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The art of leading without authority

Exploring the role of the in-between manager

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Jonathan Dauks & Joakim Forslund

Abstract

Defined as the in-between manager, we find the manager in the center of the triple helix collaboration and similar types of multi-actor constellations where collaboration is the driving force. This study aims to illuminate this role and the types of activities they engage in. Bridging the gap of previous knowledge about the role by offering a more in-depth research into the activities conducted by the in-between manager, aims to not only just show the value of the in-between manager but also highlight key activities which may prove useful for themselves to enact in.

The study follows an exploratory approach based on 19 interviews from a range of different multi-actor constellations, both in size but also in purpose and the key instigator. By following an iterative process for both data gathering as well as analysis, this study aims to continuously develop and narrow the scope of the in-between manager role and which activities they mainly engage in. Using a grounded theory inspired methodology, the authors aim to generate new concepts and theory connected to management studies.

The empirical findings paint a picture of the in-between manager acting in the heart of the collaboration, constantly aiming for the process moving forward by both using their diplomatic skills as well as playing politics. It is noted that even though several respondents to the study name activities, they enact these activities differently, and it is the common ground of these activities which are essential for the role of an in-between manager.

By developing concepts relating to both activities as well as managerial roles, this study brings forth an understanding of the interchangeable and intertwined activities that the in-between manager perform. These identified managerial roles has been labeled as *Supporter, Teacher, Diplomat, Maneuverer and Generalist*. Where activities range from taking the role of the teacher for the participants of the collaboration, to holding a holistic view where both discrepancies of participants as well as the direction of the collaboration is managed. Finally, the study deduced that the role of the in-between manager is largely misunderstood both within the in-between managers' own organizations as well as in the collaboration itself; it is argued that the ambiguity surrounding the role leads to a fluent scope of the role even though the value added by the in-between manager for each collaboration is highlighted by all interviewees.

Keywords: *Co-creation, triple helix model of innovation, managing interorganizational collaboration, collaboration intermediaries, collaborative networks, open innovation collaboration, knowledge and innovation eco-systems, in-between management*

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1 - Introduction

A current trend in innovation and co-creation of knowledge is that different organizations, such as firms, universities and public sector come together and share ideas and expertise (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000). These constellations are commonly named triple helix model of innovation (ibid) and is one way of conducting innovation in places such as science parks and inter-organizational innovation intermediaries among others. With the entrance of open innovation (Chesbrough & Schwartz, 2007; Chesbrough, 2003), knowledge is aimed to transfer across organizational boundaries and within multi-actor collaborations create innovation, sharing technologies and expertise. As such, the rationale to collaborate is argued to relate to the creation of collaborative advantage, which stems from the synergies created between collaborating organizations (Huxham, 1996). However, much of the literature on innovation collaborations points to the fact that collaborative innovations fail (Huxham, 1996; Sivadas & Dwyer, 2000), suggesting that one reason for this is unsuccessful collaboration management (Sivadas & Dwyer, 2000). For this reason, it is important that both practitioners and decision-makers understand what managing innovation collaborations entail, and what prerequisites are deemed necessary for successfully managing collaborative innovation.

The work of managers in increasingly common multi-actor environments such as science parks, innovation hubs, innovation clusters among others has changed due to a recent shift towards facilitation rather than just creating connections. With science parks entering later generations of developments (Bruneel, Ratinho, Clarysse, & Groen, 2012) new business models arise which entail leaving the connective creations, to a more guiding managerial process. This due to the absence of hierarchies in such multi-actor environments, which subsequently puts the manager in the space “in-between” (Yström, 2013).

This thesis aims to further the understanding of managing in the space “in-between”. The notion of space in-between has been put forward by Yström (2013) during the study of SAFER. SAFER in itself is an open innovation collaboration based out of Lindholmen science park in Gothenburg. As such this thesis focus is to create a deeper understanding of the roles of in-between managers and what the work entails, in the field of multi-actor collaborations.

The following chapter aims to provide a short initial insight of inter-organizational collaboration (Powell, Koput, & Smith-Doerr, 1996) and managing for innovation (Chesbrough, 2004) and

how the authors aim to connect these research areas. The chapter will end with an outline of the thesis.

1.1 - Managing innovation in interorganizational collaboration

For collaborations to gain a collaborative advantage, emerging research points to the requirement of managing collaborative innovations which sparks creativity (Ollila & Yström, 2012). This new role for managers, as argued by Amabile and Khairi (2008) does not primarily manage creativity, but manage for creativity to occur in the first place. As such, in this context of knowledge intensity within collaborations, formal leadership is questioned in general (Stacey, 2002; Streatfield, 2003) and a post-managerial leadership, which in contrast puts emphasis on relations, is claimed to be the new type of boundary-spanning organizational leadership (Karp & Helgø, 2008). It is here in this space in-between hierarchies where the in-between manager creates bounded instability as a foundation for creativity (Ollila & Yström, 2012), by not exercising control but eliminating uncertainty (Karp & Helgø, 2008).

The concept of leadership is argued by Karp and Helgø (2008) will change from the previous notion of command and control to the future concept of a dynamic process that will occur between people, e.g. relationships, and as such put more emphasis on individual characteristics. Along the change in leadership emerge new important factors for the manager in the inter-organizational collaboration. As Vangen and Huxham (2003b) notes, the post-managerial role which comes from the new paradigm of management entails building trust, a cyclic process containing forming, risk-taking, and vulnerability. Building trust is an activity closely related to the in-between manager as these individuals hold no formal authority. Hence, it is necessary for the in-between manager to hold strong interpersonal skills in order to build the relationships and trust needed to move the collaboration onwards (Ollila & Ystrom, 2017). Moreover, previous research has shown that it is within the environment of dealing with ambiguous tasks, shifting boundaries, multiple agendas, etc. the in-between manager emerges as a role that is handling these challenges (Yström, 2013).

1.2 - Problem analysis / research gap

Previous research has explored management in triple helix constellations (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000), open innovation collaborations (Ollila & Elmquist, 2011), inter-organizational collaborations (Vangen & Huxham, 2003a), intermediaries (Elmquist, Ollila, & Ystrom, 2016) and science parks (Bruneel et al., 2012), but so far, the everyday work of managers in multi-actor contexts remain relatively unexplored. Previous research has pointed

to the need for more in-depth research to understand what such work entails (Ollila & Ystrom, 2017). This thesis aims to address this gap by an empirical in-depth study of the role and work of in-between managers in such contexts.

1.3 - Purpose and research question

In order to bridge this gap, the thesis will follow a qualitative inductive research approach. As such the study aims to create understanding by exploring the following research questions:

1. What does the work of an in-between manager entail?
2. What managerial roles does the in-between manager take on in interorganizational collaborations within a triple-helix context?

1.4 - Outline of the report

The report is divided into five different chapters where each builds our research in a transparent and easily understandable manner.

Chapter 1: Sets the scene of context and an initial view into the specifics of fields this study will delve in.

Chapter 2: Our conceptual background and sensitizing concepts which guides the researchers is here developed and highlighted.

Chapter 3: This chapter consists of this research chosen methodology and consideration about procedures.

Chapter 4: Within this section, the findings is presented along with a conducted analysis.

Chapter 5: The last chapters contain a further analytical view along with a theoretical perspective on the findings in this study.

2 - Conceptual background

The following section aims at providing some conceptual background of in which context the in-between manager can be found as well as some theories and concepts related to multi-organizational innovation. Additionally, this section will shine some light on the emerging theory about managing between hierarchies within multi-actor constellations as well as introducing our *sensitizing concepts* used for guiding the analysis, which for the readers benefit the concepts is highlighted in italic.

2.1 - Opening up the innovation process

Increasing the frequency of innovation and their time to market is a process most firms today are working on. Incumbent processes such as the inhouse R&D fails to present innovation at the speed which is expected. Chesbrough (2003) proposed the business model of open innovation as a solution for increased speed and decreased resources for new R&D ventures. By opening up the before closed systems of the organization to others the collaborations which emerge follow this new trend of co-creation of knowledge amongst private sector, universities and the public sector (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000). This type of constellation is named triple helix.

The entrance of open innovation (Chesbrough & Schwartz, 2007; Chesbrough, 2003) affected how organizations conduct their research and how they look upon the innovation processes. Due to the complex nature of problems today, assemble collaborations from varying sectors is necessary as the need for dispersed expertise often is required (Cagliano, Chiesa, & Manzini, 2000; Mauzy & Harriman, 2003; Mumford, Scott, Gaddis, & Strange, 2002). However, managing such collaborations is argued by Dahlander, Frederiksen, and Rullani (2008) comes with its own challenges of tensions between participants and the nature of control. The two sides of innovation are revolving just this notion, on one side we have control and on the other freedom and the balancing act between the two falls on the manager aiming for creativity (Fredberg, Elmquist & Ollila, 2008).

Pursuing open innovation collaborations in a triple helix system (Etzkowitz & Ranga, 2015) highlights the potential for innovation and economic development within the interrelation of universities, industry and government. Since triple helix constellation brings a new kind of complexity which has previously not been thoroughly addressed this creates challenges for the participating organizations (Agranoff & McGuire, 2001). Management in such

collaborations is an integral part and those managers play a key role in the relations across the participating organizations.

The variety of constellations that originate from different triple helix participating organizations aiming for creating common benefits is denoted by Mandell and Steelman (2003) as interorganizational innovation. This notion will be further used by the authors of this study in a similar fashion. Insight of the challenges that have to be managed in interorganizational collaborations poses the question of why companies seek to collaborate. Numerous factors and challenges such as the aim for the collaboration, enactment of leadership, managing power relations amongst others have been developed and explored previously (Eden & Huxham, 2001; Vangen & Huxham, 2003a, 2003b). This in order to gain an understanding of why periods of inactiveness occur within the collaboration and how to manage these barriers and overcome them.

Although individual organizations have different incentives for being involved (Spekman & Forbes, 1998) it typically revolves around some aspiration of gaining a collaborative advantage (Huxham, 1996) since the individual organization comes into contact with knowledge and experiences they would not normally do. With the aim to tap into these emerging synergistically effects amongst the participants of the collaboration any individual organization seeks collaborative advantages. As much research suggests that the outcome of collaborations is not always successful (Huxham, 1996; Sivadas & Dwyer, 2000), Johnsen and Ennals (2012) argues that this is due to the conflicting expectations of performing innovation, where som participatory organizations aim for a stable predictive way versus others which seeks a more experimental development.

Collaborations that emerge from these constellations are further argued by Huxham and Vangen (2000) to be difficult to manage due to a high degree of complexity and ambiguity and the challenge is then to inspire the participants to participate (Giannopoulou, Yström & Ollila, 2011). With financial motivators lacking in impact for getting the participants engaged in the collaboration, the focus lies on the manager and their skills in building trust and creating a space for creativity (Bughin, Chui & Johnson, 2008; Füller, Matzler & Hoppe, 2008). Vangen & Huxham (2003a) argues that one important skill for any manager in a context like this is to be able to play the politics and manipulating the agenda within the collaboration. This in order to overcome the lack of engagement from the participants and to drive the collaboration forward.

Managerial activities relating to driving the collaboration forward originate from either the side of the spirit of collaboration or from enacting collaborative thuggery and is denoted by Vangen and Huxham (2003a) as creating collaborative advantage. Both of the sides, spirit of collaboration and collaborative thuggery, is necessary in order to achieve the desired outcome of the collaboration. Activities in line with collaborative thuggery have been previously addressed such as playing politics and manipulating the agenda. Contrary, activities supporting the spirit of the collaboration revolves around managing relations, building trust and facilitating in conflicts. By viewing management through this lens, the authors adopt the sensitizing concept of *managing for collaborative advantage*.

2.2 - Managing the “space in-between”

Managing and leadership skills need to change along with this changing environment for innovation and collaborating organizations. Certain incumbent management skills are highlighted as well as newfound ones have emerged as key for conducting leadership. Skills such as communication and trust building (Mandell & Steelman, 2003), consensus seeking activities (Vangen & Huxham, 2003a, 2003b), identity forming (Karp & Helgø, 2008) as well as managing for diversity (Ollila & Yström, 2017) is emphasized for the manager. This in order to fulfill the role with responsibilities ranging from minimizing constraints, capitalize on opportunities and pushing the process forward onto effective outcome (Mandell & Steelman, 2003). Managing such a complex environment contrasting both a cohesive structure as well as embracing existing ones position the manager in a space in-between hierarchies (Yström, 2013).

By studying top management in two different open innovation collaboration contexts, Ollila and Yström (2017) identified activities relating to the three key roles of *facilitator*, *tactician* and *sensegiver* as depicted in table 1. This study was mainly accomplished by a qualitative approach from a few cases, as such it can be argued that these results would need to be validated before generalized. Although, these roles and activities share a lot of resemblance with the previously mentioned activities by Vangen and Huxham (2003a). Even more interestingly, according to the authors of this study, is that both studies have identified activities that can be argued to go against the notion of collaboration, such as playing the politics and manipulating the collaborative agenda. This is due to overcoming the challenge of being a manager with limited power in a setting with multiple stakeholders with different incentives for participating (Ollila & Yström, 2017; Vangen & Huxham, 2003a).

Table 1. Managerial roles in open innovation collaborations (Ollila & Yström, 2017)

Managerial Roles	Activities
Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling dialogue by balancing different perspectives • Bridge perceived gaps • Harness diversity
Tactician	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playing the politics • Strategically use stakeholders perceptions to maneuver the collaboration • Anchoring decisions in retrospect
Sensegiver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable joint action • Emphasize the valuable aspects of the collaboration

Vangen and Huxham (2003a) argues that in these collaborative settings with multiple stakeholders, there rarely exists a traditional hierarchy between the manager and participants, as can be found in firms. Without hierarchies within the interorganizational collaboration, informal and relational leaders are argued to be emphasized (see for example Feyerherm, 1994; Bryson & Crosby, 1992; Murrell, 1997). However, this study focus on formally appointed collaboration managers, and as such, informal leadership is of less interest. Instead, the increased complexity of the multi-actor collaboration with limited hierarchical structure suggests a “post managerial” environment (Hamel & Breen, 2007).

Following the concept of a “post-managerial” environment, Karp and Helgø (2008) argues that the future of management, and more specifically leadership, will leave the paradigm of “direct and control” behind (Karp & Helgø, 2008). What the authors essentially means by that, is that in the future, as the complexity of the world increases, the leader will not always have control. Instead, they argue that *“the best a leader can do is to enter, with his or her intentions, into interactions with others with their intentions, out of which something will be created under no one individual’s control”* (Karp & Helgø, 2008, p32). Having to leave the aspects of direct and control holds specifically true for interorganizational innovation collaboration managers, as responsibilities here often are both diffuse and ambiguous (Ollila & Ystrom, 2017). Even though they are formally appointed managers it does not mean that they have formal authority in the traditional sense. Instead, they have to create their mandate based on other power

bases (French, Raven & Cartwright, 1959). Further argumentation by Karp and Helgø (2008) points to that the post-managerial era increases the complexity levels for leaders, such that future concepts would focus on the leader as not only a function but as a result from continuously built dynamic relations. By adopting these theories of *postmodern leadership* as our second sensitizing concept the authors aim to further guide the analysis.

3 - Research methodology

This chapter will cover the authors' chosen research strategy as well as how the data was collected and analyzed, ending in a discussion about the method used.

3.1 - Research strategy & approach

This study will follow an exploratory approach since the research of management of the space in-between hierarchies in a multi-actor environment is only partially explored (Ollila & Ystrom, 2017). Since the exploratory research mainly aims to explore a field that is relatively unexplored in previous research and does not intend to offer any conclusive solution (Stebbins, 2001), the chosen strategy is to conduct an inductive study. Hence, this study aims to explore a phenomena and identify themes and patterns (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2007) contributing with new knowledge, which lays a foundation for further studies within the research area. As follows from the reasoning of Bryman and Bell (2015) along with (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015) a qualitative method is preferred when the research is of inductive nature.

3.2 - Research process

The authors draw from the literature of Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, and Jackson (2015) which conclude that in order to generate new theory an iterative process is effective under the circumstance of inductive research. Dubois and Gadde (2002) argues that the iterative process is strengthened due to the systematic approach which combines the gathering of empirical data along with theoretical review in order to generate theory. As such the literature review is seen as an agile method conducting iterative loops when new information emerges, as seen in figure 1. This newfound knowledge will subsequently build the foundation for a new iteration (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015).

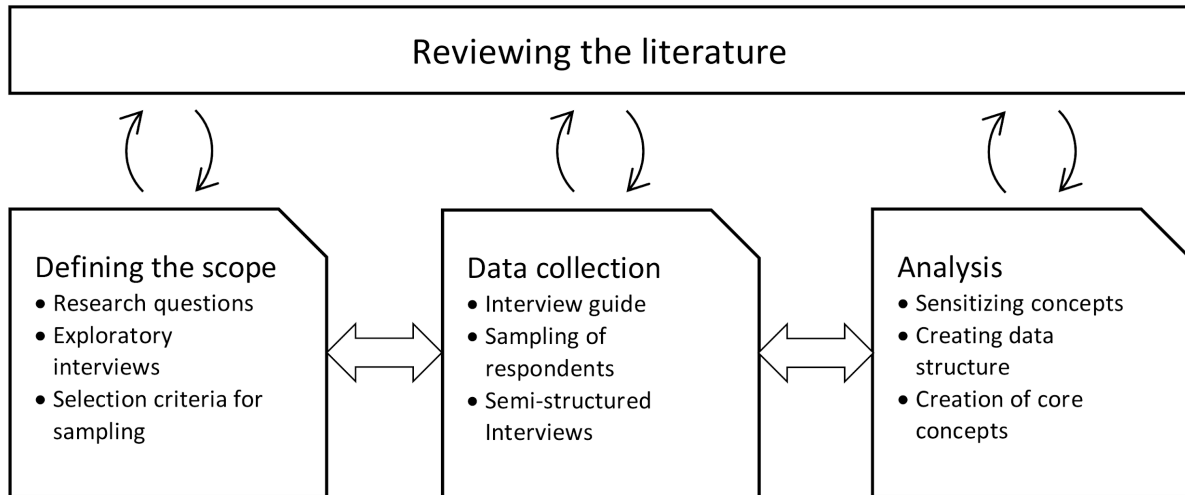


Figure 1: Process map describing the three phases and their objectives and outcome

During the first phase, the scope of the study was defined by conducting literature reviews and exploratory interviews with two respondents (see table 3). After the scope of the research was set and the initial explorative interviews were conducted the research question emerged due to the particularly interesting concept of leading without authority, as such our study takes form from the notion of what kind of activities is then conducted by the manager? This laid the foundation for our primary research question of *What does the work of an in-between manager entail?*

As the term *in-between manager* can be argued not yet to be an established concept in management research, the authors first had to define selection criteria for the role under study and the context in which there was a good chance of finding these for the data sampling of this study. The selection criteria for the in-between managers emerged during the iterations of the literature review (Ollila & Elmquist, 2011; Ollila & Ystrom, 2017; Yström, 2013) and initial exploratory interviews. Once set, the selection criteria were used when contacting the potential respondents, and as such validating them (see Sampling of respondents). To identify individuals relevant to include in the study, the selection criteria were set-up related to their work situation as well as their organizational context, as can be seen in table 2. By using these selections criteria, the authors aimed firstly to delimit individuals as well as organizations which not is sufficiently enough complex and secondly not delimit those which holds an interest in this specific study. What was integral for this study in order to further the knowledge of the in-between manager was to identify the management level under the top management. Since this level has been previously studied (Yström, 2013) and thus will not bring any further understanding of the role than already discovered. Additionally, it is worth noting that due to somewhat abstract criteria for both the interested organization as well as for each respondent,

these criteria developed iteratively along as more and more interviews were conducted. This due to both the increased understanding of the role as well as the delimitation which eliminates some individuals along with the scope narrowed for the role description of the in-between manager.

Phase 2, in figure 1, shows the data collection phase, and it is during this time interview guides, and the snowball selection along with the interviews was done in an iterative process along with another more focused literature review session. These two activities are extensively attended to later within this chapter. The next phase, phase 3 in figure 1, revolves mainly around the data analysis in collaboration with further literature reviews in order to inform our results. Similar to the conducted activities of phase 2 also these activities will be attended more deeply later on in this chapter.

Table 2: Selection criteria for sampling of respondents

Role related criteria:	Organizational context criteria:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positioned in the space in-between the hierarchies • Holds an operational role within the collaboration • Active in a multi-actor collaborative context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-creation in focus • Triple helix model of innovation involving actors from academia, industry and society • Common vision statement

3.3 - Data collection

The collection of data was done by conducting interviews. Since the interviews were carried out in different ways ranging from face-to-face interviews, to interviews over the phone the authors worked extensively with confirming answers using laddering techniques (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015) and simply repeating questions.

3.3.1 - Sampling of Respondents

The respondents of this study were chosen using theoretical sampling, i.e. non-probability sampling, in order to increase the chance of finding the in-between manager (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015). This sampling theory comes with two main upsides for this study, firstly as it is preferred when extending on emerging theory. Secondly, as this sampling strategy creates a study easier to replicate (Pettigrew, 1990). This study utilized a snowball sampling technique, which entailed choosing an initial sampling population to interview based on selection criteria that have previously been addressed.

The sampling began with recommendations of potential candidates from a jointly conducted workshop by Chalmers researchers and Johanneberg Science Park. As an initial contact the selected in-between managers were sent emails in which the authors specified their background along with the intentions and purpose of the study. In this email, the selection criteria for the role as well as for the organization were once again stated, and if the potential respondent recognized him/herself in the selection criteria an interview was proposed. By conducting the sampling in this way, the authors aimed to decrease their own selection bias and create a sampling that also includes participants perceptions.

After each interview, the respondents were asked to recommend individuals holding similar roles as themselves. From these recommendations, the list of possible in-between managers grew. By browsing through the organizational homepages and role descriptions of the managers, new potential interview subject was selected. This sampling strategy is suitable when the individuals are scarce and hard to find (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015), which could be argued is the case for the in-between manager.

3.3.2 - Interviews

Following the thesis inspiration of grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) the first exploratory interviews to identify the scope, was conducted with an idea of focusing the study and the succeeding interviews were subsequently build on this gained knowledge. The interviews were conducted using an open-ended semi-structured interview guide, which can be found in the Appendix A. Utilizing an interview guide enabled the authors to probe the interview to directions that were of interest in this study, as well as leaving the questions open for the respondents to answer freely (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Easterby-Smith et al., 2015). In this study, 19 in-between managers were interviewed at various organizations which can be seen in table 3. The interviews ranged in duration between 35-95 minutes, where some were conducted face to face and some interviews were conducted over the telephone. The latter was due to the respondents were located far away from the authors. According to Bryman and Bell (2015), this is suitable when one is restricted by any means, in our case time and travel money.

Table 3: Respondents of the interview study

Interview alias	Title	Organizational constellation	Type of interview
Phase 1: Exploratory Interviews			
Robert	Director	Science Park	Face to Face
Olivia	Consultant	Consultant firm	Face to Face
Phase 2: Semi-structured Interviews			
Elise	Process Manager	Science Park	Telephone
Ava	Project Manager	Science Park	Face to Face
Maia	Project Manager	Innovation Arena	Telephone
Owen	Consultant	Consultant firm	Face to Face
Oscar	Vice President	Science Park	Face to Face
Grace	President	Science Park	Face to Face
Simon	R&D Manager	Science Park	Face to Face
Elena	Project Coordinator	Co-creation Arena	Telephone
Axel	Process Manager	Innovation Arena	Telephone
Jane	Innovation Advisor	Science Park	Telephone
Isabel	Project Manager	Science Park	Face to Face
Julia	Process & Project Manager Innovation	Innovation Cluster	Telephone
Zara	Project Coordinator	Science Park	Telephone
David	Innovation Advisor	Science Park	Telephone
Amie	Head of Innovation & Business center	Urban development, Municipality	Face to Face
Emma	Process Manager	Consultant firm	Face to Face
Olivia	Consultant	Consultant firm	Face to Face
Mia	Consultant	Consultant firm	Face to Face

For the benefit of this study, all respondents were made anonymous with made-up names as well as a description of the organizational constellation in which they were active. An additional notation should be made on the disparity of work titles each respondent held. The researchers thoroughly reviewed each respondent both before an interview was conducted as well as after, this disparity in titles is as such mainly reflected on the nascent nature of the work the manager does. The roles hold no sectorial common title and the dissimilarities in the title are not mirrored in different work-related activities, but in contrast, their activities are aligned with what is assumed to be the main denominator of being an in-between manager.

During the interviews, the authors commit to two different roles, where one is primarily the interviewer and the other has a more administrative role. The administrative role included recording the interview, taking notes, keeping track of time and occasionally asking complementary questions. For the interviewer, the role primarily entailed building a discussion and moving the subject forward. This by for example narrowing the narrative to a minimalistic scope during parts the respondent found interesting without taking over the direction of the conversation (Czarniawska-Joerges, 2004). Furthermore, all interviews were recorded and transcribed for future analysis, as well as summarized and reflected upon directly after each interview had been conducted. By summarizing and taking notes the authors opened up for

an immediate pattern recognition. This allowed for probing of interview questions for the following interviews.

3.4 - Literature review

For this thesis, the literature review consisted of journals, textbooks and articles - both peer-reviewed and conference papers not yet published. At first, the literature review served the purpose of getting an overview of the topic of “In-between” management and managing open innovation collaboration. By initially restricting the literature review to these two subjects the aim was to create a broad understanding of the phenomena of “In-between” management and how the concept has been developed over time (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015). Sources of new literature were created along with the study but did not often stray far away from two distinct sets of origins; either by proposals from our supervisor or by searching for our themes in Scopus and Google scholar. Moreover, it was the later parts of the literature review that enabled the use of *sensitizing concepts* found in “Chapter 2 - Conceptual background”, which will be discussed more in “Chapter 3.5 - Data analysis”.

Due to the nascent nature of literature revolving in-between management, related adjacent fields in management research have been reviewed. This in order to inform the analysis by contrasting incumbent knowledge of management with the more specific practices carried out by the researched professionals. As can be seen in table 4, the literature changed along the line of development of the thesis and the subsequential narrowing of the subject due to the initial interview session. During each phase the reading procedure did not differ much, articles were briefly scanned and the abstract read during each phase. Along with the development through the research, the narrowing of the scope altered the sheer number of articles processed. In the earlier phases roughly 75-100 articles were read, and as the scoped narrowed less and more focused articles were reviewed Articles holding more promise, either by their narrower scope or by the large number of citations they got, was read more thoroughly. By using a forward snowballing technique (Wohlin, 2014), further articles of interests were found by scanning these highlighted articles' reference lists.

Table 4: Searched themes during the different phases of the study

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Searched themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Open innovation -Managing open innovation -Co-creation of value -Triple helix model of innovation -Organizational design -Knowledge creation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Interorganizational collaborations -Collaboration Intermediaries -Postmodern leadership -Open innovation collaboration -Managing collaboration/interorganizational collaboration/open innovation collaboration -Collaborative networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Knowledge and Innovation Ecosystems

3.5 - Data analysis

The data analysis in this study was inspired by Grounded theory methodology by Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton (2013), which is a framework that is suitable to generate new concepts and theory, that the authors deemed suitable for this study. That is, from the transcripts, excerpts were gathered and analyzed using “Open coding” to identify descriptive 1st order codes. During this phase, the authors separately coded the excerpts and tried to remain as open as possible to what the data showed. Using Microsoft Excel to code, the authors had continuous meeting sessions where codes were compared and iterated to arrive at a consensus. Once consensus was reached, the open codes were printed to allow for more tangible and flexible clustering into analytical 2nd order categories. From this stage onward in the coding process, the authors did the coding and clustering together.

Following in the footsteps of the study conducted by Järvi, Almpantopoulou, and Ritala (2018) the authors also adopted the notion of *sensitizing concepts*. This was used to suggest guidance to our 2nd order categories as well as the aggregated dimension of core concepts. From the first stage of the coding process, the authors were intrigued by how the in-between managers managed innovation collaborations without any formal authority. From the literature review, related concepts were identified; managing for *collaborative advantage* (Vangen & Huxham, 2003a) and *postmodern leadership* (Karp & Helgø, 2008), subsequently, these served as our *sensitizing concepts*. During this coding process, the authors were structuring categories and themes that could help to explore what the work and roles of an in-between manager entail. Citations ranged between around 10 to the upper echelon of the 30s per respondent, as each of these citations generated one 1st order codes even the 2nd order categories got numerous. The result of this coding structure can be seen in figure 2 and the related empirical evidence in table 6, supporting the 1st and 2nd order codes.

3.6 - Trustworthiness and ethics

The general idea of qualitative studies is to generate theory, in contrast to the quantitative where testing is the primary outcome. As such building trustworthiness follows the idea of triangulation (Lincoln, 1985), where the following four factors are important when evaluating the trustworthiness of any given qualitative study. Lastly, the ethical aspects of our study are reviewed and evaluated.

Credibility

One important criterion of credibility revolves around the notion that the data should be able to be reviewed by the respondent (Bryman & Bell, 2015). This in order to follow the line of thinking and to uphold a degree of good practice, such as be able to conclude that the study is correct and accurate. In this study, the authors aimed to uphold a high degree of credibility by double-checking all excerpt citations used to the individual respondent which was the originator. Moreover, Tracy (2010) adds to the notion of credibility, by stating that one of the most important things to consider is providing a “thick description”. What this essentially means, is that the study should provide enough concrete details of the data, so that the reader can make their own conclusions. Tracy (2010) further stresses that this means to *show* rather than *tell*. In line with this argument, the authors of this study have tried to provide a thick description by both depict the respondent raw data in table 6, as well as illustrate the author's way of thought when clustering this data into core concepts, as seen in figure 2.

Using peer debriefing and referential adequacy further the credibility of the study. Peer debriefing is mainly conducted by the supervisor of the thesis along with a final peer review. Since the digital age ease the storage of raw data it would be rather easy in the future to recheck the analysis from the studied data, all transcribed interviews, and as such this thesis upholds the criteria referential adequacy.

Transferability

Transferability is reached if the study is transparent of its participants, context and procedures (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The continuous work with upholding transparency during the procedure from which data is created and processed is done in this study by visualizing participants in table 3 as well as thoroughly explain the authors' course of action.

Dependability

Dependability is upheld if the study in detail describes the data collection, analysis and subsequent interpretation of it (Bryman & Bell, 2015). During this thesis, the authors aimed to uphold this by in detail explain the procedure of data collection as well as using visual means for the analysis. Lastly, the appendix is used to enhance the dependability of this thesis by including the interview guide used in this research.

Confirmability

Confirmability is essentially about objectivity (Bryman & Bell, 2015). In order to fulfill confirmability, the authors used Google drive for all context, building ideas and thoughts as well as all recorded material. This way of working provides any interested party with the possibility to evaluate that the authors worked on the research in good faith. As all transcripts in their original state are visible the problems revolving translation of data is lessened due to the re-checking by both the authors along the time of the study but also by others on a later date (Bryman & Bell, 2015). A further note is that each interview was conducted in pairs and as such personal biases are mitigated and a certain amount of objectivity is upheld. The initial coding procedure was conducted by both authors separately. The concepts and categories derived from the coding process were later discussed, compared and iterated in order to build cohesion and consensus of findings.

Ethical aspects

When conducting management research there are ten ethical principles to consider according to Easterby-Smith et al. (2015). These principles, depicted in table 5, is intended to protect the research subject and informants as well as the research community. As the latter has been

somewhat covered in the previous section, the emphasis in this section will be more on the ethical aspects linked to the research subjects and respondents.

Table 5: Ethical principles to consider when conducting management research (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015)

Principles	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensuring that no harm comes to participants 2. Respecting the dignity of research participants 3. Ensuring a fully informed consent of research participants 4. Protecting the privacy of research participants 5. Ensuring confidentiality of research data 6. Protecting the anonymity of individuals or organizations 	Protection of research participant and the interest of the research subject
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Avoiding deception about the nature or aims of the research 8. Declaration of affiliations, funding sources and conflict of interest 9. Honesty and transparency in communicating about the research 10. Avoidance of any misleading or false reporting of research findings 	Protecting the research community

When contacting every respondent by email asking them to participate in this study, the authors also made sure to explain the purpose of the study making sure that the respondent was aware of the intent and not felt misled when conducting the interviews. Moreover, prior to the interview, the authors made sure to explain to the respondents about their rights (which can also be seen in the interview guide, Appendix A):

- Inform that Chalmers follows the GDPR and that you can read more at Chalmers website
- Inform about the right to be anonymous
- Ask if it is possible to record the interview
- Inform them that they have the right to cancel the interview at any given time

Furthermore, the authors have made sure to protect the anonymity of the respondents by creating aliases as well as only being descriptive of their organizational belonging. This ensures that no harm can come to the respondent by the data the authors chose to reveal in this study.

4 - Findings and Analysis

In this chapter, the authors aim to analyze and interpret our findings constructed from the coding procedure related to what the roles and activities of an in-between manager entail. The chapter is divided into two subchapters where chapter 4.1 mainly revolves around research question 1: What does the work of an in-between manager entail? and as such attend the activities conducted by the in-between manager in their daily affairs. Chapter 4.2 attends the second research question: What managerial roles does the in-between manager take on in interorganizational collaborations within a triple-helix context? and analyze the different roles that the in-between manager takes upon themselves during their work.

Even though both questions are answered separately, both answers originate from the analysis which leads to figure 2: Data structure. The rationale for dividing the analysis in such a way is due to that the questions are empirically intertwined but separately analyzed. This in order to ensure a clear representation of both the conducted activities as well as the undertaken roles by the in-between manager.

4.1 - Work performed by the in-between manager

This section aims to analyze the work conducted by an in-between manager from the perspective of their activities, consequently mainly answering research question 1.

4.1.1 - Support collaborative direction

Our analysis suggests that the coordination of the process to find a common direction within the collaboration as well as keeping this process from stagnating often falls on the shoulders of the in-between manager. We interpret this as supportive work to aid the collaborative direction. This section subsequently aims to analyze activities undertaken by the in-between manager following that specific motive.

Searching for alignment

Searching for alignment between a highly dispersed group of individuals leads to challenges both relating to the individuals' home organization's incentives for being involved in the collaboration as well as assemble these into the direction of the process. Since some collaborations exist of organizations originating from academia, public sector and private sector, the complexity of incentive directions is considerable. Working out a direction in such a maze does not only pose a strain on the patience of the in-between manager but also on

their adaptiveness to new influences. As one respondent argues “the thing is, my understanding is subordinate to the group, you need to listen to where they are and understand that not all are up to speed at any given moment” (Mia). It could well be argued that due to the different individuals the collaboration consists of pose different solutions, although since one respondent resemble the activities to a jazz-musician (i.e. moving freely between different instruments and beats), where the adaptive ulterior characteristic trait seems to be the key enacting the interconnection between the collaboration participants.

Most collaboration stems from an overall vision where the activities building up to this direction falls on the in-between manager’s table. “In quite a few of my assignments over the years, the job has revolved at getting a heading. When asked what I should do the response was that - this is what my job entails to find out” (Emma). Our interpretation as such is that the development of direction for the process begins early and even before the collaboration participants are agreed upon. By exploring the vision and setting the activities aligned aiming to meet this vision, is the foundation for the collaboration going forward.

Keeping the process moving forward

Purposefully drive the process forward entails a plethora of characteristic traits and activities from the in-between manager. Ranging from creating cohesion amongst different ideas to be able to pick and choose which of these would create the most momentum going forward. “The drive, driving a process forward. It is not enough that the relations work if not sufficient progress is made” (Olivia) as argued by one respondent, the progress is the aim. By being result-oriented the in-between manager aims to support the process and overcome senses of stagnation using methods intended to push participants onward. This drive is created by alternating between being both “kind” and “tough” as it is the interchange between the two which pose participants to act and create an understanding for the process and also, not to underestimate, for each other and individual preferences and incentives.

This previously mentioned drive does not exist in vacuum and this drive needs to be directed. Mostly at the beginning of any process but also along the way new ideas arise. As commonly established not all ideas brings greatness but some do, so evaluating which ideas would direct the process forward and which would hinder or even backtrack the process would need to be reviewed. Similarly to other management techniques, idea evaluation is conducted by the in-between manager by using various methods. For instance, positioning a participant as a carrier of an idea and give them the responsibility to either fail or pass that idea.

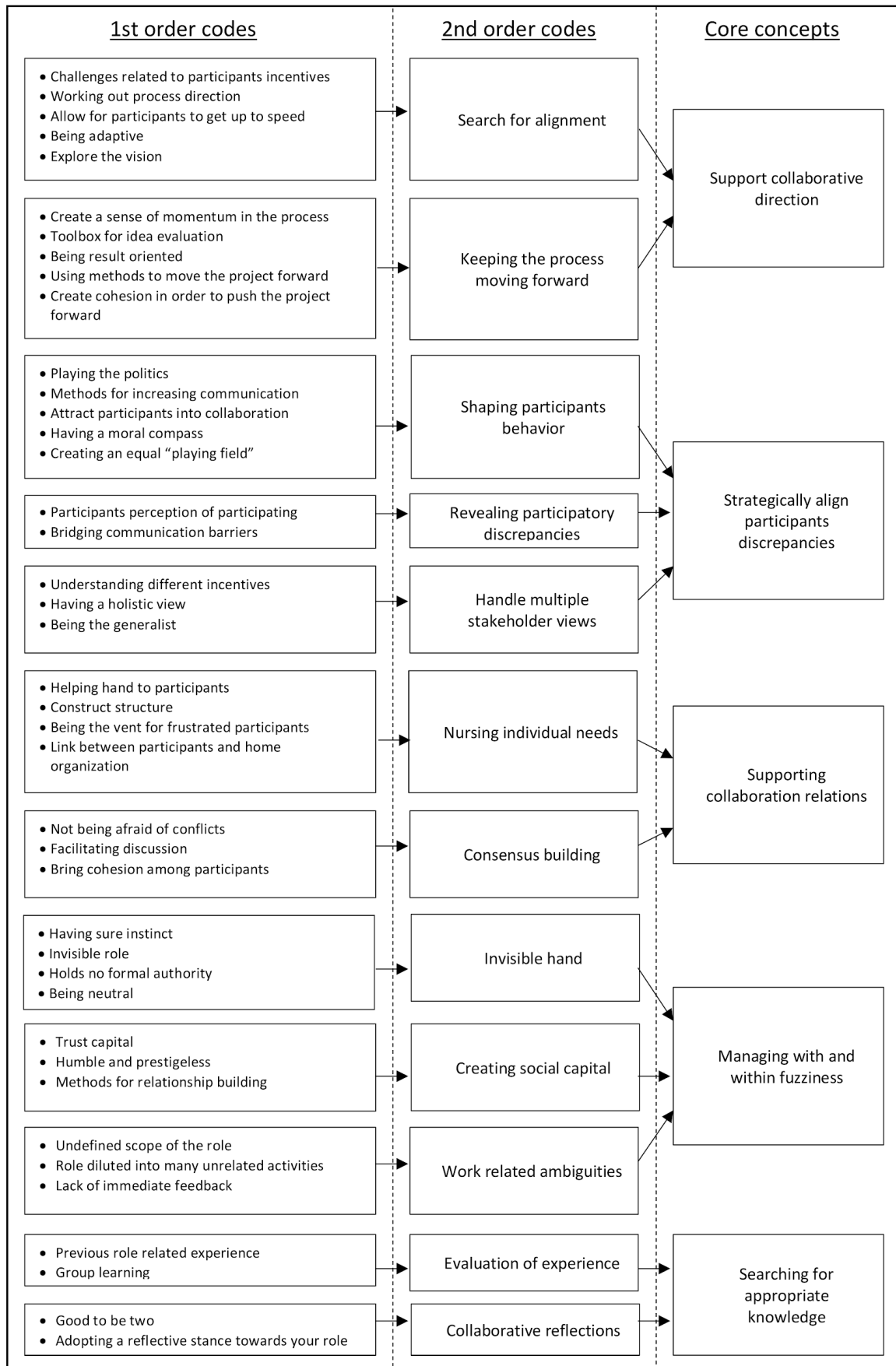


Figure 2: Data structure

4.1.2 - Strategically align participants discrepancies

Common ground, create agreement and mutual understanding is similar concepts that entail that different individuals who initially hold diverse beliefs create an understanding of bridging incentives. Collaborative commitments bring as previously stated complexities related to dispersed incentives from both individual perspectives as well as from participatory organizations. Handling and shaping these incentives and settling for common ground entails both overall understandings of participants from the perspective of the in-between manager along with the participant's own understanding of participating. As such the work of the in-between manager does not only begin by elevating these understandings into the light of participants but also the work behind the scenes in creating the foundation the collaboration succeeds on. Hence, the authors have conceptualized this process as *Strategically align participants discrepancies*.

Handling multiple stakeholder views

When multi-actor collaborations exist, mixing academia, private sector and public sector each of these associated participants has a set way of work and acting. Understanding and confronting individuals from this range of origins leads not only the in-between manager to require a holistic perspective but also be able to bridge different participants perspectives. "It is something about confronting various actors differently, you need to understand them both as organizations and under which motives they act" (Amie). Our analysis suggests that this understanding of participatory organizations and individuals is only possible if the perspective of the in-between manager is broad enough. As argued by multiple respondents this view is important for the in-between manager, "you often are the focal point of the process, and the holistic view is therefore the reason new connection is made in new innovative ways" (Axel), "I often take the focal point in the process, this gives me the holistic view and by not focusing solely on specific details I can detach myself and see the overall value which is created" (Elise).

Revealing participatory discrepancies

With no authority over participants the in-between manager needs not just to understand participants perception of participating, but the participants themselves need to create an understanding if this endeavor is the right fit for them. By offering space for participants to articulate their own perspective of involvement furthers the participants ability to reflect on the collaboration vision. Furthermore, participants own understanding does not only favor themselves but other participants can build on their perspective on the collaboration and better adjust their own. By facilitating discussions such as these the in-between manager aims to

screen which participants understand the collaborative vision and which of them may have been misled to attend. Additionally, this situation helps overcome communication barriers that occur when participants origin from varying sectors as a common language decreases misunderstanding and as such redundancy.

Shaping participants behavior

Not uncommon for the in-between manager is to be met of participants not thrilled with the idea of collaborating with others, as this often entails the need to share knowledge the participant is not comfortable with sharing. It is during this situation the work of the in-between manager entails to appeal to the value of the collaboration and entice the participants to take the leap into the collaboration. Open up discussions by asking smart questions, such as to describe what kind of inventory is in the participants fridge, is a method used by one respondent to entice participants to participate. Argued by in-between managers is that since not all individuals are comfortable to open up in groups even more profound methods are usable. "You need to try and explain the context, thus creating security for the collaborative situation", "you cannot trick someone to participate, you need to entice them, to coax in order for them to bridge their uncertainty" (Olivia). By using approaches outside the mainstream course of action is as such deemed necessary. Arguably due to the state in which the in-between managers are positioned, no formal authority leads to innovative approaches.

As some participants come with baggage that needs to be attended to in order for the collaboration to be successful, the in-between manager can use less obvious activities in order for the participants to collaborate. Using lightheartedly exposures of individuals in order to level the playing field of participants is argued by some respondents to be fruitful. For example, one respondent says that: "I can ask questions to the talkative person which I know does not hold the answer, by redirecting the same to the silent person I can bring this person in to the light and illuminate his/her knowledge" (Jane), while another notes that a thoughtful humbling act is sometimes required. Succinctly the in-between managers use many tricks in order to get the participants "in line", although the morality is not lost as it is argued heavily when using different humbling, exposures and coaxing the in-between managers need always to use their sure instinct so nothing goes over the line and always has the "right feelings" surrounding the act. One technique used by in-between managers when undergoing the act of exposure is to set a beforehand determined scene together with the exposed where the in-between manager offers an escape route. This to uphold the nice feeling surrounding the else provocative situation for the participant.

4.1.3 - Supporting collaborative relations

Much of the analyzed part heretofore revolves around how the in-between managers aim to aid the collaboration as a whole with the primary interest of driving it to success. All noteworthy relations from the manager has been deemed to be of the best interest of the collaboration. Although, as will be argued below, parts of the daily activities surrounding the in-between manager are closely linked to the participants emotions and well-being. It is not the organizations that collaborate but the individuals, and those conflicts are so much closer to home. This work is interpreted as relation building in order to support the collaboration.

Nursing individual needs

Bonding and building relationships entail a large variety of activities as a whole. For the in-between manager individual relations is one of the most common interactivities conducted as participants rely on the manager for many obstacles they encounter. Creating structure and minimizing the uncertainty is basal, but the activity of doing so is certainly not. Short foresight puts pressure on the in-between manager's possibilities to act accordingly, in addition to this the previously noted challenges relating to no formal authority, this shaping of structure is how the in-between manager creates security for participants. Other than this as relations are not built solely on feelings of security numerous in-between managers aim to be a stable point to the participants by being a helping hand in the face of adversity. "The participants can be of need to have a conversation as if you were their formal boss, similar to a performance appraisal" (Simon), "aid the participants to formulate their individual incentives as well as their home organizations incentives" (Simon), as such the diverse way an in-between manager aids the participants of the collaboration range from large to small individual hassles.

Helping participants formulate their own and their organization's incentives is a major venture which is argued to be an important one as "hierarchy" does not cut it. Internal anchoring from the participants leads to that upper management also gets involved with the collaboration and concerns as well as pride of success is internalized within the given home organization. Not all supporting activities conducted by the in-between managers are of this regard as sometimes they only need to act as a "vent" or "acting as a temporary psychologist" where participants can pour their frustration for any large to small issue.

Consensus building

Collaborations existing of organizations of different origins where some participants aim to be published, academia, some interests are aligned with the current political climate, public sector, and some just interested in what this venture would yield to their bottom line, the private

sector. Creating and consolidating an agenda in this environment where all participants are driven by their own incentives leads to continuous conflicts amongst participants but also between participants and the in-between manager. Consequently, the in-between manager could not steer away from conflict or being an individual afraid of those but has to meet them head-on, upright and honest. "You need to be engaged and humble to the task and not be afraid of steering into conflict, and to be solution-driven" (Owen). Conflict resolution with the aim of building cohesion is as such something the in-between managers face in their everyday work. Being able to facilitate discussions, able to bridge conflicts and support the relationships is argued to ease the collaborations work and reaching consensus on ambiguities relating to the progression of the process helps participants in their individual work.

"I often sense rather fast if something does not quite work. That it is pivotal to act accordingly. I am a rather honest and straightforward person so individuals not handling conflicts and critique as good can often take it quite well from me. This since they understand that I don't do it malevolently, I don't do it to grumble, but I am doing it for the bigger picture and the willingness for them to function in the collaboration as a whole" (Elise).

4.1.4 - Managing with and within fuzziness

As previously noted, the lack of authority amongst the in-between managers leads them to conduct their leadership skills in different ways. This leads to the used leadership skills by the in-between manager has shifted from the incumbent philosophy of management to new emergent theories. Enacting in management within complex constellations as interorganizational collaborations, highlights just these new leadership skills.

Creating social capital

Where all participants, if approved by the home organization, can just as easily leave the collaboration if value is not achieved, the main capital the in-between manager have to utilize is the trust in them. It is argued that both earlier experiences, "trust is experience, it is a bonus if you have some similar experience" (Amie), and humility, "it is possible to act as if I can, but it is pointless since it would be obvious that I don't as such it is better to be clear that I do not know" (Jane), helps the in-between manager building trust. It has been addressed earlier although the traits of the in-between manager are seen as primarily revolve around humility. With this as a foundation, it is argued that if the relationship between the in-between manager and the participant is more similar to a guide than that of an expert the value of the manager in the eyes of the participants, which should be the experts, is greater. This not only due to the specifics of the role of the in-between manager per se but more distinct as the possibility

“to step on toes” is decreased. Arguably a key factor since most activities within the inter-organizational collaboration has blurred lines where one participant’s activity ends and another begins.

Creating trust for the in-between manager is an activity most respondents relate to, they do though differ on how. As some notes that the activities of building trust are enough in order to build a relationship others delve deeper into tools and methods for doing so. The dual purpose of the previously mentioned fridge question, where participants were asked to recount for its belongings to the group, where not only silent individuals need to open up, it is also a method for building relationships by offering the participants something to talk and laugh about. Even though most are on board with the idea of fun being important for the collaboration to be successful, other early activities also have the purpose of evaluating participant’s competencies and knowledge. “Often, in the beginning, most of the tools and workshops are aimed to build relationships and to get everyone to know each other. Instead, I mainly use those workshops in order to understand the roles of the participants, and for them to understand their own, as well as learn who is the best at what” (Elise).

Invisible hand

Contrary to management and leaders as a concept the in-between manager does not lead from the front but from the background. This both due to the role they hold but also due to that the in-between manager has no formal authority and as such lacks the mandate for decision making. Leading from the background poses issues not just for which skill set the in-between managers must have, but since they also are connected to the collaboration by employment, highlighting their value is as important for the collaboration as for themselves. “Much of the work you do is invisible” (Isabel), “I see my work as pivotal although unseen, mostly due that it is not always necessary to be seen” (Simon). Argumentation in the line of these was not uncommon although as noted they all struggle with on one hand be in the background and doing invisible work for the good of the collaboration and on the other highlight what they do up their own management chain for the in-between managers *raison d’être*.

By not being able or having the mandate for making decisions, the in-between manager fluidly exists as an intermediary with the focus of being independent. Even though some respondents highlight their independence as contextual others strongly point to that the reason for the in-between manager to be able to do their work is if they do not “have skin in the game”. Being able to alternate between being independent and being the first informal contact for participants leads to that the in-between manager must rely on their sure instinct. This instinct is deemed to be tacit knowledge similar to the feeling of dough for the baker and intuition, not

dissimilar to many other traits that are important for a successful leader which thrives on knowledge extending on experience.

Work-related ambiguities

Everyday work for the in-between manager entails a dispersed amount of activities none more peculiar than the other. Building on the previous argumentation of how hard it is to get noticed and subsequently the problems which arise from when the in-between manager managers are unable to define the work which the role entails. "Since it does not exist an established practice of what the work is, what it entails. Your managers have often hard to comprehend the dynamics of where you are situated" (Simon). Not only does this affect the outlook for the in-between managers but since upper management, as well as collaboration participants, have problems defining and value the role, activities conducted by the in-between managers were frequently diluted into administrative chores. Being the generalist could as easily be transformed into being the all-rounder, "the one making coffee". It is as such pivotal to enclose the activities which could and activities which should be conducted by the in-between manager for the purpose of pushing the process forward.

Another subject commonly noted by the respondents is the stream of feedback received as the in-between manager, or rather the lack of it. Following previous argumentation, it is not entirely unthinkable to build an image that work conducted by the in-between managers is seldom highlighted in either a positive light or scrutinized. As such the feelings of doing something good, or the sense of closure has been noted to be missed by many, arguable due to that the in-between manager is not "in the process" but is a supporting function and when time to celebrate the success the in-between manager has already moved on to the next phase of the process. "It is rather far between the times to celebrate when doing this. The first routine I set up was that when getting a new assignment, I would buy two bottles of champagne, one to drink for celebrating the assignment and one to drink celebrating when it is done. We have not drunk so many finishing the project bottles" (Owen).

4.1.5 - Searching for appropriate knowledge

A collaboration brought to life by bringing different organizations and their individualities together brings a vast amount of experience. Sometimes of similar endeavors, sometimes with expertise not previously tapped into and other times just the different backgrounds of participants can lead to new innovative approaches and solutions if mixed and raised. The in-between manager works tirelessly using both their own background as an advantage but also

the participants, as such the authors conceptualized this process as *Searching for appropriate knowledge*. This section aims to recount for key aspects of the work entailed doing so.

Evaluation of experience

It has previously been noted that being the generalist is advantageous for the in-between manager. This gathered knowledge and experience can be fruitful even if the context broadly shifts, as one respondent notes that sometimes you need to be a “little bit of a group psychologist” while other times experience closer to the core activities of the in-between manager is more helpful i.e. pursued a previous career as an entrepreneur. Other key experiences are noted to revolve around having worked in either or in all of the different sectors; private, public and academia, as these pieces of knowledge which is picked up there greatly assists the activities performed by the in-between manager. “I have a background in all three [private-, public-, academic sectors] which may be a bit unique, although I argue that in this case it really helps me conduct my job. I think it would be immensely harder for someone not having this experience” (Axel). This previous knowledge of sectors is highlighted by several respondents to ease the burden of on one hand communicate with participants originate from that sector and on the other deepens the understanding from where they came from. Transferring this knowledge which may stem from both the in-between manager as well as in some cases from the participants is argued to help the project by lifting up previous fail and success stories. Aiming for not going in the same directions as those processes who failed and instead take head to those learnings by using the storytelling of failed projects as a guide, helps all participants and in-between managers learn from previous experiences.

Collaborative reflections

Not just learning from previous experience is an asset for the in-between manager but being able to continuously work with a reflective mindset has its values. Complexity, different objectives and a plethora of differentiated incentives among participants lead to some respondents reasoning for the favorable situation of dividing the workload. Being more than one opens up for a new avenue in which the in-between manager can test the ideas not suitable to bring into the fold of the participants as well as the interchange between different roles, for example, “being the good and bad cop”. Further positive aspects of dividing the work between several is argued to relate to having different backgrounds, in essence they all bring their respective knowledge, tacit or otherwise, built during their careers into the collaboration and their management. Although not all respondents argue for the benefits of dividing work, a more common ground is the reflectiveness surrounding their activities. By testing, evaluating, reflecting and changing behavior many of the in-between managers note that due to the role

has no certain origin and no certain related workable activities the continuous improvement undertaken by the in-between manager is what pushes their own understanding and rate of success forward. “That is what we do, thinking about; what did just happen? Reflect and discuss, sometimes with the participants but often between us” (Olivia).

4.2 - The roles undertaken by the in-between manager

Contrary to the previous section, where activities were the primary goal to attend, this section will take a step back and the authors will from a more holistic perspective analyze and develop which roles these activities relate to. This will lead to a more nuanced analysis, see figure 3, of our findings but still aligned with what is developed from figure 2: Data structure.

Numerous different roles are undertaken by the in-between manager in order for them to conduct their work. Although it can easily be seen roles of the in-between manager which relates to holding some sort of supporting position, see for example *Support collaborative direction* and *Support collaboration relation* in figure 2, other roles have also been highlighted within this chapter. Those range from the teacher, see for example *Searching for appropriate knowledge*, to the diplomat, see for example *Nursing individual needs* and *Handle multiple stakeholder views*, the maneuverer, see for example *Shaping participants' behavior* and *Consensus building*, to the generalist, see for example *Invisible hand* and *Work related ambiguities*. Even though multiple other roles can be visible, we highlight these due to their affiliation to each other and their originality both by themselves but also together as a foundation for any leader and manager.

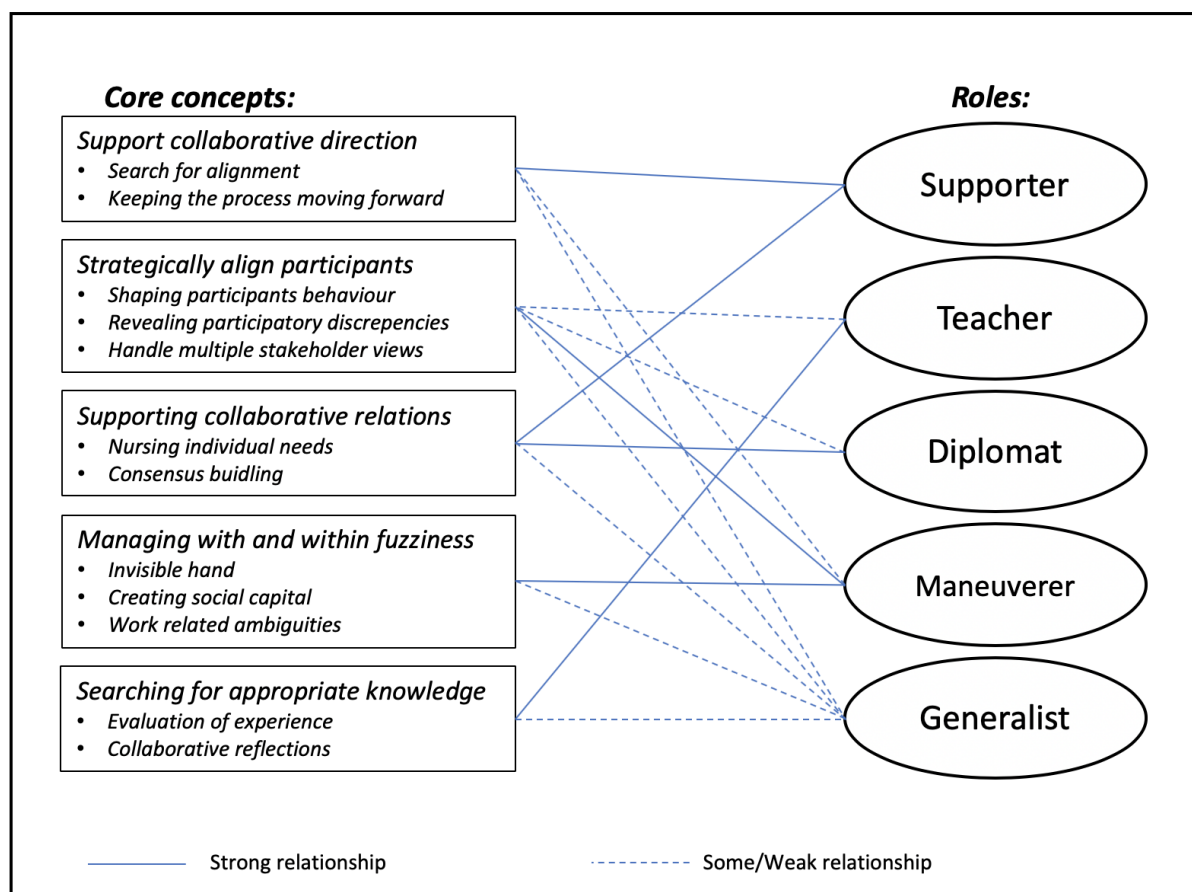


Figure 3: Relationships between the identified core concept and roles

4.2.1 - Supporter

That the in-between manager holds a supporting role is evident from the activities they conduct. We argued that since the main reason for employing an in-between manager is to support the collaboration, this comes with no upset but the role of being supportive to individual participants is, in contrast, an interesting discovery. By not having a say in the overall direction of the collaboration the in-between managers position as a supporting role opens up for not only aligning strategies for the good of the collaboration as a whole but on a more individual plane help and guide participants in their daily work within the collaboration. Having a supporting role in this sense bridges barriers of the direction of the collaboration and leads to a managerial role different from what could be expected. Supporting the collaboration as well as supporting the individual participants puts a new and noteworthy twist on having a role like this.

4.2.2 - Teacher

Evident from the activities relating to using previous knowledge, either accompanying the in-between manager or individual participants within the collaboration, it is not only the

knowledge itself that holds value but also how this knowledge is dispersed, used and reused. As such we argue that in order for this knowledge to bring value for the collaboration the in-between manager holds the role of a teacher. Previously we have addressed notions as how knowledge is evaluated by the in-between manager by both holding a reflexive stance towards newly attained knowledge as well as holding a reflexive stance to incumbent knowledge and how this can be used in the context they now are active within. It could also be argued that it is not only knowledge related to the project itself that holds value but also how to collaborate in the first place. Within this area, the in-between manager teaches and trains the participants of the collaboration in how to enact collaboration before the knowledge gain from it even emerge. By constantly and continuously revalue what knowledge is valuable the stance of an in-between manager transcends and builds on the role of a teacher within the collaboration and its participants.

4.2.3 - Diplomat

Building on the role of the supporter, in order for the in-between manager to conduct activities supporting both the collaboration and individual participants each in-between manager needs to adopt a diplomatic viewpoint in their work. During the previous section within this chapter we have shown that the in-between manager tirelessly works with aligning dispersed views of either the strategic direction of the collaborations or individual participant hassles. This leads to that the in-between manager has to alternate their work between being a psychologist for participants as well as handle the many incentives participatory organizations push on the collaboration. By having a diplomatic outlook or more precisely enacting the role of a diplomat the in-between manager is situated in a position where challenges related to dispersed perspectives could be solved. This is further helped with the previously noted lack of authority the in-between manager holds since due to this factor alignment of participants and organization could be directionless as the main role for the in-between manager is not to specifically set a direction. Undertaking the role of a diplomat is as such a valuable tool for the in-between manager and is commonly visible along with a vast number of activities conducted by the manager.

4.2.4 - Maneuverer

If the role of the diplomat can be seen as a needful and obvious one, enacting in managerial roles containing vaguer behaviors is as desirable. The role of the maneuverer falls within this latter category since by undertaking this role the in-between manager use activities such as playing the politics and previously highlighted method of power redistribution by lighthearted exposures in order to get participants aligned and building relations. These activities, similar

to the those of the diplomat, helps the in-between manager to align participants and organizations. Although the participants and participatory organizations may not be altogether knowledgeable of what has happened, the outcome is often needed. Activities undertaken during this role may be visible for the proficient outside observer, they are definitely not visible for individuals on the other side of the activities, viz the participants within the collaboration. As such the role is a balancing act and as we have previously noted, strongly linked with a good moral and character.

4.2.5 - Generalist

Noted is that respondents seldom see themselves as experts in the field and happily leave expertise on details to those possessing these bits of knowledge. Instead, they take great pride in being the generalist by elevating the importance of curiosity for the role and holding superficial knowledge along many different fields. Thus it can be argued that it is the in-between managers experience and background, as well as to some extent their own personalities which include a sense of curiosity revolving new subjects, in different fields which put them apart from other managers due to their dispersed knowledge of a larger number of fields. Relating this generalized knowledge from the in-between managers along with the previously noted holistic view, which the in-between manager advantageously possesses, it is argued, by both the respondents as well as from the authors' side, that in order to align split opinions the in-between manager itself has no advantage of being an expert. As such the role of being this generalist emerges through the analysis of the respondent's arguments. Previously highlighted phenomena of leading without authority along with the ambiguities of the in-between manager role both lead to the benefits of being a generalist.

By having a broad range of skills and tools the in-between manager can overcome most challenges and barriers they are met with during their work. As shown in this section the in-between manager takes upon him/herself many different roles with many different activities related to each role, being a specialist within one could increase the outcome of just that specific situation but since the specialist is just that, a specialist, and the in-between manager faces numerous diverse challenges having specialty skills is not as valuable. Since the scope of the role for many respondents are loosely defined any specialized skills is hard to narrow down on but as has been noted, the generalist role may be the most important role for any in-between manager to take upon themselves in order to further their understanding of their own activities as well as succeeding on practicing them.

4.3 - Analysis summary

In conclusion, our analysis of the empirical data has presented both roles as well as activities relating to the role of the in-between manager, as seen in figure 2 and figure 3. As has been previously noted our research questions are intertwined and neither of them exists in vacuum. However, research question 1 is more aligned with addressing activities the in-between manager conduct and research question 2 can then be argued to attend the roles undertaken conducting these activities. By summarizing this chapter the authors aim to illustrate in an easily overviewed manner the core findings of this chapter.

The core concepts found relating to the activities conducted by the in-between manager is:

- *Support collaborative direction*
- *Strategically align participants*
- *Supporting collaborative relations*
- *Managing with and within fuzziness*
- *Searching for appropriate knowledge*

The roles undertaken by the in-between manager is found to be:

- *Supporter*
- *Teacher*
- *Diplomat*
- *Maneuverer*
- *Generalist*

Even though these two paths of analysis highlights different characteristics and important notions the interconnection between them results in an intertwined analysis that could be argued to be hard to separate from each other. Several of the concepts connect directly to roles undertaken, but what may be more interesting is the lesser connections which intertwine for example the role of the generalist to all enacted activities in which the in-between manager conducts their day-to-day affairs.

Table 6: Codes linked to representative empirical material

1st and 2nd order codes	Representative empirical material	
1. Search for alignment		
1.1. Challenges related to participants incentives	1.1	It is a constant balancing act in three dimensions [...] the academic world, I think of the business world, I think of the political world (Axel)
1.2. Working out process direction	1.2	It is a lot of these things, the goal is to find the goal and it is a bit more diffuse and so. (Isabel)
1.3. Allow for participants to get up to speed	1.3	So that sometimes one may want to push through one thing in the first meeting,[...] But it is very much about moving people together, in a common agenda, towards a common goal. [...] it is not possible to pick up certain things until "the penny has dropped", it is completely impossible. (Grace)
1.4. Being adaptive	1.4	Because in this type of industry you need to be able to, yes, but as I said before, you have to "freebase" a bit. You have to feel - what happens here? (Jane)
1.5. Explore the vision	1.5	Yes, the basic idea must in some way be sufficiently salient. And since the in-between manager's responsibility is to explore all that potential and not give up until one has tested some unconventional solutions. (Simon)
2. Keeping the process moving forward		
2.1. Create a sense of momentum in the process	2.1	Then you need to have things that can happen quite quickly so people have a feeling of moving forward. And not just have long drawn out things. (Olivia)
2.2. Toolbox for idea evaluation	2.2	But there are a lot of methodologists, like this example to work with post-it notes so that everyone's ideas come up. No one's idea becomes worthier than anyone else's for everyone's idea is just a post-it note... (Jane)
2.3. Being result-oriented	2.3	Getting collaboration to give results. That's our job. And then the road to the results is via the people and the organizations. (Mia)
2.4. Using methods to move the project forward	2.4	I would say that deliveries are important. If one is to get a process to move forward, one must have continuous deliveries. (Amie)
2.5. Create cohesion in order to push the project forward	2.5	Why are you participating? And what do you want out of it? And what do we want out of it? And then try to find the smallest common denominator to be able to take it forward together. (Isabel)
3. Shaping participants behavior		
3.1 Playing the politics	3.1	We've talked a lot about the tactical game, if we now call it that, in the meeting with the participants. But there is a strategic game which is about understanding the playing field for these organizations and for these people, where in the organizations they are, where they have responsibility and authority. (Simon)
3.2 Methods for increasing communication	3.2	But what is common is that one needs in some way, to initiate a discussion. [...] it can be - smart questions, for example, that you ask to initiate people. (Jane)
3.3 Attract participants into collaboration	3.3	Sometimes you need to entice people out of the comfort zone so that something extraordinary can happen. It doesn't have to be such big steps. It's ok with small movements. (Olivia)
3.4 Having a moral compass	3.4	You can choose which information you share and what information you do not share. But you have to be able to stand for everything you do. It must feel right. (Olivia)
3.5 Creating an equal "playing field"	3.5	It can be such a thing that you (as a participant) sit leaning back with your arms crossed, for example [...] Sometimes it can be effective to "pull the rug out" from under such a person's feet directly, like for instance forcing them to do something that they think is a little below their level. (Jane)

Table 6: Continues

1st and 2nd order codes		Representative empirical material
4. Revealing participatory discrepancies		
4.1 Participants perception of participating	4.1	But anyway, in these contexts, it is very important to let people formulate why they perceive that they are there. Then they get to formulate for themselves. They have rarely thought of it before, expressed so explicitly. It is a process in itself. (Simon)
4.1 Bridging communication barriers	4.2	... both have a common glossary for what things mean in the project and where we are going and also what we are doing and why. Have a common ontology and a common schedule and common expectations and common ways to behave and share. So that is where sometimes the start-up of projects takes a bit of time, but once it is in place, the projects are always more successful. (Grace)
5. Handle multiple stakeholder views		
5.1 Understanding different incentives	5.1	This to be sensitive, is about an understanding of the driving forces also held by the various parties. For it is always very different. (Amie)
5.2 Having a holistic view	5.2	(What) characterizes these functions or missions is actually the ability to, on the one hand, manage to see a whole, understand a rather holistic picture of what we are doing, where we are headed, in what context one operates, the structures... (Amie)
5.3 Being the generalist	5.3	Yes, an important part for me that I see here is that I work a lot, I am the world's best generalist, I can do a lot about a variety of things. But I can do nothing about software development for example. And if there is anything we have a lot of here, it is computer game developers, various other developers, software developers. (Jane)
6. Nursing individual needs		
6.1 Helping hand to participants	6.1	So, as [Colleague] described, call, talk to people, how's it going. It's really like being one, almost like a deputy chief who cares about this issue that the individual has shared. And it can be about listening if they need help or support in some way. (Olivia and Mia)
6.2 Construct structure	6.2A	But also creating a little structure, some frames and some security may also be needed from time to time. So that everything is not "fluffy" all the time. We only get to express ourselves but nothing is done. (Olivia and Mia)
	6.2B	Reduce uncertainty. Because I also think that you cannot have processes and say we are running and it will be as it gets. It creates a lot of frustration. I think it's a pretty common mistake. But just to show that, in the next three months, I know that the process looks like this. Then it is these gates, or what you call it. We will get a letter of intent in this constellation. It happens in four weeks. (Amie and Emma)
6.3 Being the vent for frustrated participants	6.3	[Example] One has a frustration that is based on a situation that has arisen between the parties or that has arisen internally. So being a recipient of such frustration is actually a function that we have. (Olivia)
6.4 Link between participants and home organization	6.4	... help with internal anchoring. [Example] If an organization will talk in a context. Then we highlight that it is good if the (participants) manager talks. Because then the manager needs to familiarize himself with what the participant does. And ask for some pictures and so. Then you build pride in this manager and at the same time it becomes an anchoring process because you have to get to know things when you have to talk externally. (Olivia and Mia)

7. Consensus building 7.1 Not afraid of conflicts 7.2 Facilitating discussion 7.3 Bring cohesion among participants	7.1 7.2 7.3	<p>One cannot be conflict-prone, one must be able to lead in conflicts. Because people sometimes clash, and it gets bad. Getting out of it then, is important. One cannot go and hide under a blanket and hope that it ends. A participant can do that. But the leader cannot. (Olivia)</p> <p>I usually send out questions, if there is someone who is silent then I usually raise a question "what do you think? How do you think? " Getting them involved in the conversation. (Simon)</p> <p>The public sector is governed by one type of logic of politics. The academy is guided by the fact that a researcher thinks that the person is at the top and that it (the research) is the result, so they usually have a bit more difficult with democratic processes. And the business community is after all guided by a development agenda and their business logic. So finding a logic that makes everyone want to be on the train and that suits everyone. It is a lot of what we do, we pick up an agenda and a logic that allows three organizations with different driving forces to work in the same project. (Grace)</p>
8. Invisible hand 8.1 Having sure instinct 8.2 Invisible role 8.3 Holds no formal authority 8.4 Being neutral/independent	8.1 8.2A 8.2.B 8.3A 8.3B 8.4	<p>It is probably intuition, and sensing, the person you are communicating with, what that person needs. This is very much that you have an ability to understand the person you are communicating with. (Elise)</p> <p>Much work performed is invisible work. And in the role I have, it is a lot... (Isabel)</p> <p>I see my role as important though half invisible. Because is not necessary (to be visible), really. It may not even support the context all the time that it should appear that my role is as important as it is. (Simon)</p> <p>... we only have authority as long as people want us to exist and have it. (Olivia)</p> <p>You can't decide anything, in this role. So it (the project) was unique in that way. (Maia)</p> <p>I as an in-between manager have no interest in this (project). All parties have their own interests, but I have no interests other than that something happens. (Olivia)</p>
9. Creating social capital 9.1 Trust capital 9.2 Being humble and prestigeless 9.3 Methods for relationship building	9.1 9.2 9.3	<p>When we work in-between managers, we only have the mandate when we have the parties' trust, and have the people's trust. If we do not, we cannot work. (Oliva)</p> <p>I think you have to be very prestigeless, because the important thing is not that I'm seen or heard or get my needs met in this. Instead, it is about raising others, make sure that the ideas of others can be combined together in a good way or find funding, or whatever it may be. (Elena)</p> <p>And I think that it may be important to be able to allow to have a little fun. That you get personal with those you sit with, because then it will not be ... what should I say, it will not be so prestigious, if one is willing to laugh a little and have some fun. One hell of a good thing is to ask people what is best with their refrigerator. It sounds completely banal, but if you ask that question to a group of people who have never met before, then you can be quite sure that with it... when everyone has been told what is the best with their refrigerator, then there is like no barriers left. Without them, everyone has laughed at each other, and then you get much faster forward (in the project). (Jane)</p>

10. Work related ambiguities		
10.1 Undefined scope of the role	10.1	But I think we have had difficulties talking about it before (the scope of the role). But we are now starting to become better at formulating what we are doing, for ourselves above all. So we can describe it in our organization. (Jane)
10.2 Role diluted into many unrelated activities	10.2	There is a risk that you will get many "roles" as process leaders. Brew coffee, write notes, hold the meeting. You have many roles. So you have to watch out, I think. (Emma)
10.3 Lack of immediate feedback	10.3	I have a guy for example, whom I work with a lot, that is the CEO of a company here, which I try to put in all possible important contexts. He would never tell me like this – "How good it was that I could participate in this, or come to this [event]". He just shows up, but he would never thank me for that. And then one cannot feel sorry. Instead, one have to think like this - yes but it is a good rating that he comes to my activities that I have arranged. (Jane)
11. Evaluation of experience		
11.1 Previous role related experience	11.1	It is required that you know a little about many things. You need to know a little group psychology, you need to have some leadership experience. You need to have experienced complex contexts yourself. One needs to have been in several different contexts to be able to put that (process) puzzle together. Also, you need to have a network that you can use if you need to. There are many more ingredients, such as these, which can't be taught in school. (Emma)
11.2 Group learning	11.2	An experience workshop, where we gather all the experiences. [...] And put it up in a big lesson learned list, so that we can all benefit from it. It is perhaps not the list which ends up in a final report, but it is part of the fact that they (participants) should feel that they have a list for other upcoming activities that can be similar in character. (Elise)
12. Collaborative reflections		
12.1 Good to be two	12.1	Because the group's reactions and process and individual participant's process can be of such importance, it is often great if one is coordinating and the other can observe and support and take notes. Just such practical stuff like that. So couple work is very good in this context I would say. And it also increases redundancy, it reduces the risk that you fail, if you suddenly have too much work to do. (Simon)
12.2 Learn by adopting a reflective stance towards your role	12.2	I think we are testing (new things) all the time and also reflecting: "okay, where have I read this?". It creates security, "Yes, but we were right". Can we then ground this in theory, "yes, but here are others who have done similar things and so ..." (Oscar)

5 - Discussion and conclusion

The purpose of this study was to develop the understanding of the work conducted by the in-between manager as well as their own understanding of it. As such the researchers have adopted, contrary to organizational focused literature (see for example Järvi et al., 2018; Powell et al., 1996), a managerial centric perspective. By conducting a thorough analytical process grounded in empirical data, we have found five distinct concepts as well as five different roles undertaken by the in-between manager which guided us to answer our research questions:

1. What does the work of an in-between manager entail?
2. What managerial roles does the in-between manager take on in interorganizational collaborations within a triple-helix context?

5.1 - Interconnected concepts

These five concepts and these five roles are visible as our core concepts in figure 2: Data Structure and in figure 3: Relationships between the identified core concept and roles. Key findings relating to roles and activities will in this chapter be related to theoretical perspectives and evaluated for their contribution to relevant theory. Since our findings and analysis chapter were divided into two subgroups, each essential answering separate research questions, the rationale for this chapter follows the same logic. Firstly, we aim to highlight activities, subsequently attending the first part of the findings and analysis chapter, with the theoretical perspective of activities. Lastly the roles which has been addressed in the previous chapter is attended.

5.1.1 - Work activities

Firstly, in this study we have identified a number of activities relating to the work performed by the in-between manager *supporting the direction of the collaboration*. Having a designated role to align participants in such may hold some similarities to work undertaken by the project manager (Kerzner & Kerzner, 2017). But the contrast shown in our study is that due to the lack of formal authority the in-between manager could never use authoritarian leadership for activities aligning participants nor pushing the project forward but instead has to rely on other power bases (French, Raven & Cartwright, 1959). Similar to our second concept of *supporting collaboration relations* activities conducted by the in-between manager mainly aims to help the participants themselves come to an agreement moving forward. Key findings identify actions implemented by the in-between manager for them to emerge as either an informal

leader or in some capacity as a secure point for participants. This relationship-building is argued to be pivotal for the in-between manager as they often work to support the progress of others. This builds on the shift from direct to relational leadership argued by Karp and Helgø (2008). Within our third concept, *strategically align participants discrepancies*, we also identified numerous activities relating to finesse and influencing of members (Vangen & Huxham, 2003a) as well as acting with a clear motivation in mind. It is interpreted here that similar to previous reasoning (see for example Vangen & Huxham, 2003a; Ollila & Yström 2012; Giannopoulou, Yström & Ollila, 2011) of the role of the in-between manager, having no authority, that in order for the participants to align the need to play politics and maneuvering may be influential activities carried out by the in-between manager (Vangen & Huxham, 2003a).

Our fourth identified concept, *managing with and within fuzziness*, relates mostly to the leadership conducted from the background, i.e. since the in-between holds no formal authority and as previously discussed activities mainly revolve around relationship building in order to build social capital (Karp & Helgø, 2008). It is within this concept we find and interpret what the in-between does with this informal authorship. We have found that many activities associated to this context is built on intuition, this led us to believe that the activity, as well as the outcome of these activities, greatly differs. As such it is difficult to analyze the practice with such a high degree of individual preferences and moralities. As such we propose that highlighting the role from the perspective of senior management will lead to activities conducted by the in-between manager will relate more to bringing value to the collaboration in contrast to the diverse activities we found they do.

Based on our fifth concept, *searching for appropriate knowledge*, which refers to the learnings made, both within the group of participants as well as the continuous learning by each individual in-between manager, we propose that collaborations in general should add more weight to this activity. Not only as a process to learn from previous experience from participants, but also in order to consolidate the necessity to collaborate and more loosely a way to bridge communication barriers by offering a moment for storytelling, which is an act building relations. Building on incumbent theories of both individual as well as organizational learning (see for example Kim, 1998; Argote, 2012) we have positioned the in-between manager in the center of the context of learning. This due to that the in-between manager is the agent of knowledge transfer, similar to the argument put forward by Argote (2012), as well as is the link between learnings done by the collaboration and the individual learnings (Kim, 1998) made by its participants by not only assess relevant knowledge but also implement it in along the lifecycle of the collaboration. Since the in-between manager heavily relies on their

social capital, i.e. trust, this study builds on the theory put forward by Inkpen and Tsang (2005) which highlights the notion of the importance of social capital for successful knowledge transfer we see that this intertwining of characteristics of the in-between manager as well as its activities further the need for social capital in order for knowledge transfer to be conducted with a positive outcome. Similar concepts and arguments are addressed when the in-between manager is analyzed through the role lense of the *teacher*.

5.1.2 - Roles

In tandem with the analytical discussion of activities, the other part of this study relates to roles undertaken by the in-between manager. Since most activities fall within similar roles which have been addressed in previous literature (see for example Vangen & Huxham, 2003a; Ollila & Yström, 2017; Mintzberg, 1975; Muzzi & Albertini, 2015) we can deduce that most of the roles the in-between managers take upon themselves are not new. Although as argued earlier, it is the intertwining of roles and their novelty in overlapping which holds the interesting progress of managerial developments within interorganizational collaborations. By this we mean that in isolation, each role and activity has been previously addressed and it is in a certain context, such as in these type of collaboration addressed within in the scope of this study, the novelty arises. Putting together the activities and roles of a teacher and that of the diplomat both pose new and interesting avenues to investigate but also visualize the complexity in which the in-between manager act.

Research on the roles of the in-between manager has been addressed previously by Ollila & Yström (2017), where overlap exists between their findings of facilitator, tactician and the sensegiver. Although here we have denoted similar characteristics as supporter, diplomat and generalist, even though some overlap exists elsewhere among our findings it is amongst these three they are the clearest. Previous research on inter-organizational collaborations highlighted the two streams of leadership roles, either emerging as the spirit of the collaboration or towards collaborative thuggery (Vangen & Huxham, 2003a). We have interpreted our roles such that supporter, teacher and diplomat stems from the spirit of collaboration and our role of maneuverer corresponding to the collaborative thuggery by Vangen and Huxham (2003a). Worth noting is though that even if the in-between manager enacts in maneuvering the participants of the collaboration the sole purpose for this is to enhance the collaboration and neither in personal gain or in a specific direction. As such we build on previous literature on both the in-between manager, as well as enacting leadership within interorganizational collaborations holds similarities to our findings. The role of the teacher relates on one side to joint learning and on the other being reflexive to the knowledge

acquired. Similar to literature on knowledge management (see for example Alavi & Leidner, 2001; Davenport et al., 1998) highlights the value of joint learning and reflexiveness, but not addressing the leader as a focal point. By instead focus on the in-between manager as the source of sharing and evaluating this study builds in the theoretical foundation set by Kim (1998), Argote (2012) and Inkpen and Tsang (2005) and as such highlighting the individuals as key for the system of knowledge management to work.

5.1.3 - Summary

In summary, the in-between manager is argued to be highly valuable in collaboration by undertaking different roles and enacting numerous activities in order to overcome problems of either participatory conflicts, ambiguity of vision, sharing knowledge or just simply getting the process moving forward. Overall our findings, as well as literature, show a misunderstood and constantly undervalued role (Järvi et al., 2018; Powell et al., 1996), both within the in-between managers' own organizations but also during their practice in collaborations. The following section will develop this study's implication for both theory as well as for practitioners, and eventually ending with proposed future research.

5.2 - Implications for theory

In this study, we have shown and reflected upon managerial activities and roles undertaken by the in-between manager within the scope of multi-actor collaborations. As has been previously shown this study builds on the activities put forth by Huxham and Vangen (2003a) in regards to activities conducted by the in-between manager to aid the collaboration, either in *spirit of the collaboration* or conducting *collaborative thuggery*. Moreover, our findings builds on the top management roles presented by Ollila & Ystrom (2017) where we have shown that managers on an operational level also take on roles similar to the *tactician*, *sensegiver* and *facilitator*. Although it can be argued that by narrowing the scope of roles and activities even further, newfound activities and roles have emerged for the in-between manager. Even though these activities and roles themselves are not new, the context in which they exist is. Building on incumbent managerial literature of roles (see for example Mintzberg, 1975) we propose the usage of other distinctive roles than those previously attended. By offering a new set of descriptive roles to the emergence of literature on management of interorganizational collaboration we aim to shift focus from incumbent ones, since it can be argued that due to their generalist nature all managerial roles are included within their scope of definition, and thus further the understanding of the activities and roles carried out by the in-between manager.

Furthermore, our findings contribute to the theory of postmodern leadership (Karp & Helgø, 2008) where this study has shown leaders active within the scope of postmodern leadership theories as well as using knowledge management systems. By showing managers and leaders behaving in conformity with postmodern leadership theories (ibid) we argue that the shift from power and control paradigm in management to relationship building has already taken place within the field of managing interorganizational collaborations. In summary, we contribute to the theoretical development in management of interorganizational collaboration within the context of triple helix constellation by providing empirically grounded findings exploring what the work of an in-between manager entails and what roles the in-between manager take on in interorganizational collaborations.

5.3 - Implications for practitioners

The value of this study is not solely for its theoretical advancements but also for practitioners working as in-between managers or holds similar roles within their organizations. As such the authors would like to offer some practical advice to practitioners as well as decision-makers based on the findings of this study.

- It is perhaps no surprise that the work activities of respondents interviewed in this study differed. The work activities that an in-between manager conducts range from “matchmaker” to “enabling co-creation”. It is safe to say that not every practitioner will face exactly the same challenge, and do the exact same things. Because of the dynamic nature of interorganizational collaborations, some situations will require less effort whereas others will require a lot more effort. Thus, it is beneficial to view the work activities of the collaboration manager as a continuum, rather than static. However, it is argued in this report that the true value of an in-between manager revolves around managing complex relations and enabling co-creation. Therefore, it is important to recognize and understand when it is required to have such skills.
- Additionally, in line with Yström (2013) the authors of this study encourage practitioners and decision-makers to adopt a reflexive stance towards the role of the in-between manager. As this study has shown, there is a plethora of activities conducted in various contexts, and so far, there is no “best practice”. Instead, practitioners would benefit from thinking about what actions and relations are important to truly tap into the collaborative advantage of the undertaken collaboration.

- Many of the respondents in this study expressed a wish, or gratitude, to be more than one in the role of the in-between manager. As this study has shown, it can sometimes be an invisible and quite ungrateful role to shoulder, often with a lot of ambiguity surrounding the interorganizational collaboration. This suggests that it can be a huge strain for an individual to take on this role all by themselves. Furthermore, since the role is often held by ambitious individuals that often go the extra mile for the sake of the collaboration - this raises the question of the risk of burnout. Therefore, both decision-makers and practitioners would benefit from thinking about how to make this role more sustainable in future collaborations.
- Leading without authority poses as a difficult position for the in-between manager. Therefore, it might be tempting to think that giving the manager more authority would be beneficial for the interorganizational collaboration. However, this would affect the hierarchical structure of the collaboration, consequently impacting power relations between participants and participatory organizations as well as the overall direction of the collaboration. Instead, the solution to this challenge is perhaps not about changing the position of the in-between manager, but instead, learn to lead without formal authority. Shown by this study, it is certainly possible to do so. Therefore, the authors in this study emphasize the importance of focusing on developing these managerial skills, such as managing relations and creating social capital, which this study found is a pivotal part of being the in-between manager. As such, in-between managers may need further training and experience to adopt a broader set of skills necessary for aiding the interorganizational collaboration.

5.4 - Limitations and proposed future research

This study has identified a number of activities conducted by the in-between manager as well as several roles they take upon themselves during their work. It is argued though that since our selection criteria are based on our initial interviews and literature review, this path that we set us on might be only one out of many possible ones aiming to find managers in similar positions as those denoted as in-between managers. The uncertainties surrounding the role lead the research to certain respondents and by changing the original start point others may have been found. This is also evident since we have used a snowball sampling method evolved by each respondent we came across.

A further notation should be made on the subject of context we searched for the in-between manager. After all, we used a rather wide context without distinguishing between contexts

such as research projects, development projects and commercialization projects. As such this would be interesting for further research to develop: *Is there a difference in work enacted by the in-between depending on the intended outcome of the collaboration?* Additionally, following a similar logic, since we have shown that previous knowledge is valuable for the in-between manager as long as it is relevant, we would like to propose research question such as: *How does previous knowledge affect the work conducted by the in-between manager depending on their origin within the triple helix constellation.* Different backgrounds have shown different advantages, hence it would be interesting to be able to research the different advantages.

From this research we do not know anything about the success rate of projects and processes with or without the in-between manager, does it differ at all, and in relation to their primary activities. Is the in-between manager an administrator or a significant cog in the system or just the previously denoted coordinator within literature revolving interorganizational collaboration? Consequently, we propose research that both widen the understanding of the role of the in-between manager as well as further defining what it means to be an in-between manager in the first place, such as what does the nature of the work entails for the in-between manager and what kind of professional identities does the in-between manager hold.

As with all research, we were also limited by time and by proposing these previously noted research questions we hope that another can take on where we left. Lastly, we would like to highlight the limited transferability of this study. As it is done in the geographical part of Scandinavia, specifically Sweden, triple helix constellation is dominant due to the state's interest in furthering the rate of innovation. We have numerous times along this study met managers either fully funded or partially funded by the state. As such we argue that this constellation would differ a fair amount from nation to nation and so would the role of the in-between manager since power dynamics and incentives also shift.

5.5 - Sustainability aspect

In the United Nation resolution "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (United Nations, 2015), one can read about the 17 global goals for sustainable development. These goals cover the aspects of environmental, social and economic development, all which are pivotal for a sustainable future. In order to reach these goals, Sachs (2012) argues that it is necessary to engage in collaborative problem solving across sectors of academia, industry, governments and non-profit organizations. As such, being able to aid and manage this collaborative process is a vital part in order to gain a successful outcome.

This study contributes to the emerging theory and conceptualization of what managing complex interorganizational collaborations entail. If the in-between managers of the future can be better prepared to tackle the challenges related to managing complex collaborative constellations, the success rate might improve. Therefore, it can be considered an important piece of the larger puzzle towards sustainable development.

6 - References

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Appendix A

Interview guide: Semi-structured interview

First and foremost, we want to introduce our project, so you know why we want to do this interview. We are working on our Master's thesis, the purpose of which is to try to expand the understanding of leadership in collaborations with many different actors, which aim at innovation and knowledge creation.

Checklist before conducting the interview:

- Inform that Chalmers follows the GDPR and that you can read more at Chalmers website
- Inform about the right to be anonymous
- Ask if it is possible to record the interview
- Inform them that they have the right to cancel the interview at any given time
- Offer them to get the report when it is finished
- Inform how long the interview is expected to take

Questions

1. Can you tell us a little about yourself and your background and how you ended up in this position?
 - a. How long have you held this role?
2. How do you view your role as a collaboration manager?
3. What is the first thing you start with when you meet a new team?
4. Describe your work tasks:
 - a. What did you do, for example, this Monday?
 - b. What do you think is required for the collaboration to work?
 - c. Do you use any special tools in the work you have done to get the participants enticed by the collaborations?
 - d. Some people may find it a little daunting to open up and be part of collaborative projects, how do you look to attract these to the project?
5. We believe that building trust is an important part of your role as a collaboration manager, is it something you recognize yourself?
 - a. How do you build trust among participants?
 - b. Do you use any methods or tools?
 - i. Develop.
6. During the last collaborative project you were involved in, what did you experience as the biggest challenge?
 - a. Is this a recurring challenge?
 - b. What went easy?
7. Are you involved during the whole project?
 - a. Does your way of working change over time?
 - i. What are your differences in activities over time?
8. What do you think is required for characteristics, training and traits to do this job?
 - a. Do you feel there is something you lack, more training in an area that you see value in?
9. What do you do if you get stuck? For example, if the participants refuse to cooperate in a good way?

- a. Who are you talking to? who are you discussing solutions and ideas with?
- 10. We imagine that your job requires different types of "hats" / roles at different times/situations - do you agree?
 - a. If yes → How would you say the distribution between the different roles looks?
- 11. In what stage in the project are you most active?

Closing questions (if time allows):

- Do you meet other individuals with similar duties?
 - For what purpose; Knowledge/experience exchange?
- Would it have been valuable/helpful for you, for example, to be part of a network of leaders working on similar things that you do?

Checklist for closing the interview:

1. Is it something you would like to add, or something important that you feel we forgot to address?
2. Thank you for your time
3. If we have any more questions, is it okay if we contact you again?