more or less meaningful (Gilje and Grimen 1993, 156-161). In stead of talking about 'correct' and 'incorrect' interpretations, focus should rather be directed towards examining which interpretations are the strongest (*interpretative pluralism*). Due to reflections about how details fit with the whole, and the extent to which interpretations correspond with the intentions of the interviewees it becomes possible to appraise whether or not one interpretation is more or less valid than another. Within the hermeneutic research paradigm such criteria for proper interpretation are labelled the holistic criteria and the actor criteria for correct interpretations respectively (Gilje and Grimen 1993, 158-160). By interviewing public and private representatives on various levels of cooperation, and moreover by confronting the interviewees with the overall interpretations and findings of the study, the validity of the interpretations made here was strengthened following the logic of the holistic and actor criteria.

The second phase of data collection departs somewhat from the initial phase as it represents a more close-end approach to analysing PPP practice. From the preceding analytical phase together with input from the alliance literature, a number of parameters of particular interest were pre-selected and analysed systematically across the five PPP cases. This stage of the analysis thus resembles more the positivist case study strategy (Blatter forthcoming) while the first stage resembles more closely the interpretative research paradigm as represented by for instance the naturalistic case study strategy recommended by Stake (1995). At the final stage of inquiry, the focus thus shifted somewhat from describing and understanding to explaining, from exploratory to confirmatory, and the role of the researcher became more impersonal relative to the earlier stages where subjective interpretations played an important role. This within study evolution from exploration to confirmation has been recommended in the case study literature (for instance, Perry 1998). However, it should be emphasised that the dominant logic of

inquiry was effectively the inductive theory building approach as opposed to deductive theory testing. The objective of this project, as expressed by the two research questions, is to understand the complex phenomenon of PPP, more specifically the meaning and practice of PPP, rather than to explain correlation between variables.

Before moving on to describing specific elements of the case study strategy, an important note should be made at this point. Fierce ideological debates are taking place concerning the pros and cons of PPP. PPP as an idea has strong allies as well as opponents – both among politicians, practitioners and researchers. While proponents suggest that PPP is “a marriage made in heaven” (Hodge 2004, 39), opponents view it as a scheme that is “yet again screwing the taxpayer” and moreover caricature the private sector actors as “evil bandits running away with all the loot” (Bowman 2001, 27). Here, it should be stressed that this study does not take a stance as to whether or not PPP is an expedient policy tool. This study simply departs from the observation, as noted in the introduction, that PPP has hit the public management agenda globally, that it is widely spread, and that massive public as well as private resources are devoted to the implementation of PPPs. This necessitates and justifies a study of how it functions in practice. Regardless of whatever pros and cons there may be affiliated with this particular policy tool it is important to understand economical as well as social aspects of cooperation.

### 3.3 Case study strategy

The case study strategy has been chosen here because it enjoys a natural advantage in research that has an exploratory nature (Gerring 2007, 39), and research which has an affinity towards descriptive goals (Blatter forthcoming). Case studies moreover have a comparative advantage (relative to for instance large-N-studies) “in respect to the ‘depth’ of the analysis, where depth can be understood as empirical completeness and natural wholeness or as conceptual richness and theoretical consistency” (Blatter forthcoming). Moreover, a qualitative case study approach is appropriate when the aim is to capture and elaborate on soft concepts such as cooperation, trust and relations between different parties because hard data sources are unlikely to capture

soft concepts (Parkhe 1993, 230).<sup>24</sup> “The study of process requires an approach to data collection that differs from the conventional survey methods, or from reliance on secondary data sources” since an exclusive reliance on such methods, “is not likely to capture the dynamic elements of process” (Ring 1997, 289).

The applied case study strategy belongs to the naturalistic strand of case study research. The aim is to generate practical and detailed knowledge about PPP practice in the five selected cases. Naturalism is a case-centered approach as opposed to a variable-centered approach. Research efforts are thus directed towards revealing “the authentic nature of a social phenomenon or the detailed elements of a causal process by getting as close as possible” (Blatter forthcoming).<sup>25</sup> The case analysis has four basic characteristics (see Figure 2). First, it is a multiple case study strategy involving five PPP cases (Section 3.3.1 below deals with case selection). Second, the centre of attention is the dyadic relationship between the involved organizations. In other words an inter-organizational approach to cooperation has been adopted (see Section 3.3.2). Third, the analysis of the five cases is embedded at the micro-level of analysis meaning that attention is attuned towards individual level practices within each PPP project (Section 3.3.2). Studying micro-level factors can be argued to bring about a more complete understanding of the collective level phenomena under study (Coleman 1990). Finally, empirically this analysis addresses

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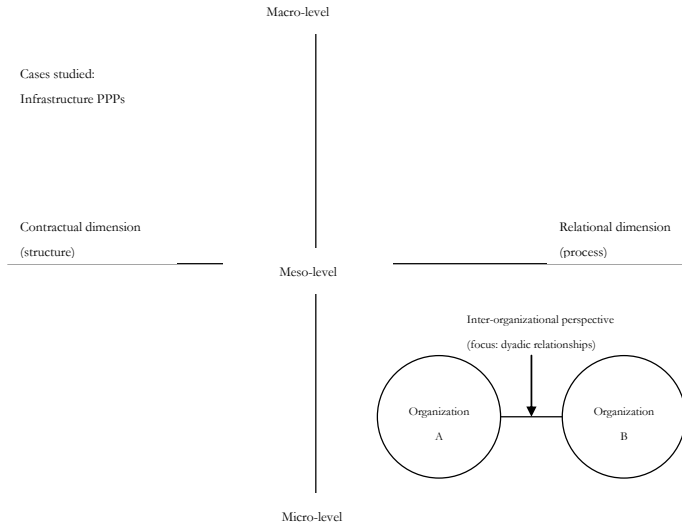
<sup>24</sup> Admittedly, some scholars would disagree with this point arguing that case study research is equally appropriate for explanatory purposes (Yin 1994, 3; Flyvbjerg 1998). However, in the context of this study, the case study strategy is chosen because of its ability to generate detailed knowledge about a topic which up until now has been relative unexplored in the public management literature – i.e. cooperative practice vis-à-vis PPP.

<sup>25</sup> The applied case study strategy moreover follows the recommendation to let the type of research question, the extent of control over actual behavioral events and the degree of focus on contemporary events determine the choice of method (Yin 1994, 4ff). The central question addressed here is *how* does PPP work in practice? The aim is to produce detailed and systematic knowledge about PPP practice. This renders the case study method relevant since it “allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events—such as [...] organizational and managerial processes” (Yin 1994, 3). This line of issues is at the centrepiece of attention in this study; i.e. organizational processes with particular emphasis on relationship styles, roles, attitudes, and interaction patterns. The core aim here, as already argued above, is not to do explanatory research but rather to explore and describe cooperative practice in PPP and in that way help resolve the stated research question concerning PPP practice.



relational characteristics of cooperation as opposed to formal/structural features (Section 3.3.3).

**Figure 2 Research design**



The analytical approach pursued here is innovative in the sense that it departs from previous perspectives on infrastructure PPPs. The analytical focus in much of the extant literature can be plotted in the upper left hand corner of Figure 2. Very few studies can be identified in the right-hand side of the figure, and fewer even in the bottom right-hand corner where this study is situated (see article 4 where a concise overview of the PPP literature is given).

### 3.3.1 Case selection

As already noted, five cases (five PPP projects) have been selected for this analysis. Five cases is a broadly accepted number of cases to include in a multiple case analysis (Perry 1998; originally Eisenhardt 1989, 545; Hedges 1985, 76-77; and Miles and Huberman 1994, 30; Stake 2006, 22). It is sufficient in the sense that it enables a qualitative and in-depth study of how cooperation unfolds in the selected PPP

projects while at the same time allowing insights about PPP practice in different contexts thus also retaining some breadth in the analysis.

A key case selection criterion was the duration of the projects. The selected cases all reached operation between 2000 and 2003. Thus as a minimum, all the cases had been fully operational for at least three years at the point of selection.<sup>26</sup> When addressing PPP practice (how cooperation unfolds), there is a need to go beyond the formative stages of cooperation and to analyze what happens at the point when the projects are implemented. Therefore, choosing projects in their formative stages was not an option. The cases were further chosen from three different policy sectors; one project from the defense sector concerning a military establishment (case 1), two projects from the transport sector, a technology project and a road project (case 2 and case 3), two hospital projects from the health sector, one of which concerned the redevelopment of an existing site, and one concerned a new built hospital (case 4 and case 5 respectively). The reason for pursuing this cross-sector approach was to allow the possibility for uncovering potential differences between different policy sectors. In this respect it can be beneficial to study industry specific cases since this can lead to the “discovery of different patterns in different kinds of industries” (Madhok 1995, 72-73). The ambition behind choosing several PPP projects from several sectors is to draw up a picture of PPP practice applicable beyond the individual cases: i.e. to present findings that represent a broad range of experience relating to the topic of PPP practice. Thus diversity was an important rationale behind case selection. As suggested by Stake, to examine how a phenomenon performs in different environments is an important reason for conducting a multiple case study (2006, 23). Following the logic of naturalistic case study research, access also played an important role in relation to case selection (Blatter forthcoming). Prior to gaining access to the five cases, unsuccessful attempts were made at including other PPP projects.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> As an exception, one of the investigated projects had a phased role out of services.

<sup>27</sup> Originally, the intention was to include two cases from the educational sector and one further case from the defense sector. The educational sector is highly relevant to look at because, although it only ranges fourth when it comes to the total capital value of PPP projects, it is the public policy sector with the second largest amount of implemented PPP projects in the UK. The defence, transport and health sector are together with the educational sector among the most capital intensive sectors when it comes to the capital value of the PPP activities within these sectors. These sectors are further among the policy sectors that involve the most intensive PPP activity when it comes to the total number of  
*(footnote continues on next page)*

Finally, as already noted in the introduction, PPP practice is studied in the UK context which can be argued to be a benchmark case of PPP. It is exemplary of the particular phenomenon under study (Barzelay 2001). This choice is pragmatic in the sense that when interested in how PPP unfolds in the operational phase, the most extensive experience to date is available in the UK. In comparison, as noted on the opening page of the cover introduction, only two Danish PPP projects had reached financial close by 2007.<sup>28</sup> UK is also a forerunner in the sense that it was in the UK context that the line of PPP studied here was first implemented back in the early 1990s.

### 3.3.2 *Analytical focus and level of analysis*

Generally, we can distinguish between two different strands of research on inter-organizational relationships: a) research that investigates *inter-organizational* or dyadic factors pertaining to particular projects, and b) research that adopts an *intra-organizational* perspective of inquiry (Heimeriks 2004, 14). In the latter line of research the analytical focus is the individual organization and how it manages its portfolio of partnerships. It is the capability of the individual organization to manage its partnerships that is the centerpiece of interest. Methodologically, this means that in the *intra-organizational* perspective internal organizational characteristics and processes of the individual organization are studied. For instance, how an organization shares and institutionalizes its experience with PPP. Internal organizational features are thus the focal point of inquiry in the *intra-organizational* perspective. In an *inter-organizational* perspective, focus shifts from the individual organization to the dyadic relationship. Here, the *inter-organizational perspective* is adopted which means that traits of the individual partnership relationship are analyzed. The focus is directed towards uncovering inter-organizational factors of cooperation. The analytical focus is moreover directed at the *micro-level* of cooperation meaning that individual level factors of cooperation are investigated. More

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projects implemented. A list of signed PPP deals is available at the homepage of the HM Treasury ([www.hm-treasury.gov.uk](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk)).

<sup>28</sup> To compare with another PPP forerunner, Australia has only about 50 implemented projects. For information about the Australian PPP activity visit <http://pppforum.gov.au/home>

specifically what is analyzed here are the characteristics of the partnership relationship between the involved actors.

### 3.3.3 *The relational dimension*

Finally, the focus of this analysis is the *relational dimension* of cooperation. This means that this analysis is intended to produce knowledge about non-structural aspects of cooperation. Thus addressed in this study is for instance the level of trust between the involved actors, the relational quality in the dyadic relationship, interaction patterns and roles, and the norms and values that guide and characterize cooperation in the individual cases. This part of the analysis has, as already noted, been informed by research on private-private partnerships (strategic alliances). A key argument is here, that this literature is particular relevant to consult when we want to know more about the importance of non-formal aspects of cooperation (Section 5; article 4).

To recapitulate, the present analysis of PPP practice draws on open-ended face-to-face interviews and follow-up telephone interviews involving close-end questions. It is a multiple-case design and the analytical level of the study is embedded at the micro-level with the dyadic relationship as the unit of analysis. The key focus of analysis is cooperation at the public-private interface in each investigated PPP project – in particular the relational dimension of cooperation. The methodological approach is of an exploratory, inductive and descriptive nature. However, there are elements of deduction in that the analysis has been guided by the extant theoretical discourse about PPP as well as analytical parameters derived from the alliance literature.

## 4 COMING TO TERMS WITH PPP

This section concerns the findings relating to the first research question: *What does PPP mean?* (see also article 1; and article 2). This part of the study makes three contributions to the field. First, an overview of the PPP literature is offered by ordering the literature into four major streams of research (i.e. four PPP approaches) (article 1). Second, and based on the empirical findings of the case study, a provisional two-dimensional understanding of PPP that distinguishes between PPP structures and PPP processes is proposed (article 2; Section 6.1). Third, and complementary to the two previous contributions, a categorization of three prototypes of PPP is developed (Section 4.2).

A central finding from this part of the analysis is that PPP is a nebulous concept with little analytical leverage. Based on the findings, it is argued that the most expedient way forward, when it comes to curbing the conceptual bewilderment, is to explicitly acknowledge that there are different compartments of research adhering to different understandings of PPP. Then within each compartment, knowledge and lessons about best practice can be accumulated (article 1). This solution is, as noted earlier, a middle ground between on the one hand operating with a very open-ended version of the term (for instance, Rosenau 2000; Mörth and Sahlin-Andersson 2006), and on the other hand reducing PPP to encompass only a subset of the many public-private mixes that are effectively labelled PPP today (for this approach, see for instance, Klijn and Teisman 2000).<sup>29</sup> As noted earlier, there are several advantages by doing so. Mapping the PPP field reduces conceptual bewilderment, makes the literature more accessible to newcomers, and moreover moves us beyond conceptual quarrels and directs our attention instead towards substantive issues such as how PPP functions in practice, and the worth and merits of different PPP models.

The *timing* of this study was fortunate in the sense that it provided a unique opportunity for contributing to a young scholarly field in rapid development. Future research can build on the classification of the literature and the definitions of PPP offered here and in that sense move quickly beyond the primal task of definition.

#### 4.1 Organizing the literature – the four PPP approaches

As argued in article 1 and article 2, there are at least four different clusters of research (PPP approaches) within the PPP literature. These are: the infrastructure approach<sup>30</sup>, the local regeneration approach, the policy approach, and the development approach

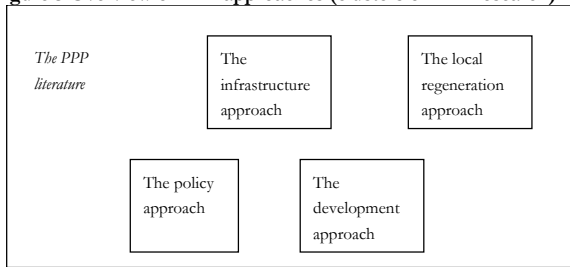
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<sup>29</sup> I do however sympathize with this latter approach because it directs our attention to the fact that many of the public-private mixes today labeled partnerships do not diverge significantly from already known transactional contractual relationships. It is important that researchers, policy makers as well as other practitioners are aware of this fact; i.e. that the PPP label is often used as a misnomer for strict principal-agent arrangements and traditional buyer-seller relationships.

<sup>30</sup> Note that the term 'infrastructure' is not limited to transport infrastructure but refers to economic, social as well as hard and soft infrastructure (Grimsey and Lewis 2004).

(see also Weihe, 2005). Each approach is embedded in a distinct context, involves different types of actors as well as distinct structures. Characteristically, there is little cross-communication between the different schools and scholars working within one perspective seldom explicitly recognize the existence of the other PPP approaches (van der Wel 2004, 21). Therefore, the PPP literature is somewhat fragmented with small islands of research that are not connected with one another (as illustrated in Figure 3 below). For the same reason, when surveying the literature at a glance, quite inconsistent and conflicting statements about PPP can be identified. This can give rise to quite some confusion (article 1).

**Figure 3 Overview of PPP approaches (clusters of PPP research)**



Let me briefly recapitulate the key features of each approach. In the *infrastructure approach* the focus is on various types of infrastructure projects; or more precisely the delivery of infrastructure assets and associated services over a long term period (typically 25-30 years). This is, as argued earlier, currently the most dominant meaning of the PPP term. Within the infrastructure approach there is a broad and narrow understanding of the infrastructure PPP. The broad version includes more or less all types of infrastructure projects that involve some extent of private delivery. In the narrow understanding of the term, a project must include private finance, construction, design, operation and maintenance in order to qualify as an infrastructure PPP. It is the latter type of infrastructure PPP which is investigated in the context of this study. In the *local regeneration approach*, attention is directed towards local economical development and renewal. This approach to PPP originates from the urban policy literature and concerns different types of arrangements where local businesses and local governments join their forces in order to relieve the economic and social distress of their cities. A local regeneration PPP is characterized by principal-principal relations between public and private local actors which involve some sort of joint production, sharing of risk, and a durable character of cooperation. Local regeneration PPP does not include cases of buyer-supplier

relationships where the government identifies and defines the service to be delivered by the private provider. Rather, in the cases of local regeneration partnerships there is more of a genuine effort to achieve a joint goal: i.e. regeneration of the local area. Moreover, this type of partnership is often initiated by the business sector in a local community with a genuine interest in remedying the economical distress of that city. The *policy approach* on the other hand concerns non-project based and non time-delimited public-private relations. It concerns the institutional set-up between public and private actors in different policy areas. In this approach, attention is directed towards how a specific policy area is organized and what characterizes the public-private division of work within that particular area. Finally, in the *development approach*, there is a change of context and different actors are involved in the PPP. The focus within this approach is third world development, and, in addition to public and private actors, there are a number of governmental and non-governmental international aid-organizations acting as third-party facilitators/catalysts for cooperation. Thus this approach departs somewhat from the others in the sense that international organizations and other donor organizations play an important role in the advancement of PPP with the overall aim of achieving development goals.




The four approaches are not claimed to be exhaustive nor absolute. Over time, approaches might be added and existing approaches can be refined. For example, one could argue for a fifth PPP approach called the *governance approach* (Weihe 2005) which captures the part of the PPP literature which is closely related to network research and the governance paradigm within public management research (for instance, Koppenjan and Klijn 2004; Rhodes 1997; Kooiman 1993; Kooiman 2003). This perspective on PPP cuts across the four approaches proposed here. The key thing to emphasise here is that it is important to explicitly acknowledge that there are different compartments in the PPP literature because, as noted above, this allows us to accumulate approach specific lessons and moreover, provides us with a terminology that enables policy makers and other stakeholders to develop policies on a sounder basis.

#### 4.2 Three PPP prototypes - a supplementary way of categorizing

As a supplement to organizing the literature into four PPP approaches, we can distinguish between three prototypes of structures: a) the contractual PPP, b) the organizational PPP, and c) the network PPP (see Table 2). The three prototypes are mutually exclusive in the sense that a contractual PPP cannot be a network PPP at the same time and vice versa. The structures are intrinsically different. However, within each category, there can be variations. The contractual PPP, for instance, can

vary in length and content. Thus some contractual PPPs concern services only, while others (including the type of PPP analysed here) involve infrastructure elements in addition to associated services. Further some contractual PPPs may be relatively short term contracts, while others are long term. A key problem with much of the PPP literature is that we often do not know precisely what types of formal structures are addressed. This is in particular a difficulty in relation to what I have previously coined the governance approach to PPP because (due to the adoption of broad definitions of the term) it is not clear what types of public-private arrangements are included in the analyses (for instance, Edelenbos, Klijn and Steijn 2007, 64). Conceptual clarity can be enhanced by delineating not only the strand of research but also the particular formal structures that are investigated.

**Table 2 Variety of PPP formal structures**

	CONTRACTUAL PPP	ORGANIZATIONAL PPP	NETWORK PPP
Formal structure	Contractual link between public and private actors	Joint organizational expression	Loosely coupled public-private relations (including networks and general policy relations)
Definition	A policy instrument for the facilitation of contractual relations between public and private actors that involves commitments of private capital and labour over a sustained period of time and which ushers in new governance practices	Durable cooperation between public and private actors which involves joint development of products, sharing of risks and which involves a joint organizational expression (adapted from Van Ham and Koppenjan 2001 & Klijn and Teisman 2005)	Non-institutionalized network based policy relationships between private and public actors.
Typical examples	Infrastructure PPPs	Local regeneration PPPs	Policy networks, policy partnerships
Illustration			

As also argued in article 5, a common distinction made in the theoretical discourse about PPP is PPP contracts (or concessions) and PPP as organizational cooperation



projects (Klijn and Teisman 2005). In the former different parts of infrastructure projects (design, construction, finance, operation and or maintenance) are integrated in a contract (Klijn and Teisman 2005, 98) while in the latter “different projects are integrated with each other in order to achieve surplus value”, and moreover the latter type of PPP is argued to involve more intensive interaction than the former type (Klijn and Teisman 2005, 98-100). Another author distinguishes between DBFM(O) projects (Design-Build-Finance-Maintain-Operate) and the alliance model (van der Wel 2004; for a similar distinction see Koppenjan 2005, 138). The alliance model refers to cases where cooperation has an organizational expression; i.e. a legal entity such as a joint venture (van der Wel 2004, 10) and the DBFM(O) model is similar to what Klijn and Teisman label PPP contracts. Correspondingly on a European Community level a distinction is made between the concession model and the joint venture model of PPP (Bergström 2006, 2; COM 2004). There thus appears to be increasing agreement about the existence of two main categories of PPP. First, that there is a group of PPPs that are exclusively made up of contractual links (different types of long-term contractual relations typically involving private finance, maintenance and/or operations). Secondly, that there is another group of PPPs which involves more integrated relationships between the involved public and private parties. Within this latter group there is a split between authors that explicitly assert that PPP involves some extent of joint organizational expression (e.g. COM 2004; van der Wel 2004; Wettenhall 2006), and other authors that stress that this version of PPP involves more cooperation in the sense that the involved public and private actors jointly find new solutions. In this latter understanding of the term, PPP has been defined as “co-operation of some durability between public and private actors in which they jointly develop products and services and share risks, costs and resources which are connected with these products or services” (Van Ham and Koppenjan 2001, 598; for a similar definition see Klijn and Teisman 2005, 96; and Klijn and Teisman 2000, 85). This definition does not limit the PPP term to joint organizational entities but broadens it to include a variety of different types of links between public and private actors. The structural form is not determined a priori (supposedly it can be a contract, a new organizational entity as well as a network). This lack of specification of what kind of structural arrangements cooperation involves can be argued to contribute to the conceptual ambiguity concerning PPP.

In the first two PPP prototypes proposed here (contracts and organizational PPPs) cooperation involves some degree of institutionalization; i.e. cooperation is formalized. This is however not the case in relation to the third category – the network PPP. Here the PPP term is used much more broadly and encompasses loosely organized network structures and policy relationships which are

not project based (for instance, Rosenau 2000; Mörth and Sahlin-Andersson 2006; Marcussen 2007).

The identification of different streams of literature (PPP approaches) and different prototypes of formal structures enables us to navigate more easily in the proliferating PPP literature. A further navigational tool can be added to these tools. The literature can be organized according to four different outlooks/perspectives on PPP (translated from the Danish term 'blikke'). More specifically, we can distinguish between research that addresses project level, policy level and societal level issues. Finally, there is a fourth category labelled the discursive outlook on PPP, which can be described as a method rather than a distinct level of analysis. Within this latter outlook the researcher critically observes the phenomenon PPP while applying a discursanalytical method of inquiry (for a further elaboration of the four PPP outlooks, see Petersen and Weihe 2007). The majority of the extant research on PPP is related to project and policy level aspects of cooperation; e.g. descriptions of different types of PPP projects and different issues relating to PPP policies (for some examples, see Osborne 2000; Ghobadian et al. 2004; Hodge and Greve 2005). To a lesser extent PPP is studied as a general societal trend (for examples, see Mörth and Sahlin-Andersson 2006). The same goes for the discursive outlook on PPP (for some examples of this; see Andersen 2006; and Linder 1999).

Let me conclude this section by pointing out that there are cross-country differences in the usage of the PPP term. While in the UK context, for example, PPP is explicitly used by the government as an umbrella term for many different types of public-private arrangements, in other countries, for instance Denmark, the government exclusively uses the term to refer to infrastructure PPPs (in the narrow understanding of the term); i.e. the design, build, finance, operate and maintenance of public infrastructure and associated services for a sustained period of time. In yet other countries, a broad version of the infrastructure PPP is adopted including any sort of infrastructure arrangement that falls between privatization on the one hand and full public provision of collective goods on the other hand (for an example of this approach visit the webpage of the Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships; [www.pppcouncil.ca](http://www.pppcouncil.ca)). So in different policy contexts PPP can mean different things. This further adds to the conceptual ambiguity.

## 5 BEYOND CONTRACTS – UNRAVELING PPP PRACTICE

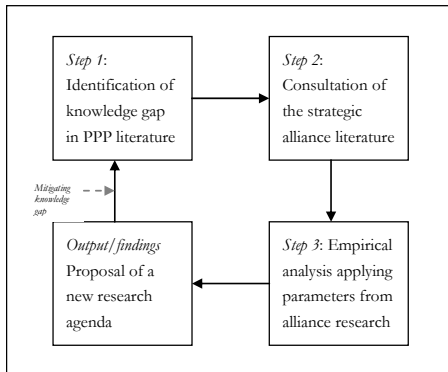
Let us now turn to the second research question: *How do public and private partnership actors cooperate in practice in PPP?* In other words, what characterizes the working relationship when we look beyond contracts? The initial empirical findings based on

the first data collection phase are available in compressed form in article 3 (the two data collection phases were described in Section 3.1). In article 3, the empirical findings are utilized vis-à-vis a discussion about PPP and public values. Article 5 draws together the findings from the both data collection phases. In the present section, the findings about PPP practice will be briefly recapped. A more detailed analysis is available in Weihe 2007a and Weihe 2007c. The present section is structured in the following manner. First, the general logic and chronology of the empirical part of the analysis and the literature that has informed it is briefly outlined. Second, the reader is introduced to the main findings concerning PPP practice. As noted earlier, due to confidentiality issues, the identity of the cases is not revealed.

## 5.1 Chronology of study

The direction and logic of the study can be summarized into three logical steps (see Figure 4). First, a knowledge gap was identified in the PPP literature. Second, the strategic alliance literature was consulted because this body of literature contains relevant information about the aspects of cooperation that we are interested in here (see article 4). The third step was subsequently to study PPP practice empirically.

**Figure 4** Chronology of study



### 5.1.1 Step 1 – identifying the gap

The analysis departs from the observation that there is a lack of knowledge about how PPPs operate in practice. This is in particular the case in relation to

infrastructure PPPs. As noted on the introductory pages, PPP research has until now primarily addressed structural and other technical aspects of cooperation (Ghobadian et al. 2004, 8, 289; Reeve and Hatter 2004; Langford 2002). Scholars have thus addressed formative aspects of cooperation such as designing the contract, political issues, risk issues, accounting issues as well as general PPP policy related issues (for instance, Evans and Bowman 2005; Hodge and Bowman 2004; Coghill and Woodward 2005; Corner 2005; Ball, Heafey and King 2004; Falconer and McLaughlin 2000). Some work has been made vis-à-vis PPP performance (for instance, Hodge and Greve 2007), and some work has moreover been done on PPP from a democratic accountability perspective, where questions concerning transparency and accountability have been addressed (Shaoul, Stafford and Stapleton 2007; Mörth 2007). As noted above, some studies further address the PPP phenomenon from a discursive perspective (Linder 1999; Andersen 2006). Little to no attention has however been directed at the relational dimension of cooperation of PPP – we know very little about the cooperative processes that take place after contracts are signed; i.e., as argued in the introduction, operational as well as relational aspects have thus far been *black-boxed*. By now, however, scholars are increasingly beginning to point out that there is a need for more academic reflection regarding the ways active PPPs operate (see Ysa 2007, 51; Noble and Jones, 2006; Fischbacher and Beaumont 2003, 171). Thus despite the widely disseminated a priori assumptions about the character of cooperation in PPP arrangements, few studies actually address this dimension of cooperation and this is in particular the case relative to the infrastructure PPP. The generalized ideas about PPP are thus, as noted earlier, to a very little extent based on empirical observation. This, it is argued here, is inexpedient because the infrastructure understanding of the term is at the same time the most prevalent understanding. Moreover since, as noted in the introduction, billions of pounds are committed to this type of public-private arrangements every year, it is relevant to investigate how infrastructure PPPs materialize in practice.

There are a handful of studies that address relational aspects of PPP. These do however not address PPP in the narrow understanding of the term (i.e. the infrastructure PPP). Examples are Edelenbos, Klijn and Steijn (2007), Noble and Jones (2006), and Ysa (2007). There are additionally studies that address the topic of coordination and collaboration generically but this work is not related specifically to PPP. Rather the focus is on understanding the concepts of cooperation, coordination and collaboration and/or themes in cooperation or the ingredients of effective cooperation (for instance, Huxham 1996; Huxham and Vangen 2004; Wood and Gray 1991; Thompson and Perry 2006; Rogers and Whetten 1982; Keast et al. 2007; Sullivan and Skelcher 2002). Rogers and Whetten are for instance only focusing on coordination among organizations and agencies in the public sector (1982), and Gray

and Wood dissect the collaboration concept drawing upon studies addressing as diverse topics as collaboration in the garment industry and public policy initiation at state level (1991).

### *5.1.2 Step 2 – Consulting the alliance literature*

The second step in the analytical process was to confer with the alliance literature in order to learn from the related experience of a related discipline (see Weihe 2006 and article 4). In particular, the subcategory of alliance research that is concerned with processes and dyadic relationship aspects was reviewed (for instance, Ariño and de la Torre 1998; Doz 1996; Dyer and Singh 2004; Kanter 2002; and Ring and Van de Ven 1994). This literature is particularly relevant because many of the features normally affiliated with PPP – e.g. trust, relational quality, and partnership processes – have been studied at quite some length within this subcategory of alliance research. Together with the theoretical discourse about PPP in the public management literature, this literature constitutes the general background against which PPP operational practice is studied. The alliance literature has guided the analytical focus of this analysis towards some aspects of cooperation as opposed to others. The key lesson/message of this body of literature can roughly be recapped in the following way: the way partnerships (alliances) materialize is not pre-destined by the nature of the deal itself or by the contractual features of cooperation (although these factors are certainly important as they condition cooperation and constitute the general framework in which social exchange takes place); rather partnerships evolve continuously and the way in which they evolve and the involved actors interact with one another can have important consequences for partnership performance. Relational features such as trust, relational quality, and the ability of the involved actors to bond with one another (relational competences) are highlighted as important performance antecedents (see article 4 and article 5). This suggests to us the importance of studying relational aspects of cooperation. From the alliance literature, three composite analytical parameters were derived that guided the analysis of PPP practice (see Appendices).<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> The questionnaire used for the follow-up interviews in the second stage of data collection included two further parameters: management strategies and organizational features (i.e. tangible questions concerning project characteristics). In the case of the former, the evidence suggests that limited  
*(footnote continues on next page)*

- Interaction patterns
- Relational quality
- Performance

In the open-ended initial phase of inquiry, the public and private partnership managers were asked to describe the partnership project they were involved with and the partnering relations. The second phase of inquiry involved close-end follow-up questions concerning the relationship features and interaction patterns.

#### *Collaboration vs. exchange*

Deriving from the alliance literature (Kanter 2002; Dyer and Singh 2004) and related research on collaboration (e.g. Thomson and Perry 2006; and Keast et al. 2007), a distinction can generally be made between a continuum of cooperative styles ranging from an exchange pole (which can be labelled *selfish* cooperation) to a collaboration pole (which can be labelled *collective* cooperation) (see also articles 3 and 5). The features of cooperation in the exchange pole are somewhat similar to what the contract literature labels transactional (hard) contracting, while the features of the collaborative pole resemble the features of relational contracting (Macneil 2000). For an overview of the features affiliated with the two ideal types of contracting, see Walker and Davis 1999; see also Ejersbo and Greve 2002). The features of the collaborative pole moreover coincide to some extent with the generalized idea about PPP as outlined on the introductory pages. The exchange pole on the other hand is quite similar to the way in which traditional contracting is normally depicted when contrasted with PPP (for instance, Klijn and Teisman 2005 and 2000). An important difference is however that Table 3 only encompasses relationship features, and not structural features of cooperation as do the other typologies (e.g. extent of formalization and details in contracts).

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deliberate management strategies in relation to altering organizational or relational features takes place. However, since different respondents interpret 'management strategies' differently, it is difficult to conclude anything from the answers. Finally the latter parameter concerning organizational features was used primarily as background information about each of the investigated cases.

**Table 3 The cooperation continuum**

<i>The exchange pole</i> <i>(selfish cooperation)</i>	<b>The collaboration pole</b> <b>(collective cooperation.)</b>
<b>Relational quality low</b>	Relational quality high
<b>Contract-centred (clear rules)</b>	Relationship-centred (trust)
<b>Incomprehension</b>	Attentiveness/empathy for partner
<b>Split purposes (lack of sense of joint goals)</b>	Self-interest and collective interest aligned
<b>Minimal joint action</b>	Joint decision and problem-solving
<b>Low intensity/connection</b>	High intensity/connection
<b>Distanced relationship (no bonding)</b>	Close relationships (bonding)
<b>Unenthusiastic and reactive attitude</b>	Positive and proactive attitude/mindset

Source: article 5

This general analytical distinction between an exchange pole and a collaborative pole provides us with a terminology that can be used for describing the features of cooperation – i.e. the partnership element – in the analysed PPP projects. It can be used as an analytical tool in relation to loosely classifying the identified collaborative practices. The features of the two poles can be debated, and the distinction between exchange and collaboration is a contestable one. In the context of this study, it is important to hold on to that the key objective is to highlight similarities and differences between operational practices in the examined PPP projects. Not to develop the conceptual understanding of the terms collaboration, cooperation and exchange (for efforts in this direction see, for instance, Keast et al. 2007; Wood and Gray 1991; and Thomson 2001). The objective here is instead to empirically look into how actors cooperate in practice, and for this purpose we have borrowed some analytical parameters that can guide our analytical attention towards some aspects of cooperation as opposed to others.

In the type of alliance research utilized here, an assumption is that alliances that are closer to the collaboration pole will be more likely to achieve collaborative advantage. Collaborative advantage can be defined as “when something unusually creative is produced – perhaps an objective is met – that no one organization could have produced on its own and when each organization, through the collaboration, is able to achieve its own objectives better than it could alone” (Huxham 1993, 603). Thus some alliance scholars suggest that partnerships that involve “*collaboration* (creating new value together) rather than mere *exchange* (getting something back for what you put in)” are perceived as more successful (Kanter 2002, 100; original emphasis by the author). By actually cooperating, the involved parties can generate a supernormal profit (collaborative advantage) which they otherwise

could not have achieved (Dyer and Singh 2004, 351-352). The point to stress here is that 'arms-length relationships' (pure exchange relations) are not capable of producing supernormal profit (Dyer and Singh 2004, 351). That there is a connection between partnership performance and features of the partnership relationship is also suggested in the PPP literature (see Klijn and Teisman 2000 and 2005). It is important, though, to distinguish between different types of performance (e.g. cost savings, substantive improvement and innovative products; Klijn and Teisman 2005, 97). Performance is generally difficult to establish in relation to partnerships because it can be measured in many different ways, and further there may be a distinction between process and output/outcome performance. Further, performance may vary depending on from what perspective it is assessed (public perspective, private perspective or project level perspective) (see article 5 and Section 5.2.3).

### 5.1.3 Step 3 – Analysing PPP practice

Finally, cooperative practice was studied in the selected PPP cases. The findings from this part of the study are concisely presented below (Section 5.2; see also article 3 and article 5). As noted earlier, the empirical analysis encompasses five PPP projects from three different policy sectors (defense, transport and health):

1. A military establishment (case 1).
2. A technology project concerning road network traffic management (case 2).
3. A road project (case 3).
4. A hospital project concerning the redevelopment of an existing hospital site (case 4).
5. A hospital project concerning the new build of a hospital (case 5).

A short description of each of the cases is available in article 5.

## 5.2 Mapping PPP practice – opening up the black box

When looking beyond contracts and instead attuning our attention towards how the involved actors actually *co-labour* (i.e. focusing on the partnership element of cooperation as opposed to institutional structures), a diversity of cooperative practices are revealed. While in some cases, there is a strong sense of partnership, in other cases, cooperation is adversarial and confrontational. The analysis reveals that the features of cooperation can vary markedly from case to case. Thus while on the surface, the formal organizing of the public-private relations is similar, beneath the



surface; the nature of cooperation varies. While the findings suggest that the majority of the examined cases are somewhat closer to the exchange pole, and thus remain aspirational relative to the global idea about PPP, this study also reveals that infrastructure PPPs can evolve into collaborative partnerships that converge with the general global idea about highly intense and trust-based relations, high levels of relational quality, joint decision-making and a sense of working together towards a joint goal. How cooperation unfolds in practice thus also seems to depend on how the involved actors manage and interpret the contract. This in turn seems to be connected with partnership performance as perceived by the involved actors (Section 5.2.3). Although the contract is a central element in the infrastructure PPP, and although cooperation is highly formalized, relationship elements remain important too. Not everything in a contract is contractual (Ejersbo and Greve 2002, 18; originally Hodgson 1988, 57), and this leaves room for unforeseen events and issues that the involved actors have to manage in an ad hoc manner. How well such unforeseen events are managed depends partly on the type of working relationship that has been established between the involved actors. Therefore, the key argument here will be that no matter how onerous the contract, effective cooperation always to some extent relies on how the involved actors interact and work together in practice. The empirical findings of this study can be summarized into the following key points:

1. The pattern of interaction varies from case to case.
2. There is variation in the way in which the involved actors cooperate (i.e. the cases are scattered along the exchange-collaboration continuum with the majority of the cases resembling primarily the exchange pole).
3. There are two outlier cases among the five cases, one of which displays many of the features affiliated with the collaborative pole (collective cooperation), and one which assumes many of the features of the exchange pole (selfish cooperation).
4. There is a connection between how the involved actors cooperate and perceived partnership performance.
5. Trust evolves over time (and generally tends to increase).

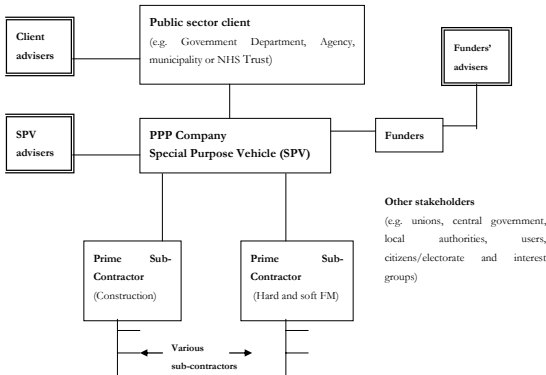
Below, each of these five findings will be discussed chronologically.

### *5.2.1 Ad 1 Varying Patterns of Interaction*

As already noted, infrastructure PPPs consist of highly complex contracts with a complex web of contractual agreements between various actors, including banks,

guarantors, subcontractors and dept financiers (see Figure 5). For the matter of simplicity, only the key institutional actors are depicted here. For a more detailed illustration of the PPP contract structure see Evans and Bowman (2005, 73).

**Figure 5 Actors in the infrastructure PPP**



The key actors in an infrastructure PPP are the public sector client and the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV). It is between the public sector client and the SPV that the core PPP contract is. The SPV is normally a joint venture between a construction company and a service provider. The SPV has its own organizational identity and is regulated by UK company law. Below the SPV, there are two prime subcontractors (a PS construction company and a PS service provider), which both are normally affiliated with the companies in the SPV. Below the PS companies there are a number of further subcontractors that are in a contractual relationship with the PS companies. In the operational phase, the key interface is between the SPV, the public sector client, and the PS service provider. The PS construction company plays only a minimal role after the PPP has entered the service delivery period (see Figure 2 in article 3 for an overview of the different phases in an infrastructure PPP). This is reflected in differing partnering relationships between the different types of actors involved. This has implications for future research on PPP (see section 6).

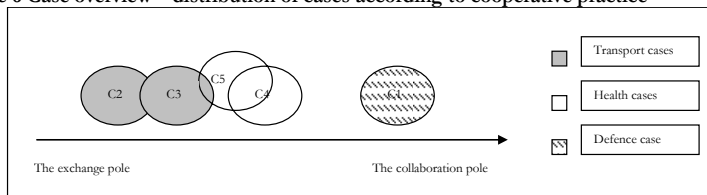
The analysis of interaction patterns further reveals that the patterns of interaction vary from case to case. While in some cases (case 3, the road case) all interaction at the public-private interface takes place between the SPV and the public sector client, in other cases (case 4, the rebuild hospital case) the SPV assumes a more distant role and most interaction takes place between the public-sector client

and the PS companies. In yet other cases, interaction takes place evenly between the public sector client, the SPV and the PS company (the defense case, the technology case, and the new built hospital). Hence, management styles vary across cases. In some projects, there is hands-on management by the SPV, in other projects the SPV primarily functions behind the scenes. What is important to hold on to in this connection is that interaction patterns and intensity of interaction varies not only from case to case but also within cases. Thus, when examining infrastructure PPPs, analyzing only one relational tie may not give an adequate picture of cooperation. This has implications for future studies of PPP, which is something that will be touched upon in Section 6.3.

### 5.2.2 Ad 2 and 3 Divergent Partnership Practices

The majority of the investigated PPP projects are, as noted above, closer to the exchange pole of cooperation than the collaboration pole (this is loosely illustrated in Figure 6). In other words, cooperation in most of the examined PPP projects does not match the typical global idea about PPP. Figure 6 loosely illustrates the type of cooperative relationships that were uncovered in the examined cases. Note that it does not illustrate the differences between the five cases in a quantitative or an absolute sense. Rather it depicts the cases in a comparative and qualitative sense.

**Figure 6 Case overview – distribution of cases according to cooperative practice**



\* C1 = Case 1, C2 = Case 2 etc.

\*\* Source: article 5

Closest to the exchange end of the continuum, the two transport sector cases can be positioned (i.e. the technology PPP = Case 2; and the road PPP = Case 3). These two cases displayed the least extent of collectiveness in the working relationship. In the technology case the public-private relations were strained and cooperation confrontational. There were clear signs of distrust and a lack of communication between the involved parties. Relational quality at the public-private interface was thus comparatively low. Further, in this case, there was also a discrepancy between

how the public and private partnership managers approached the PPP. While the public sector project managers put more emphasis on the contractual dimension, the private sector managers emphasise the importance of the relationship dimension. Thus the private sector representatives complained about a lack of partnering behaviour from the public sector counterpart. The development of a partnering relationship in this case was further impeded by the fact that external advisors (consultants) to a large extent were managing the contract for the public sector client. This reduced the possibility for a partnering relationship to emerge. Due to the adversarial and contractual approach in the technology cases, cooperation was experienced as slow, burdensome and painful and the managers complained about being bogged down into interpreting the wordings of contracts. In Huxham and Vangen's terminology, cooperation in this case was marked by inertia rather than collaborative advantage (Huxham 2003, 403). In the other transport case (the road project: case 3), cooperation was also primarily exchange based and contract-centred but however did not involve the same degree of strained relationships and inertia as the technology case. The importance of working together was not emphasised as an important element of cooperation. Personal ties were further weak. The road case further involved limited interaction between the public and private project managers. This is partly explained by the fact that there is no co-location of partnership managers in this PPP.

PPP practice in the defence case (case 1) differs significantly from that in the two transport cases. Here, the involved actors share a strong feeling of working together towards a joint goal, individual interests are aligned, there are high levels of trust at the public-private interface, and the working relationship is generally marked by mutuality and reciprocity. There are further strong personal bonds between the key public and private partnership managers on location. Particularly distinct with this case is that the involved partnership managers stress that they work together to find joint solutions, and moreover that success is achieved exactly because of these joint efforts. As noted by one of the interviewed managers: "This has been without shadow of a doubt a success for both of us [...]. It is something that we worked out *together*" (my emphasis added). This case distinguishes itself in the sense that the importance of working together and the partnering relations are repeatedly highlighted by the involved actors. Another distinct feature is that there is a strong commitment and ownership to the project among the partnership managers. Uncertainties and unforeseen problems are managed effectively and cooperation unfolds in a harmonious manner. Conflicts are to a higher extent than in the two transport cases managed without automatic reference to the contract. The defence case can therefore be positioned closest to the collaboration pole (collective cooperation) on the cooperation continuum in Figure 6.

Between the two transport cases and the defence case, somewhat closer to the transport cases, the two hospital PPPs can be positioned. In both hospital cases, fairly constructive working relationships have been established. Cooperation does however not assume the same extent of collaborative features as the defence case (case 1). There is also a slight difference between the two hospital cases in the sense that in one of the projects, there is variation in cooperative behavior and attitudes among the various actors. Thus while on the SPV level, it is emphasised that cooperation is not so contractual and that both parties – public and private – want the project to be a success, on the PS level cooperation is depicted as being more conflicting and contractual. Therefore, one of the hospital cases (case 5) has been positioned somewhat closer to the exchange pole than the other hospital (case 4).

From the case analyses, the essential thing to draw attention to is the two outlier cases; the technology case and the defence case. These two cases display significantly different partnership practices. While the former is contract-centred, confrontational and adversarial (selfish cooperation), the latter is relationship-centred and involves a strong sense of collectiveness (collective cooperation). These pronounced case differences correspond with the partnership managers' own ratings of the levels of trust, reciprocity and joint decision-making in the partnering relationship (see Figure 7). Thus when asked to rate these dimensions of cooperation on a scale from 1 to 10 where 10 was the highest grade possible, a similar pattern emerged as that depicted earlier in Figure 6. Again, we see pronounced case differences between the technology case (case 2) and the defence sector case (case 1). The same pattern (distribution of cases) re-emerges in relation to the general relational quality in the five PPPs (see Table 5 and Table 7 in Appendix 2; see also Figure 3 in article 5 where this is illustrated).

**Figure 7 Case differences vis-à-vis ratings of trust, reciprocity, joint-decision making and performance**

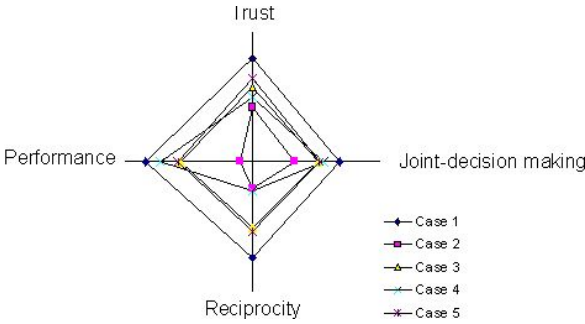


Figure 7 further suggests that there is a connection between relationship features and partnership performance (the figure above illustrates the partnership managers' rating of performance on a scale from 1 to 10 where 10 was the highest score possible). The identified connection between the features of the partnering relationship and perceived performance is also consistent relative to other performance dimensions such as satisfaction with project outcome, innovation, and reputation enhancement (see questions 18-22 in Appendix 2). Partnership performance will be commented upon further in Section 5.2.3.

The findings from the case analyses suggest that assumptions about how actors cooperate cannot be exclusively derived from formal structures. As we have seen above (and in article 3 and 5) there are quite large differences in the cooperative styles that have materialized in the different cases. This is in particular epitomized by the pronounced case differences in the defence case and the technology case. On this basis it can be argued that a partnership, understood as collaborative and trust-based relations, is not something that mechanically can be affiliated with certain types of structural arrangements as sometimes suggested in the literature (e.g., Wettenhall 2007). A partnership, can, based on the evidence of this study, also emerge in the type of arrangements that in the literature are speculated to be strictly exchange based. Thus, as argued in article 5, even an infrastructure PPP can involve collaborative behaviour.

The findings further suggest that the prevalence of a global idea about PPP being something qualitatively different from previous practices is problematic. It is problematic for two reasons. First, the dominant meaning of the term relates to a public-private arrangement which involves little natural partnership. The

infrastructure PPP, as argued earlier, concerns contractual arrangements that do not diverge qualitatively from earlier contracting practices other than that there is an extension of the contracting period, involvement of private finance and further a bundling of different project elements (design, construction, operation, and maintenance). Second, and perhaps more importantly, the findings here suggest that the type of assumptions about cooperation that are contained in the global idea about PPP cannot be automatically prescribed to certain governance structures.

### *5.2.3 Ad 4 Partnership Practice and Partnership Performance*

As noted earlier, partnership performance is difficult to measure and can further be measured in a host of different ways (Olk 2006). Performance is, in the context of this study, measured as perceived performance by the interviewed partnership managers. As argued in article 5, within strategic alliance research this is a relative commonplace and accepted way of measuring performance (Kale et al. 2002, 753) and a strong correlation has further been identified between such subjective measures of performance and financial/objective measures (Geringer and Hebert 1991). Here the interviewed partnership managers were asked to rank performance on a number of dimensions, including satisfaction with project outcomes, innovation, reputation enhancement, cost savings, surplus value, and the extent to which the construction element of the project was finished on time and within budget (see Appendix 2). Bearing in mind the methodological caveats concerning measuring performance in this manner, interesting patterns do emerge. There is a clear connection between PPP practice and partnership performance. This is the case regardless how performance is measured. Thus while displaying the most collaborative features; the defence case (case 1) also appears to be the highest performing case in relation to all the performance dimensions noted above. At the same time, the exact opposite is the case for the other outlier case, i.e. the technology case (case 2), which displays the lowest levels of perceived performance.

However, as argued in article 5, premature conclusions concerning the connection between partnership practice and partnership performance should however not be made. First, the examined projects are only at the early stages of service delivery which makes it difficult to say anything conclusive about partnership performance. Second, we do not know the direction of the causality. It may very well be that the partnering relationship in the defence case is collaborative exactly because it performs so well. In other words, a collaborative and trust-based relationship has emerged on the basis of well-functioning project. However, regardless what direction the causality has, there is a clear connection between perceived performance and the

relationship features that can be identified in the identified cases. This finding corresponds with alliance research on the importance of intangible aspects of cooperation such as trust and relational quality (for instance, Dyer and Chu 2003; Büchel and Killing 2002; see also article 4 and Weihe 2006).

#### *5.2.4 Ad 4 Trust evolves over time and varies at different levels of the partnership*

Trust levels generally seem to increase over time, and this is particularly the case in relation to the level of trust between the public sector party and the private actors that are involved in the operation and maintenance of the asset in the long run (i.e. the PS service provider and the public sector party). A majority of the partnership managers thus state that trust levels between the public sector party and the PS service provider has increased or strongly increased over time. This is also the case in relation to the relational tie between the SPV and the public sector body where approximately half of the managers assert that trust levels have increased over time. This finding corresponds with findings from related research on collaboration which suggests that trust is something that is gradually built up over time (see Huxham and Vangen 2004, 194-195). Correspondingly, scholars adopting a process perspective on inter-organizational cooperation suggest that trust levels can vary over time and propose that if commitments “are executed in an efficient and equitable manner, they will continue with or expand their mutual commitments. If these commitments are not executed in an efficient and equitable manner, the parties will initiate corrective measures by either renegotiating or reducing their commitments to the cooperative IOR [inter-organizational relationship]. Underlying these heuristics is a more complicated set of informal social-psychological dynamics that go on and that explain how and why cooperative IORs evolve through repetitive sequences of formal negotiation, commitment, and execution stages or events” (Ring and Van de Ven 1994, 99).

In relation to the PS construction companies, trust does *not* evolve in the same way as in relation to the other two key institutional actors (i.e. the SPV and the PS service provider). Hence the majority of the partnership managers assert that trust levels between the public sector party and the construction company has remained the same or declined over time. This finding is not so surprising when considering the fact that, as noted earlier, construction companies leave the scene and move on to the next project soon after construction has been finalized. The construction companies are therefore not involved in the partnership in the long run to the same extent as the other actors in the PPP. The identified variation in relationship features across the different sets of relational ties is an important finding



relative to future research on cooperation in infrastructure PPPs (see Section 6.3 which deals with methodological implications of this study).

### *5.2.5 Some Emergent Findings*

One important question emerges from the findings: Why do similarly structured PPPs materialize in such different manners? Analysing how institutions influence cooperation was not a part of the research design of this study, however emerging inductively from the data is the finding that PPP practice differs somewhat from policy sector to policy sector. In brief, path-dependencies, cultural traits and structural features of the different policy sectors seem to influence PPP practice (see article 5). In particular there seems to be a difference between how infrastructure PPP is approached in the defence sector relative to the transport sector. PPP practice in the transport sector seems to be infused by a hard contract culture specific to the road industry while in the defence sector a more relationship-centred approach seems to be adopted. This is something that several of the private sector partnership managers with experience from both sectors point out. The fact that the Ministry of Defence (MoD) operates with a Soft Issues Bid Evaluation Tool (SIBET) when selecting its suppliers further supports the assumption that a relationship-centred approach is pursued. When selecting suppliers, the MoD not only evaluates the traditional hard issues (cost, quality, time and delivery) but also takes into consideration relationship factors, culture, strategy, and change management. SIBET is, according to the MoD, based on an interest in establishing close and collaborative relationships with suppliers.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, the suggestions here remain rather speculative for several reasons. First, as noted above, institutional differences and how these influence cooperation have not been systematically studied in this research project. Second, the small N of this study hardly makes it possible to generalize about PPP practice in the concerned three policy sectors. More research is needed in order to determine the prevalence of policy sector differences. What we can say here is however that there are certain interesting patterns that future research can address. The identified patterns are intriguing in the sense that although the infrastructure PPP is presented as a somewhat generic policy tool, in practice we see that it can

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<sup>32</sup> For more information about SIBET, see [www.aof.mod.uk](http://www.aof.mod.uk) (i.e. the webpage of the MoD's Acquisition Operating Framework).

assume quite different features. Research on organizational translation (e.g. Czarniawska and Sévon 1996) and institutional theory (for an overview, see Hall and Taylor 1996) may offer important insights on this topic. As noted by Pollitt, convergence can occur on different levels, and convergence on the discursive and decisional level does not mean practice convergence too (2001).

Finally, as also argued for in article 5, individuals seem to play an important role in relation to how cooperation materializes. This is a recurrent theme in the interview data, where a majority of the partnership managers point out that the behaviour of key individuals is central for the effectiveness of cooperation (see statements in Box 1.1. in article 5). This gives grounds for analysing the determinants of the partnership behavior of individual partnership managers. For instance, we would like to know more about how factors such as professional and educational backgrounds, experience and the managerial mandate from the organizational parent influences the way in which PPP managers approach cooperation. Another aspect that can be explored further is how institutional differences between the public and the private sector can influence the cooperative relationship. A recurrent theme in the interview data was that actors within one sector (public or private) have a priori assumptions about the intentions and behaviour of actors in the opposing sector. More specifically, reservations and a priori prejudice (stereotyping practices) about the motives and work procedures of the opposing sector appear to be quite commonplace (Weihe 2007c). Such differences can be speculated to act as barriers in relation to moving cooperation beyond mere exchange relations and towards the type of collaborative relations that the private-private partnership literature prescribes as being decisive for realizing synergy and collaborative advantage in partnerships.

## 6 CONCLUSION

This dissertation commenced with two key observations from which the dissertation's two research questions were derived:

- What does PPP mean?
- How do public and private partnership actors cooperate in practice in PPPs?

The first observation was that although PPPs are widely disseminated, and that massive amounts of resources are spent on PPP policies globally, there is simultaneously surprisingly little convergence vis-à-vis the meaning of the term. PPP has become a catch-all label which encompasses more or less any arrangement that merely involves public and private actors. This gave the occasion for a re-

examination of the *meaning* of PPP. The aim of this part of the study was to identify different usages of the term in the scholarly literature. This part of the analysis led to an organizing of the PPP literature, a classification of different categories of PPP, and the development of the definitions of three PPP prototypes (Section 4, article 2, and article 4). The conclusion concerning the meaning of PPP is, in brief, that it is a *diluted term* with little immediate value as an analytical concept. The nebulosness of the term seriously hampers theory development. As a middle-ground between abandoning the term altogether, and narrowing down the concept to mean only one specific thing however, this study proposes that a better way forward for future PPP research is to explicitly operate with different PPP approaches and to specify what category and prototype of PPP is being addressed. This sort of clarity is a prerequisite for future theory development in the field, and perhaps more importantly it is also a precondition for the enabling of policy guidelines that can direct future policies and decision-making processes concerning PPP.

The second observation that this study departed from concerns the outspread and firm belief, in theory as well as in practice, that PPP heralds a new era, where classical adversarial relations between public and private actors are now evaporating and being replaced by cooperative trust-based relations. Seemingly PPP promises a new cross between the dogmatic positions of nationalization and privatization respectively where control is being replaced by trust, output- by a process-focus, hierarchy by horizontal structures, and principal-agent relations are being transformed into principal-principal relations. As opposed to previous practices, PPPs are taken to imply intense and trust-based co-labouring an altruistic behaviour rather than mere exchange-based opportunistic behaviour. This was on the introductory pages coined the global idea about PPP. However, although widely disseminated, little empirical research was available to support this notion of PPP. This second observation led to the analysis of PPP *practice*. The key aim of this part of the analysis was to empirically unravel the characteristics of the partnering relationship. The conclusion of this exercise is that, contrary to the general global idea about PPP, the most prevailing form of PPP (i.e. the infrastructure PPP) concerns hard line contract relations that have an affinity towards relations marked by exchange, inflexibility and separation—not trust and collaboration. Thus, relative to the broader public management literature, this analysis suggests that PPP in the infrastructure understanding of the term does not present a qualitative shift in public-private relations. Rather, it seems to be just another step on the learning curve within the already well-known New Public Management Paradigm (Hood 1991). There is indeed very little natural partnership between the public and private actors in the infrastructure version of PPP, and further cooperative practice in the majority of the cases examined here resembles primarily the transactional and exchange-based style

of cooperation outlined in Section 5.1.2. This suggests that relative to the infrastructure PPP the term partnership can be accused of being somewhat of a misnomer. That being said however, the empirical analysis also reveals that embedded within these rigid contractual arrangements, partnerships in the general understanding of the word *can* emerge. Effectively, the empirical analysis reveals that *similarly structured PPPs can materialize in highly different manners*. This was in particular epitomized by the two outlier cases examined here. These two cases displayed qualitatively different styles of post-contract cooperation. The empirical findings suggest that there is reason to believe that partnership contracts in themselves are very limited sources of information about PPP practice.

## 6.1 Conceptual implications

In the scholarly discourse about PPP there is a common binary distinction between governance PPPs and infrastructure PPPs (see article 5). Further, in the literature, certain relationship features tend to be associated with each of these two general types of PPP. In particular, features such as collaboration, trust, and social capital are associated with the governance type of PPP, while the infrastructure PPP is renowned for a lack of such partnership characteristics (see article 5 where this argument is unfolded). The analysis here however suggests that the conventional binary distinctions are unfortunate since, as already argued above; governance processes do not mechanically follow governance structures. When keeping in mind that formal structures of cooperation do not mirror what goes on behind the contractual scene, the need for a re-conceptualization of PPP becomes evident. Based on the findings of this study, a two-dimensional approach to PPP, which distinguishes between PPP *structures* and PPP *processes*, can be advocated for (see also article 2 which contains a provisional typology of PPP based on this two-dimensional logic). This conceptualization simply means that a partnership in the traditional meaning of the word *can* emerge in various types of structures. Whether a contractual, network based or joint organizational PPP, ex post-contract cooperation can assume variable characteristics.

## 6.2 Managerial implications

The findings of this study suggest that a partnership is not something which automatically can be achieved by structural design. Rather, as already emphasised, similarly structured arrangements can involve varying degrees of partnership, as demonstrated in article 5 and Section 5.2. This implies that in addition to designing

appropriate governance structures, continuous and conscious managerial attention should be directed towards managing the partnering relationship. This becomes particularly pertinent when keeping in mind the identified connection between partnership practice and perceived partnership performance. Considerations about how to organize and manage the cooperative relationship over time may in the long-run bring about more effective cooperation, open information exchange, lower transaction costs and perhaps more innovative solutions. The evidence from the defence case points in this direction. Keeping in mind the long-term nature of the infrastructure PPP (with an average length of 30-35 years) managing the relationship becomes only the more pertinent. Even so, few organizations have strategies for how to manage operational projects and how to interact with the opposing partner. In policy practice there is now a rising interest in this topic and the challenges that arise in operational infrastructure PPPs. Thus, in March 2006, on behalf of HM Treasury, Partnerships UK (which is itself a PPP between public and private sector actors with the aim to support PPP activity in the UK) published a report on Operational PFI Projects (see Partnerships UK 2006). In the same year, the HM Treasury published the policy document PFI: Strengthening Long Term Partnerships (see HM Treasury 2006). And further, in 2006, an Operational Taskforce was established on behalf of the Treasury within PartnershipsUK. Moreover, the National Audit Office in the UK is now offering courses on how to successfully manage PPP relationships in operational projects.<sup>33</sup> These latest developments suggest that practitioners are facing operational challenges and that there is a demand for guidelines on how to manage these challenges.

### 6.3 Methodological Implications

The empirical part of this analysis has generated a number of important methodological lessons, which can be utilized in relation to future research on PPP. In particular, three key lessons will be highlighted here. First, one of the major advantages of adopting a micro-level approach to studying cooperative practice is that detailed knowledge is gained about the various types of institutional actors involved in an infrastructure PPP. Infrastructure PPPs can be argued to be a collection or a pyramid of relational ties where each tie can assume different features.

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<sup>33</sup> See [http://www.nao.org.uk/practice\\_areas/private\\_finance/programme.htm#managing](http://www.nao.org.uk/practice_areas/private_finance/programme.htm#managing)

Thus the analysis here reveals that the drivers and approaches to cooperation vary at different project levels. The construction companies, for example, have different roles than the service providers. Further there is important variation in the degree of trust in the different relational ties with the lowest levels of trust appearing between the public sector party and the construction companies. These within project differences suggest that studies of PPP that only distinguish between public and private actors may not bring about a coherent depiction of the features of cooperation because the findings may vary according to what type of project actors are included in the analysis (e.g. representatives for the construction companies, the service provider or the SPV). This has implications for choice of interviewees or respondents. More specifically careful consideration must be made concerning choice of project representatives because this can be speculated to have consequences for the findings. Second, a similar argument can be put forward in relation to the maturity of PPP projects. Judging from the interview data, interaction modes vary throughout the different stages of cooperation. Hence analyses of cooperation in the formative stages may give a somewhat different impression than analyses of cooperation in the operational stage. This has implications for the selection of cases in PPP research because mature cases may display somewhat different features than cases in their early years of construction. A third lesson, and related to the first one, is that when aiming at achieving a deeper understanding of PPP, it is expedient to interview both the public and the private partners involved in the project. The reason for this is that accounts of a given PPP can vary depending on which party to the contract is interviewed. The public sector party, for instance, may give a rather different account of the project than the private sector counterpart.<sup>34</sup> Thus by interviewing actors from both sides of the contract, a more adequate picture of cooperation can be achieved. Finally, the finding that contextual factors may condition PPP practice suggests that a cross-sector comparative approach to studying PPP is beneficial because this gives a more representative picture of PPP practice. Studying only for instance PPPs in the defense sector may not bring about a representative portrait of PPP practice in the UK.

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<sup>34</sup> For example, in one of the cases examined here, there were important differences in the public and private sector representatives' accounts of cooperation.

## 6.4 Limitations of Findings

There are a number of limitations associated with the findings of this analysis. Here, it will suffice to highlight three such limitations. The first relates to the choice of interviewees. It is conceivable that a different group of actors – for instance, in relation to the hospital cases, this could be local politicians, clinical staff, patient groups and other stakeholders – would have characterized the examined cases somewhat differently than the public and private partnership managers that have been interviewed here did. Further, it is possible that the interviewed partnership managers to some extent are inclined to conceal problematic issues since they themselves have a stake in the performance of the partnerships. This may have skewed the findings somewhat. The second limitation concerns that this study focuses on the early years of the operational phase. The period from when the idea about PPP is first conceived over the prolonged tendering phase to the final stages of the operational phase has not been included in the analysis. Therefore, the findings of this study may be accused of being limited to only a subset of the partnership life-cycle. Third and related to this is the concern that it is too early to say anything final about performance in the investigated projects – they are still in their relative early days of service delivery. Further, since performance relative to PPP is multidimensional (e.g. cost savings, quality, durability, innovation, reputation, and synergy) it is difficult to say anything conclusive about this – even when projects are completed.

Finally, in light of the small number of PPP projects analysed here, some reservations must be made concerning the overall application and generalizability of the findings. The analysis here has generated detailed knowledge about PPP practice in five cases but this cannot, however, be generalized to the broader population of PPP projects in a statistical way (Yin 1994, 31). Further, since all the cases are studied within the UK, the concern may also be raised that the revealed features of cooperation are specific to the UK context. Future studies will have to determine whether or not, for instance, the features of cooperation in Danish PPP projects resemble those of the UK counterpart. The Varieties of Capitalism literature within the scholarly field of political economy suggests to us that there are important difference between a liberal marked economy (LME), such as the UK economy, and the Danish coordinated marked economy (CME), where in the latter case political and social institutions have played a more active and direct role in shaping economic action (see Hall and Soskice 2001). Historically the public-private divide has been shaped somewhat differently in the two countries, and there are therefore reasons to believe that cooperation may materialize somewhat differently in these different contexts. Correspondingly, within the related discipline of strategic

alliance studies, research suggests that there are country and regional differences in how organizations cooperate with each other. North American alliance managers are for instance said to focus on the business aspects of alliances, Latin American managers to prefer to build the relationship prior to conducting business, and Asian managers to have an even more pronounced focus on the relationship (Spekman, et al. 2000, 62; see also Kanter 2002, 100; Dyer and Singh 2004; 368).

Despite the mentioned limitations relative to overall generalizability, this study does however reveal important patterns and offers novel information about operational PPP projects that future research can draw upon. In that sense it paves the way for future generalizations. It is in particular in this light that the value added of this study should be viewed. On a final note, this analysis challenges the conventional wisdom that infrastructure PPPs do not involve trust-based and other collaborative features. Thus there is some scope for analytical generalization in the sense that the empirical findings here can be contrasted with the extant theoretical discourse about PPP (Yin 1994, 31). After all, as pointed out by Stake, by counter-example grand generalizations “can be modified by case study” (Stake 1995, 7).

## 7 FUTURE RESEARCH

Deriving from the alliance literature and from the research findings of this study, this concluding section will argue generally for a shift in research focus towards a relational view (a process perspective) on PPP as opposed to economic perspectives on cooperation (see Table 4). In a relational perspective, the pattern of interaction can be equally as important for efficiency as structural properties (Aulakh and Madhok 2002, 27; originally Granovetter 1985). In other words, the success or failure of cooperation is not exclusively determined by formal structures. A relational perspective suggests that it is expedient to direct attention towards the web of interactions that take place inside PPP projects. The main difference between what is here labelled economic perspectives and relational perspectives respectively is that in the latter category it is acknowledged that successful partnerships require effective cooperation throughout the full life-cycle of collaborative arrangements and that contracts alone do not ensure successful cooperation. Formal structures ensure only the very minimum level of cooperative behaviour (Madhok 1995, 59). When the deal is made, and contracts are signed, cooperation can, as demonstrated above and in article 5, evolve in many different directions; regardless of the structures that govern the relationship. In order to fully understand cooperation, we therefore need to know more about the relations between the involved parties and perhaps more importantly



what determines or conditions the way in which partnerships materialize in practice. Some suggestions concerning this emerged inductively from the empirical analysis but systematic analyses of conditioning factors such as institutional context are still lacking.

Note that the two perspectives do not refer to fully fledged theories about cooperation but simply to two different ways at looking at cooperation. In each perspective, the binoculars are adjusted to look at only certain dimensions of cooperation as opposed to others. The logic is somewhat similar to the metaphorical approach suggested by Gareth Morgan in *Images of Organization* (1997). Morgan simply suggests that different metaphors (e.g. the learning organization or the political organization) reveal different aspects of organizing. In a similar way, the two perspectives on PPP, economical and relational, offer two different ways to read and understand public-private partnerships.

**Table 4 Two perspectives on inter-organizational cooperation**

	<b>Economical perspectives</b>	<b>Relational perspectives</b>
<b>Source of efficiency in a partnership</b>	Governance structures	Governance relationship
<b>Focus of analysis</b>	Structures and technical aspects of cooperation	Processes and intangible relationship aspects
<b>Actors</b>	Opportunistic	Trusting
<b>Primary interest</b>	Ex ante contract signature	Ex post contract signature

The argument here is not that the nature of the deal and formal structures are unimportant, and that it does not matter how contracts are drawn up. Rather, the claim is that formal structures do not exclusively determine the success or failure of cooperation, and that by addressing relationship characteristics, a more comprehensive understanding of PPP can be achieved. To paraphrase Granovetter, both undersocialized and oversocialized approaches should be avoided (1985). “In order to understand interorganizational relationships, it is useful to view them as having a structural and a social dimension” (Madhok 1995, 59). The aim here is not to propose a knock-out theory that explains everything about PPP but rather to explore an important part of the jigsaw puzzle which is the social and processual dimension of cooperation. “In the relationship-centered approach, sole emphasis on the contract would not be adequate to ascertain desirable action by the partner, other than the very minimum required. This needs to be supplemented by a positive social atmosphere, revolving around trust, within which the exchange is conducted. Such an atmosphere evolves through interaction. Whereas the contract-centered approach

attempts to reduce uncertainty and manage the flow of information more formally through the legal form of the transaction, the relationship-centered view attempts to do so through the social processes underlying the transaction” (Madhok 1995, 59).

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## PART II

### Addressing the Meaning of PPP





## RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

## Ordering Disorder – On the Perplexities of the Partnership Literature

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*The literature on public-private partnerships (PPP) has proliferated in recent years. However, confusion about the actual meaning of PPP still abounds. As a consequence, contradicting findings and statements about PPP flourish in the literature. This article reviews the literature, and argues that there are different streams of PPP research which operate with qualitatively different notions of the PPP concept. Accordingly the literature is divided into four different PPP 'approaches'. By doing so the article offers some clarification concerning an increasingly complex concept. The article concludes that an authoritative definition of PPP – one that can encompass all the different variations of the concept currently in use – is not logically possible.*

**Key words:** *public-private partnerships, urban regeneration, policy approach, infrastructure approach, development approach*

The public-private partnership (PPP) concept is a contested concept. Over the years, many different definitions and classifications of the term have been put forward (for example see, Linder 1999; Van Ham and Koppenjan 2001; Hodge and Greve 2005a, 2005b; Klijn and Teisman 2005; Tvarnø 2005; Wettenhall 2006) but an authoritative definition or a classification of PPP remains to be seen. Paraphrasing Wettenhall (2003:98) there have been previous efforts at classifying partnership arrangements but 'there is much more to be done'. This article is an effort in this direction.

Conflicting findings and inconsistent statements about the worth and merits of PPP appear in the literature. While some scholars argue that a downside with PPP is a lack of transparency and public participation (Shaoul 2003), others conclude the exact opposite, namely, that PPP can act as a channel for local mobilisation and participation (Andersen 2004). Some scholars note that it was the United Kingdom (UK) Labour government that first introduced the PPP concept in the 1990s (Spackman 2002); however, a survey of the literature reveals that

the PPP label has been in use since at least the late 1970s (see for instance, Fosler and Berger 1982), and that it first appeared in the United States (US) urban policy literature. Yet others state that the UK is leading the way in the development of PPP (Ghobadian et al. 2004). This article argues that such contradictory findings can be found because there are different streams of PPP research. Four general PPP approaches are identified in the literature; ie, four different strands of research that cluster around somewhat similar understandings of the PPP concept. Confusion occurs because there is little explicit acknowledgement of the different perspectives, and limited communication takes place across the different approaches. The identified approaches are: a) the urban regeneration approach; b) the policy approach; c) the infrastructure approach; and d) the development approach. An approach in this context is not a specific type of research with a specific methodology, ontology and epistemology; rather it refers to general patterns and tendencies in the literature. The terms 'fields', 'traditions', 'compartments' and 'strands/streams of

literature' are used synonymously with the term 'approach'. The four approaches have been identified through an inductive review of the PPP literature.<sup>1</sup>

### The Urban Regeneration Approach

In the urban regeneration approach, the focus is on public-private partnerships in relation to *urban economic renewal and development*. This approach seems to have its roots primarily in the American urban governance literature (for instance, Buencker 1973; Fosler and Berger 1982; Boyer 1983; Davis 1986; Barnekov, Boyle and Rich 1989; Squires 1989).

Urban regeneration partnerships are typically initiated by the response of private businesses to urban crises (eg, high unemployment, high crime rates and deteriorating revenue base). Thus an urban regeneration partnership often begins as a partnership between businesses or business leaders. This private to private cooperation subsequently paves the way for a more formal stage, where public, private and non-profit actors work together. This has been suggested by Davis (1986:1) and was corroborated by Macchiarola's (1986) account of the New York City Partnership (NYCP). In the late 1970s, New York City was on the brink of bankruptcy. Consequently, business leaders took the initiative to address the troubling state of the city by establishing a business community partnership. This initiative was 'an effort to unite the business community and work with the public sector "to make New York City a better place to live to work and to conduct business"' (*New York Times* 10 November 1985). The NYCP 'linked the New York Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Economic Development Council and created a 120 member board with representatives from large and small businesses, nonprofit organisations and universities from all five boroughs' (*New York Times* 10 November 1985). The partnership ultimately hosted a large number of different development programs, including the creation of summer jobs for disadvantaged youngsters, housing programs, Join-A-School programs, and a Crime Stoppers program (Macchiarola 1986).

The point to emphasise, here, is the key role of private businesses as *initiators* and *drivers* of urban partnerships. In the case of the NYCP, business leaders did not only initiate the partnership, they also had the leading role in the overall program with almost 90% of the funding coming from the private sector (Macchiarola 1986:128). This division of roles between public and private might, however, vary from context to context and in some instances the public sector might play a more prominent role than in the case of the New York City Partnership.

Generally urban regeneration partnerships are about how private businesses cooperate with local governments in order to enhance urban development. Such cooperation can take on a variety of formal structures as precise definitions of what types of (contractual or non-contractual) arrangements constitute a PPP within the urban regeneration approach, to the best of this author's knowledge, are absent in the literature. What in particular characterises this type of partnership is that each participant is a principal. It is not a matter of traditional buyer-seller relationships as is the case in some of the other PPP approaches (see below). The exchanges between the partners tend to be 'unforced exchanges', which are based on 'inducement and mutual interest', not command (for instance, Harding 1998:78).

The urban regeneration approach existed prior to the appearance of New Public Management (NPM). Already in the late 1970s, American scholars were occupied with explaining the worth and merits of public-private partnerships in urban economic development. As early as 1984, one author notes that every year 'the public-private concept is growing and taking on new meanings and new advocates' (Durenberger 1984:7). Another scholar claims that public-private partnerships became a policy tool in the US during the Carter administration (Lyll 1986). Keeping this in mind, it is difficult to uphold the claim that PPP is a natural continuation or a part of the NPM or, as for instance the trade unions in the UK sometimes suggest, that PPP can be viewed as 'backdoor-privatisation' (Flinders 2005:220). There might be some truth in these statements *within*

some of the identified PPP approaches, but not necessarily in relation to the urban regeneration approach.

The urban regeneration approach appears to be the precursor of many of the contemporary contributions in the PPP literature that emphasise the importance of 'co-production' and 'risk-sharing' and 'principal-principal relationships' as key defining characteristics of PPP (eg, Van Ham and Koppenjan 2001; Klijn and Teisman 2005). The more recent contributions however focus more broadly on public service delivery and are thus not limited to the local regeneration context.

### The Policy Approach

The policy approach can be identified within the American public policy literature (for instance, Rosenau 2000). In this approach, the PPP concept does not necessarily encompass specific collaborative projects but focuses instead on describing and analysing public-private constellations within specific policy areas. Thus the *institutional set up* of public-private cooperation in different policy fields is the focus of analysis. For instance, Rosenbaum talks about the institutional challenges in relation to PPP in the commercial nuclear power sector in the US. More precisely, he talks about the industry's 'institutional misdesign' referring to legal and political structures (Rosenbaum 2000:65). Similarly, Stiglitz and Wallsten (2000) address government support of private sector research and development in the US as being an example of a public-private partnership. In the same way, the US RECLAIM emission trading system is considered to be a PPP (Kamieniecki, Shafie and Silvers 2000).<sup>2</sup> Other scholars talk about PPP in education referring to the linkages between the public and private sectors in elementary and secondary education. For instance, public assistance to private schools and private support of schools is considered to constitute a formal partnership (Levin 2000).

As the examples above illustrate, in the policy approach the PPP term refers *broadly* to the relations between the public and private sector

in certain policy areas and policy setups. It does not necessarily refer to specific collaborative projects. Rather in the policy approach, scholars describe and examine the appropriate role for, respectively, the public and the private sector in various policy fields.

Thus while the urban regeneration approach focuses on specific projects and programs, the policy approach focuses more generally on policy design and general public-private relations in different policy settings. Furthermore, the latter seems to be more inclined (although not exclusively so) towards a federal or state level focus, while the urban level is the centre of attention in the urban regeneration approach. Thus here we see differences between the two approaches in relation to context, actors, objectives as well as formal structure.

### The Infrastructure Approach

Today, the PPP term is increasingly used in the context of private provision of infrastructure and associated services (Evans and Bowman 2005): ie, 'arrangements whereby private parties participate in, or provide support for, the provision of infrastructure' and the delivery of public infrastructure-based services (Grimsey and Lewis 2004:2). When government representatives around the world talk about PPP, they typically refer to some version of the infrastructure partnership. Furthermore, most official PPP homepages address infrastructure partnerships, and it is typically infrastructure projects that are registered in PPP databases.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, much of the recent PPP literature deals with infrastructure partnerships (for instance, Yescombe 2007; Grimsey and Lewis 2004; Savas 2000).

There are a variety of different types of infrastructure PPP arrangements. For example, joint ventures/joint purpose companies (which some scholars refer to as PPP alliances; see below) and a number of mutual financial arrangements such as BOT (build-own-transfer), BOOT (build-own-operate-transfer) and sale-and-lease back arrangements where local governments sell their buildings and rent them back on a 20 or 30 year contract (Hodge and Greve 2005b:5). Some scholars also include

franchises, and divestments in the definition of infrastructure PPP (for instance, Savas 2000:241; see Grimsey and Lewis (2004:10–12) for an overview).

Within the infrastructure approach, there are broad and narrow usages of the PPP term. The narrow version covers only arrangements that include private finance and the bundling of design, construction, operation, and/or maintenance into a single contract. Particularly the presence of private finance, the allocation of risk to the private sector, and the integration of construction and maintenance/operation are defining characteristics of the narrow understanding of the infrastructure PPP. The broad version of the term however covers all of the above mentioned varieties, including for instance joint ventures, leasing and management contracts.

The infrastructure PPP firmly entered the public management agenda after the launch of the UK based Private Finance Initiative (PFI) in the early 1990s. It was launched by the Conservative government and came about in order to increase the amount of privately financed projects. More specifically it was an effort 'to address the underinvestment in public assets to secure the long-term future of public services' (Ghobadian et al. 2004:6).<sup>4</sup> By 2005, agreements for about 700 PFI projects were signed across a wide range of sectors in the UK (Partnerships UK 2006). The policy has now been adopted in many countries around the world. In Australia, for instance, by July 2007, 37 projects were contracted or completed, seven projects were in the marked (tender or bid selection), and another 24 projects were in the pipeline (Allen Consulting Group 2007). In Denmark, there are to date only two signed deals (Weihe 2007:7–8). However, considering the relative large amount of ex ante evaluations that are now taking place, more projects seem to be underway (see for instance, [www.ebst.dk/OPPforundersoegelser](http://www.ebst.dk/OPPforundersoegelser)).

The launching pad for the increased interest in PPP in the 1990s and in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century appears to have been the UK-based PFI policy. Only after the launch of this policy, PPP rhetoric and policy activity intensified and

scholarly work on PPP proliferated. However, as argued by several scholars, different types of infrastructure PPPs existed long before the introduction of the PFI program (for instance, Grimsey and Lewis 2004; Wettenhall 2005b; Yescombe 2007). France, for example, has a long-established tradition of using PPPs to privately finance public infrastructure (Grimsey and Lewis 2005:xiii).

PFI projects were not conceived as partnerships at their inception but have been reconceptualised as such under Labour (Ruane 2002:201). Labour adopted the PFI scheme and the number and average value of PFI projects have increased under Labour (Ghobadian et al. 2004:7). The change of terms is in all probability a key source to the continuing confusion about the meaning of the PPP concept. The term 'partnership' insinuates that relationships are close and trust-based and that to some extent actual 'collaboration' takes place rather than pure exchange. However, the infrastructure version of PPP is first and foremost an exchange relationship. For the same reason some scholars argue that infrastructure PPPs present nothing more than a new and extended way of procuring public services (Klijn and Teisman 2005); and that they can be viewed as the latest chapter in the privatisation book (Hodge 2004) or 'rebadged privatisation' (Coghill and Woodward 2005:81). Others have correspondingly argued that infrastructure partnerships are not 'real' partnerships (Wettenhall 2005a). These findings appear valid; however, since a large part of the PPP literature, as well as PPP policies, concern infrastructure PPP projects, it seems legitimate to assert that there is a PPP infrastructure approach.

In infrastructure PPPs, the actors, the context, the project objectives and the contract structures vary from those of respectively the local regeneration approach and the policy approach. Particularly the contract structure departs from the other two PPP versions since infrastructure PPPs are capital intensive long term projects with strict principal-agent relations. Moreover, risk is not 'shared' but rather transferred or divided between the involved public and private actors.

### **Developments in Infrastructure PPPs**

Over the years the use of infrastructure PPP has expanded into new areas. For instance, in the UK and Australia, infrastructure PPPs were originally largely applied to economic infrastructure (eg, motorways, bridges, tunnels) while now being applied to social infrastructure such as schools, hospitals and prisons as well as social housing, urban regeneration, and waste management (Grimsey and Lewis 2004:7). Thus the Australian PPP infrastructure marked, for instance, has evolved through two distinct phases. An initial phase, where project finance and instruments were developed for BOT and BOOT projects vis-à-vis transport infrastructure. And a second phase where social infrastructure projects that involve significant facilities management over the life of the project became more prevalent (Allen Consulting Group 2007:12). Accordingly, the nature of the Australian infrastructure PPPs has been more varied within the past five years (Yescombe 2007:42–43).

A parallel development has taken place in the UK, and similar trends are now occurring across Europe and in other places where the UK-type model has been implemented (Grimsey and Lewis 2004:35). This tells us that the infrastructure PPP is continuously evolving. Thus today, infrastructure PPPs are not limited to hard economic transport projects but also encompass a range of soft and social infrastructure projects. Another development is that there is now a greater focus on risk-sharing and relationship management than was the case in the early nineties. Moreover, policy guidelines regarding relationship management are developed (for instance, NAO 2001) and courses on how to successfully manage PPP infrastructure projects are held for public as well as private PPP managers ([www.nao.gov.uk](http://www.nao.gov.uk)).

### **The Development Approach**

In recent years, partnerships have also taken on an important role in relation to advancing development. A key moment in relation to utilising partnerships for such purposes was

the United Nations Global Compact in 2000 (Reed and Reed 2006:2). This process was further strengthened at the United Nations World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002 (Reed and Reed 2006:2). Accordingly there has been a marked increase of partnership activities in the development area since 2002.<sup>5</sup> The central focus in the development approach is achievement of *development goals*. Here PPPs are means to achieve such broad ends as to reduce poverty and social deprivation, reduce corruption and environmental improvement. Although they are typically not directly engaged in partnerships, key actors in development PPPs are *national and international (non)governmental aid organisations*. Their role lies primarily in that of promoting and creating environments *conducive* to PPP in recipient countries.

For instance the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has a PPP program for the Urban Environment (PPPUE) aiming at alleviating poverty through public-private partnerships. The goal is ‘to increase access of the urban poor to basic services such as water, sanitation, solid waste management and energy by promoting inclusive *partnerships between local government, business and communities*’ (emphasis added).<sup>6</sup> Thus here UNDP acts as a *facilitator* of local partnerships. The organisation plays the same role in relation to other PPP initiatives. For instance, the Supporting Entrepreneurs for Environment and Development (SEED) initiative, which is a program that focuses on innovative partnerships between local stakeholders from the public, private and the civil sector in recipient countries.

Similarly, the World Bank has a Public-Private Partnership in Infrastructure (PPPI) program, which has the goal of establishing a business environment conducive to the development of PPP for the provision of infrastructure services. Among other things, the program aims at providing knowledge on options and mechanisms for securing PPPs, educating regulators and authorities on modern regulation tools, and providing an understanding of the interests of main contracting parties in an infrastructure project transaction.<sup>7</sup> Thus, just like the UNDP PPP program referred to above, the

aim is to facilitate partnerships. The specific type of partnership is slightly different in this particular case, and the recipient actors are different too, however the common theme in both cases is that third party organisations act as facilitators of PPPs in less developed countries in order to meet development goals.

The development partnership, driven by a third party organisation, is different from the infrastructure partnership, the policy partnership and the urban regeneration partnership discussed above. The actors are different, the aims are different and the context is different too. The essential point here is that there is a distinct PPP development field where international organisations and other governmental stakeholders continuously try to establish an environment in developing countries that is conducive to different types of PPP. What unites this as an approach is that *third party actors* play a vital role in initiating and also overseeing different type of partnerships in order to enhance *development*.

### Previous Attempts at Defining and Classifying PPP

An often employed definition views PPP as ‘... cooperation of some sort of durability between public and private actors in which they jointly develop products and services and share risks, costs and resources which are connected with these products’ (Van Ham and Koppenjan 2001:598). This is a broad definition which allows for significant variance across parameters such as time, closeness of cooperation, types of products/services produced, costs, and complexity, level of institutionalisation as well as number and type of actors involved. However, despite allowing for significant variance, this definition does not apply to all the different ways in which the PPP label is used as indicated above. For instance, some would argue that infrastructure partnerships do not involve ‘joint development’ of products. Rather the extent of actual co-production tends to be limited (ie, to exchange rather than collaboration) (see Klijn and Teisman 2005). The private actor signs a

contract after which he is obliged to deliver a fixed service, at a fixed time and for a fixed price. Typically, in case of time and cost overruns, the private actor carries the consequent commercial losses. Therefore, risk is not shared in this type of project, it is transferred.<sup>8</sup> The notion that cooperation involves public and private actors does similarly not apply to the development approach where public and private *as well as* third party actors are involved. Equally, the definition does not apply to the type of PPPs that belong to the policy approach. Policy PPPs do not necessarily concern specific instances of cooperation (ie, collaborative projects), and therefore strictly speaking there is no joint development/co-production of products or services. Additionally, risk-sharing is not necessarily an issue within the policy approach. Problems like this also emerge when other similar definitions are weighed against the different PPP approaches identified here. For instance, some scholars have similarly argued that PPPs as a minimum involve a) a public and a private actor; b) an enduring cooperation between these actors/continuing relationships; c) risk-sharing; and d) a principal-principal relationship (see Peters 1998; Andersen 2004; Klijn and Teisman 2004). These defining characteristics are similar to the ones used by Van Ham and Koppenjan and therefore in the same way they do not apply to all the different ways in which the concept is being used in practice. Each participant in an infrastructure PPP is *not* a principal. The public sector actor is the principal while the private sector actor is the agent; and an extensive monitoring regime is established to ensure that the agent fulfils his obligations. Similarly, the argument that partnerships are long term continuing relationships does *not* fit all PPPs. For instance a development PPP does not necessarily mean anything more than a brief period of contracting relations between a public and private sector party with a third party facilitating the contract. The validity of the different definitions is thus limited to certain PPP approaches.

Similar problems occur when previous attempts at classifying PPPs are weighed against the different types of PPP and PPP approaches

identified here. They too fail to capture the variety of PPP approaches in the literature. For instance, Klijn and Teisman distinguish between PPP contracts and organisational cooperation projects (2005). Although this distinction captures some of the differences in the literature, it does not reveal that there are different streams of research that operate with qualitatively different understandings of the PPP concept (eg, the policy PPP). Moreover, the distinction between 'organisational' and 'contractual' PPPs is somewhat perplexing in that all PPPs (perhaps with the exception of the policy version of the term) include some extent of contracts and organisational structures. What Klijn and Teisman intend to do is to clarify that the infrastructure version of PPP (which they label a PPP contract or a PPP concession) is not a PPP in the true sense of the word because a real PPP involves co-production (close interaction) and risk-sharing (Klijn and Teisman 2005:98–103). Although useful for such purposes this distinction fails to help the 'outside' reader to understand the diversity of the field, and to illuminate that there are different research traditions in the literature. Additionally, it is not entirely clear what constitutes an 'organisational PPP'. In practice most public-private relations that include co-production and risk-sharing, and which have an enduring relationship can be labeled a PPP. Consequently, with this classification, PPP still remains an elusive concept.

Correspondingly, Hodge and Greve (2005b:6) base their PPP typology on the nature of organisational and financial relationships. The former type refers to how tightly the relationship between public and private actors is organised (Hodge and Greve 2005b:5), and the latter refers to how different actors are involved financially in the project. Like Klijn and Teisman (2005), the intention here is most probably to illuminate that some PPPs are mostly financial (infrastructure PPPs), and do not entail co-production and organisational collaboration. Hodge and Greve (2005b) moreover argue that the biggest divide in the literature seems to be between those who view PPP as a governance tool and those who see it as a language game. Again, in some instances

it would be useful to operate with this division but it does not capture the rich variety of PPP approaches identified here. The same argument applies to Koppenjan's distinction between respectively the 'alliance model' and the 'concession model' (Koppenjan 2005:137–138). Alliance PPP refers to cases where joint corporations are established in order to develop, maintain and operate an infrastructure facility (Koppenjan 2005:138; originally Klijn and Teisman 2000) while concessions PPPs are more equivalent to the infrastructure PPP referred to earlier (see Van der Wel 2004 for a similar classification). This is an important distinction, but just as the earlier classification schemes it falls short of illustrating the different research compartments in the literature.

A range of further PPP typologies can be extracted from the literature along some of the following dimensions: degree of transaction costs (Stoker 1998:40); the extent of the target (broad/limited); types of agents (national/local); the degree of formalisation; and motivations (Andersen 2004:4). Other parameters could be: 'purpose' (and whether the partnership is strategic or project driven); 'who' (key actors and the structure of their relationship); 'when' (the timing or stage of development of the partnership process and changing relationships and activities over time); 'where' (the spatial dimension); and 'how' (how the activities are carried out, implementation mechanisms) (McQuaid 2000:12–19). Another example is Linder and Rosenau's use of 'revenue sources' and the 'legal standing' of the entities involved as parameters for classification (Linder and Rosenau 2000). Yet another scholar distinguishes between policy level partnerships and project-based partnerships (Dunn 2000) while another differentiates between defensive, offensive and shotgun partnerships (Harding 1998:74).<sup>9</sup> These different dimensions might be used *within* each PPP approach in order to facilitate *approach specific* typologies but they fail to illuminate that there are different PPP research traditions with different accumulation of knowledge; knowledge which cannot be easily transferred from one PPP approach to another. Hence, instead of searching for some critical

core of PPP, it may be more expedient to settle for the idea that *multiple cores exist*; ie, within each PPP approach there is some core to the PPP concept. Because of the different clusters of PPP research (and usages of the concept), it is not logically possible to put forward one single and over-arching definition of PPP. Paraphrasing Van der Wel (2004:8), it does not make sense to search for enlightening definitions of PPP. Rather, a more promising way forward is to acknowledge the existence of different compartments of PPPs and PPP research, and to explore the boundaries of the concept within each of these compartments. Therefore neither a broad nor a narrow definition of PPP appears helpful, and deeming the concept as being entirely an empirical one does not help much with regard to alleviating the conceptual confusion either.

### **The Merits of Adopting the Four PPP Approaches**

Some scholars would probably defy being categorised in any of the four approaches delineated above. However, although there are not necessarily waterproof shutters between the different PPP approaches, and although there might be alternative ways of ordering the PPP literature, the approaches identified here seem to be capable of mitigating some of the bewilderment about the PPP term.

What essentially separates the different approaches is that to some extent formal structures, actors, context and project objectives differ from approach to approach. In the urban regeneration approach, a PPP is a collaborative project involving principal-principal relations and co-production. In the policy approach, PPP does not refer to specific projects or specific collaborative arrangements. Rather the focus is more generally on policy design and policy networks. The infrastructure approach deals with infrastructure projects, where private finance is typically involved, and where different elements such as construction, maintenance and operation are integrated. The development approach focuses exclusively on development projects and programs, where third

party international organisations act as PPP facilitators (see Table 1 for an overview).

Today, there seems to be a tendency to draw general conclusions about PPP without specifying what is actually meant by PPP, and since the PPP label, as we have seen, has many different meanings, this leads to problems. As put very bluntly by Van der Wel (2004: 21), it is 'striking to see how few authors (or for that matter governments or international agencies) seem to be aware of the existence of other interpretations of the term PPP than the one they happen to use themselves. It looks as if the international discussion on PPPs takes place in a number of watertight compartments, while those in one compartment hardly seem to be aware of what goes on in the others'.

Delineating which PPP approach one does research within enables more apt generalisations about the pros and cons of PPP, more analytical clarity, and last but not least it helps us to avoid statements such as: PPP is a recent phenomenon that should be viewed in the context of the shift from government to governance; that the UK is a leading country in relation to the use of PPP; or that PPP can act as a channel for local mobilisation and participation. These statements are only valid within certain PPP approaches.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

This article has identified four PPP approaches: a) the urban regeneration approach; b) the policy approach; c) the infrastructure approach; and d) the development approach. By recognising the existence of these dissimilar approaches it is suggested that some of the current conceptual bewilderment can be avoided.

Previous attempts at defining and classifying the PPP concept do not acknowledge explicitly and clarify that there are different research compartments in the partnership literature. As a result of the multiple meanings of the PPP term, it is not possible to construct an over-arching definition of PPP; ie, one that can encompass all the different usages of the PPP label. Certainly not without making the definition so broad that it in reality becomes meaningless. As a compromise between abandoning the



Table 1. The Four PPP Approaches

	URBAN REGENERATION APPROACH	POLICY APPROACH	INFRASTRUCTURE APPROACH	DEVELOPMENT APPROACH
<b>Actors</b>	Principal-principal	General public-private relations, non-project based	Principal-agent	Triangle of public, private and non-profit third party organisations
<b>Context and project objectives</b>	Development of urban economies, improve weak urban economies, distressed cities. Later broadened to include other contexts	Institutional setup of policy sectors/areas. Expedient public-private constellations in different policy areas	Private provision of infrastructure and associated services	Development context. How to enhance development in less developed countries via enhancing cross-sector cooperation
<b>Origin</b>	US urban governance literature	US policy literature	UK Government, Private Finance Initiative (1992) (although arguably infrastructure PPPs existed long before the introduction of the PFI program)	United Nations World Summit for Sustainable Development, Johannesburg 2002
<b>Formal structures</b>	Formal structures tend to be more collaborative than in the infrastructure approach, eg, jointly established organizational units. Co-production and sharing of risk	Not project based cooperation, thus no contract as such	Long-term (typically 25–30 years) detailed contracts which integrate finance, design, construction, operation and maintenance. Looser definitions also exist in which all the above mentioned project elements are not necessarily integrated	Multiple forms
<b>Some exponents</b>	Pierre 1998; Andersen 2004	Rosenau 2000; Stiglitz and Wallsten 2000	Savas 2000; Shaoul 2003; Koppenjan 2005	Reed and Reed 2006; practitioners in the development field; I(N)GOs and (N)GOs

concept altogether on the one hand and finding a universal core on the other hand, it is suggested that a fruitful way forward is to look at how the term is being used differently in different compartments of the literature. In this way, contradictory statements and conclusions about PPP can to a greater extent be avoided in the

future. The offered taxonomy of the literature is not claimed to be exhaustive. It should rather be viewed as a suggestion on how to navigate in the burgeoning PPP literature, and over time it could be further developed.

We have seen that the PPP label covers both horizontal and vertical relationships, dyadic

and multi-actor relationships, they can be more or less formalised (contractual links, network based links and joint organisational expression), and the extent of co-production and risk-sharing can vary greatly. It could be claimed that not all of these arrangements are 'real' PPPs (Wettenhall 2006) but the aim here has merely been to illustrate how the term is used to cover multiple practices and how the literature can be organised into different PPP approaches. As noted earlier, several definitions stress that PPP involves co-production, risk-sharing, and principal-principal relations and additionally that relationships are more trust-based, close-knit and equal in PPP than in traditional cooperative arrangements (for instance, Wettenhall 2006 and Mörth and Sahlin-Anderson 2006). Thus a general notion tends to be that, relative to contracting-out and privatisation, PPP is a qualitative jump ahead (Hodge and Greve 2005b:2). Whether this is actually the case is an open question since so far there has been very little research on micro-level processes and the actual character of cooperation ex post contract signature (for some notable exceptions, see Klijn 2006; Reeves 2006; and Noble and Jones 2006). Future research could appropriately address the character of cooperation beyond the characteristics of the formal contract. At what point is cooperation 'close' and 'trust-based' or 'genuine collaborative'? When is decision-making 'consensual' and how can we measure whether 'trust and respect' are exploited as 'forms of social capital' in the partnership (see Wettenhall 2006: Appendix 1)? Future empirical research could with benefit address some of these questions.

On a final note, the dangers of applying the same concept to different realities should be noted. Contradictory conclusions about the promises and pitfalls of PPP reforms emerge when it is not clear what practices the concept covers. Consequentially, PPP policies can potentially be based on an erroneous foundation, as policy-makers for instance could choose to implement infrastructure PPPs in order to achieve more collaborative and trust-based cooperation with the private sector. Another danger of the conceptual ambiguity is that

the actors entering a PPP might have divergent expectations about the nature of cooperation. Such differing expectations can in the worst case be the direct cause of cooperative difficulties or even failure to cooperate.

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### Endnotes

1. Note that the identified PPP approaches do not represent the author's normative view on how the PPP label 'ought to' be employed. Rather the effort here is, as loyally as possible, to illustrate how the term is being used qualitatively different by different authors.

2. The system was initiated in 1994 by the US South Coast Air Quality Management District. It is a market based approach to reduce the emission of sulphur oxides and nitrogen oxides.

3. For examples, visit the homepage of the Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships ([www.pppcouncil.ca](http://www.pppcouncil.ca)), the National Council for Public-Private Partnerships in the US ([www.ncppp.org](http://www.ncppp.org)) and the Federal Highway Administration in the US ([www.fhwa.dot.gov](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov)). For examples of PPP databases see for instance, Partnerships UK (<http://www.partnershipsuk.org.uk/index.html>) and the HM Treasury (<http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/>).

4. Shaoul observes that 'the objectives and rationale of the policy [ie, the British PFI/PPP policy] have changed over time'. In the beginning the major argument was that PPPs would enable the public sector to access finance for capital investment without breaching

the commitments under the Maastricht Treaty (macro economic argument). Recently the microeconomic argument about 'risk transfer' and 'value for money' is put forward (2003:186; see also Flinders 2005).

5. Presentation by Peter Lund-Thomsen at a PPP workshop on sustainable development at the Copenhagen Business School, 15 August 2006.

6. <http://pppue.undp.org/>, August 2005.

7. For more information visit [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)

8. It should be noted here that some scholars argue that risk transfer in the context of essential services is fundamentally flawed (for instance, Shaoul 2003:193; see also Flinders 2005).

9. A defensive partnership takes form when agency A can no longer achieve what it previously achieved by itself, eg, because of a reduced resource base. An offensive partnership is a partnership which is established when Agency A wants to achieve new objectives that require resources, expertise or knowledge beyond its competence. Finally, shotgun partnerships refer to situations where the governing authority demands that A enters into a partnership, ie, externally induced partnerships.

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# Offentlig-private partnerskaber: et mangetydigt begreb

Offentlig-private partnerskaber (OPP) er et meget omtalt forvaltningspolitisk redskab både på nationalt og internationalt plan. I de senere år er der blevet publiceret utallige artikler og bøger om emnet, og der findes ligeledes mange officielle rapporter, OPP vejledninger, og evalueringer af OPP. Populariteten til trods hersker der fortsat usikkerhed omkring begrebets egentlige betydning. Denne artikel søger at besvare spørgsmålet 'hvad er OPP?' og samtidig skitsere en ny typologi.

Offentlig-private partnerskaber (OPP) kom for alvor på den internationale forvaltningspolitiske dagsorden i løbet af 1990'erne, og siden er der blevet sagt og skrevet meget om OPP. Alene indenfor det sidste år er der i Norden udkommet to bøger om OPP (Mörth og Sahlin-Andersson 2006; Åkerstrøm Andersen 2006). I udlandet er der også publiceret en lang række bøger om emnet (fx Pierre 1998; Rosenau 2000; Osborne 2000; Ghobadian et al. 2004; Hodge og Greve 2005; Bult-Spiering og Dewulf 2006). Dertil kommer et stort antal artikelbidrag om OPP i internationale tidsskrifter. Et nærmere eftersyn viser, at de forskellige bidrag anvender OPP-begrebet på ganske væsensforskellige måder. Formålet med nærværende artikel er at kortlægge de forskellige fortolkninger og anvendelser af OPP-begrebet i litteraturen, og på den måde vise at OPP er et mangetydigt begreb. Der har været flere tidligere forsøg på at definere og klassificere OPP (fx Linder 1999; Van Ham og Koppenjan 2001; Van der Wel 2004; Klijn og Teisman 2005; Tværnø 2005), men mange af disse forsøg har ikke formålet at indfange OPP begrebets mangetydighed, idet definitionerne og klassifikationerne typisk læner sig op ad én bestemt forståelse af OPP. Der er derfor fortsat behov for begrebsafklaring.

Som en konsekvens af OPP-begrebets flertydighed findes der ganske modsatrettede udmeldinger i litteraturen om fordele, ulemper og udfordringer forbundet med OPP. Mens nogle forskere kritiserer OPP for uigennemsigthed og manglende offentlig deltagelse (Shaoul 2003), vurderer andre, at OPP netop kan medføre øget lokal mobilisering og deltagelse (Andersen 2004). Atter andre steder kan man læse, at det var den britiske regering som introducerede OPP-begrebet i 1990'erne (Spackman 2002), mens der samtidig findes litteratur, der beskæftigede sig med OPP – i USA – for mere end 20 år siden (f.eks. Fosler og Berger 1982). OPP forbindes ofte med tætte og tillidsbaserede relationer mellem offentlige og private aktører, men nyere analyser indikerer, at det også langt fra altid er tilfældet (Reeves 2006; Weihe 2007a). Som det vil fremgå på de følgende sider, er det på nuværende tidspunkt ikke muligt at opstille én entydig definition af OPP, som kan omfatte alle de måder begrebet bliver brugt på.

Artiklen identificerer fire overordnede 'OPP-tilgange'. Ved 'tilgange' forstås forskellige måder at anvende OPP betegnelsen på. De modstridende udmeldinger om OPP forklares netop ved, at de kun relaterer sig til én bestemt tilgang til OPP-begrebet. Ved at illustrere hvor-

dan forskellige (og nogle gange modstridende) betydninger bliver knyttet til etiketten OPP og ved at inddele litteraturen i overensstemmelse med disse forskellige anvendelsesmåder, er forhåbningen, at dette bidrag kan være med til at reducere noget af den begrebslige forvirring. Sagt med andre ord er formålet at illustrere, hvordan den samme betegnelse (OPP) bliver brugt til at betegne helt væsensforskellige aktiviteter/samarbejdsformer mellem offentlige og private aktører. De forskellige tilgange identificeres og organiseres i forhold til følgende tre parametre: kontekst (hvor og med hvilke formål bliver OPP anvendt?), struktur (hvilke formelle strukturer er der tale om?) og aktor(relationer) (hvilke aktører deltager i OPP, og hvilke aktørrelationer er der tale om?). Artiklen konkluderer, at det er vigtigt at være opmærksom på de forskellige anvendelser af OPP begrebet, således at vurderinger og erfaringer indenfor de forskellige tilgange ikke bliver blandet sammen. Afslutningsvis tilbyder artiklen et bud på en OPP typologi, som tager afsæt i et proces-perspektiv på OPP. Typologien er todimensional, og der argumenteres for, at OPP ikke kun bør klassificeres ud fra kendetegn ved de formelle samarbejdsstrukturer, men også ud fra kendetegn ved de faktiske samspilsrelationer. Vi ved fra relateret forskning, at de to dimensioner ikke nødvendigvis følger hinanden, men at samarbejdet i stedet kan betragtes som evolutionære processer, der løbende udvikler sig over tid (Ring og Van de Ven 1994; Doz 1996; Ariño og De la Torre 1998). Derudover, så tyder relateret forskning også på, at måden hvorpå samarbejdet udfolder sig i praksis kan have en betydelig indflydelse på partnerskabsperformance (se f.eks. Kanter 2002; Spekman et al. 2000). Enkelte forskere går så langt som at sige, at den egentlige merværdi skabes undervejs i partnerskabsforløbet, og bestemmes ikke af selve aftalegrundlaget (Doz og Hamel 1998: x). Derfor bør fokus ikke kun rettes mod formelle samarbejdsstrukturer, men også mod hvordan samarbejdet idriftsættes og udfolder sig i praksis. I det følgende præsenteres indledningsvis de fire overordnede OPP-tilgange, som kan identificeres i litteraturen (Weihe 2005).

### Bygge- og anlægstilgangen

Kontekst: Den første tilgang, og efterhånden også den mest omfangsrige, beskæftiger sig med offentlig-private bygge- og anlægsprojekter (privat finansiering, design

og drift af eksempelvis veje, broer, skoler og hospitaler). Det er indenfor den kontekst, at OPP begrebet i stigende grad bliver anvendt (Evans og Bowman 2005: 62; oprindeligt Evans 2003). Det gælder både den internationale litteratur om OPP samt policy praksis i mange lande (det samme gælder også for de fleste bidrag i nærværende temanummer). I en dansk kontekst er det også bygge- og anlægstilgangen, der er den mest fremherskende. Det fremgår bl.a. af de eksisterende offentlige publikationer om OPP herhjemme (f.eks. Økonomi- og Erhvervsministeriet 2004) samt det vejledningsmateriale, der er tilgængeligt på de danske offentlige myndigheders hjemmesider (f.eks. www.ebst.dk). Så når danske beslutningstagere taler om OPP, refererer de typisk til bygge- og anlægsprojekter.

Som en konsekvens af OPP-begrebets flertydighed findes der ganske modsatrettede udmeldinger i litteraturen om fordele, ulemper og udfordringer forbundet med OPP.

Struktur: I bygge- og anlægstilgangen defineres OPP snævert som et projekt, hvor finansiering, design, etablering og drift er koblet sammen i ét udbud; derudover skal der være et vist omfang af risikodeling mellem den offentlige og den private part (Økonomi- og Erhvervsministeriet 2004). Det helt centrale i denne (snævre) forståelse af OPP er, at den private del af finansieringen er substantiel. Samarbejdsformen stammer fra Storbritannien, hvor den er bedre kendt under navnet 'the Private Finance Initiative' (PFI). Det Britiske PFI program blev lanceret i starten af 1990'erne. Formålet med programmet var at øge antallet af privat finansierede anlægsprojekter. Først senere opstod argumenter om risikodeling og 'value for money' (Shaoul 2003: 186; Flinders 2005). Oprindeligt blev PFI-projekter ikke betragtet som 'partnerskaber', men blev blot relanceret som sådan, da Labour regeringen kom til i 1997 (Ruane 2002: 201). I dag bliver modellen brugt til at opføre mange forskelligartede projekter såsom skoler, hospitaler, veje, broer, forsvarsmateriel og forskellige IT og teknologi projekter.<sup>1</sup> I Danmark er der et vist efterslæb i forhold til udbredelsen af denne type OPP-projekter. Projekterne kan fortsat tælles på én hånd: Vildbjerg Skole, nye arkiver til Rigsarkivet og udbygning af en



Sønderjysk motorvej. Heraf er kun førstnævnte i implementeringsfasen, mens de to øvrige projekter er henholdsvis i udbuds- og planlægningsfasen (Helby Petersen 2007, 6).

Forskellige kontraktmodeller på anlægsområdet såsom BOT (build-own-transfer), BOOT (build-own-operate-transfer), DBF (design-build-finance), DBFO (design-build-finance-operate) og sale and lease-back modeller (hvor offentlige myndigheder sælger deres bygninger og lejer dem tilbage via 20-30-årige kontrakter) kan også inkluderes i bygge- og anlægstilgangen (Hodge and Greve 2005: 5; Savas 2000). Sidstnævnte model er i Danmark bedre kendt under betegnelsen 'Farum-modellen' (Helby Petersen 2007, 14). Hvorvidt alle disse kontraktmodeller kan betegnes som OPP er der imidlertid delte meninger om. I Danmark er det primært den helt snævre definition af OPP der gør sig gældende (dvs. projekter der inkluderer både projektering, udførelse, vedligeholdelse, drift og finansiering af et projekt). Andre steder er OPP et samlebegreb for mange forskellige typer bygge- og anlægsprojekter. En ekspanon for den helt brede tilgang er Savas (2000).

Aktørrelationer: I bygge- og anlægstilgangen kan relationerne mellem de involverede parter beskrives som traditionelle principal-agent relationer. Den offentlige aktør bestiller et bestemt output til en bestemt pris, der skal leveres på et bestemt tidspunkt. Det egentlige 'samarbejde' mellem den offentlige og den private aktør er derfor i udgangspunktet ganske begrænset. Derfor kan man vove at påstå, at det er ganske paradoksalt, at netop denne form for samarbejde i stigende grad er blevet synonym med OPP-betegnelsen.

Det bør imidlertid bemærkes, at nyere forskning tyder på, at på trods af kontraktens umiddelbare 'hårde' karakter,<sup>2</sup> så kan der indenfor rammerne af den hårde kontrakt over tid udvikles tætte og tillidsbaserede principal-principal relationer mellem de involverede offentlige og private aktører (Weihe 2007a). Sagt med andre ord så kan der selv indenfor rammerne af hårde og omstændelige kontrakter opstå bløde kontraktrelationer.

### **Byudviklingstilgangen:**

#### **OPP som lokale byudviklingsprojekter**

Kontekst: Bygge- og anlægstilgangen er imidlertid langt fra den eneste tilgang til OPP, og det er heller ikke her, vi skal finde OPP-begrebets oprindelse. Allerede tilbage i

slutningen af 1970'erne og i starten af 1980'erne undersøgte amerikanske forskere, hvordan OPP kunne bidrage til udvikling af byer i økonomiske og sociale vanskeligheder (for eksempel Fosler og Berger 1982; Davis 1986). I denne sammenhæng fokuseredes der imidlertid på nogle helt andre samarbejdsformer end dem, som vi forbinder med bygge- og anlægstilgangen ovenfor.

Struktur: De lokale byudviklingsprojekter, som de amerikanske OPP-forskere beskæftigede sig med for snart 30 år siden, blev typisk initieret af det private erhvervsliv som en reaktion på økonomisk lavkonjunktur, høj arbejdsløshed, voksende kriminalitet og faldende indtjeningsmuligheder for offentlige såvel som private virksomheder (f.eks. Davis 1986; Macchirola 1986). Det helt centrale i den type OPP projekter er, at lokale aktører går sammen om at løse lokale problemer. Det drejer sig om samarbejdsformer og -relationer, som er mindre formaliserede end bygge- og anlægspartnerskaberne. I byudviklingspartnerskaberne mødes aktørerne med en fælles interesse og et fælles mål. Midlerne (og den specifikke institutionelle form) til at nå målet finder parterne frem til i fællesskab. Et eksempel på et byudviklingspartnerskab er 'New York Partnerskabet', der blev oprettet i 1979. I slutningen af 1970'erne var byen på fallittens rand, og på den baggrund dannede byens erhvervsliv et partnerskab med henblik på at "forene erhvervsliv og samarbejde med den offentlige sektor med henblik på at gøre New York til et bedre sted at leve, arbejde og gøre forretninger i" (New York Times 10. november 1985). Partnerskabet fik et organisatorisk udtryk i form af en partnerskabsbestyrelse, som administrerede en række udviklingsprogrammer (f.eks. boligprojekter og kriminalitetsprogrammer). Finansieringen var 90 procent privat og 10 procent offentlig.

Aktørrelationer: Byudviklingspartnerskaberne er kendetegnet ved et samarbejde mellem ligeværdige parter (principal-principal relationer) som etableres med henblik på at opnå fælles mål. Det drejer sig endvidere om mere eller mindre langvarige forhold, hvor begge parter bidrager til partnerskabet, og hvor begge parter deler ansvaret for partnerskabets udfald (Peters 1998). Samarbejdet behøver ikke at involvere en egentlig kontrakt (samarbejdet kan også være baseret på en netværksstruktur eller oprettelsen af en fælles organisatorisk enhed, jvf. eksemplet ovenfor). I modsætning til bygge- og anlægspartnerskaberne, som pr. definition in-

volverer specifikke kontraktstrukturer, så defineres byudviklingspartnerskaberne således primært ud fra kendetegn ved samarbejdsrelationerne.

Det er indenfor rammerne af byudviklingspartnerskaberne, at vi skal finde rødderne til mange af de OPP definitioner, som er ganske udbredte i litteraturen i dag (f.eks. Klijn og Teisman 2004; Van Ham og Koppenjan 2001: 598).<sup>3</sup> OPP indenfor denne tilgang beskrives typisk som "et samarbejde af en vis varighed mellem offentlige og private aktører, hvor de i fællesskab producerer produkter og services og deler risici, omkostninger og ressourcer forbundet hermed" (Van Ham og Koppenjan 2001: 598; egen oversættelse).<sup>4</sup> Definitionen understreger fællesproduktion og risikodeling som afgørende karakteristika ved OPP. I modsætning til de tidligere studier indenfor byudviklingstilgangen begrænser disse senere bidrag sig ikke til byudviklingskonteksten (byer i økonomiske vanskeligheder), men undersøger i stedet en bred vifte af forskellige samarbejdsrelationer på forskellige områder, som blot opfylder kravene om risikodeling, fællesproduktion m.m.

## Policy-tilgangen:

### OPP som generelle policy-relationer

Kontekst: I policy-tilgangen bliver OPP-betegnelsen brugt til at betegne generelle policy-relationer mellem offentlige og private aktører. Genstandsfeltet er policy design; dvs. hvordan et specifikt policy-område er organiseret, og hvad der kendetegner den offentlig-private rollefordeling og samspil på et givent politikområde; f.eks. analyseres, hvordan offentlige og private aktører samarbejder om at håndtere kriser såsom strømafbuddet i USA og Canada i 2003 og fængsels-skandalen i Abu Ghraib (Svedin 2006) eller udviklingen i relationerne mellem den svenske stat og forsvarsindustrien (Britz 2006). OPP-begrebet begrænser sig dermed ikke til en specifik kontekst eller en specifik projektform. Det, der er i fokus er generelle policy-relationer.

Strukturer: Indenfor policy-tilgangen anvendes OPP-betegnelsen således ikke til at betegne egentlige projektbaserede relationer mellem offentlige og private aktører (hvilket er tilfældet i både bygge- og anlægstilgangen og byudviklingstilgangen). OPP er et langt mere 'åbent' begreb. Der fokuseres på at beskrive og analysere offentlig-private relationer og institutionelle strukturer på et givent politikområde. Yderligere eksempler er Ro-

senbaum, der analyserer juridiske og politiske strukturer på det kommercielle kernekraftsektorområde i USA (2000); Stiglitz og Wallsten (2000) som analyse rer offentlig støtte af privat forskning, og omtaler det fænomen som OPP; og Kamieniecki, Shafie og Silvers (2000), der analyserer et system til forhandling af kvoter for udledning af henholdsvis nitrogen oxid og svovl oxid.<sup>5</sup>

Aktørrelationer: Indenfor policy tilgangen er relationerne mellem de offentlige og private aktører ikke kendetegnede ved bestemte karakteristika.

OPP kan både være komplekse bygge- og anlægsprojekter, netværksbaserede relationer mellem offentlige og private aktører og udviklingspartnerskaber mellem internationale og nationale (ikke)statslige offentlige aktører.

Policy-partnerskaberne adskiller sig dermed fra byudviklingspartnerskaberne, hvor samarbejdet er defineret ved nærmere bestemte aktørrelationer. En af grundene, til at man alligevel kan tale om en særskilt policy-tilgang, er, at den adskiller sig fra bygge- og anlægs- og byudviklingstilgangen i og med, at der ikke er tale om egentlige projekter, og fordi at OPP bliver brugt til at betegne helt generelle relationer mellem offentligt og privat (der er hverken tale om specifikke formelle kontraktstrukturer eller aktørrelationer). Det er indretningen af et bestemt politikområde, som er det centrale fokus og ikke relationerne mellem offentligt og privat. Dermed er tilgangen og forståelsen af OPP væsensforskellig fra de to tidligere tilgange.

## Udviklingstilgangen:

### OPP som udviklingsredskab

Kontekst: Den fjerde og sidste tilgang til studiet af OPP finder vi på bistands- og udviklingsområdet. Her ses OPP som et middel til at fremme udvikling i modtagerlande. Denne praksis er relativ ny – i hvert fald på det retoriske niveau, da man ikke har omtalt 'OPP' som udviklingsredskab tidligere. OPP blev sat på udviklingsdagsordenen i forbindelse med FN's Global Compact-initiativ, der blev lanceret i 2000 (Reed and Reed 2006: 2).<sup>6</sup> Ideen om partnerskaber som udviklingsredskaber blev yderligere styrket i forbindelse med FN's verdenskonference om bæredygtig udvikling i Johannesburg i 2002

(Reed and Reed 2006: 2). Et dansk eksempel er Danida's OPP-erhvervsprogram, som blev lanceret i 2004 indenfor rammerne af Global Compact initiativet. Programmet opfordrer danske virksomheder og organisationer til at 'igangsætte socialt orienterede aktiviteter, innovative tiltag og investeringer til styrkelse af arbejds- og levevilkår i udviklingslandene'.<sup>7</sup> Konkret indebærer erhvervsprogrammet, at Danida tilbyder rådgivning og medfinansiering af danske virksomheders sociale initiativer i udviklingslande.<sup>8</sup>

FN's udviklingsprogram (UNDP) har ligeledes et OPP-program, der hedder OPP for 'Urban Environment' (PP-PUE). Programmets overordnede formål er fattigdomsbekæmpelse i byer. Mere konkret er målsætningen at forbedre de fattiges adgang til grundlæggende forhold som vand, sanitære faciliteter og energi, og det gøres ved at fremme partnerskaber mellem lokale myndigheder, virksomheder og diverse samfundsgupper. Programmet omfatter forskellige former for partnerskaber, herunder kontrakter, joint ventures og lokale agenda 21 strategier.<sup>9</sup> I Verdensbanken findes der ligeledes et OPP-udviklingsprogram, hvor formålet er at forbedre vilkårene for etablering af bygge- og anlægspartnerskaber. Det sker eksempelvis ved at formidle teknisk viden om OPP (OPP i snæver forstand, jf. bygge- og anlægstilgangen) og ved at uddanne offentlige myndigheder, således at de bliver i stand til at regulere og styre bygge- og anlægspartnerskaber. Fællesnævneren for de mange forskellige typer udviklingspartnerskaber er, at internationale organisationer eller statslige aktører fra donorlande aktivt forsøger at fremme udbredelsen af offentlig-private samarbejdsprojekter med henblik på at fremme udvikling.

**Strukturer:** Udviklingstilgangen refererer dermed ikke til specifikke samarbejdsstrukturer eller en bestemt type samarbejdsrelation mellem offentlige og private aktører. Som eksemplerne ovenfor har vist, så sammenblandes flere af de forudgående OPP forståelser/tilgange i udviklingskonteksten. Det er problematisk, idet man dermed risikerer at sammenblende erfaringerne fra forskelligartede udviklingspartnerskaber. Grunden, til at jeg alligevel vil argumentere for, at man kan tale om en egentlig 'udviklingstilgang', er, at der er tale om nogle særlige kendetegn, der adskiller OPP på udviklingsområdet fra de øvrige tilgange. Det afgørende kendetegn er, at OPP ses som et udviklingsredskab, og

at en tredje part (internationale statslige og ikke-statslige aktører) indgår som koordinator og/eller katalysator for udbredelse og implementering af forskellige former for offentligt-privat samarbejde. Aktørkonstellationerne og konteksten er dermed væsensforskellige fra de forudgående tilgange.

**Aktører:** OPP-projekterne indenfor udviklingstilgangen har således nogle fællesnævner, der ikke kan genfindes i de øvrige tre tilgange. For det første, og som nævnt ovenfor, så er der ikke udelukkende tale om et samarbejde mellem offentlige og private aktører, men partnerskaberne involverer også internationale aktører (både statslige og ikke statslige aktører, f.eks. Danida og FN) samt private virksomheder fra donorlande. I visse tilfælde er der tale om partnerskaber mellem f.eks. danske virksomheder og erhvervsliv i modtagerlande (uden om lokale myndigheder). Der er dermed tale om kvalitativt anderledes aktørrelationer end dem, der gør sig gældende i de tre øvrige OPP-tilgange. Derudover bliver partnerskaberne implementeret specifikt i en udviklingskontekst, hvor formålet er fattigdomsbekæmpelse, anti-korruption og lignende udviklingsrelaterede formål.

### Et mangetydigt begreb

Gennemgangen ovenfor illustrerer, at betegnelsen OPP kan andrage ganske forskelligartede betydninger. OPP kan både være komplekse bygge- og anlægsprojekter, netværksbaserede relationer mellem offentlige og private aktører og udviklingspartnerskaber mellem internationale og nationale (ikke)statslige offentlige aktører (jf. tabel 1). Forskellene mellem de forskellige OPP-tilgange er ganske omfattende.

OPP som et bygge- og anlægsprojekt omfatter en kompleks, detaljeret og outputfokuseret kontrakt mellem offentlige og private aktører. Arbejdsdelingen mellem parterne er klart defineret. Det er egentlig et paradoks, at samarbejdsformen bliver kaldt OPP, da det i udgangspunktet ikke drejer sig om et 'partnerskab' i ordets bogstavelige forstand. Det er i langt højere grad tale om en traditionel bestiller-udfører relation mellem offentlige og private aktører. Det 'nye' ved kontraktformen er anvendelsen af privat finansiering og sammenkobling af de forskellige projektfaser i et udbud.<sup>10</sup> Derudover drejer det sig om et samarbejde, der strækker sig over flere årtier. Bygge- og anlægspartnerskabet præsenterer umiddelbart ikke en kvalitativ ny måde at samarbejde

Tabel 1: De fire OPP perspektiver

	Bygge- og anlægs- tilgangen	Byudviklingstilgangen	Policy tilgangen	Udviklingstilgangen
<b>Kontekst</b>	Offentlige bygge- og anlægsprojekter, drift/vedligeholdelse.	Afhjælpe økonomisk og sociale problemer i byer. I dag udbredt til en lang række andre kontekster.	Rollefordeling ml. offentlig og privat på et givent politikområde (institutionelt design)	OPP som udviklingsredskab. Værktøjskasse (inddragelse af nye aktører i udviklingsarbejdet)
<b>Strukturer</b>	Bygge- og anlægskontrakter; langsigtede (typisk +30 år), detaljerede kontrakter; finansiering, design, etablering og drift koblet sammen i ét udbud*	Forskellige formelle strukturer. Tætte relationer, fællesproduktion, risikodeling, samarbejde over tid (kan både være forskellige kontraktformer og selskabslignende relationer mellem offentlig og privat)	Ikke projektbaserede relationer (fravær af formaliseret aftalegrundlag, netværksbaseret)	Projektbaserede samarbejdsformer, hvor internationale statslige og ikke-statslige aktører agerer som katalysatorer og/eller koordinatore for OPP-samarbejdet.
<b>Aktor (relationer)</b>	Principal-agent.	Principal-principal.	Generelle relationer mellem offentlig og privat.	Multiple aktører.

\* Bygge- og anlægstilgangen kan som tidligere nævnt også omfatte andre kontraktformer såsom BOOT, BOT, sale and lease back arrangementer m.m.

på, hvilket forventningerne til OPP ofte tilsiger (jf. Hodge og Greve 2005: 2; Mörth og Sahlin-Andersson 2006: 11-12; Wettenhall 2006: appendix 1). De samspilsformer, der fokuseres på indenfor rammerne af byudviklingstilgangen, kommer tættere på gængse forventninger om tætte og mere tillidsbaseret relationer mellem offentlige og private organisationer. Det skyldes, at fællesproduktion, risikodeling og principal-principal agent relationer er indeholdt i selve definitionen af OPP inden for den tilgang. En ulempe ved byudviklingstilgangen kan være, at den er relativt tavs om hvilke formelle strukturer, et OPP består af (er samarbejdet baseret på en kontrakt, løse netværksstrukturer eller en fælles organisatorisk enhed?). Blot samarbejdet indeholder ovennævnte kendetegn (fællesproduktion, principal-principal relationer osv.), så kan det klassificeres som OPP. Hvorvidt den relativt åbne definition er en ulempe eller ej, er en smagssag. Nogle forskere ville utvivlsomt mene, at det ikke er hensigtsmæssigt at 'lukke' begrebet, så det kun omfatter særlige kontrakttyper eller bestemte organisatoriske fællesskaber. I stedet bør OPP udforskes empirisk (Mörth og Sahlin-Andersson 2006). Et modsvar til det kunne være, at erfaringsopsamling dermed bliver problematisk, da der er en overhængende fare for, at man sammenligner 'pærer og æbler'. Et andet spørgsmål,

der også rejser sig, er: Hvad adskiller OPP fra tidligere former for offentlig-privat samspil? Som enkelte forskere har påpeget, så kan man argumentere for, at OPP har eksisteret i århundreder (Wettenhall 2005b). Samme kritik gør sig gældende i forhold til policy-tilgangen til OPP. Hvad er det nye og særegne ved OPP i et policy perspektiv? Er der ikke blot tale om, at et nyt ord bliver brugt til at betegne noget, som har eksisteret længe?

I forhold til byudviklings-, policy og udviklingstilgangen kunne man argumentere for, at OPP er ganske udbredt i Danmark (det bliver bare kaldt noget andet), mens i forhold til bygge- og anlægstilgangen så er de danske OPP-erfaringer (som tidligere nævnt) meget begrænsede sammenlignet med eksempelvis Storbritannien og Australien. Det kan være problematisk, at det samme ord (OPP) har så mange forskellige betydninger. For det første, så er det svært at fremstille én overordnet definition på OPP. For det andet, så er der en fare for, at karakteristika ved de forskellige OPP tilgange bliver blandet sammen. For eksempel kan man foranlediges til at tro, at bygge- og anlægspartnerskaber nødvendigvis involverer tætte og tillidsbaserede samarbejdsrelationer mellem offentlig-private aktører – hvilket i udgangspunktet ikke er tilfældet. For det tredje, så er der en risiko for, at erfarin-

gerne fra en type OPP bliver blandet sammen med erfaringer fra andre OPP-typer. Derved kan man afstedkomme til at tro, at bygge- og anlægspartnerskaber f. eks. medfører øget lokal mobilisering og deltagelse (jf. Andersen 2004). Sidst men ikke mindst, så er det umuligt at sige noget generelt om fordele, ulemper, succeskriterier og faldgruber ved OPP. Svaret vil altid afhænge af, hvilken konkret OPP form man taler om.

Der er givetvis overlap mellem de forskellige tilgange. Der kan især i forhold til udviklingstilgangen stilles spørgsmålstejn ved, om der er tale om en egentlig tilgang for sig, da flere af de øvrige tilgange blandes sammen indenfor denne. Jeg har indtil videre valgt at beholde udviklingstilgangen alligevel, netop på baggrund af den særskilte rolle, som en tredje part spiller i udviklingspartnerskaberne. Og yderligere fordi det giver mening at tale om en særlig forgrening af OPP litteraturen, som beskæftiger sig med OPP i et udviklingsperspektiv. Udviklingsfeltet ser også ud til at leve et ganske uafhængigt liv set i forhold til den øvrige OPP-litteratur. Formålet med inddelingen her har desforuden ikke været at skabe vandtætte skodder mellem forskellige definitioner og forståelser af OPP, men snarere at illustrere mangedygheden, uklarhederne og de forskellige felter, der eksisterer i praksis. Hvis gennemgangen blot har illustreret, at der er forskellige måder, hvorpå forskere og praktikere anvender betegnelsen 'OPP', og at man derudover helt overordnet kan tale om forskellige forgreninger i litteraturen, så er formålet nået.

Begrebets mange anvendelsesformer taget i betragtning, så er det ikke besynderligt, at der hersker forvirring omkring, hvad et OPP er.<sup>11</sup> Der forekommer umiddelbart tre overordnede måder, hvorpå forvirringen kan håndteres: a) Man kan argumentere for, at der kun findes én rigtig måde at forstå OPP på; dvs. påpege, at der kun er en 'rigtig' anvendelse af begrebet (som eksempel på den løsning, se Wettenhall 2006 eller Klijn og Teisman 2005);<sup>12</sup> b) Eller man kan argumentere for, at OPP er et relativt åbent begreb, der skal udforskes empirisk (se f.eks. Mörth og Sahlin-Andersson 2006), dvs. begrebets grænser defineres ikke på forhånd; c) Alternativt kan man anerkende, at der findes forskellige forgreninger (tilgange) i litteraturen, og at OPP-begrebet andrager bestemte betydninger indenfor hver enkelt af de tilgange. Fordelen ved sidstnævnte løsningsmodel er, at den i højere grad muliggør erfaringsopsamling og gene-

raliseringer inden for hver enkelt tilgang. Sidstnævnte løsningsmodel synes derfor umiddelbart at være den mest attraktive af de tre. På de følgende sider vil jeg komme med et forslag til, hvordan forskellige OPP-modeller yderligere kan klassificeres. Typologien går på tværs af de ovenfor gennemgåede OPP-tilgange og erstatter derfor ikke, men supplerer blot disse.

### En alternativt OPP-typologi

OPP-forskningen har indtil videre primært interesseret sig for økonomiske og tekniske forhold ved OPP (Langford 2002; Ghobadian et al. 2004, 8, 289; Reeve and Hatter 2004). Der er blevet lagt en del energi i at analysere kontraktstrukturer, finansierings spørgsmål, forsikrings spørgsmål osv., mens der er forsket ganske lidt i OPP processer og relationer. Relaterede studier af alliancer (private-private partnerskaber) viser imidlertid, at forhold, der finder sted, efter at kontrakterne er blevet underskrevet, kan have en afgørende betydning for samarbejdets effektivitet og performance (f.eks. Tallman and Phene 2006: 140; Spekman et al. 2000: 33; Kanter 2002; Doz 1996). Antallet af sådanne studier er ganske imponerende. Der findes for eksempel et relativt stort forskningsområde, som analyserer hvilken betydning tillid har for et effektivt samarbejde (se f.eks. Rousseau et al. 1998; Dyer og Chu 2002). Et andet felt forsøger at identificere hvilke organisatoriske og individuelle kompetencer bidrager til et succesfuldt samarbejde. I den forbindelse identificeres både tekniske og relationelle kompetencer som værende vigtige for partnerskabsperformance (se f.eks. Spekman et al. 2000, Heimeriks 2004; Dyer and Singh 2004). Den omfattende erfaringsopsamling, der har fundet sted indenfor alliance-forskningen tyder på, at man med fordel kan rette mere opmærksomhed mod samarbejdsrelationerne og -processerne i forhold til OPP. Typologien, der skitseres her, bygger netop på et sådant procesperspektiv. Det vil sige, at OPP overordnet betragtes som en dynamisk proces, hvor samarbejdets karakter ændrer sig over tid (Ring og Van de Ven 1994; Doz 1996; Ariño and De la Torre 1998). I et procesperspektiv kan OPP betragtes som sociale mekanismer for kollektiv handling, som løbende formes og omdannes af de involverede aktører (Ring and Van de Ven 1994: 96). Partnerskaber kan i dette perspektiv ikke a priori designes til at fungere på bestemte måder, og derfor bliver det væsentligt at af-

dække og analysere, hvad der sker, efter at kontrakterne er underskrevet, og det egentlige samarbejde træder i kraft. Dermed ikke sagt, at det formelle aftalegrundlag ikke er væsentligt. Pointen er, at sociale relationer – i tillæg til de formelle strukturer – kan have en afgørende indflydelse på samarbejdets karakter og effektivitet. Det fordrer en dynamisk kategorisering af OPP (jf. tabel 2). Dvs. en typologi, der anerkender, at: a) der findes grundlæggende forskellige formelle OPP strukturer; og b) forskellige typer sociale relationer, der c) også kan variere over tid.

Ved at skelne mellem formelle og relationelle (uformelle) samarbejds karakteristika kan noget af den eksisterende begrebsforvirring formildes. Som gennemgangen ovenfor har illustreret, så defineres OPP i nogle tilfælde som bestående af bestemte formelle strukturer (f.eks. bygge- og anlægstilgangen; se f.eks. Tværnø 2005), mens andre definitioner primært tager udgangspunkt i karakteristika ved samarbejdsrelationerne (se bl.a. Klijn og Teisman 2005; Wettenhall 2006; Mörth og Sahlin Andersson 2006). I et procesperspektiv udelukker bestemte strukturer imidlertid ikke a priori bestemte relationer, og derfor bliver det mere hensigtsmæssigt at klassificere OPP ud fra træk ved både den formelle struktur og de mere uformelle samarbejdsrelationer. På strukturdimensionen kan man overordnet skelne mellem tre former for formelle strukturer: a) kontrakter, b) fælles offentlig-private organisatoriske enheder (f.eks. dannelse af offentlig-private selskaber) og c) netværksrelationer. Den relationelle dimension er lidt mere tricky at definere, da den refererer til en række ikke-håndgribelige og svært 'målbare' forhold ved samarbejdet. Den

refererer overordnet til kvaliteten ved samarbejdsrelationerne (f.eks. omfanget af tillid, gensidighed, empati og ejerskab). Grundtanken er, at jo bedre relationerne mellem nøgleaktørerne er, desto mere effektivt og produktivt vil samarbejdet være. En væsentlig pointe er endvidere, at selv i projekter med enslydende formel struktur kan samarbejdsrelationerne være grundforskellige. En britisk OPP-leder - der var involveret i to relativt ens OPP-projekter - fortæller eksempelvis, at han brugte syv-otte gange så meget tid på at få samarbejdet til at fungere i det ene projekt netop på baggrund anstrengte relationer mellem de involverede parter. En anden britisk OPP-leder understreger, at samarbejdsrelationerne er helt centrale: "The whole process is about people. That is a key thing actually! [...]... the essence of all this is; it doesn't matter what you have got drafted or what contracts you've got. It still relies on the right people in the right place. You can't really legislate for that." For enkeltheds skyld kan vi her nøjes med at sige, at den relationelle dimension består af et antal bestanddele, som er indbyrdes forbundet. Disse er f.eks.: tillid, fleksibilitet/gensidighed, empati, parternes indstilling til samarbejdet (positiv vs. negativ), intensiteten (tætheden) i relationerne samt oplevelsen af at have fælles mål (se i øvrigt Weihe 2007b; samt Weihe 2008). Enkelte alliance-forskere bruger samlebetegnelsen 'relationel kvalitet' (relational quality), og definerer det som det omfang, parterne er trygge ved og villige til at forlige sig på tillid i relationen til hinanden (Ariño, De la Torre, Ring 2001: 111). Hvis vi skelner mellem tre kategorier af relationel kvalitet (høj, medium og lav grad) kan ni OPP-idealtyper udledes.

Tabel 2: En OPP-typologi baseret på et procesperspektiv på partnerskaber

		Grad af relationel kvalitet i partnerskabet		
		Lav	Medium	Høj
Type partnerskab langs den strukturelle dimension	<i>Fælles organisatorisk enhed</i>	Type I	Type II	Type III
	<i>Kontraktbaseret</i>	Type IV	Type V	Type VI
	<i>Netværksbaseret</i>	Type VII	Type VIII	VIII

Fordelen ved at tænke på OPP som både formelle strukturer og sociale relationer er, at et mere dynamisk perspektiv på OPP muliggøres. Et perspektiv der anerkender, at samarbejdets karakter ikke udelukkende determineres af formelle strukturer, men at det løbende udvikles og ændrer sig over tid (Aulakh and Madhok 2002; Granovetter 1985). Typologien tvinger os endvidere til at være eksplicite i forhold til, hvad vi mener med OPP. Refererer vi til bestemte strukturer (specifikke kontraktformer) (jvf. f.eks. Tvarnø 2005)? Eller handler det om bestemte typer samarbejdsrelationer (fx tillidsbaserede og procesorienterede relationer mellem to ligeværdige parter) (jvf. Klijn og Teisman 2005; Wettenhall 2006)? De forskellige formelle og relationelle karakteristika bliver tit blandet sammen i litteraturen, og det er en af grundene til, at der opstår forvirring omkring OPP begrebet.

Typologien kan videreudvikles/præciseres yderligere for derefter at fungere fx som et redskab til diagnose af OPP praksis; dvs. et redskab til at kigge bagom den til tider måske rosenrøde OPP retorik. Hvilke praksiser gemmer der sig egentlig bagved OPP betegnelsen? Typologien kan ligeledes hjælpe os med at komme uden om diskussionerne om hvad et OPP er eller ikke er (f. eks. Klijn og Teisman 2005; Wettenhall 2006), idet den anerkender, at der findes forskellige OPP- strukturer og -relationer, der kan kombineres på kryds og tværs. Slutteligt kan typologien anvendes til at få et overblik over den empiriske udbredelse af forskellige former for OPP. Presentationen her skal blot ses som et første skridt i retning af en mere veldefineret typologi.

## Konklusion

På de forudgående sider er OPP-begrebets mangetydighed forsøgt illustreret ved en gennemgang af den internationale OPP-litteratur. Der findes forskellige tilgange til OPP, og indenfor de forskellige tilgange dækker OPP væsensforskellige samarbejdsformer. Det kan argumenteres, at det er problematisk at OPP begrebet reelt ikke har en specifik betydning andet end, at offentlige og private aktører samarbejder om noget, der i et vist omfang er reguleret på en ikke nærmere specificeret måde (kontrakt, organisation, netværk?). Det kan give anledning til misforståelser, samt at erfaringerne med én type OPP kan blive blandet sammen med erfaringerne fra andre OPP-typer. Derfor er det vigtigt eksplicit at slå fast, indenfor rammerne af hvilken OPP-tilgang bestemte erfaringer og konklusioner hører hjemme.

Fremtidig forskning kan med fordel rettes mod at afdække samarbejdsprocesserne i OPP. Hvad sker der, når et OPP implementeres? Hvad kendetegner de faktiske relationer mellem de involverede aktører? Hvilken 'partnerskabskultur' gør sig gældende i de enkelte projekter? Hvilke udfordringer opstår der undervejs i forløbet? Hvilke partnerskabs- eller samarbejdskompetencer er særlig vigtige i forhold til et velfungerende og effektivt samarbejde? Hvordan ændrer OPP-samarbejdet sig over tid? Og hvilken betydning har de løbende samarbejdsprocesser for OPP-performance? Svar på disse og lignende spørgsmål ville bidrage til en mere komplet forståelse af hvilke mekanismer er afgørende for opnåelse af et effektivt OPP samarbejde.

## NOTER

<sup>1</sup> OPP i snæver forstand er mest udbredt i Storbritannien. En opgørelse viser, at omkring 700 aftaler var underskrevet i 2005 (Partnerships UK 2006). En oversigt over alle underskrevne aftaler i Storbritannien findes på følgende hjemmeside: [www.partnershipsuk.org.uk](http://www.partnershipsuk.org.uk). Det skal nævnes, at den britiske regering i løbet af de seneste år er begyndt at fraråde brugen af PFI-modellen i forhold til IT og teknologiprojekter, da erfaringerne på det område har været mindre gode.

<sup>2</sup> Se Greve og Ejersbo (2002) for en beskrivelse af henholdsvis hårde og bløde kontrakter.

<sup>3</sup> Bemærk, at de senere definitioner i høj grad er præget af den kontekst, de er opstået i (Holland), hvor der er mange byudviklings- og områdeudviklingsprojekter kendetegnet ved en høj grad af interaktion mellem aktørerne og komplekse beslutningsprocesser (Klijn, Edelenbos og Hughes 2007).

<sup>4</sup> Se også Klijn og Teisman 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Systemet blev oprettet i 1994, og er en markedsbaseret tilgang til at reducere udslippet af svovl og nitrogen oxid.

<sup>6</sup> Programmet går i korthed ud på at bringe virksomheder, FN-enheder, arbejdsmarked og civilsamfund sammen om at støtte og fremme ti generelle principper vedrørende menneskerettigheder, arbejdstagerrettigheder, miljø og anti-korruption (se [www.unglobalcompact.org](http://www.unglobalcompact.org)).

<sup>7</sup> 25. juni 2007 [www.um.dk/da/menu/Udviklingspolitik/Erhvervssamarbejde/Public-Private-Partnerships/](http://www.um.dk/da/menu/Udviklingspolitik/Erhvervssamarbejde/Public-Private-Partnerships/)

<sup>8</sup> Der tilbydes medfinansiering på op til 60 procent af henholdsvis forberedelses- og implementeringsfasen (Udenrigsministeriet 2006). Et konkret eksempel på en virksomhed som er engageret i erhvervsprogrammet er Novo Nordisk, som arbejder med at fremme lige muligheder og mangfoldighed på globalt plan. Det arbejde har eksempelvis medført et mere mangfoldigt Novo Nordisk sælgerkorps i Sydafrika, og en fokuseret indsats fra virksomheden med henblik på at reducere diskrimination på det indiske arbejdsmarked (Udenrigsministeriet 2005: 12). For mere information om DANIDA's OPP-erhvervsprogram, se hjemmesiden [www.pppprogramme.com](http://www.pppprogramme.com).

<sup>9</sup> For mere information om PPPUE se <http://pppue.undp.org/>.

<sup>10</sup> Der er en række fordele, ulemper og udfordringer forbundet med de forskellige former for OPP, og det er i sig selv temmelig interessant. Det bliver imidlertid ikke berørt her, da det ikke er artiklens formål at afdække succeskriterier og faldgruber ved forskellige typer OPP.

<sup>11</sup> Begrebsforvirringen kommer også til udtryk ved OPP-konferencer, OPP-seminarer og OPP-workshops, hvor en betydelig del af tiden ofte bliver brugt på at diskutere, hvad et OPP egentlig er.

<sup>12</sup> Wettenhall argumenterer bl.a. for, at medmindre et OPP involverer et 'ægte samarbejde', 'tillidsbaserede relationer', og har et organisatorisk udtryk (f.eks. et partnerskabsforum eller en joint venture mellem offentlige og private organisationer), så er det ikke et 'rigtig' OPP.

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## PART III

### Beyond Contracts – addressing PPP practice



# Public-Private Partnerships and Public-Private Value Trade-Offs

**Guðrið Weihe**

*Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are playing an increasingly important role in infrastructure policies in many countries. This article reflects on the extent to which PPPs deliver public value. The article also distinguishes between material and procedural public values, and suggests that there may be an inherent contradiction between achieving material value while at the same time safeguarding procedural public values in PPPs.*

There are many different types and definitions of public-private partnerships (PPPs) (Weihe, 2006). However, what is increasingly meant by PPP is some version of the Private Finance Initiative model (PFI), which was launched in the UK in the early 1990s. This type of PPP has become a significant element of public infrastructure policies in many countries. In the UK, PPPs comprise about 10–15% of total investment in public services (Treasury, 2006a, p. 1). It is therefore important to consider what implications PPP policies have for public values.

PPPs are established with the ultimate aim of achieving some sort of advantage by delivering value that could not have been achieved without collaboration (Huxham and Vangen, 2000, p. 293). More specifically, the rationale for implementing PPPs is that they provide greater value for money than conventionally procured projects, i.e. a more optimal combination of whole-of-life costs and quality of goods or services compared to the outcomes of alternative ways of service delivery (Treasury, 2006b, p. 7). Achieving some sort of material value is thus the *raison d'être* for PPPs. Different degrees or types of value can be generated, for example 'simple cost savings' or 'real synergy'. In the former case, collaboration is limited to co-ordination of operations, and therefore there is no basis for synergy. In cases of real synergy, substantive surplus value is achieved; for instance in the form of innovative products (Klijn and Teisman, 2005).

This article argues that the extent to which real synergy is achieved is partly contingent on behavioural and operational aspects of co-operation. Partnerships that demonstrate certain behavioural characteristics are more likely to produce synergistic results than partnerships that do not show such characteristics (for instance, Kanter, 2002). An analysis of co-operative practices enables an

interim appraisal of the extent to which real synergy can be expected to result from a PPP.

This article distinguishes between two general categories of public values:

- Material values—tangible substance values (for example those affiliated with the rationale for implementing PPPs).
- Procedural values—the traditional values of public administration such as equality, transparency, democratic accountability and governance by rule.

The article looks at the implications that PPP infrastructure policies have for material and procedural public values. Material value is, of course, normally distinguished from the public values discourse. But here I expand the notion of public values to include values that refer to material benefits.

For the past two decades there has been an increasing focus on making the public sector more efficient, more flexible and more cost-effective. Performance and service delivery have had more emphasis than traditional public values such as universality, equality, and legal security (Peters and Pierre, 2003, p. 4). Methods of valuation that traditionally belong in the private sector have been transferred to the public sector. Therefore, insofar as PPPs are evaluated in terms of material value, value is taken to be a 'public' one in this article.

This article argues, first, that the way in which PPPs are implemented and managed over time can have consequences for performance (the degree to which material value is produced). Second, it contends that there may be a contradiction between achieving material value in the form of 'real synergy', on the one hand, and safeguarding procedural public values on the other. Third, it shows how research from a sister field on the management

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of alliances can shed light on the importance of operational and behavioural dynamics in PPP.

### Past Research

Previous research on PPPs has tended to focus on material and economic considerations, in addition to *ex ante* contractual issues (Ghobadian *et al.*, 2004, p. 289; Reeve and Hatter, 2004). There has also been a considerable amount of academic work on conceptual clarification (for instance Weihe, 2006; Wettenhall, 2006) and on PPPs' performance (see Hodge and Greve, 2007).

What happens after contracts have been signed, however, has received little scholarly attention. Indeed, operational practice has been more or less black-boxed. So we do not know very much about how the public and private actors in PPPs co-operate in practice, and how this affects performance, which is, ultimately, the level of (material) value expected to be achieved via PPPs. A key assumption, here, is that managing the partnership process is an important aspect of effective co-operation.

### Methodology

The arguments in this article build on findings from a qualitative case study of co-operative practice in five different PPPs in three different policy sectors in the UK—transport, health and defence. The case study approach adopted follows the logic of 'naturalism' (as opposed to positivism and constructivism). The objective was to produce detailed knowledge about the operational practice of PPPs. The approach used here is innovative in the sense that it goes beyond the formal PPP contract and investigates what happens at the micro-level processes in individual operational PPP projects.

A key case selection criterion was the duration of the projects—each of the cases had been operational for between two and five years when they were selected. As an exception, one of the cases had a phased roll-out of services and became fully operational after it was selected. Finally, access was also a decisive factor with regard to case selection. The analyses focused primarily on the post-construction phase of co-operation, and the public-private interface in the selected cases. In each PPP, a number of key representatives from the public and the private sector were interviewed, i.e. public and private sector managers at different levels of the partnership (for example special purpose vehicle managers and board members, managers at the prime subcontractor level, and representatives from the public sector commissioning body, in addition to public sector

project managers at a local level). This follows the recommendations by Madhok (1995, pp. 72–73), who suggests that it is prudent to interview both partners in a partnership. Since different actors might have different perceptions of the character of co-operation, a more comprehensive picture can be attained by interviewing representatives from both sides of the contract. This is a novel approach to PPP research.

Each project manager was asked to describe the partnership relationship, the characteristics of co-operation, and the pattern of interaction in the partnership projects in which they were involved. Since much of the collected data consists of personal views, experiences and expressions of the involved partnership managers, the identity of the cases is not revealed.

### PPPs and Collaborative Advantage

Alliance research has demonstrated that in order to achieve real synergy (i.e. a higher order level of material value), certain elements of co-operation are required (see, for instance, Spekman *et al.*, 2000). The formal deal itself may be a necessary precondition, but it does not guarantee effective co-operation. According to alliance scholars (for example Contractor and Lorange, 2002), critical ingredients in a synergistic partnership are of a more intangible nature. Indeed, they concern softer issues of co-operation such as trust and the mindsets of the involved actors. A key source of collaborative advantage is that the actors succeed in moving beyond a pure exchange relationship and move towards a relationship characterized by *collaboration* (Kanter, 2002), i.e. an inter-organizational relationship marked by 'high connection', 'high intensity', and 'close relationships' (Keast *et al.*, 2007, p. 12). According to an international study of 37 companies, the most successful partnerships are more familial and less rational (Kanter, 2002).

Various alliance scholars suggest that organizations possessing some sort of 'collaborative capability' (Schreiner *et al.*, 2005) or 'alliance competence' (Spekman *et al.*, 2000) will be more successful in their alliance activities than organizations that do not possess such capabilities. The components of the capability concept vary somewhat from study to study, but a common denominator for many of the approaches is that intangible *behavioural factors* are stressed as being important for overall alliance performance. Having the right 'mindset' and being able to 'bond' with other

**Table 1. Key features of co-operation.**

<i>The collaborative partnership</i>	<i>The exchange partnership</i>
Trust	Distrust
Reciprocity, tit-for-tat strategies	One-sidedness, non-mutual approach
Attentiveness/empathy for partner	Incomprehension, minimal attentiveness
Positive and proactive attitude/mindset	Unenthusiastic and reactive attitude
Close relationships	Distanced relationships
Shared purpose/joint goals	Split purposes
High intensity/connection	Low intensity/connection

organizations are examples of such factors (see Spekman *et al.*, 2000; and Schreiner *et al.*, 2005). Generally, trust is a recurrent factor that is believed to have significant performance implications. Trust, *inter alia*, is believed to lower transaction costs, enhance co-operation, increase information-sharing, facilitate dispute resolution and reduce the amount of formal contracts and harmful conflict between co-operating organizations (see Luo, 2002 for an introduction to research on trust and strategic alliances).

On the basis of research findings from the alliance literature, a number of propositions can be put forward regarding the co-operative nature of different types of partnerships. More specifically, the features of two ideal types—'collaborative' and 'exchange' partnerships—can be extracted (see table 1).

Operational practice that resembles the collaborative partnership will generally achieve more real synergy (higher levels of material value) than the exchange partnership. Our five case stories were constructed by using these parameters as guidelines for analysing the nature of co-operation. Key findings were:

- Intensity of interaction and interaction patterns varied greatly from case to case.
- Relational quality varied considerably across the investigated cases.
- Institutional context influenced the way that PPPs unfolded.

Intensity and pattern of interaction ranged from low to high. The involvement of different institutional actors also varied from case to case. In some cases, interaction was only between the special purpose vehicle (SPV) and the public sector counterpart; in other cases, the main interaction was between prime subcontractors and the local public sector partnership managers. In yet other cases, a significant amount of the interaction took place between public sector advisors (consultants) and private sector representatives from various levels, while the public sector partners maintained a more

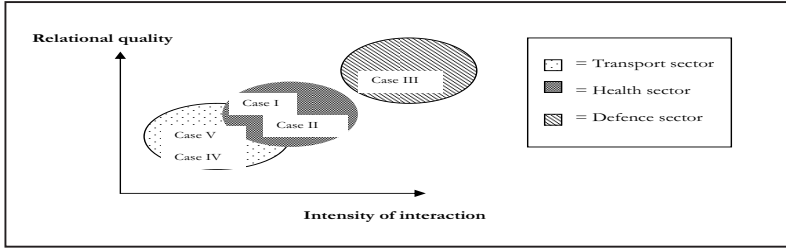
hands'-off approach (i.e. avoided becoming too involved in the project during the implementation stage).

There were significant variations in the relational quality across the public-private interface. While some cases displayed close-knit and collaborative operational relationships, others displayed rather distanced and formalized relationships. There was a considerable variation in levels of reciprocity, degree of empathy for partner interests, and the type of mindsets that the involved partnership managers displayed. While some partnership managers stressed the importance of working together, acknowledging each other's differences and being flexible, others focused primarily on the contract. As a consequence, some managers said they felt 'bogged down' in the interpretation of words, while others indicated that co-operation runs very smoothly. Some partnership managers stressed the importance of people and how well they interact with each other, others simply suggested that the relational aspect of co-operation is insignificant. Only one case resembled the collaborative partnership. Two cases came closer to the exchange partnership, and the last two cases were in between.

Finally, there was a pattern with respect to the nature and intensity of co-operation across the three policy sectors involved. Comparatively, the two transport cases had lower levels of relational quality, in addition to the least intensive interactions. The defence sector case displayed comparatively intense co-operation and high levels of relational quality. And the two health sector cases were in the middle (somewhat closer to the transport cases than the defence case).

Figure 1 illustrates the position of the different cases in a comparative sense, but not in an absolute sense, i.e. when a case is positioned at the high-end of the continuum, this indicates a high score relative to the other cases included in the analysis. The exact position of each case is debatable since the working relationships were not measured in a quantitative sense, and

Figure 1. Policy sector case differences.



the findings are based on the analyst's interpretation of 'observed' behaviour (for example expressions, statements, and attitudes of the interviewed managers). However, the in-depth interviews revealed a significant difference in partnership approaches across the investigated cases. It is these differences that figure 1 loosely illustrates.

#### Implications for Public Values

The majority of the analysed cases resemble the exchange partnership more than the collaborative partnership. This suggests that material value in the form of 'real synergy' is not being achieved. This does not mean that material value is not achieved at all but that the highest scale of synergy is perhaps not achieved. Some studies of PPP performance have suggested that material value is achieved. However, there is no agreement in the academic literature on PPP performance (for an overview of the literature on PPP performance, see Hodge and Greve, 2007).

There are several reasons for most of the analysed cases resembling the exchange partnership. First, the nature of the PFI contract does not invite the type of co-operation associated with collaborative partnerships. The contracts are extensive and detailed. At the outset, therefore, there is little room for joint action (Klijn and Teisman, 2005). Another reason might be that both the private and the public sector actors often hold *a priori* assumptions about the motives and behaviours of their opposing partners—a recurrent issue in the interview data. This may lead to lower trust levels, which again inhibits effective co-operation. Finally, differences in public and private organizational cultures may act as a constraint on the collaborative environment.

How, then, can we explain why one of the cases resembled the collaborative partnership more closely? Differences in historical institutional context between different public policy sectors

could be part of the explanation. Moreover, the defence sector may be subject to less public scrutiny than some of the other policy sectors. This could influence partnership behaviour. The distinct military background of the public PPP managers in the defence sector could also play a role. Finally, a more straightforward explanation could be that both parties in this case considered it a flagship project, which naturally leads to a higher level of collaborative effort.

The features that, according to the alliance literature, are most closely associated with synergistic alliances run counter to traditional procedural public values. Synergistic partnerships are supposedly flat, non-hierarchical and thus more irrational, personal and unpredictable (see table 1). The point to stress here is that there is a discrepancy between the type of partnership features that supposedly lead to collaborative advantage on the one hand, and procedural public values on the other. While synergistic partnerships are characterized by close personal bonds and a culture of 'leaving contracts in the drawer', public organizations are ideally characterized by diametrically opposed values. They are taken to be impartial and rule-bound. The ideal bureaucracy is a uniform and unbiased administration, not one that improvises, bends rules and practices favouritism. Public organizations cannot act in familial and 'less rational' ways—traits which some alliance scholars suggest are conducive to collaborative advantage (Kanter, 2002).

A key challenge for today's public managers, including partnership managers, is to balance the demands for achieving material value (for example effectiveness and efficiency demands) with safeguarding procedural values such as transparency, legality, universality, equity, ethics, and accountability. During the extensive new public management (NPM) reforms of past decades, traditional public administration values have received relatively little attention. Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind that



the constitutional objective of public administration is not to promote efficiency, but to prevent the exercise of arbitrary power (Allison, 1979). Therefore it is important to take into account not only effectiveness and efficiency demands, but also the procedural values of public administration. The complexity of objectives in the public sector accentuates the importance of clarifying different notions of 'value' and the trade-off between different types of values promoted by different types of (infrastructure) policies.

It is commonly suggested in the PPP literature that the PFI version of PPPs is not a real partnership because co-production is limited, risk-sharing is absent, and relationships are purely contractual (for example Klijn and Teisman, 2005). At a first glance, these claims seem valid. Nevertheless, the case analyses here reveal that PPPs sometimes do develop into real partnerships—i.e. they become 'genuinely collaborative', 'exploit respect and trust as forms of social capital' (Wettenhall, 2006), and involve 'close-knit' and 'intensive' co-production (Klijn and Teisman, 2005). This type of relationship emerges during the long-term operational stage of co-operation (see figure 2), which suggests that collaborative advantage, in the form of substantive surplus value generated jointly by the public and private sector actors, is generally limited in the early stages of co-operation. It also suggests that synergy levels and degree of innovation increase as the parties get to know each other, which leads to greater levels of trust.

It is during the long-term service delivery period—which typically lasts several decades—that partnerships sometimes develop the features that alliance scholars associate with synergistic partnerships. This finding is consistent with results from game theory (for instance Axelrod, 1984). Since the actors expect to be in the partnership for several decades, they are not looking to 'hit and run'. A constructive working

relationship is more beneficial in the long run and, as a result, PPP relationships can evolve into collaborative partnerships over time. Therefore, the 'PPP concession' should not be rejected *a priori* as some authors, who argue that it is not a real PPP (for example Klijn and Teisman, 2005; Wettenhall 2006), want to do.

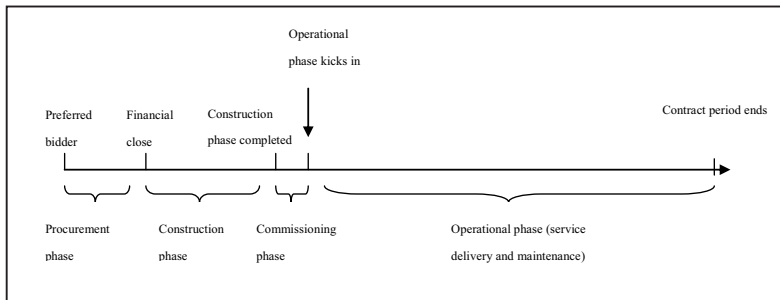
How to define and categorize different types of PPP is under debate (Weihe 2006). Some scholars classify different types of PPP along the contractual dimension, others focus more on relational and organizational features of interaction (for instance, Klijn and Teisman 2005; Wettenhall, 2006). The findings here suggest that a more promising approach would be to include the formal (contractual) dimension, in addition to the informal (behavioural) dimension of co-operation when categorizing different types of PPP. The case analyses have shown that the way in which co-operation proceeds in practice can vary from project to project—despite the fact that formal structures are relatively constant. Typologies based exclusively on the contractual dimension are limited since they do not say much about actual co-operation. Moreover the findings suggest that a partnership can simultaneously be a 'PPP contract' and an 'organizational co-operation project' even though, in the literature, a sharp distinction is often made between the two forms of PPP (Klijn and Teisman, 2005).

## Conclusions and Suggestions for Future Research

The findings reported here suggest that material value (in the form of real synergy) is not achieved in the majority of the analysed cases because the co-operation is transactional—actual collaboration is limited. Another finding is that the co-operative characteristics, which tend to be viewed as synergy-enabling features in the alliance literature, threaten procedural value.

Operational practice was shown here to vary

**Figure 2. Phases in a PPP.**



significantly from project to project. Since related alliance research has demonstrated that this part of the partnership can have significant performance implications, more research should be directed at investigating the operational processes of PPPs, for example at empirically mapping what goes on within the 'black box' of co-operation:

- How does interaction take place in practice?
- Who are the key actors?
- What is the pattern and frequency of interaction?
- What is the content of interaction?
- How does institutional context influence the way PPPs are implemented?

More qualitative research that can capture and elaborate on soft concepts such as processes, social dynamics, trust and goodwill is needed.

Two key managerial lessons emerged from this work. First, managing the partnership process is an important aspect of PPP since this phase can have significant performance consequences. Attention should therefore be directed at managing partnerships, while sufficient resources should be made available for the continuous management of partnership projects. Second, the balance between different types of values should be consciously managed by public managers. Neither an exclusive focus on material values, nor a sole focus on procedural values appears to be beneficial in the long run. ■

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## Article 4

### **Beyond contracts: Utilizing alliance research vis-à-vis public-private partnership research**

#### Abstract

Recently the concern has been voiced that we need to know more about the managerial challenges pertaining to public-private partnerships (PPP). Like PPP policy guidelines, most PPP research, focuses its attention primarily on the front end of the partnership process, especially the technical aspects of cooperation: accounting, insurance and financial issues, for example. Aspects that go beyond the formal structure of cooperation have only to a limited extent been analysed systematically vis-à-vis PPP. This is regrettable since there is a specific demand for more knowledge about the ex post contract-signature issues and the ‘people issues’ that may ultimately make or break a PPP. This article demonstrates how strategic alliance research can inform future PPP research on these matters of cooperation.

“Compared with traditional managers, they [partnership managers] appeared to express much more confusion, talked of stressful work relationship environments and a sense of lonely pioneering in their work roles.” (Reeve and Hatter 2004, 7)

#### Introduction

This article departs from the observation that public-private partnerships (PPP) have hit the public management agenda globally, that it is widely spread, and that massive public as well as private resources are devoted to the implementation of PPPs. This necessitates and justifies research that addresses how this policy tool functions in practice. Regardless of whatever pros and cons there may be affiliated with PPP it is important to understand economical as well as social aspects of cooperation. This line of research is however currently missing in the PPP literature. Limited scholarly attention has been devoted to the “ongoing managerial life of a PPP” and to the cooperative practice at the micro-level of cooperation (Noble and Jones 2006). Processes for the ongoing management of PPP are still developing (Clifton and Duffield 2006, 573), and there is limited “navigational help” available for PPP managers who are now experiencing difficulties with managing PPP projects ex post

implementation (Reeve and Hatter 2004, 7). The strategic alliance literature on the other hand has accumulated a significant stock of knowledge about non-contractual aspects of cooperation and how such factors can influence partnership performance. This article argues that this knowledge profitably can be utilized in relation to PPP research as well as PPP practice.<sup>1</sup>

Two years ago Steve Kelman proclaimed that “Public Management Needs Help!” (Kelman 2005). The key message was that mainstream organization theory can help enrich our understanding of the public sector problems we are studying. Kelman points out that although much of the pioneering work in organization theory was written about public organizations, attention to public organizations has withered in recent decades (2005). I want to argue that strategic alliance research can help enrich our understanding of PPP. The common denominator for the two research fields is that they are both occupied with analysing cooperation across organizational boundaries. Similarly, in both cases the key object of study is typically the *dyadic inter-organizational relationship*.<sup>2</sup> One field studies *private-private* cooperation (alliances) and the other *public-private* cooperation (PPPs). Although both fields are studying the same object, i.e., inter-organizational cooperation, little to no cross-disciplinary communication has yet taken place. This is regrettable because, as already noted above; there is a specific demand for guidelines and instruction on how to handle the managerial challenges that PPP projects pose. This is further corroborated because alliance research suggests that such non-contractual aspects of cooperation can have significant performance consequences. While there is a lack of guidelines in the PPP literature, the strategic alliance literature contains useful knowledge about managerial aspects of cooperation and other non-formal facets influencing partnership performance.

The aim of this article is twofold. First, I want to demonstrate that alliance research can enrich our understanding of PPP and that it is an obvious area where public and business management scholars can join forces. Second, I want to draw

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<sup>1</sup> There are many different types and families of PPPs (Hodge and Greve 2007; Weihe 2005). In the context of this article, what is meant by PPP is ‘the infrastructure PPP’ (see Weihe 2005). This type of PPP involves a contract between a public and a private entity for the delivery of infrastructure-based services. The infrastructure PPP involves the bundling of private finance, construction, operation and/or maintenance into one contractual arrangement. This is also the context in which the PPP term is increasingly being used (Evans and Bowman 2005, 62).

<sup>2</sup> This distinguishes alliance research and PPP research from other related disciplines such as network research which studies multi-organizational relations (for instance, Agranoff and McGuire 2001); and governance research which is more inclined towards the changing institutional setup of society rather than features and mechanisms relating to the nature of bilateral organizational relationships (Kooiman 2003; Lynn, Heinrich and Hill 2001). Similarly research on collaboration addresses *collaboration* as a phenomenon and not dyadic inter-organizational relationships (for instance, Sullivan and Skelcher 2002; Wood and Gray 1991); and the same goes for the theory of collaborative advantage that explores in a generic manner the factors contributing to collaborative advantage (see Huxham and Vangen 2005). Therefore, in the context of this article, the mentioned research disciplines will not be addressed. What we are interested in demonstrating here is exclusively how the strategic alliance field contains lessons for PPP research practice.

attention to certain aspects of cooperation that are often emphasised by alliance scholars but have until now been left more or less out of PPP studies.

## PPPs and alliances: Conceptual clarification

Some preliminary conceptual clarification of both the PPP and the alliance term is needed. A PPP is commonly defined as “cooperation of some durability between public and private actors in which they jointly develop products and services and share risks, costs and resources which are connected with these products” (van Ham and Koppenjan 2001, 598). Alliances, meanwhile, have been defined as “voluntary arrangements between firms involving exchange, sharing, or codevelopment of products, technologies, or services. They can occur as a result of a wide range of motives and goals, take a variety of forms, and occur across vertical and horizontal boundaries” (Gulati 1998, 293). It becomes clear from these two definitions that alliances and PPPs can constitute a variety of institutional forms of co-production. Both terms cover a parallel scope of formal arrangements (see table 1).

**Table 1 - Alliances and PPPs: an overview**

		<b>Public-Private Partnerships</b>	<b>Alliances (private-private partnerships)</b>
Formal structures	Joint organizational expression	Cooperation that involves partnership boards or forum Public-private limited companies (e.g. the LIFT program in the UK)	Joint ventures, different types of equity arrangements involving a joint institutional expression
	Contractual link	PFI, BOOT, DBO, different types of service contracts	buyer-seller agreements, other contractual relationships between private firms

The table shows that the degree of formal integration between the involved organizations can vary significantly – in PPPs as well as alliances. Two general categories can be identified. First, both terms are used to describe inter-organizational relationships based on joint ownership; for instance, a joint venture in the case of alliances, and a public-private limited company in the case of PPP (for some examples of this definition of PPP see Bergström 2007, 2; and Van der Wel 2004). The point to stress here is that the alliance and the PPP term are used to describe cooperation that has reached some sort of joint organizational expression. Cooperative endeavours based on this type of formal structure are positioned in the high end of the integration continuum. Some PPP scholars suggest that ‘real’ partnerships involve this type of organizational arrangement (Wettenhall 2006, appendix 1), and that the contractual PPP is merely a “revamped form of tendering” (Klijn and Teisman 2005, 103). In relation to alliances, the concept initially referred mainly to joint ventures. However, as indicated in table 1, today the alliance term also includes a range of non-equity arrangements, for instance buyer-seller agreements (Casson and Mol 2006, 23).

The second general category is the contractual link. In relation to the PPP literature the most known example of the contractual link type of PPP would be

some version of the UK based Private Finance Initiative (PFI) projects. These have been defined as “partnerships between the public and the private sectors for the financing, design, construction, operation and maintenance, and/or provision of assets or infrastructure and associated services, which have traditionally been provided by the public sector” (Evans and Bowman 2005, 62). It is increasingly in this particular context that the PPP label is being used (Evans and Bowman 2005, 62). However, some PPP scholars complain that this version of PPP is far too limiting (Wettenhall 2005, 22) as it excludes all other cooperative arrangements than those that involve some combination of infrastructure and associated service delivery. The contractual link category is not limited to PFI type arrangements. Other types of contractual links such as service contracts can also be included in this category of PPPs (for instance, Jonston and Romzek 2005). The same is true in relation to the alliance term which includes a broad range of different types of contracts that fall “between the extremes of discrete, short-term contracts and the complete merger of two or more organizations” (Contractor and Lorange 2002, 4).<sup>3</sup>

Two important findings emerge. First, both concepts are rather flexible and have been assigned a variety of meanings. The second and perhaps most important finding to emphasise here is that both terms cover a similar range of formal structural arrangements. The key difference is that they do so in different contexts. In the case of alliances, research is confined to private sector cooperation between firms. In the PPP context, one of the firms is replaced by a public sector actor. Given the common characteristics of the two concepts and the coverage of similar structural arrangements, there are obvious lessons to be drawn from the alliance literature.

## An overview of the PPP literature

Although research on PPP has proliferated during the past decade or so there are, as indicated above, some aspects of cooperation which have received limited attention. First, the literature is dominated by an institutional and organizational level focus to the detriment of a micro-level focus on the role of individual actors (Noble and Jones 2006, 891). Research efforts have moreover primarily addressed material and economic concerns (Ghobadian et al. 2004, 289), and focus has for the most part been directed at the front end of the partnership process; for instance at how contracts are designed, and at how risk is allocated between the involved parties (Reeve and Hatter 2004, 5). What happens after contract-signature has received limited attention; that is, operational processes at the micro-level have been more or

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<sup>3</sup> There could be argued to be even a third category of cooperation which is less formalized than the two other categories. I.e. a category, where cooperation is not based on formalized agreements (contracts). In the PPP literature, there are a number of scholars who use the PPP label to cover non-contractual policy relationships, and other non-formalized and none-time-delimited relationships between private and public actors (for instance, Rosenau 2000). Likewise alliance scholars also address non-institutional relationships between firms: e.g. research adopting a social network perspective on alliances (Gulati 1998).

less black-boxed. Formal and structural aspects of cooperation such as designing the contract, financial issues, insurance issues, accounting issues, allocating risk as well as political issues have been dealt with in quite some length (for instance, Coghill and Woodward 2005, Corner 2005; Evans and Bowman 2005). Additionally, substantial work has by now been done to explore the conceptual boundaries of the PPP concept (for instance; Hodge and Greve 2007; Van der Wel 2004; Weihe 2005; Wettenhall 2006). The same applies to work on the performance of PPP projects (for instance, Hodge and Greve 2007), and PPP research on policy related issues such as cross-country comparative studies of PPP policy development (for instance, Greve and Hodge 2007). Some work has moreover been conducted on PPP from a democratic accountability perspective, where questions concerning transparency and accountability have been addressed (for instance, Shaoul, Stafford and Stapleton 2007).

However, as already suggested above, little attention has been directed at PPP governance processes (including operational processes and behavioural aspects of cooperation). A few exceptions are Edelenbos, Klijn and Steijn (2007), Noble and Jones (2006), Reeves (2006); Reeve and Hatter (2004).

Edelenbos, Klijn and Steijn have within the past few years conducted a couple of quantitative surveys measuring how behavioural factors such as trust influence partnership performance. In their most recent survey the general conclusion is that trust is an important factor in long-term public and private relationships (2007). Another PPP scholar has conducted a qualitative study (interviewing a handful of practitioners and including a mini-survey in the interviews) of the relationship characteristics in five PPP school projects in Ireland. He found that the contracting practice was not characterised by a shift to relational contracting as expected under PPP (Reeves 2006). In 2004, a report on management issues that arise in the post contract-signing phase of partnerships was published. The aim of this qualitative study was to uncover what makes a PPP successful beyond contractual factors (Reeve and Hatter 2004). It builds upon the managerial experiences of senior PPP practitioners involved in a 'PPP practitioner Forum' – a forum that was initiated by one of the authors. This qualitative study tells us what a PPP looks like from the inside. Moreover, it seeks to outline what principles a 'real partnership' needs to achieve in order to be successful. Finally, two Australian scholars have in a very innovative way analysed the roles and behaviours of boundary-spanning managers during the establishment of voluntary PPPs. Data was collected from ten PPPs and involved interviews, participant observation at meetings, organizational records and publicly available documents. Their study contributes in three important ways. First it identifies the critical role of boundary spanning managers in PPPs. Second they identify the main factors that shape the managerial environment that governs the behaviour of the boundary spanners. Finally, they outline how boundary spanners respond to environmental pressures.

The mentioned research represents some first and preliminary attempts at analysing non-contractual aspects vis-à-vis PPP. Although each of these studies

contributes in important and innovative ways and provides useful insights into the de facto non-contractual challenges of PPP, much work remains to be done. For instance, the empirical studies have some limitations. In the Dutch research project on the importance of trust (Edelenbos, Klijn and Steijn 2007), for example, the selection of respondents is not a sample in statistical terms and it is also unclear what types of PPP projects are investigated. This is also the case in relation to Reeve and Hatter's study as well as Noble and Jones' study. It is somewhat unclear exactly what types of partnerships are analysed. Other concerns go to the generalizability of these initial findings? Are the findings case specific or country specific? Or perhaps even specific to an individual policy sector, e.g., schools in to the case of Reeves' study (2006)? And would the findings vary across different types of PPPs? Finally we still know little about how cooperation evolves over time, what characterizes partnership behaviour in individual partnerships and the performance implications that these aspects of cooperation have. These are some of the questions that remain to be answered.

In policy practice, a similar bias in focus can be identified. In the UK, attention was only recently directed at the operational phase of cooperation in policy practice. This is reflected in the establishment of an operational taskforce by the HM Treasury in 2006. Moreover, there have been some recent official reports that have addressed issues related to the ongoing PPP relationship (for instance HM Treasury 2006 and PartnershipsUK 2006). Because of the initial bias towards focusing on the front end of the PPP process, PPP practitioners now experience difficulties with managing operational PPP projects. Some managers evoke analogies of 'spinning compasses', 'lights going on and off', 'intermittent engine function' and 'radio silence' when describing their experiences with managing PPPs (Reeve and Hatter 2004, 7).

## Identifying some promising learning potentials

The alliance literature contains valuable managerial lessons. In particular, there are two areas in which this sister discipline can prove to be particularly valuable vis-à-vis PPP research: These concern a) research that analyses informal aspects of cooperation, and b) research on cooperative processes respectively. First, alliance scholars have accumulated a significant stock of knowledge about the importance of a broad range of *informal* (behavioural) factors in alliance relationships. Aspects of cooperation such as relational quality and trust between the partnering organizations have been studied in depth and are suggested to have significant performance implications (for instance, Dyer and Singh 2004; Zaheer, McEvily and Perrone 1998). Second, alliance scholars have identified partnership *processes* as being important performance antecedents too (Ariño and de la Torre 1998; Doz 1996; Ring and Van de Ven 1994). The key message in this latter line of research is that inter-organizational relationships cannot a priori be designed to function in certain manners rather they can be viewed as "socially contrived mechanisms" that are constantly "shaped and restructured" by the involved actors (Ring and Van de Ven 1994, 96). In this perspective, simple neoclassical accounts of economic action are



not sufficient to explain partnership behaviour but need to be supplemented by analyses of social structures and social interaction (Granovetter 1985). Before elaborating further on this subfield of the alliance literature, potential problems with mixing the two research fields of public management and business management are addressed.

## Reasons for cautiousness

In the context of public and private sector cooperation, there are of course reasons to be cautious when utilizing research findings from a research field (alliance studies) that deals exclusively with cooperation between private firms. It could be argued that the differences between public and private organizations are so great and the logics of cooperation so different that it makes little sense to transfer knowledge between the two fields. There may be several reasons for this. First, the alliance is situated in a competitive setting; the involved firms are cooperating with a potential competitor. In a PPP, the competitive element is not present to the same extent. This might lead to some differences in behaviour. Second, a PPP is situated in a political context while an alliance is not – at least not directly. Third, public sector goals may be viewed as more complex and diverse than private sector goals. Public goals are supposedly vaguer and more intangible than private organizational goals, and public sector goals can also be in conflict (Rainey et al. 1976, 237); there can for instance be a conflicting goal between effective and efficient cooperation on the one hand, and following the standard and rule-bound procedures of public administration on the other hand. Fourth, the public bureaucracy was “never designed to maximize on efficiency, flexibility and customer friendliness but rather to ensure a uniform and unbiased implementation of the law” (Peters and Pierre 2003, 6). Unlike business organizations, public organizations have a constitutional foundation, and therefore the objective of public organizations is not primarily the attainment of gain but the furtherance of the welfare of the society (Lynn 2003, 16-17). A fifth difference may be that public sector managers enjoy less autonomy than their private sector counterpart; they may be less flexible because of a greater use of formal regulations and more levels of review in the public sector (Rainey et al. 1976).

Scholars are increasingly proposing, however, that the differences between public and private organizations may not be so far-reaching after all. While early research was mostly preoccupied with stressing the differences, it appears that later contributions focus more on similarities between public and private organizations (for instance, Rainey and Bozeman 2000). Correspondingly, (business) scholars now suggest that the standard perception that private organizations are driven exclusively by a profit and market share motive is far too limited. Private sector organizations, so the argument goes, are becoming more political (for instance, Frankel 2004), and therefore the traditional definitions of private organizations are no longer sufficient. In a similar vein, the recent decades of worldwide New Public Management (NPM) related reforms of public administrations shows that public organizations are becoming more business-like (for

instance, Hood 1991). These developments suggest that perhaps the differences between what is purely private and what is purely public are becoming more blurred. To paraphrase Bozeman, perhaps the public-private dichotomy is more imagined than real (1987). This view is corroborated by the proposition that many of the “widely held a priori assumptions” about public organizations - i.e., untested assertions and foregone conclusions about the differences between public and private organizations – are not always supported by empirical research (Rainey and Bozeman 2000). As public and private organizations grow more alike, the disadvantages to be gained from lesson drawing across public management and business management research are perhaps diminishing too.

## Strategic alliance research – cooperative processes and behavioural factors

The main objective on the following pages is to highlight the segments of alliance research that are relevant in relation to enhancing our understanding of non-structural aspects of cooperation. The intention is not to provide a general review of the alliance literature (for that, see Auster 1994). Instead, my efforts here will be concentrated on outlining some of the key findings from alliance research relating to the importance of informal factors and processes in inter-organizational cooperation. These findings will illustrate the expediency of directing more attention towards the long-term nature of PPP projects and the resources required to manage these projects throughout the whole project life-cycle and not only at the formative stages.

Strategic alliance research can be classified into two main tendencies (Aulakh and Madhok 2002, 26). First, there is the strand of research preoccupied with the motives underlying alliance formation. This line of research tries to explain why firms form alliances (for instance, Kogut 1988). The second strand of research is concerned with the topic of how to manage alliances. It can be divided into two subcategories: research that focuses on formal aspects of the relationship such as the choice of formal governance structures, and research that focuses on informal governance mechanisms (for instance, Ring and Van De Ven 1994). Amongst other things the first subcategory focuses on ownership structure and a variety of contractual mechanisms, while the second subcategory is more concerned with relationship processes (Aulakh and Madhok 2002, 26). Within this subcategory, scholars have argued that the pattern of interaction can be more important for efficiency than structural properties (Aulakh and Madhok 2002, 27; originally Granovetter 1985). It is the type of alliance research that falls under this latter subcategory that will be addressed here. Two key points can be extracted from this line of research:

- The way partnerships evolve over time can have significant implications for partnership performance, and;

- Behavioural aspects of cooperation can have significant performance implications.

### *Partnership processes*

First, alliance scholars have demonstrated that the way cooperation evolves over time impacts performance. Some suggest that the operational phase ultimately can determine the success or failure of cooperation (Thallman and Phene 2006, 140), and that “alliances fail for reasons other than the soundness of the business plan or the ability to execute according to that plan” (Spekman et al. 2000, 33). Others have similarly recognized alliance management as a source of competitive advantage (Ireland, et al. 2002; Kanter 2002), and that “managing the alliance relationship over time is usually more important than crafting the initial formal design” (Doz and Hamel 1998, xv). Correspondingly a study conducted by management consulting firm McKinsey has shown that 50 percent of alliances fail because of governing and operating processes (Bamford and Ernst 2003, 323).

In a process perspective, alliances can be viewed as evolutionary processes rather than a set of fixed formal structures (Ariño and de la Torre 1998; Doz 1996; Ring & Van de Ven 1994). They continuously evolve in their possibilities, and grow or fail just like relationships between people (Kanter 2002). A key point in this approach is that the way cooperation evolves is not exclusively determined by formal arrangements but instead relationships and psychological contracts supplement formal role relationships and increasingly substitute for legal contracts (Ring and Ven de Ven 1994, 91). In this light, it is important to look at the continuous cooperative processes and not – which has been the case thus far in the PPP field – confine research to the front end of the process (i.e. at pre contract-signature issues). Instead more attention should be directed towards how partnership plans are implemented, negotiated and continuously assessed and reassessed by the involved actors. Such processes can determine whether or not partnerships evolve into vicious or virtuous cycles of cooperation. Relevant research questions to ask could be: How do the involved actors relate to one another? What characterizes partnership relationships? How integrated are the involved partners in practice? And what is best practice in relation to the ongoing management of operational PPP projects?

### *Informal (behavioural) factors*

Numerous alliance studies address behavioural aspects of cooperation. First, there is an extensive bulk of research which analyses how *trust* influences partnership performance. By and large this research suggests that trust lowers transaction costs, increases information-sharing, facilitates dispute resolution, reduces the amount of formal contracts, increases learning, and reduces harmful conflict (Das and Teng 1998, 494; Dyer and Chu 2003; Luo 2002; Rousseau, et al. 1998, 394;). As an example, one study of buyer-supplier relationships found that the least trusted

company had procurement (transaction) costs that were five times higher than the other comparable companies in the study (Dyer and Chu 2003).

Second, research on trust and alliances is closely related to research that deals with the importance of *relational quality* in strategic alliances. Relational quality can be defined as “the extent to which the partners feel comfortable and are willing to rely on trust in dealing with one another” (Ariño, de la Torre and Ring 2001, 111). Relational quality is a broader concept than trust as it also involves other aspects of cooperation such as the degree of compatibility of corporate cultures, compatibility of decision-making styles, degree of convergence of worldviews, and other organizational characteristics. Relational quality can also be understood as the state of trust and confidence between the cooperating parties (Büchel and Killing 2002). Personal bonds, trust, and the reputation that the involved parties have for ‘fair dealings’ can be variables that influence the degree of relational quality in a relationship (Ariño and de la Torre 1998, 307; see also page 324, endnote 4). Although relational quality is a somewhat elusive concept, alliance scholars seem to view it as an important concept. Generally, greater relational quality is believed to enhance alliance performance. For instance, one empirical study suggests that efforts at maintaining relational quality, after the contract has been signed – in addition to initial relational quality – are positively related to performance (Büchel and Killing 2002, 751). The relationship itself can be viewed as a resource for value creation and realization, and therefore it is important for organizations to recognize beforehand the need to invest in the ongoing collaborative relationship in order to attain such synergies (Madhok and Tallman 1998, 326-327). This point is well captured in the following statement “perhaps the lack of a proper appreciation of the true value of relational assets prevents firms from enjoying the benefits from their alliances more fully” (Madhok and Tallman 1998, 336-337).

Third, in addition to research on trust and relational quality, there are a growing number of alliance studies that address what sort of collaborative capabilities make an organization successful at cooperating with other organizations (for instance, Schreiner, et al. 2005; Heimeriks 2004; Duysters and Heimeriks 2002), i.e., what types of collaborative competences enhance a firm's alliance performance. This line of research is typically captured under such terms as ‘collaborative capability’ (Schreiner et al. 2005), ‘alliance competences’ (Spekman et al. 2000), ‘alliance capabilities’ (Heimeriks 2004), ‘relational capabilities’ (Dyer and Singh 2004), ‘relational assets’ (Dunning 2002) and ‘collaborative know-how’ (Simonin 2002). The underlying assumption of the capability research is that collaborative capabilities enhance alliance performance. Scholars generally distinguish between two groups of factors: structural and behavioural (Duysters and Heimeriks 2002, 2-3). The former group refers to tangible capability factors such as the presence of alliance functions, tools and other resources that aid organizations in managing their alliances (Duysters and Heimeriks 2002). The latter group of capability factors focuses on intangible aspects of cooperation such as trust and relationship quality.

Different authors stress different sorts of collaborative capabilities as being important for performance. Not only are structural factors such as alliance tools important but behavioural factors such as an organizations ability to conduct “meaningful social exchange” with other organizations (Schreiner et al. 2005, 9) and its “willingness and ability” to partner (Dyer and Singh 2004, 366-367) are discovered to be important for performance too. In this latter line of research, having the right technical skills does not automatically make organizations successful in their partnership activities. Rather alliances are viewed as “living systems that evolve progressively in their possibilities”, beside the immediate reasons for collaborating, the relationship itself offers unforeseen opportunities (Kanter 2002, 100), i.e., the relationship can be viewed as a rent-generating source in itself (Dyer and Singh 2004).

One category of behavioural competences is “having the right mindset”, e.g., being able to foster commitment and to build trust with the partnering organizations (Spekman et al. 2000). The vital starting point in a successful alliance is the adoption of a mindset and a set of attitudes by managers that allows them to function in environments characterized by instability, few fixed objectives, ambiguity, and evolving partner relationships (Doz and Hamel 1998, 32). In addition to enhancing general performance, relational capabilities are suggested to create a basis for learning and transfer of know-how across organizational boundaries (Kale, Singh and Perlmutter 2000, 218; Lorenzoni and Lipparini 1999).

The capability literature is not very clear about how collaborative capabilities are acquired. Is it something that is learnt from experience? Or is it something which is more deeply embedded in an organization’s culture? Are alliance capabilities embedded at the individual or organizational level? And can they be managed? A few scholars have ventured arguments about these issues (for instance, Anand and Khanna 2000; Heimeriks 2004; Kale et al. 2002) but alliance as well as PPP scholars could with advantage look more into these issues in their future research.

There has been some critique in the PPP literature that public sector organizations do not match the skill sets of their private sector counterparts. It has been argued that they do not have the adequate financial and commercial expertise to match their private sector counterparts (Wettenhall 2006, 2). In this light the capability perspective appears particularly relevant for the PPP community.

### *Summary*

In the preceding two sections, I have introduced alliance research that in different ways addresses issues of cooperation that go beyond contractual aspects of cooperation. First, alliance research adopting a process perspective on cooperation was introduced. In brief, the essential argument is that alliances do not represent a fixed set of structures; rather, they continuously evolve. For the same reason, it becomes central to study how cooperation unfolds over time and which factors other than the nature of the deal render cooperation successful or not. Second, alliance

research that deals with behavioural aspects of cooperation in a variety of ways was introduced. More specifically, research on the importance of trust and relational quality in alliances and also research on collaborative capabilities was introduced. The common denominator for these three approaches is that behavioural factors are identified as important performance antecedents in alliances.

## Some implications for PPP research

Overall, alliance research suggests that the partnering relationship is a vital driver of collaborative advantage. These findings imply that PPP scholars might well direct more attention to behavioural and operational aspects of PPPs and answer questions such as: What happens after PPP contracts are signed? Who are the key actors? How do they relate to one another? What typifies the pattern and frequency of interaction between the involved parties? What characterizes the partnership relationship? What are the main determinants of productive cooperation? Does the public sector have the necessary skill-set for managing PPP projects? And how does all this relate to partnership performance?

The learning potential is however not limited to the identified areas of research. Strategic alliance research is an extensive body of literature which deals with many different aspects of cooperation. For instance, alliance scholars address issues relating to how to choose the most expedient formal governance structures, how to choose the right partner, and why firms engage in alliances in the first place. These are issues which are relevant for public organizations too. Moreover, methodologically I believe much can be learned from the alliance field since over the past decades the techniques and methods for studying alliances have been advanced and refined. This accumulated methodological experience could valuably complement our work on PPP. Recently PPP scholars called attention to the need for more “rigorous assessments” of PPP performance (Hodge and Greve 2007, 553). Measuring performance is at the same time a research topic that has at some length been addressed by strategic alliance scholars (see Olk 2006). This is an example of an area where methodological lessons from the alliance literature could inform PPP research.

Generally, the adopted methodological approaches in the two research fields differ significantly. While strategic alliance research is dominated by large statistical data sets (Shenkar and Reuer 2006, 11), PPP research is dominated more by qualitative and case based research methodologies. It is important to note however that the PPP phenomenon has roots in the privatization literature, and that this literature does contain quantitative studies (for instance, Hodge 2000). But there still may be lessons to be learnt from the alliance literature, for example on how to operationalize and measure intangible aspects of cooperation such as trust and relational quality quantitatively.

Due to the relative newness of the PPP literature it has, up until now, been somewhat eclectic and pre-theoretical. Admittedly, in the past two to three decades the PPP label has randomly surfaced the public management literature and

the public policy literature (Weihe 2005). However it is only within the past ten years that PPP has been put firmly on the public management research agenda and the number of PPP related publications has exploded. Historically, much of the PPP literature has tended to be driven by an empirical motive, offering description of PPP policies and techniques in different settings. Certainly, solid theoretical analyses have been conducted but there are no generalized theoretical approaches to PPP. This is not the case in the alliance literature where there are a number of well-recognized theoretical models that underpin the majority of analyses of strategic alliances, e.g., transaction cost economics, industrial organization theory, the resource-based view, the dynamic capability view, the competence-based view, the knowledge-based view, evolutionary economics and organizational learning (for an introduction, see Heimeriks 2004, pp. 34ff). These theoretical perspectives may offer insights that can inform and supplement further development of theoretical models in the PPP literature.

The findings from the alliance literature reviewed here do also have some immediate value for PPP managers. First of all, it directs attention towards the notion that ex post contractual issues are significant for overall performance. Second, that it may be useful to consider how relationship processes can be managed over time. Moreover, the findings propose that more resources should be devoted to the management of the PPP contract over the full life-time of the project (and not only the formative phase of signing up the contract). This is something which not enough thought has been devoted to in the past – neither in PPP policy practice nor in the PPP literature.

Taking into consideration that value for money is a key rationale for implementing PPPs an effective cooperative relationship throughout the whole project life-cycle becomes all the more relevant. More effective cooperation, and ultimately better performance, can be realized by focusing more explicitly on ex post contract signature factors of cooperation. After all, well-managed trust-based partnership projects where processes are deliberately structured have proven to be cost efficient. The ever-increasing international dissemination of PPP as a policy tool only emphasises the importance of a more comprehensive approach to PPP, that is, a policy approach that takes into account not only the formative and technical aspects of cooperation but also recognizes the importance of the ongoing processes and the relational dimension of cooperation.

## Conclusion

Public services are today increasingly being delivered in some sort of partnership between public and private organizations. This stresses the importance of bringing about sophisticated analyses of public-private cooperation that can feed back into policy decision-making processes and PPP practice. With this article I have illustrated the importance of directing more intellectual firepower at aspects of cooperation that go beyond the PPP contract. This has been done by drawing upon lessons from the sister field of alliance research. Alliance research on private-private business relations

has convincingly demonstrated that operational processes and managing the relationship over time influences partnership performance. Therefore, although careful consideration must always be given to the public-private distinction, alliance research is promising in the effort to fill some of the current gaps in the PPP literature. Alliance research can in particular enrich our understanding of the dynamic and evolutionary nature of cooperation and how non-contractual aspects - such as trust and relational quality - can influence partnership performance. Moreover, alliance research can be used in order to fill in the current knowledge gap that practitioners are experiencing when managing PPPs. By utilizing the knowledge accumulated in the alliance field, the potential of PPP research to relieve the distress that PPP managers are experiencing would be drastically improved.

More generally, what is proposed here is a new PPP research agenda that puts organizational and managerial issues at the forefront of investigation. What are the managerial challenges that PPPs pose for the involved public as well as private actors? And how do such aspects of cooperation impact performance? This approach departs significantly from earlier proposed research agendas, which have primarily encouraged research on a range of technical, policy and performance related aspects of cooperation (see, Broadbent and Laughlin 1999).



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## Article 5

# Unravelling cooperation: Do infrastructure partnerships involve collaborative behaviour?

### Abstract

This article analyses the character of cooperation in five operational infrastructure public-private partnerships (PPP) and demonstrates how cooperation unfolds differently from project to project. Contrary to the expectations in the literature, the analysis reveals that infrastructure PPPs sometimes develop the type of relationship features normally only associated with genuine partnerships. Moreover the analysis shows that there is a connection between these features and partnership performance as perceived by the involved managers. The article concludes that partnerships can emerge regardless of what type of structural (contractual) arrangement regulates the relationship.

### Introduction

Although publications on PPP have proliferated in recent years, few studies have analysed how cooperation develops after contracts are signed (Ghobadian et al. 2004: 8, 289; Reeve and Hatter 2004).<sup>4</sup> Limited knowledge has thus been accumulated about active PPPs and about cooperative behaviour at the micro-level (Ysa 2007; Noble and Jones 2006).<sup>5</sup> This knowledge gap is particularly prevalent in relation to infrastructure PPP. Indeed, if we want to reach a deeper understanding of public-private partnerships (PPP), we do well to look beyond contracts and investigate how the involved actors cooperate in practice. We will have to investigate the real characteristics of cooperation in operational infrastructure PPPs. After all, infrastructure PPPs are normally theorized to be strictly exchange based and the

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<sup>4</sup> There is a body of literature which deals more generically with the issue of ‘collaboration’ and ‘coordination’ (for instance, Huxham and Vangen 2005; Sullivan and Skelcher 2002; Keast et al. 2007; Wood and Gray 1991; Rogers and Whetten 1982; Thomson and Perry 2006). These contributions constitute important and pioneering insights about cooperation but do not address PPP specifically. Rogers and Whetten for instance address aspects of coordination within the public sector (1982), and Gray and Wood dissect the collaboration concept drawing upon studies addressing as diverse topics as collaboration in the garment industry and public policy initiation at state level (1991).

<sup>5</sup> Pioneering exceptions are Reeves (2006), Noble and Jones (2006) and Ysa (2007). Of these, only one study addresses the type of infrastructure PPPs analyzed here (i.e. Reeves 2006). There are moreover some innovative studies that address the performance implications of intangible aspects such as trust in relation to PPP - although without addressing features of cooperation of individual PPP projects (for instance, Edelenbos, Klijn and Steijn 2007)



partnering relationship between the actors involved is not attributed significant importance. My empirical analysis, however, demonstrates that, contrary to the expectations in the literature, infrastructure PPPs can display the type of features normally only affiliated with 'genuine' partnerships (which in the context of this article are labelled governance PPPs; definitions follow below). Even when contracts are similar, the nature of cooperation nonetheless differs greatly. The findings suggest that partnerships, in the general understanding of the word, can also emerge in infrastructure PPPs.

## Extant theorization about PPP

In the PPP literature, there is a common theoretical distinction between genuine PPPs and other forms of public-private mixing (Wettenhall 2006; Wettenhall 2007); between PPP concessions and PPP organizational cooperative projects (Klijn and Teisman 2005); between contracts and partnership arrangements (Klijn and Teisman 2000); and between economic partnerships and social partnerships (Hodge and Greve 2005). These binary classifications have in common that they refer to a general theoretical distinction between contractual PPPs on the one hand and organizational or non-contractual PPPs that involve corporatist-like structures, joint organizational expression or network relations on the other hand (Hodge and Greve 2005; Wettenhall 2006; Wettenhall 2007; Klijn and Teisman 2005). The latter type will here be labelled governance PPP because of its emphasis on horizontal principal-principal relations, cooperation and trust between the involved actors. The governance PPP is in the literature seen as an integral part of the network society, where the public and private sector are intertwined (Klijn and Teisman 2000: 87), and the former (the contractual PPP) merely as part of already well-known policy measures such as privatization and contracting out (Shaoul 2003: 186). The binary conceptualization of PPP reflects a general division in the PPP literature where one branch of the literature addresses partnerships as something distinct from previous hierarchical and market arrangements and highlights the governance dimension of cooperation (for instance, Huxham and Vangen 2005), while another branch addresses public-private contractual arrangements used in the delivery of public assets and services (e.g. Ghobadian et al. 2004).

The contractual PPP (which in the context of this article is labelled infrastructure PPP) can be defined as contractual 'arrangements whereby private parties participate in, or provide support for, the provision of infrastructure' and associated services (Grimsey and Lewis 2004: 2).<sup>6</sup> Within this type of PPP there is a sharp division of

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<sup>6</sup> Thus in the context of this article an infrastructure PPP is a long-term contractual arrangement which involves the bundling of private finance, design, construction and operation of infrastructure assets and associated services into one contract. 'Infrastructure' should in this context be understood broadly involving social, economic, soft and hard infrastructure (Grimsey and Lewis 2004). It is a complex long-term contractual arrangement that normally spans 30-35 years. This type of PPP is in the UK context known as Private Finance Initiative (PFI) projects.

risk and a sharp division of responsibilities between the involved public and private actors. The private sector actor commits to the delivery of a certain type of output, at a certain cost and within a specified timeframe. Co-production in this form of public-private arrangement is limited. Judging from the structural dimension, then, there is little natural partnership between the public and private actors in an infrastructure PPP. For the same reason, the infrastructure PPP has rightfully been accused of being nothing but a revamped form of tendering (Klijn and Teisman 2005: 103), rebadged privatization (Coghill and Woodward 2005: 81) and the latest twist in the privatization book (Hodge 2004: 37). It concerns ‘neither a “partnership” in the general sense of the word, i.e. a relationship based on co-operation, mutual trust and sharing of benefits, nor a “partnership” in the strictly legal sense of the word’ (van der Wel 2004: 5). Somewhat ironically, although accused of not being a genuine partnership in the literature, in policy practice the PPP label is more or less exclusively used in relation to the infrastructure understanding of the term.

The governance PPP on the other hand can be defined as a trust based public-private relationship which either involves a joint organizational structure (Wettenhall 2007) or non-formalized network structures (Klijn and Teisman 2005) such as efforts built on previous contractual relationships or extensions of corporatist-like arrangements (Hodge and Greve 2005: 334). This type of PPP involves consensual decision-making, operates on the basis of complementarity and collaboration, achieves synergies between involved persons and organizations, and exploits respect and trust as forms of social capital (Wettenhall 2006; 2007). Co-production in this type of PPP is close-knit and intensive (Klijn and Teisman 2005: 102). A governance PPP, then, as opposed to the infrastructure PPP, concerns a partnership in the general sense of the word. Trust is a crucial feature in relation to creating added value in this type of PPP; the key to success in the infrastructure PPP on the other hand is the formulation of clear goals and clear rules for tendering (Klijn and Teisman 2000: 86). The infrastructure PPP is not expected to involve the type of relationship features affiliated with the governance PPP (e.g. trust, mutuality, close-knit interaction). Thus in the literature there is a tendency to equate certain types of formal structures (networks and joint organizational arrangements) with certain types of relationship features (trust, mutuality, cooperation, close-knit interaction).

Contrary to this, the argument developed here is that the aforementioned relationship features can emerge regardless of what type of structural arrangements regulates cooperation. The empirical analysis reveals that even in the infrastructure type of PPP, cooperation can become close-knit, intensive and highly trust-based. Moreover, the data suggests that the way the involved actors cooperate in practice has some consequences for partnership performance. The findings of this study have conceptual as well as managerial implications.

## Methodology

This analysis is based on a qualitative case study of five UK based infrastructure PPPs. The case study strategy has a distinct advantage when a how or why study is

asked about a contemporary set of events over which the investigator has little or no control (Yin 1994: 4-9). The applied case study strategy belongs to the naturalistic strand of case study research where the aim is to provide a comprehensive and consistent picture of each case. Naturalism is a case-centered approach as opposed to a variable-centered approach and research efforts are directed towards revealing 'the authentic nature of a social phenomenon or the detailed elements of a causal process by getting as close as possible' (Blatter 2007). In the context of this article, the aim is to generate knowledge about the features of cooperation in operational PPPs. An important case selection criterion was the *duration* of the PPP projects. The selected cases have been operational for a similar amount of years.<sup>7</sup> Choosing cases that have reached the same point in the partnership life-cycle makes the cases more comparable since different governance modes may be prevalent at different stages of the partnership life-cycle (Lowndes and Skelcher 1998).

All in all, 43 interviews were conducted as part of the analysis. Data collection proceeded in two distinct phases. First, exploratory face-to-face interviews were conducted with public and private sector partnership managers at different project levels in each PPP. Second, in order to systematize and make more comparable the findings from the initial open-ended interviews, follow-up telephone interviews were conducted. As part of the follow-up interviews the partnership managers answered a questionnaire containing close-end questions about operational practice and the partnering relationship. The first phase of data collection involved 17 interviews (with 20 different people) (see table 1). Following introductory questions about the features of the concerned PPP project, the partnership managers were asked to describe: a) the partnership relationship; b) the patterns and frequency of interaction, and c) barriers/enabling factors in relation to cooperation. The interviews were subsequently transcribed and analysed for recurrent themes and issues pertaining to the cooperative relationship.<sup>8</sup> Quotations from the interviews are used illustratively/generically in the analysis below.

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7 All the cases are in their relative early days of operation (approximately between 7 and 10 years have elapsed since financial close).

8 In some cases, the interviews were not transcribed. This was due to bad sound quality and/or lack of information about the research topic.

**Table 1 - Profile of respondents in the first data collection phase**

	Case 1 (Defence)	Case 2 (Transport)	Case 3 (Transport)	Case 4 (Health)	Case 5 (Health)
Public sector partnership manager (local and policy level representatives)	1*	3***	2****	3*****	2*****
Private sector partnership manager, (SPV level)	1**	1	1	1	1
Private sector partnership manager (prime subcontractor level)	1	1	-	1	1
Private sector manager (below prime subcontractor level)	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>

\* The public and private sector partnership manager at the prime subcontractor level were interviewed jointly.

\*\* The SPV manager here is a board member in three of the studied cases (case 1, 2 and 5). He is only included as a respondent in case 1. This interview had a general character.

\*\*\* One of these three was a policy level representative. The other two were local project level representatives.

\*\*\*\* The two public sector managers were interviewed jointly.

\*\*\*\*\* Two of the local level representatives were interviewed together.

\*\*\*\*\* One of these two was a policy level representative.

The follow-up data collection phase involved close-end questions concerning four general themes: a) organizational characteristics (including interaction frequency), b) relationship characteristics c) management strategies, and d) project performance. In the context of this article, the analysis evolves mainly around theme b) and d). For an overview of the participants in the he latter phase of data collection see table 2.

**Table 2 - Profile of interview respondents in the second data collection phase**

	Case 1 (Defence)	Case 2 (Transport)	Case 3 (Transport)	Case 4 (Health)	Case 5 (Health)
Public sector partnership manager (local and policy level representatives)	1	2*	1	1	1
Private sector partnership manager, (SPV level)	2	2	4	1	2
Private sector partnership manager (prime subcontractor level)	1	1	-	1	2
Private sector manager (below prime subcontractor level)	1	2	-	-	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>

\* Including one policy level representative. That person's answers have not been included in the descriptive statistics as he is not directly involved in the concerned project.

Interviewing both public and private sector representatives follows the recommendations by Madhok who suggests that it is prudent to interview both partners in a partnership (1995: 72-73). Similarly Aulakh et al. encourage inclusion of both partners when studying the social dynamics of partnerships (1997, 188). This gives a more comprehensive and valid picture of cooperation and is moreover innovative in the sense that few other studies adopt such an approach (a notable exception is Reeves 2006). This study is also innovative in the sense that it explores cooperation at the micro-level and ex post contract signature. It thus fills in an important empirical gap in the literature.

Because much of the collected data consist of personal views, experiences and expressions of the involved partnership managers about the partnering relationship, the identity of the cases and the interviewed case representatives is not revealed.

## Analytical framework

The analysis adopts a process perspective on PPP which means that partnerships are viewed as social systems that continuously evolve. The essential assumption in this perspective is that partnership success is not exclusively reliant on formal structures, or what happens prior to the signing of the contracts (Ring and Van de Ven 1994; Doz 1996; Ariño and de la Torre 1998). The formal deal itself is perhaps a necessary precondition but it does not ensure effective cooperation. A process perspective on PPP emphasises the importance of recurring relationship processes as opposed to focusing only on choosing the right governance structures. In this framework PPPs can be viewed as 'socially contrived mechanisms for collective action, which are continually shaped and restructured by actions and symbolic interpretations of the parties involved' (Ring and Van de Ven 1994: 96). Partnerships continuously evolve in their possibilities, and grow or fail just like relationships between people (Kanter 2002). In this perspective, the pattern of interaction can be more important for efficiency than structural properties (Aulakh and Madhok 2002, 27; originally Granovetter 1985).

That intangible aspects of cooperation are important performance antecedents has been compellingly demonstrated by strategic alliance research concerned with the management of relationship processes and informal governance mechanisms (for instance, Ring and Van de Ven 1994; Kanter 2002). Moving the partnering relationship beyond pure exchange (getting back what you put in) towards collaboration (creating new value together) is according to some scholars an important step in the direction of redeeming collaborative advantage (Kanter 2002; Dyer and Singh 2004). Trust, for example, has been identified as an important source of collaborative advantage (for an overview, see Zaheer and Harris 2006). There are many definitions of trust but in the context of this article, trust refers to the stable perception of one actor of the goodwill intentions and motives of the opposing actor (i.e. opportunistic behaviour is not expected) (Edelenbos, Klijn and Steijn 2007: 65). Associated research on relational quality similarly suggests that higher levels of relational quality imply higher levels of performance (Büchel and Killing 2002).

Relational quality has been defined as ‘the extent to which the partners feel comfortable and are willing to rely on trust in dealing with one another’. It involves degree of compatibility of corporate cultures, and decision-making styles, a convergence of worldviews, and other organizational characteristics (Ariño, de la Torre, and Ring 1998: 111). In the context of this article relational quality refers to relationship characteristics including attentiveness, commitment, community, intentions, tension, mindsets, personal bonds and joint effort among the cooperating parties.

Partnership performance can be measured in a variety of different ways. Within the strategic alliance literature, scholars distinguish between financial and objective measures of performance on the one hand (for instance, profitability, growth, survival and duration), and subjective measures of performance on the other hand (perceived performance). Research has shown that there is a strong correlation between these two measures of performance (Geringer and Hebert 1991). There is increasing consensus in the strategic alliance literature that managerial assessments of performance (i.e. subjective measures) are a reasonable way to measure partnership performance (Kale et al. 2002: 573). In the context of this study, subjective measures of performance are applied: i.e. performance is measured as perceived performance where interviewed partnership managers have been asked rate performance on a number of different dimensions. Although alliance research suggests that such subjective performance measures are a reliable data source, the findings should nevertheless be approached with prudence. In particular, attentiveness should be given to the possibility that high levels of perceived performance in the early stages of operation do not necessarily mean high performance in the long-run (output/outcome performance). Since all the PPPs examined here are in their relative early stages of service delivery the findings concerning performance must be approached with reservation.

A number of analytical parameters can be derived from the alliance literature for the analysis of cooperative practice in the selected PPP cases (see table below).

**Table 3 -The cooperation continuum**

<b>The exchange pole (selfish cooperation)</b>	<b>The collaboration pole (collective collabor.)</b>
Relational quality low	Relational quality high
Contract-centred (clear rules)	Relationship-centred (trust)
Incomprehension	Attentiveness/empathy for partner
Split purposes (lack of sense of joint goals)	Self-interest and collective interest aligned
Minimal joint action	Joint decision and problem-solving
Low intensity/connection	High intensity/connection
Distanced relationship (no bonding)	Close relationships (bonding)
Unenthusiastic and reactive attitude	Positive and proactive attitude/mindset

This general analytical distinction between an exchange pole and a collaboration pole provides us with a useful terminology for describing the features of cooperation – i.e. the partnership element – in the analysed PPP projects.<sup>9</sup> The characteristics of the exchange pole and the collaboration pole resemble the type of features associated with governance and infrastructure PPP respectively (for instance, Klijn and Teisman 2000; Klijn and Teisman 2005). As with all theories of organization and management, the process perspective persuades us to see some dimensions of cooperation as opposed to others. In creating ways of seeing, theories and metaphors about organizations also ‘create ways of not seeing. Hence there can be no single theory or metaphor that gives an all-purposive point of view. There can be no “correct theory” for structuring everything we do’ (Morgan 1997: 348). The analysis here offers important insights about cooperation in PPP and the partnering relationship but it also leaves other important aspects of cooperation aside.

## Analysis of operational practice

The findings from the empirical analysis can be summarized in the following three key points:

There is variation in the way in which the involved actors cooperate (i.e. the cases are scattered along the exchange-collaboration continuum with the majority of the cases resembling primarily the exchange pole).

There are two outlier cases, one of which displays many of the features affiliated with the governance PPP.

There is a connection between how the involved actors cooperate and partnership performance.

Preparatory, a brief description of the five examined PPPs is in its place.<sup>10</sup> The first case concerns the construction, operation and maintenance of a military establishment in the defence sector (case 1). In addition to designing and providing a military facility, a number of related services are included in the project. The second case is a transport technology project which concerns the development, maintenance and operation of a system to manage traffic networks. This project also includes a small construction element (case 2). The third case is a traditional and relatively standard sized local authority road PPP which involves the design, build, finance and operation of a road (case 3). Finally, the remaining two cases are hospital PPPs (case

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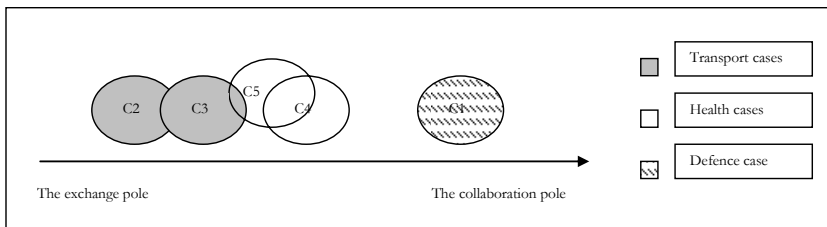
<sup>9</sup> Although the dimensions of the continuum can be debated, in the context of this article it merely provides a useful tool to distinguish between different styles of cooperating. What is important to note here is that the core objective is to lay bare the features of cooperation in operational infrastructure PPPs not to develop the general theoretical understanding of concepts such as cooperation, coordination, exchange and collaboration and how they relate to one another. For efforts in this direction, see Keast et al. 2007: and Thomson and Perry 2006).

<sup>10</sup> Note that the details about the cases are concealed in order to not reveal the identity of the cases. The exact figures concerning capital value and project duration are not revealed.

4 and case 5). Case 4 concerns the redevelopment of an existing hospital site and provision of maintenance and facility services. Case 5 concerns the new build of a hospital and provision of associated services. The capital value of the investigated projects varies between £65m to £234m with an average value of £147,3m. The duration of the projects varies between 30 and 35 years with the exception of one case which has a somewhat shorter duration.

The empirical mapping of cooperation reveals that operational practice in infrastructure PPPs generally has an affinity towards the exchange mode of cooperation. However the analysis also reveals that collaborative style relationships can assume importance. There are in particular two outlier cases in the data. These are the defence sector case (case 1), which can be positioned closest to the collaboration pole, and the technology transport case (case 2) which can be positioned closest to the exchange pole. The road case and the hospital cases (case 3, 4 and 5) can be positioned somewhere in between the two outlier cases (see figure 1).

**Figure 1 - Positioning of the cases on the cooperation continuum**



Relative to the other cases, the defence case (case 1) displays by far the most collaborative features. In this case, relations at the public-private interface are informal, close, and affable and oriented towards working together in order to achieve joint goals. There are high levels of trust between the involved actors and they are committed to making the project a success for both parties. The actors have faith in the intentions of each other and do not suspect opportunistic behaviour. Moreover, there is a general understanding and accept of the interests of the opposing party, and an acknowledgement of the important role of compromises. ‘You have to recognize each other, and why you can’t achieve what you both want to achieve’, one of the partnership managers says. Further the involved actors continuously find joint solutions that are satisfactory to both parties. The partnership managers highlight the excellent working relationship established at the public-private interface and how they in different ways have managed to solve unforeseen problems that were not taken into account by the PPP contract. In the event of a specific crisis situation, for example, which was caused by extreme weather conditions, the parties managed to jointly find a solution without entering into a legal battle. Another similar example concerns indoor architectonic changes, which were necessary but unaccounted for in the contract. Also in this instance, a solution was



found which was acceptable to both parties. A third example concerns asbestos contamination, 'a contractual nightmare to sort out whose responsibility it was. But we did. You know we worked our way through it. And it took a long time but you know if you have got the relationship you can have that sort of conversation without getting into a contractual fight over it. And potentially it could have been quite serious', one of the private sector partnership manager stresses. Many of the features normally only affiliated with the governance partnership are present in the defence case. Mindsets and attitudes are strikingly affirmative and there is a strong sense of commitment and collectiveness among the involved partnership managers. 'We have established an extremely good relationship with them at the point were we are collaborating on other ventures', one partnership manager explains. The public and private actors in this case have jointly developed a pilot for a new e-learning management system.

Cooperation in the other outlier case, i.e. the technology transport case (case 2), diverges significantly from that in the defence sector case. Here, relationships are distanced and strained, and empathy for the opposing partner is limited. Trust levels are low and there is little faith in the intentions of the opposing party. Thus both partners in this project indicate that the opposing party displays behaviour which can be detrimental to the interests of themselves and/or project outcome more generally. One of the private sector managers, for example, suggests that from the public sector side 'there is often the reason of: "Oh, why should we? That is what we said we wanted. We wanted a red car and you are going to deliver me a blue car. Why should we put up with a blue car...?" Even though it is a Rolls Royce...?' Similarly, another managers notes that the private sector party's 'attitude to partnership is; "we ask and you give." Except that we don't often give. So they can't understand why we don't give them lots of money when they ask for it.' This type behaviour differs markedly from that in the defence sector case where such signs of distrust were absent. Moreover, the governance processes in the technology case appear more contract-centred relative to the defence case. This is captured in the following statement: 'the contract has thousands of sentences that say you will do this and this and this and for every sentence we have to go through a process... we are demonstrating to the customer that we are doing all the sentences and so you bog down into interpreting words: What does this word mean...? Well, it could mean that or it could mean..., and literally we are on that level. So in that process, you completely loose the big picture because everybody is concerned..., are we doing what the contract says?' Thus while in the military case, the involved actors have a constructive working relationship which enables them to solve unforeseen problems and issues and to create new solutions together, the technology transport case is marked by inertia and experienced by the involved actors as a public-private 'battle' as opposed to a partnership.

Of the remaining three cases, the road case (case 3) is most similar to the technology case. This case further involves the least intensive interactions. In particular the extent of informal face-to-face interaction is limited due to the fact that there is no

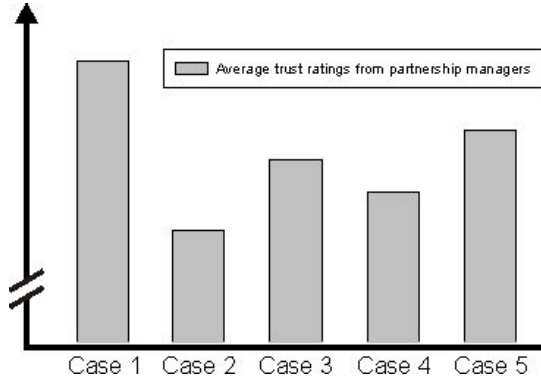
co-location of staff. Also here, a clearly contract-centred approach is present, which the following statement by one of the private sector managers captures: 'we know what our role is the client knows what his role is, and we manage that role between us together, you know in a constructive manner'. Ideally, one of the private sector managers suggests, the public sector client should be able to 'stand back' and let the private sector party manage the project. There is thus a pronounced difference in the rhetoric of the partnership managers when comparing the defence case with the two transport cases. The road case also, much like the technology case, differs strongly from the defence case in the sense that there is little sense community among the public and private actors, and little emphasis is put on the importance of working together. Further, personal ties at the public-private interface are comparatively weak. The two hospital PPPs display somewhat stronger relational ties than the two transport cases which is why these cases can be positioned somewhat closer to the defence case than the two transport cases. Relationships are fairly constructive and positive although the same degree of collectiveness as in the defence case is not detectable here. Further cooperation is not quite as positively portrayed here as in the defence case. This was particularly the case in relation to the new build hospital case (case 5) where one partnership manager expresses suspiciousness concerning the motives of the public sector partner suggesting that they are interested in finding ways of taking money away from the service provider. The relationship was described as an all against all battle. At the upper level management echelons in the same case however, relations are more cordial. Thus another manager asserts that the public sector party does not constantly come 'around seeing how they can beat us up so that they can get money back because that isn't their culture. Their culture is "we want a successful contract not one that is always in claims" and that is the same for us.' In the rebuild hospital case (case 4), cooperative practice also appears fairly collaborative which is captured in the following statement 'we have a very very good relationship with the client here, so things run very smoothly on site. That is not to say in other PFIs they don't. Some can be very confrontational. But we built an excellent relationship with the client where we are actually seen as part of the team and we do work together.'

The important thing to hold on to here is that there are huge differences in relationship styles, behaviours and attitudes, particularly between the two outlier cases (the defence case and the technology case). The defence case is consistently higher performing in relation to all the close-end questions concerning relationship features such as attentiveness, degree of focus on joint success and joint goals, intentions, mindsets and extent of joint efforts. The technology case on the other hand is consistently the lowest performing case. This is also the case in relation to the partnership managers' ratings of trust at the public-private interface (see figure 2 below). Trust ratings follow the same general case by case pattern which was illustrated in figure 1 with the defence case at the high end (with an average rating of 8.75 where 10 is the highest score possible) and case 2 at the low end of the

continuum (average rating: 6.49). The remaining three cases are again somewhere in between.

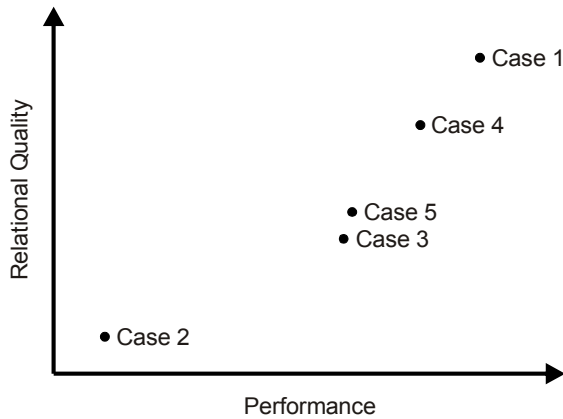
In addition to important variations vis-à-vis the partnering relationship, there are moreover quite pronounced case differences in perceived performance. On a scale from 1 to 10, where 10 was the highest score possible, the highest average rating of performance was 9 (in the defence case) and the lowest average rating was 4.6 (in the technology case).

Figure 2 - Variation in ratings of trust at the public-private interface on a scale from 1 to 10



Again, the remaining three cases are positioned somewhere between the two outliers. There is hence a pronounced connection between relationship features and perceived performance (see figure 5). The cases that display the highest levels of relational quality do at the same time also have the highest levels of perceived performance. In the figure below, the values on the y-axis (relational quality) represent summarized scores for each case in relation to how the partnership managers have responded to a number of close-end questions concerning relationship characteristics (e.g. empathy, mindsets, tension and personal bonds). The x-axis represents the perceived performance as rated by the partnership managers on a scale from 1 to 10 where 10 is the highest score possible. There is a marked, almost linear, connection between the quality of relations (how the actors cooperate) and perceived partnership performance.

Figure 3 - Connection between relational quality and performance



A similar pattern emerges when perceived performance is measured as the degree of perceived satisfaction with project outcomes, and perceived degree of innovation, reputation enhancement and further cooperation between the involved parties. We should however, as noted earlier, be careful with drawing wide-ranging conclusions concerning the relationship between operational practice and partnership performance. Constructive and collaborative relationships in the operational phase may simply imply high process performance as opposed to output or outcome performance. Thus when the involved actors manage to establish a working relationship based on trust, commitment and empathy, they may simply become better at coping with unforeseen events not taken into account by the contract, and at finding effective and innovative service delivery solutions. In this sense the overall transaction costs of managing the project may be reduced but this does not necessarily imply good performance in relation to the overall output of the projects. The investigated projects are only in the early years of operation and will only be completed approximately 20 years from now. It is thus still too early to say anything final about performance. Further the direction of the causal effect can be debated. Are projects performing better because of better working relationships or is it perhaps the other way around?

To summarize, there are marked cross-case variations and differences in how the public and private actors cooperate in the examined operational PPP projects. Although on the formal structural level the examined cases are similar, they are indeed quite different when we look beyond contracts and examine how the involved actors cooperate in practice. The defence case (case 1) displays comparatively very positive and proactive mindsets, alignment of self interest and close relationships, high levels of empathy, trust and strong commitment to making the project a joint

success. The actors in this particular project have managed to establish a constructive working relationship where both parties are dedicated to creating new value together. This partnering relationship has spun off new partnership projects between the involved actors. The defence case resembles the collaboration pole the closest relative to the other four cases. The technology transport case (case 2) can be positioned comparatively closest to the exchange pole of the cooperation continuum. Behaviours and attitudes vary drastically between the defence case and the transport cases. The way the partnership managers describe their respective PPP projects is different. Moreover, the degree of ownership and bonding between the involved actors varies significantly. There is also a pronounced difference in the degree to which the involved parties share a feeling of working together towards a joint goal. While there is a clear sense of community in the defence case, this sense of solidarity was absent in case 2. This was also the case in relation to the road case (case 3). The health sector cases (case 4 and 5) generally portrayed positive attitudes but the same extent of trust, norms of reciprocity and positive relationships which were identified in the defence case were not identified in these cases either.

## Discussion of findings

Considering the type of PPP studied here the findings are surprising because the expectation is that the infrastructure PPP does not involve the type of behavioural features affiliated with the governance PPP. The findings suggest that certain relationship features can not be a priori affiliated with certain partnership structures. These two dimensions of cooperation do not follow each other in a linear manner. As noted by one partnership manager, 'you can have partnerships whether you have PFI or not'. This point is corroborated in a recent study of operational partnerships for regeneration and management of city centres which suggests that 'PPPs are processes rather than outcomes and may switch from one governance model to another in no pre-established order' (Ysa 2007: 51). Another study of UK urban regeneration partnerships correspondingly finds that different modes of governance – hierarchy, market and network – can be present in the same organizational form (Lowndes and Skelcher 1998). Together with the findings here, this suggests that there may be some problems with distinguishing between governance PPP and contractual PPP. When looking beyond the formal structures, the infrastructure PPP can display the features that are normally affiliated with the governance PPP. The second hitch with the conventional distinction is that it implicitly suggests that relationship features are insignificant in the infrastructure PPP. Conversely, the findings here suggest that there is an important connection between the nature of cooperation in infrastructure PPP and perceived partnership performance. Thus interaction processes appear to condition the extent to which the involved actors manage to cope with change, disputes and create innovative solutions. The importance of intangible aspects of cooperation such as trust is therefore not limited to the governance partnership type as sometimes suggested in the literature (see Klijn and Teisman 2000: 85-6). The managerial implication is that proper attention should

be devoted to processes and relationship features vis-à-vis infrastructure PPP. In other words, managerial efforts should not exclusively be directed towards getting the contract right but also towards managing the PPP relationship effectively throughout the full life-cycle of the project. In the early days of infrastructure PPP scant attention was given to organizational and managerial issues arising in the ex post contract signature phase. No policy guidelines were available on how to manage operational infrastructure PPPs. The implicit assumption was that once the PPP contract was signed, cooperation would follow the plotted course like a train on its track. This however, as we have seen here, is not the case. The initial contract is the baseline which conditions cooperation but it does however not exclusively determine the behavior of the involved actors. In other words, the deal itself does not determine whether cooperation will be a public-private partnership or a public-private battle.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, there is a third and more general quandary with the distinction between governance PPP and contractual PPPs. This concerns the circumstance that it is unclear what empirically constitutes a governance PPP. Both in policy practice and in the literature there are only few empirical examples available. The theoretical idea about governance PPP (i.e. that it constitutes a genuine or real PPP in the sense that it involves, for example, trust, reciprocity and mutuality) seems more prevalent than the actual existence of such notions in policy practice. ‘The linguistically correct interpretations of the term “partnership” are namely often so broad and general that as a result the term public-private partnership can be (and in practice is) interpreted in a multiplicity of ways’ (van der Wel 2004: 5). One example of a governance PPP concerns a loosely organized network structure (e.g. a public-private strategic planning committee for area development, see Klijn and Teisman 2005: 100-1). This example does not involve shared risk and joint production which, by the same authors, are argued to be defining features of a real PPP. Similarly, in policy practice, as already noted earlier, there is rarely any other meaning attached to the PPP label than the contractual understanding of the term. Public-private service delivery hardly ever takes place without the presence of contracts. The large divergence between how PPP is conceptualized theoretically and how it is applied in policy practice is unfortunate because it gives rise to misunderstandings.

## Concluding reflections

If the contractual arrangement is not seminal for how actors cooperate in practice in infrastructure PPPs, what then causes the variation in operational practice which has been demonstrated here? Two factors emerge inductively from the data: a) the significance of institutional context, and b) the importance of individuals. First, the institutional context in which cooperation is embedded seems to permeate the way in

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<sup>11</sup> In recent years, increasing policy attention has been devoted to managing operational infrastructure PPPs. This is epitomized with the establishment of an Operational TaskForce in 2006 by the UK HM Treasury to provide help, support and guidance to public sector managers of operational PPPs.

which the involved actors cooperate (i.e. certain policy sector patterns come into view).<sup>12</sup> The hard contract culture of the road industry, for example, seems to permeate operational practice in the two transport cases. Several partnership managers point out that there are differences between the various policy sectors as well as between the public and the private sector. The defence sector is to a lesser extent subjected to public scrutiny in the sense that it does not deliver assets and services directly to the public. Defence sector projects are therefore not to the same extent in the public eye. This may create a more relaxed and informal atmosphere than is the case in relation to, for instance, hospital PPPs where the stakeholders are numerous and outcomes highly visible. Differences in professional backgrounds and training of personnel may also be part of the explanation, which also was suggested by some partnership managers. Further, the pure nature of the projects may give rise to different project dynamics. Constructing a road is after all different from building a complex military asset. Two further sector differences come to mind. One is the mere size of the PPP projects. While the health sector, for example has relatively many and small scale projects, the defence sector has fewer but bigger projects. In small scale projects there are fewer resources to manage the same levels of complexity relative to large projects. This may have implications for the operational relationship. Another sector difference concerns the level of service delivery. In the defence sector, the management of PPP contracts is highly centralized, while in the health sector it is decentralized to individual NHS Trust units. In the transport sector on the other hand, delivery takes place at different levels ranging from government agencies, city and county councils and local boroughs. This suggests that the extent of experience varies from sector to sector. Related research on strategic alliances (private-private partnerships) suggests that experience plays an important role in relation to partnership performance (Anand and Khanna 2000). In sum, policy sector differences such as institutional path-dependencies, differences in professions, differences in size and nature of projects, and differences in level of service delivery and thus experience may play a role vis-à-vis how the involve public and private actors cooperate *ex post* contract signature. There is a rich body of literature that suggests that various types of institutions condition social outcomes. This literature can profitably inform future research on how institutions condition partnership practice (for a recent overview of the literature on institutional theory, see Campbell 2004).

The second emergent factor that influences cooperation concerns the importance of individuals. Behaviours, beliefs and attitudes of key individuals who occupy boundary-spanning positions in the PPP projects seem to play a significant role in relation to how cooperation materializes in practice. This is corroborated by

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<sup>12</sup> Institutional context is not a part of the research design of this study and has therefore not been analysed systematically. The primary objective here was to explore cooperation (how PPP actors cooperate in practice) not to measure correlation between different variables (what causes PPP actors to cooperate in certain manners). Nevertheless, some interesting findings emerge inductively that are reflected upon here.

research on governance PPP and alliances that highlight trust and relational aspects of cooperation as being important drivers of performance (for instance, Edelenbos, Klijn and Steijn 2007). The importance of people is a recurrent theme in the interview data (see box 1.1). Comparing two similar hospital PPPs, one partnership manager notes that it was mainly due to the partnering approach of a key individual that transaction costs became several folds higher in one of the projects: ‘We were [...] constantly having to drive that relationship. Put lots of... You know I had to be there full time, and full time was you know 7 in the morning to 7 or 8 at night every day. Whereas I would go to [the other hospital PPP], similar sized project, similar complicated, I probably spent 8-10 hours a week there. A majority of the interviewed partnership managers suggest that individuals are central for an effective operational project.

**Box 1.1. On the importance of individuals – excerpts from interviews with partnership managers**

‘I think relationships need to be much better understood and exposed. [...]. We all need to be re-educated.’ (public partnership manager)

‘The whole process is about people. That is a key thing actually.’ (private partnership manager)

‘I think [...], the essence of all this is it doesn’t matter what you have got drafted or what contracts you’ve got. It still relies on the right people in the right place. You can’t really legislate for that. You can’t write that into a contract.’ (private partnership manager)

‘It is like any relationship I think. You know it is about people.’ (private partnership manager)

‘A lot still depends on individuals. I have been asked to go to a Trust that has entered into a difficult period/discussion with their bidders and it seems to me that there is no more than the actual confidence and competence of the project director.’ (public partnership manager)

‘There is always situations that arise that are not covered and you need to be able to sit down and have a good working relationship to resolve any of the service issues that come out.’ (private partnership manager)

‘Again it is down to personalities and how we work it and how we run it’ (private partnership manager)

‘But what can turn an average project into a really good one, or a really poor one into an ok one is the softer skills of the people involved...’ (private partnership manager)

‘I think that if you are going to have a partnership that will last that long because this is for 30 years [...] ...you need to have a much better understanding of each other. [...]. I think it is people.’ (private partnership manager)



'You have to build the relationship up, as you go along. It takes the right sort of people. You have got to have the right sort of people. People how are prepared to negotiate, people who are prepared to be pragmatic, people how are prepared to, what can I call it, live with uncertainty with regards to confrontation.'

In this light, it is important to understand the determinants of the behaviour of individual partnership managers. Based on the interview data and the literature, the following three factors can be considered to play a role in this respect:

- Educational background of partnership managers.
- Managerial empowerment.
- Features of the parent organization

First, the educational background of the partnership managers may be a factor. 'I think that quite often the style they take [the project directors] is determined by their background', one partnership manager suggests. Lawyers, accountants, and engineers respectively may emphasise different aspects of a partnership.<sup>13</sup> Second, an appropriate mandate to manage the PPP may be a prerequisite for effective management as a lack of management power can be argued to impede effectiveness (Kanter 1997). In this respect, experience and seniority may also play a role. Third, management behaviour is arguably conditioned by features of the parent organization and its PPP strategies. This finding is also highlighted in recent research on private-private partnerships (alliances) which argues that it is important for organizations not only to have strategic partnerships but also to have partnership strategies (for instance, Gomes-Casseres, Bamford and Robinson 2003). Further, as noted earlier, private partnership managers may display different behaviours than public sector managers due to general differences between public and private sector organizations. This was a recurrent theme in the interviews where stereotyped views of the opposing sector were thriving.

## Conclusion

Although the scope for generalization of this study is limited, important patterns and lessons have emerged that, given the lack of a persuasive body of research on operational PPPs, are important to hold on to. The article demonstrates that infrastructure PPPs can sometimes assume the features normally only associated with governance PPPs. Therefore, certain type of PPP relationship features cannot a priori be associated with certain types of PPP structural arrangements. Under certain circumstances, even an infrastructure PPP can display the relationship features

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<sup>13</sup> While a lawyer may be preoccupied with legal aspects, an accountant may emphasise financial models, and finally an engineer may put more emphasis on technical solutions. These differing approaches may create different project dynamics.

normally only affiliated with the governance PPP. This finding constitutes an important input in relation to the ongoing conceptual debates about the meaning of PPP (van der Wel 2004; Klijn and Teisman 2005; Wettenhall 2007). The finding that there may be a connection between how the involved actors cooperate in practice and partnership performance further suggests that resources and management attention can fruitfully be directed towards the ongoing management of infrastructure PPPs. Correspondingly, future research can profitably address the operational processes in infrastructure PPPs. In particular we would like to know more about the managerial and organizational challenges that emerge in operational PPPs and how this relates to partnership performance. Further, more knowledge is needed about the factors and mechanisms that condition cooperative practice (such as for instance institutional context). This research agenda departs significantly from previously proposed agendas that highlight, for example, privatization issues, regulatory processes, value for money, risk transfer and the worth and merit of PPP as important research agendas (Broadbent and Laughlin 1999). Already at this point, however, we have strong reason to believe that partnership contracts in themselves are a very limited source of information about PPPs.

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## APPENDIX I

### Open-ended Interview-guide (first data collection phase)

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This interview guide contains a number of open-ended questions. In the interview situation the interview guide will not be followed chronologically. Rather it will be used as an inspirational source throughout the interview situation. The key thing is to uncover the features of the interaction processes and the character of the cooperative relationship in the individual PPP project.

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#### **Introductory questions (background)**

- Who: (information about the interviewee, background, job functions, previous experience with PFI/PPP).
- PFI portfolio: General description of the organizations PPP policy/activities.
- Background of the PFI project: (why was the PPP established, whose initiative was it, what was the reasoning behind this PPP, main objective).

#### **Questions concerning the partnering relationship**

- PPP actors and PPP structures (description of the actors involved and the structure of the project).

- Description of the partnering relationship at different levels of the partnering relationship (interaction patterns and quality of the partnering relationship).  
Questions about the character of cooperation.

### **Other questions**

- Differences between policy sectors?
- Connection between partnership behaviour and performance (importance of partnering relationship)?
- Factors influencing/conditioning the partnering relations (e.g. institutional factors)?
- Have relationships changed over time?
- Important factors/competences in the successful management of PPP? (barriers / enabling factors)?
- Available case documents or other material that can be handed out?



APPENDIX II

Interview-guide for Follow-up Interviews (second data collection phase)

Project name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate your project position:<sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been involved in the project (number of years): \_\_\_\_\_

**Interaction Pattern (operational phase):** The following questions concern the frequency of interaction between the key project actors.

1. Please indicate the frequency of formal interaction between you/your organization and the other involved organizations (formalized meetings/other scheduled activities).

	Never	Once or twice a year	Once or twice every 6 months	Once or twice every three months	Once or twice a month	3-5 times a month	More than 5 times a month
Special Purpose Vehicle							
Prime subcontractor (construction)							

<sup>1</sup> Public sector manager (local level or policy level), SPV manager, SPV board member, prime subcontractor manager (construction), prime subcontractor manager (service), manager at the sub-subcontractor level or other?

	Never	Once or twice a year	Once or twice every 6 months	Once or twice every three months	Once or twice a month	3-5 times a month	More than 5 times a month
Prime subcontractor (service)							
Public sector, (local level)							
Public sector (policy level)							
Funders (Banks)							

2. Please indicate the frequency of informal interaction between you/your organization and the other involved organizations (telephone calls, mails, face to face meetings and other ad hoc interaction).

	Never	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	3-5 times a week	More than 5 times a week
Special Purpose Vehicle					
Prime subcontractor (construction)					
Prime subcontractor (service)					
Public sector, (local level)					
Public sector (policy level)					
Funders (Banks)					

**Characteristics of Interaction (operational phase):** The following questions concern relationship characteristics between the key project actors.

Please only answer the questions in this box if you are affiliated with one of the concerned organizations.

<b>3.Trust<sup>2</sup></b>	<p>a) Please rate the degree of trust between the <u>SPV</u> and <u>commissioning public body</u> (grades between 1 and 10 where 10 is the highest score possible): _____</p> <p>b) Please rate the degree of trust between the <u>prime subcontractor</u> (service) and the <u>commissioning public body</u>: _____</p> <p>c) Please rate the degree of trust between the <u>prime subcontractor</u> (construction) and the <u>commissioning public body</u>: _____</p>
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4. Changes in trust levels over time (please indicate with a mark):

	Strongly declined	Declined	Remained the same	Increased	Strongly increased
a) Have trust levels between the <u>SPV</u> and the <u>commissioning public body</u> changed over time?					
b) Have trust levels between the <u>prime subcontractor</u> (service) and the <u>commissioning public body</u> changed over time?					
c) Have trust levels between the <u>prime subcontractor</u> (construction) and the <u>commissioning public body</u> changed over time?					

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<sup>2</sup> The following questions concern the degree of trust between the involved parties. ‘Trust’ refers here to the stable perception of one actor of the intentions of another actor (Edelenbos and Klijn, 2006). “The stable perception concerns the idea that the other actor will refrain from opportunistic behaviour in situations, which give him the opportunity. So an actor believes that the other actor will respect his interests.” (Klijn and Edelenbos 2007).

5. Please indicate to what extent you agree with the statements in the table below about the character of the partnership relationship (put a mark in relevant boxes):

	Absolutely agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Absolutely disagree
a) The parties in this project give one another the benefit of the doubt.					
b) The parties in this project are attentive towards the interests of each other.					
c) The involved parties want the partnership to be a success for both the public and the private actor.					
d) The actors are not pursuing individual goals at the expense of the achievement of joint goals.					
e) It can be assumed that the intentions of the other parties are good in principle.					

6. Please rate the degree of reciprocity in the operational relationship (grades from 1 to 10 where 10 is the highest score possible):

<p><b>6. Degree of reciprocity</b> (is the partnership marked by norms of reciprocity/give and take between the key parties?)</p>	<p>a) Degree of reciprocity in the relationship between <u>SPV</u> and <u>public sector counterpart</u>:</p> <p>_____</p>
	<p>b) Have levels of reciprocity between the above mentioned actors changed over time (please highlight the correct answer below)?</p> <p><i>Strongly declined; Declined; Remained the same; Increased; Strongly increased</i></p>
	<p>c) Degree of reciprocity in the relationship between <u>prime subcontractor (service)</u> and the <u>public sector counterpart</u>:</p> <p>_____</p>
	<p>d) Have levels of reciprocity between the above mentioned actors changed over time (please highlight the correct answer below)?</p> <p><i>Strongly declined; Declined; Remained the same; Increased; Strongly increased</i></p>
	<p>e) Degree of reciprocity in the relationship between <u>prime subcontractor (construction)</u> and the <u>public sector counterpart</u>:</p> <p>_____</p>
	<p>f) Have levels of reciprocity between the above mentioned actors changed over time (please highlight the correct answer below)?</p> <p><i>Strongly declined; Declined; Remained the same; Increased; Strongly increased</i></p>

7. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements about the relational quality between the public and private party in this project:

	Absolutely agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Absolutely disagree
There is limited tension between individual and collective interests					
The mindsets of the involved actors are positive towards the partnership					
The involved actors continuously adapt their cooperation to learning and feedback					
Over time organizational boundaries increasingly become blurred					
This project involves a high degree of joint effort from the involved actors					
There are strong personal bonds/close relationship between key project actors					

	Absolutely agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Absolutely disagree
The experience with cooperation has so far been primarily positive					
Conflicts are solved constructively and effectively					
When solving unforeseen conflicts/disagreements we do not automatically refer to the contract					
Individuals are key to an effective operational PFI project					
There is a significant difference between how cooperation unfolds in different policy sectors (health, transport, defence, education etc.)					

**Organizational characteristics (operational phase):** The following questions concern among other things the organizational structure of the PFI, project characteristics, performance measurement systems and decision-making characteristics.

<b>8. Actors</b>	<p>a) Have there been any changes in the composition of organizations in the SPV since the project reached financial close (if yes, please describe the changes)? _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>b) Has there been a change of prime subcontractors since the project reached financial close (if yes, please describe these changes)? _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
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<b>9. Project characteristics</b>	<p>a) Please describe the proportion/scope of related primary services that are included in the PFI: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>b) Have there been changes in the number of services included over time (please explain): _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
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	c) Does the SPV hold 100 % equity in the project (if no, please describe other actors' involvement):
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<b>10. Performance monitoring system</b>	<p>Please answer the following questions:</p> <p>a) What is the number of service measurement items in this PFI? Have there been any changes in the number or type of service measurement items over time (if yes, please explain)? _____          _____          _____</p> <p>b) How were the measurement items developed (jointly, primarily by private or by public party? Please explain)? _____          _____          _____</p> <p>c) Are instant penalties issued in case of failure to perform or are warnings issued first?)? _____          _____          _____</p> <p>d) How much of the unitary charge is at risk (possible scope of financial deductions)? ____          _____</p> <p>e) Have there been any changes in the penalty system over time (please explain)? _____          _____          _____</p> <p>f) How many and how large penalties have been incurred thus far (if any)? _____</p>
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<b>11. Project refinancing</b>	<p>a) Has the PFI been refinanced at any point? If yes, how was the revenue split between the public and the private party? _____          _____</p> <p>b) Have the procedures for refinancing been changed over time (if yes, please describe changes)? _____          _____          _____</p>
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<b>12. Variations</b>	a) How many variations to the contract have been incurred since project implementation (estimated number)? _____
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<b>13. Review process</b>	a) Please describe the review process in place for this project (i.e. the process in which the public sector reviews project design and processes that the private part wants to put in place during the post construction phase): _____ _____ b) Have there been any changes in the review process over time (if yes, please describe changes)? _____ _____
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<b>14. Degree of joint decision-making</b>	a) Please rate the extent of joint decision-making across the public-private interface in the operational phase (grade from 1 to 10 where 10 is the highest score possible): _____ b) Has this changed over time (please highlight the correct answer below)?  <i>Strongly declined; Declined; Remained the same; Increased; Strongly increased</i>
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15. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements about the administrative capacity available for this project:

	Absolutely agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Absolutely disagree
Communication is effectively managed across the public-private interface					
Coordination is effectively managed across the public-private interface					



**Management strategies (operational phase):** The following questions concern management actions taken to change the organizational or relational structure of the project.

<b>16. Project level management strategies</b>	<p>a) Has the public sector management team taken any deliberate action to change the <u>organizational structure</u> of the partnership (if yes, please describe which actions)? _____ _____</p> <p>b) Has the public sector management team taken any deliberate action to change the <u>relational structure</u> of the partnership (if yes, please describe which actions)? _____ _____</p> <p>c) Have there been managerial actions from the <u>private</u> sector party directed at changing partnership <u>organizational structures</u> (if yes, please describe which actions)? _____ _____</p> <p>d) Have there been managerial actions from the <u>private</u> sector party directed at changing the <u>relational structure</u> of the partnership (if yes, please describe which actions)? _____ _____</p>
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<b>17. Policy level management strategies</b>	<p>a) Have there been managerial actions from <u>policy level</u> actors (e.g. departmental level) directed at changing partnership <u>organizational structures</u> (if yes, please describe which actions)? _____ _____</p> <p>b) Have there been managerial actions from <u>policy level</u> actors (e.g. departmental level) directed at changing the relational structure of the partnership (if yes, please describe which actions)? _____ _____</p>
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**Partnership Performance:** The following questions concern the performance of the project.

<b>18. Perceived performance</b>	<p>a) On a scale from 1 to 10 where 10 is the highest grade possible, how would you grade the partnership performance? _____</p> <p>b) On a scale from 1 to 10 where 10 is the highest grade possible, please indicate the extent to which your organization is satisfied with project outcomes thus far: _____</p>
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19. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following two statements:

	Absolutely agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Absolutely disagree
The partnership delivers value for money to the public					
The partnership delivers value for money to the private sector partnering organization					

<b>20. Perceived equity</b>	<p>To what extent do you believe that the outcomes are proportional to your organization's input (perceived distributive fairness)? (please highlight the correct answer)</p> <p><i>To a very high extent, to a high extent, neither low nor high, to a low extent, to a very low extent</i></p>
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<b>21. Actual performance</b>	<p>a) Was construction finished on time? _____</p> <p>b) Was construction finished to the budget? _____</p> <p>c) Have agreed upon service levels thus far been met in the operational phase? _____</p>
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22. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following two statements:

	Absolutely agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Absolutely disagree
a) The partnership has led to innovative solutions.					
b) The partnership has led to mutual reputation enhancement.					

	Absolutely agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Absolutely disagree
c) The partnership has led to further cooperation between the involved actors (e.g. new spin offs).					
d) The partnership has realized cost savings.					
e) The partnership has realized substantive surplus value (real synergy).					

Do you have any comments to this questionnaire? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you very much for participating!



## Danish Abstract

Offentlige forvaltninger verden over har været præget af voldsomme reformbølger de seneste 20-30 år, og den private sektor er i stigende grad blevet inddraget i den offentlige serviceproduktion. Privatiseringer og udliciteringer kendetegnede således forvaltningspolitikken i mange vestlige lande op gennem 1980'erne og 1990'erne. De mange reformtiltag er i forvaltningslitteraturen kendt under betegnelsen New Public Management. En af de senere udviklinger i den moderne forvaltningshistorie er fremkomsten af offentlig-private partnerskaber (OPP). OPP har i dag fået en lignende udbredelse som de tidligere privatiserings- og udliciteringstendenser. De fleste vestlige landeforvaltninger har således forsøgt sig med OPP, og i forvaltningslitteraturen har antallet af publiceringer om emnet været hastigvoksende de seneste cirka 10 år. Trods den store udbredelse, i såvel teori som praksis, skorter der imidlertid med klassifikationer, ensdige definitioner af OPP begrebet. Denne afhandling har to centrale formål. Det ene er at afdække OPP begrebets mangetydige betydninger. Det gøres ved at kortlægge hvordan begrebet bliver anvendt i den internationale forvaltningslitteratur. Analysen viser at begrebets grænser er slørede, og at betegnelsen OPP bliver anvendt om en mangfoldighed af offentlig-private samarbejdsformer dækkende over uformaliserede netværksbaserede relationer såvel som stærkt formaliserede kontraktstrukturer. På baggrund af analysen inddeles forvaltningslitteraturen i en række strømninger. Dermed skabes et overblik over feltet som ikke eksisterede forud for analysen. Denne del af analysen munder endvidere ud i en ny måde at klassificere og definere forskellige typer OPP på. OPP er et relativt ungt forskningsfelt. En markant barriere for udviklingen af feltet har været manglen på anerkendte klassificeringer/definitioner. Begrebsdefinitioner er en forudsætning for teoriudvikling. Ved at afdække OPP begrebets mangetydige betydninger, og ved at udvikle nye måder at klassificere og definere OPP på bidrager denne analyse væsentligt til den fremtidige teoriudvikling om OPP.

Afhandlingens andet formål er at afdække hvad der kendetegner samarbejdsrelationerne i idriftsatte OPP-projekter. Det er en udbredt opfattelse blandt praktikere såvel som forskere at OPP bebuder noget kvalitativt nyt relativt til de fordums tiders privatiseringer og udliciteringer. Der findes således en udbredt teoretisk diskurs om at OPP indebærer tætte og tillidsbaserede samarbejdsrelationer, dialog og fokus på processer frem for output. På trods af sådanne udbredte forventninger og antagelser om samarbejdsformens karakter, så er der forbausende få systematiske empiriske studier af hvordan samarbejdsrelationerne ser ud i praksis. Ved empirisk at kortlægge samarbejdets karakter i fem britiske OPP-projekter udfylder afhandlingen derfor et vigtigt hul i den internationale forvaltningslitteratur. Analysen bidrager til litteraturen på to centrale måder. Den viser, for det første, at forventningerne om kvalitativt anderledes samarbejdsrelationer ikke bliver indfriet i flertallet af de analyserede cases. Det forventede skift fra hierarkiske, kontrolorienterede principal-agent relationer mod fladere, tillidsbaserede principal-principal relationer ses ikke i praksis. For det andet ses der dog alligevel stor variation

i den måde hvorpå samarbejdet udmønter sig i de forskellige cases. Den ene case udviser således mange af de førnævnte samarbejds karakteristika som typisk bliver kædet sammen med OPP. Analyseresultatet peger på, at samarbejdsrelationernes kan udmøntes væsensforskelligt indenfor den samme type kontraktstrukturer. Dette peger videre på, at formelle strukturer kun giver en begrænset indsigt i samarbejdets karakter. For at få en dybere forståelse af OPP, er det derfor nødvendigt at gå bagom kontrakten og analysere hvordan samarbejdsformen udspiller sig i praksis. Der identificeres endvidere en sammenhæng mellem samarbejdspraksis og partnerskabsperformance. De cases som involverer de mest tillidsbaserede og tætte relationer ser samtidig ud til at være de cases, der præsterer bedst. Analyseresultaterne har implikationer for OPP litteraturen og ledelsesmæssige implikationer. For det første giver resultaterne anledning til at revidere den eksisterende teoretiske diskurs om OPP. Der er en tendens i litteraturen til at forbinde bestemte samarbejdsstrukturer med bestemte typer samarbejdsprocesser. Resultaterne her indikerer at disse to dimensioner ikke følger hinanden. Dernæst peger resultaterne på at ressourcer og ledelsesmæssig opmærksomhed med fordel kan rettes mod de løbende samarbejdsprocesser, da dette kan få betydning for samarbejdets udfald.

## Faroese Abstract

Almennar fyrisitingar kring heimin hava verið dæmdar av ógvusligum umbótarrákum seinastu 20-30 árinu og vinnulívið er í størri mun drigið inn í framleiðsluna av almennum vørum og tænastum. Einskiljingar og útbjóðingar settu soleiðis sín dóm á umsitingarpolitikkin í nógvum vesturlondum í 1980unum og 1990unum. Tey nógvu nýskaparátøkini eru í umsitingarhøpi kend sum New Public Management. Ein av teim seinnu ábótunum innan almenna umsetingarpraksis er íkoman av almennum-privatum samstarvi (APS). APS er í dag at meta við tey fyrru einskiljingar- og útbjóðingarrákinu. Flestu vesturlond hava roynt seg við APS, og í umsitingarhøpi hefur tað verið stórus vøkstur í útgávum um evnið. Hóast stóru útbreiðsluna, bæði ástøðiliga og í royndum, eru ikki nógv flokkingar, eiheldur skilmarkingar av APS hugtakinum.

Henda ritgerð hefur tvey høvuðsendamál. Eitt er at greiða mongu týðningarnir í APS hugtakinum. Hetta verður gjørt við at kortleggja hvussu hugtakið verður nýtt í altjóða umsitingarbókmentum. Kanningin vísir, at mörkini í hugtakinum eru ógreið og at APS verður nýtt um eina órgrynnu av almennum-privatum samstarvsháttum, ið fevna um bæði óformfest netværksbaserað samskipti eins og ógvuliga formfestar kontrastrukturar. Ritgerðin býtir bókmentirnar um APS í ymisk rák. Á henda hátt fæst eitt yvirlit yvir hetta granskingarøki, ið ikki fanst frammanundan. Hesin parturin av kanningini munnar út í einum nýggjum hátti at flokka og allýsa ymiskar APS hættir.

APS er eitt reiðiliga nýtt granskingarøki. Ein eyðsýnd forðing fyri menning á granskingarøkinum hefur verið væntandi góðkendar flokkingar og skilmarkingar. Ástøðismennan er treytað av hugtaksgreiningum. Við at rekja fløkjuna um ymsu týðningarnar í APS hugtakinum, og við at menna nýggir hættir at bólka og skilmarka APS, stuðlar henda ritgerð framtíðar ástøðismennan um APS.

Seinna endamálið í ritgerðini er at fáa greiði á, hvat eyðkennir APS-samstarvið aftaná at samstarvið er sett í verk. Tað er algongt fatað millum bæði granskarar og praktikarir, at APS ber boð um nakað dygdargott og nýskapandi sammet við áður kendu einskiljingar og útbjóðingar. Sostatt er eitt víðfevnt ástøðiligt kjak um, at APS inniber tætt og álitisgrundað samstarv, tvíroðu og savnan um arbeidsgongd heldur enn úrslit. Hóast tilíkar algongdar væntanir og metingar um henda samstarvsháttin, eru tað óvanliga fáar empiriskar kanningar av hvussu samstarvsrelatiónirnar virka í royndum.

Við at greina samstarvið í fimm bretskum APS-verkætlanum varpar ritgerðin ljós á eitt heldur kámt øki í altjóða umsitingargransking. Hetta serliga á tveimum avgerðandi økjum. Í fyrsta lagi avdúkar ritgerðin at ynski um eitt nýtt og øðrvísi samstarv er ikki uppfyllt í flestu av kannaðu verkætlanum. Væntaða skifti frá stigveldiskipaðum, eftirlitshugaðum principal-agent relatiónum mótvegis flatari álitisgrundaðum principal-principal samstarvi er ikki til staðar í praksis.

Hinvegin sæst eisini eitt stórt fjölbroytni í hvussu partarnar í teimum fimm verkætlanum samstarva í praksis.

Í einari verkætlan finnast nógv av teim áðurnevndu samstarvseyðkennunum, sum vanligi verða knýtt at APS. Úrslitið av kanninginini týðir á, at samstarvsrelatióinirnar innan sama kontrastruktur kunnu fáa ógvuliga ymiskan skap. Somuleiðis týður hetta á, at formligir bygnaðir bert geva avmarkað innlit í samstarvseyðkennini. Fyri betur at kunna skilja APS er tað tí neyðugt at fara afturum sáttmálan og greina hvussu samstarvshátturin virkar í roynd og veru. Harafturat ásetist ein samanhangur millum samstarvspraksis og performance. Tær verkætlanir, ið byggja á álitisgrundað og tætt samband/relatióinir tykjast at vera tær, ið hava bestu úrslitini. Kanningarúrslitini hava avleiðingar fyri bæði gransking og fyri praktikarar á økinum. Í fyrsta lagi geva úrslitini orsök til at endurskoða núverandi ástøðiliga kjakið um APS. Tað eru ábendingar í bómentunum, ið vilja binda saman ávísir samstarvsbygnaðir við serstakar samstarvs-gongdir. Úrslitini her benda á, at hesi ikki neyðturviliga eru tengd hvør at øðrum. Harafturat bera úrslitini tekin um, at tað er týðningarmikið at fyrisingarligt ansni og tilfeingi eisini verður vent mótvegis leypandi samstarvsrelatiónum.



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