Paper presented at Colloquium on "Global challenges in Public Private Partnerships: cross-sectoral and cross-disciplinary solutions?", 7th November 2013, Antwerp, Belgium

Public-private partnerships in the light of a sociological analysis on trust: an analytical model

Céline Remy and Jean-François Orianne

Introduction

Over the last few years, multiple collaborations between the public employment service (PES) and private firms (market or non-market) have been developing driven by European institutions, especially in the framework of the European strategy for employment which aims at developing the employability of jobseekers (Orianne, 2005). The collaborations take the shape of public-private partnerships (PPP) in the field of employment and professional training.

The literature on PPPs mainly focuses on resources and results which does not enable a comprehensive approach and in-depth analysis of the partnership dynamics. The paper will demonstrate three principal limits in the literature on PPPs and the contributions of a sociological analysis based on trust within the study of partnership dynamics. Firstly, the management approach, related to Ogien[1], restricted to the organisation viewpoint (inter-organizational dynamics, financial and legal aspects). Secondly, the approach chiefly examines resources and results of the partnership without seeking to understand the mechanism of the interactional dynamics. Thirdly, it highlights a substantiality[2] approach to partnerships.

We resort to a sociological analysis on trust which allows us to go beyond the organizational perspective of the partnership and introduce two other levels of analysis, the interpersonal level (micro) and the systemic level (macro). Furthermore, the paper seeks to open the black box of the partnership, and provide the means to envisage the conversion of resources into

---

[1] Concept elaborated by Ogien (1995 : 189) which he defines as « a method which consists in superimposing forms of reasoning- economic and accounting- disconnected from the category of meaning ordinarily understood as – political – which is linked to a specific type of activity- to govern ».

[2] A substantialist approach : is from our perspective an approach which takes the object of analysis (PPP) as a substantial reality.

results. Lastly, it covers a procedural[3] and procession approach which clearly differentiates itself from the positivist and management approaches.

We will first present the PPP concept by addressing its origin and definition. We will focus on the PPPs in employment policies and professional training in Belgium. Second, we will highlight the three main limits of the literature on PPPs. The third part will clarify and exemplify the contributions of a sociological analysis on trust which allows for a more in-depth analysis of partnership dynamics. Situations from an exploratory phase within two public employment services (PES) –Actiris and the Forem – will illustrate the points put forward in the paper.

1. The concept of PPP

1.1. The origin of the PPP concept

The concept of PPP was initiated in « new public management » which posits a strong rationality on human activities (Marty & Voisin, 2006: 3). This trend considers people to be selfish beings who only seek to maximise their own interests. When taking this perspective into consideration, governmental decisions and activities prove to be inefficient owing to politicians and bureaucrats desire to maximise their own interests. According to Danis (2004: 7), the only way to circumvent personal desires is to confide a substantial amount of governmental activities to the laws of the market and competition. This movement is conveyed by the privatisation of government-owned business sectors, a downsizing of the state sector and the privatisation of the welfare state.

Although no common definition exists for PPP the « Green Book of the EU Commission on public-private partnerships » recommends the development of PPPs. Consequently, it is possible to see how different countries implement this in their governmental strategies. In the above-mentioned book, PPPs stem from forms of cooperation between public authorities and the world of businesses which aim to ensure the financing, construction, renovation, management or maintenance of an infrastructure or the supply of a service. The principal feature of a PPP is its « public-private partnership component » (Blondiau, 2004: 1). The

[3] By procedural approach we mean: an approach which takes into account the linguistic procedures which underpin the partnership.

definition given by the EU Commission does not consider the forms that this collaboration between public and private partnerships could take.

Giauque (2009 : 385) points out certain major traits on PPPs found in the European literature that is to say « a cooperation between public actors, private actors and possibly collective organisations, within which the different actors can realize their own objectives, whilst working together to create potential synergies, by sharing responsibilities, opportunities and risks, founded on a formalized cooperation contract ». This rather broad definition leaves room for a multitude of PPP procedures with their own dynamics.

1.2. PPPs in the field of employment and professional training in Belgium

Initially, PPPs are intended for substantial investments in technical, legal and financial fields such as construction, or renovation of public infrastructures. Above all, these types of contracts between public and private partners comply with a logic of service (Evette in Campagnac and al., 2009/a: 13) and optimization of resources (Campagnac, 2009/a: 36). What is the partnership situation like in the field of employment and professional training in Belgium?

A movement towards regulation is introduced, among other things, with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) convention on private employment exchange agencies (CC181, 1997, art. 13). The convention invites the States to define, establish and regularly revise the terms, in order to promote cooperation between public employment services and private employment agencies. It encourages the private operator to regularly give the competent authorities information concerning their structure and activities.

In Belgium, the ratification of the convention generated several decrees and regulations relative to the mixed management of the labour market between public and private actors. The employment and professional training competences are governed by the regions. Each region– Brussels-Capital, Flanders, Wallonia – has its own regional public employment service (see table below) as well as its own decrees and regulations (see appendix 1).

Table 1

Region/competences	**Employment**	**Professional training**
Region Brussels Capital (French-speaking)	Actiris	Brussels Training
Region Brussels Capital (Flemish-speaking)	Actiris	VDAB [4]
Region Flemish	VDAB	VDAB
Region Walloon	Forem[5] ADG[6]	Forem ADG

In legal texts it is possible to identify the following terms: « collaboration », « partnership convention », « partner », « exchange », « sustainable partnership » which designate how operators have to work in the future. Even if the term PPP is not clearly stipulated, the law explicitly asks the private and public operators to fall within a framework of collaboration and exchange in order to successfully implement mixed management in the labour market. The public employment and training services lose the monopoly of dealing with job seekers. They have to delegate part of their missions to private market and non-market operators.

These collaborations take place in different frameworks. The public employment service use a call for bids system, call for projects or project partnership. Our two case studies which were carried out at Actiris and the Forem are chiefly concerned with the call for projects[7]. A substantial number of operators introduce an application file in order to establish an agreement with the Employment Office. These kinds of collaborations focus on the reintegration of jobseekers as well as the transparency of the regional labour market. Consequently, it is deemed important to understand the dynamics of these partnerships.

2. The limits of the « management » approach of the PPPs

A review of the PPP[8] literature enabled us to identify the main limits of these papers relating to the level of analysis, the objective of the analysis and the analytical approach.

---

[4] VDAB signifies « Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding ». The Flemish employment and professional training service.

[5] Forem signifies « Formation professionnelle et de l'Emploi » Professional training and employment.

[6] ADG signifies « Arbeitsamt der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft ». Operates in the German-speaking community.

[7] In the framework of a call for projects the Office « *invites the partner candidates, public or private, to propose actions which comply with the definitions of the measures stipulated in the call, with a view to responding, by offering professional training/reintegration adapted to the unmet needs of the public* » (Internal audit of the Audit office, 2008 : 102-103).

[8] Principally : Baumstark L., Huge A., Marcadier C., & Maubert C., (2005), Belhocine, N., Facal, J., & Mazouz, B., (2005), Bernier, P., (2005), Campagnac, E., et al., (2009/a), Chatrie, I., & Uhaldeborde, J-M., (1996), Danis,

2.1. An analysis from an organisational perspective

The PPP literature places emphasis on financial, legal and technical aspects rather than the interactional and contextual dimensions of the partnership. As Campagnac (2009/a: 41) points out, « *the approach is deliberately management* ». Consequently, the authors are interested in the impact of PPPs in terms of results, financial risk-taking for the stakeholders but above all, for the State. The analysis perspective is generally at the meso-sociological level. Some authors focus on the inter-organisational aspect of the partnership like Jüriado (in Campagnac, 2009/a) who studies the learning process between private and public organisations belonging to the same partnership. However, all of them are in an evaluative rather than comprehensive perspective. They are evaluating to what extent the PPPs are best practice for economies of scale and evaluating to what extent they are supplying a quality product or service (Campagnac, 2009/a; Marty, Voisin & Trosa, 2006).

Nevertheless, some authors seek to understand the negotiation mechanisms between the public and private partner. The interactional dimension essentially crops up to reveal « *non-cooperative behaviour* » between partners (Uhaldeborde in Chatrie & Uhaldeborde, 1995: 66). Other authors try to analyse the partnership in terms of trust (Brewer & Hayllar, 2005) nonetheless, their angle of analysis is mainly based on the exchanges at the meso-sociological level (organisational). The microsociological level (individual) is, quite often, ignored, as well as the macrosociological level (systemic). The individual only exists through the organisation represented in the PPP, the institutional context is absent. The authors demonstrate through their case studies the importance of exchanges between partners and they do this by putting all the stakeholders on an equal basis by giving all of them the possibility of speaking freely. Nevertheless, these studies do not analyse the partnership in depth as a system nor the interactional mechanisms, whether it concerns individuals or individuals and organisations.

2.2. The objectives of the analysis: resources and results

Insofar as the management approach is centred on financial, legal and technical aspects of the partnership, these objectives of analysis are the resources and results of the PPPs. The authors mainly study the PPP projects in the field of construction or renovation of infrastructures (buildings, roads, etc). The projects of the PPPs are numerous and varied. Here are a few

G., (2004), Kee, J.E., & Forrer, J., (2008), Lienhard, A., (2006), Marty, F., Voisin, A., & Trosa S., (2006), Marty, F., & Voisin, A., (2006/2), Mazouz, B., (2009), Préfontaine, L., Ramonjavelo, V., & Skander, D., (2009).

examples: Cole (in Campagnac, 2009/a) studied the PPPs in the construction of hospital buildings in Ireland. Marty, Voisin and Trosa (2006) relate an experience of a PPP in the public transport sector in Italy. These PPPs were put in place to benefit from private funding because the State could not finance the totality. The substantial funding explains without doubt the preference given to a quantitative type of approach.

The PPP evaluations relate to resources on one hand and their impacts on the other hand. The resources (financial, material, technical, etc) have to be distributed between the public and private partner. The impacts are evaluated in terms of the PPP's effectiveness and efficiency, the quality of the product and/or service, the sharing of financial risks, public action, etc. (Campagnac, 2009/a : 36 ; Deffontaines in Campagnac, 2009/a : 305). « The objectivity sought is reflected in an exercise of quantification, neglecting the whole meaning of the phenomenon » (Ogien, 1995: 42). The actors and their discourse are not in the forefront as the main focus is on the quantitative aspect. In his paper on the spirit of management, Ogien puts forward an example of housing aid to demonstrate the consequences of the logic behind quantification.

Box 1: A quantification exercise

The housing aid rates are going to be unified to gain two benefits, which are the control of expenses and the protection of populations judged as priorities. The aim is to reduce budgetary costs. Consequently, aid will be concentrated on the priority populations to the detriment of allowances for no kid's families or of average incomes. The recipients, concerned by benefits will receive a letter with the new amount of the benefit through the post indicating whether they are eligible or excluded. Depending on the nature of the decision, the recipients have no explanation concerning the benefit, reduction or refusal. (Ogien, 1995: 118-119)

This box shows a quantification exercise which is focused on figures without taking into account the impacts of the phenomenon on individuals. There is no room for the actors to express themselves. They have no possibility of being informed about the reasons behind the decision taken with regards to them. They will only be informed of the decision.

A quantitative approach does not seek to understand the mechanism which allows the conversion of resources into results (Sen, 2000). Yet, two partnerships with the same resources can obtain very different results. In addition, a contrario, two partnerships can reach similar results with different resources. In order to understand the functioning, it is necessary to open the black box of partnerships in order to grasp the mechanisms behind the interactional dynamics.

2.3. The analytical approach: the partnership as a substantial reality

As far as the management approach is concerned, the partnership is considered to be a substantial reality insofar as it posits itself as a reality. There is no questioning its existence nor, to be more specific, the elements which make it exist and last. The literature on PPPs only highlights the technical and quantifiable dimensions of PPPs. In this way, the positive results justify the PPPs' techniques as best practice whilst poor results would call the technique implemented in the partnership into question.

This logic cannot be applied to the field of employment and professional training. For instance, a partnership agreement can be prolonged between a public employment service department and an organisation for socio-professional reintegration even if the expected results were not reached during a previous collaboration. It is not because a partnership has negative results that the PPP's technique is inappropriate. Thus, a PPP technique applied in a certain context takes on a particular dynamic depending on the actors involved. Consequently, it is indispensable to understand the interaction between the partners. The management approach does not offer a pertinent analytical viewpoint in order to study the mechanisms of the interactional dynamics within the PPPs in the field of employment and professional training. How can a sociological analysis on trust surmount these limits? The following table allows us to visualize the contribution of a sociological analysis on trust and the management approach.

Table 2

Approaches/type of analysis	**Level of analysis**	**Objective of analysis**	**Analytical approach**
Management approach	Organisational level	Resource approach (resources & results)	Substantialist approach
Sociological analysis on trust	Micro-and-macro-sociological level	Partnership dynamics	Procedural and processual approach

3. The contributions of a sociological analysis on trust in a PPP study

In a « volatile economy » (Sabel, 1992) in which world markets are more and more ephemeral and fragmented, where technology is developing at a rapid pace and where product life cycles are particularly short, the question of trust (Mangematin & Thuderoz, 2003) is raised in the context of growing economic uncertainty. The question is also raised as far as the risk of « opportunism » (Williamson, 1985) is concerned as this is likely to occur between active stakeholders on the same market. Trust can then be envisaged as a sort of « cement » (Simon, 2007) avoiding the too rapid « disintegration » of these collaborations. Some authors see this as an intrinsic attribution of relationships between individuals (Granovetter, 1985; Zaheer and al., 1998, Quéré, 2001) and/or the institutions (Zucker 1986; Koenig, 1994; Rousseau and al., 1998). Trust is effective in reducing the uncertainty and complexity of the world we live in today (Simmel, 1987, 1991; Neuville, 1997; Luhmann, 2006).

We will try to go beyond the limits of the management approach by referring to the sociological approach on trust. Luhmann's work will enable us to treat the complexity of interactional mechanisms. Neuville's papers, focus on the actors' discourse, as Ogien does when he studies the way actors talk about trust. Karpik's work allows us to keep in mind all the elements of a partnership.

3.1. Trust as an interactional and systemic mechanism of complexity

In 1965, Niklas Luhmann was one of the first sociologists to take an interest in the concept of trust from a descriptive and comprehensive perspective. His work « Trust, a mechanism which reduces social complexity » reveals his position with respect to this polysemous concept of trust. For him, the main problem is the complexity of the society in which we live. Due to this, Luhmann believes man should develop procedures in order to reduce complexity. He introduces two levels of trust which allow the reduction of complexity in the world.

3.1.1. The interpersonal level of trust

The first level of trust put forward by Luhmann is the interpersonal level, that is to say, between actors who communicate in the workplace for example. These work spaces define the exchanges or collaborations in which these individuals are involved in. This level is defined as « *the generalised expectation that the other will make good use of his freedom, the* *worrying potential of his possibilities of action, in the sense of his personality which he revealed and demonstrated socially [thus] is worthy of trust the person who is loyal to what he has communicated about himself, consciously or not »* (Luhmann, 2006: 43).

Each action the individual takes impacts the mechanism of trust towards someone. The only way to evaluate this trust is the self-presentation of the subject, considered as a mechanism which transforms the sociocultural conditions into sources of trust. The construction of trust begins with the presentation of self (Goffman, 1973) as a social identity building itself in the interactions with the environment (Mead, 2006). When someone distances himself from others, he no longer inspires trust because he no longer gives the possibility to others to learn and verify his identity. This does not mean in any way conforming to someone else.

> ***Box 2: The selection process in the call for projects***
> *Within Belgian public employment services, the private operators introduce an application file within the framework of a call for projects. The structure of the file, realised by the PES, includes a section aimed at presenting the organisation. Self-presentation constitutes a guarantee of reliability for the evaluators because it highlights the operator's specifics and experience. The private operator only has to fill in half a page. The evaluators perceive presenting oneself in several pages as a sign of vanity.*

Developing a relationship based on trust cannot begin with demands but only a « step » towards the other. The relationship is strengthened when the other reciprocates. Gratitude unleashes a give and take action which nurtures the relationship. It is what Luhmann names « *the principle of 'tiny steps'* ». Neuville (1998) illustrates this principle with an example of a partnership. Neuville observes a particular practice in the industrial sector: some spare parts are offered by the supplier to the assembly service, which is not included in the bill of specifications. Neuville demonstrates the gratitude and « principle of tiny steps » which exist in partnerships in the industrial sector. This gesture demonstrates the existence of interactional trust between the supplier and the assembly service, which refers to the first level of trust.

3.1.2. The systemic level of trust

The second level defined by Luhmann is the systemic level. It allows the « regulation » of the extreme complexity of the world thanks to the presence « of supplementary tools », called « medias of communication » (Luhmann, 2006: 56). These medias favour the adoption of appropriate behaviour by the subject when confronting a specific situation and means he does not have to choose among a multitude of possible attitudes. These tools like truth, love, power and money reduce the complexity found in society. An individual who is wealthy does not need to trust others, where « *generalised trust in the institution of money therefore replaces innumerable individual demonstrations of trust* » (Luhmann, 2006: 60). In this case, he does not trust the other but rather trusts in the functioning of the system.

As in many institutions, money allows the move from inter-individual trust to systemic trust. This move is made when the other also displays his trust in money. A community of trust is then more aware, which facilitates learning and triggers selective behaviour. People can avoid problematic situations « specific » because money has become a general tool to solve problems. By reducing endless possibilities to operate economic exchanges, the monetary system authorises people to exchange in a delimited framework offering a certain number of possibilities. People have a role of co-constituent and co-holder of the world. If not, they lose their social identity.

The move to systemic trust facilitates the learning of trust, insofar as it makes the internal guarantees insignificant or replaces them with a functional interaction. However, it is worth noting that this move makes trust more diffuse and more difficult to control. Diffuseness provides immunization against individual deceptions. Whether there is a move or not, the two types of trust follow a similar process in which some steps can be identified as « *the need for learning and the method of learning, the partial shifting of the problematic from the external to the internal and the projection into the environment for a symbolic control of the subject of trust* » (Luhmann, 2006: 68).

The interest of the distinction between the two levels highlighted by Luhmann's works is to discover how a system – the partnership- becomes autonomous from its co-present members. Autonomisation takes place when there is a move from inter-individual trust to systemic trust, by moving through inter-organisational trust. The relationship of the partnership undergoes, to some extent, a kind of standardization or generalization. It no longer depends on the actors or the group it founds. The actors involved in the interaction have created a common identity by belonging to a partnership. This group of individuals has produced actions and norms which have generated an *autonomous organisation possessing its own collective, its formal rules, its decisions, etc.* (Teubner, 1996: 260).

A series of research questions is raised based on the new model of analysis. What is the degree of autonomisation of trust of a PPP on the labour and professional training market? To what extent is the move undertaken towards one direction or another? Is it owing to the evolution of the partnership? How can the longevity of partnership ‘y’ be explained when the initiators of the partnership have left the member organisations of the partnership? Moreover, how can the stagnation or break up of a partnership ‘x’ be explained when an individual leaves? Can we put forward the idea that trust autonomises itself in the situation of partnership ‘y’, which would not be the case for partnership ‘x’? The answer to these questions can be discovered when an in-depth analysis of the interactional dynamic is carried out. With a view to understanding interactional relationships, the black box of partnerships needs to be opened.

3.2. Opening the black box of partnerships: the mechanisms of the interactional dynamic

The management approach only focuses on the resources and results of the partnership, without seeking to understand the interactional mechanisms. We can go beyond this approach by opening the black box of partnerships with a view to understanding how interactional partnerships function and the mechanisms deployed to convert resources into results. In order to grasp these mechanisms, it is necessary to resort to a qualitative type of approach rather than a quantitative one, by collecting descriptions on the functioning of partnerships which produce the actors.

3.2.1. Who are the actors in an interactional partnership?

The members of the partnership are at the same time organisations (private or public) and individuals. The latter are designated as representatives of the organisation which they belong to. They have a role of « spokesman » in the meaning of Callon (1986: 194). The attribution mechanism of the role to an actor who accepts it is called « *enrolment* » (Callon, 1986: 189). When we try to define enrolment, the whole multilateral negotiations among the actors have to be described. This implies including the power plays and craftiness which accompany the process of interest the future partners show. A crucial step in the creation of a PPP is the moment the partners mutually commit to an engagement.

> ***Box 3: How the « enrolment » of the partners unfolds within the PES ?***
> *Certain operators realise their service without involvement in an interactional partnership. They have to attend committee meetings, give their opinion, express their ideas and meet the agents' needs. Some do not do it. Due to the above-mentioned behaviour the agents try to comprehend the reasons for such passiveness. They insist on the operators giving their ideas and topics for the meetings. Their discourse towards the operators speaks about the importance of feeling free to participate. They do not put pressure on them but hope they will invest in the partnerhsip.*

Sabel (1992) states that in order to construct a dynamic partnership it is necessary to invest in a process of creating a partnership identity. The author sees the individual as an « element » belonging to a community, that is to say « a common *sphere of meaning and expectations* » (Sabel, 1992: 425). Individuality is expressed and appreciated through applying common norms. According to Sabel, the frontiers define the perimeter of trust whilst the outside is a source of suspicion. Understanding trust passes by a perimeter of identification « *of familiarity* » (Luhmann, 2001/4). It is therefore important to delimit the common values of the community (of the partnership) which means « *classifying categories of preferences* » or the « *organisation of a hierarchy into hierarchies* », as Sen states (2000).

His reasoning leads him to introduce the concept of « reflexivity »: which implies knowing how the stakeholders become reflexive or acquire « *capabilities* » (Sen, 2000) when committing to a partnership? Sabel posits that a community of reflexive individuals is prudent and attentive towards others. The question is not to know if it is possible to create trust by an act of willingness but to understand how trust can be established in particular circumstances thanks to an indirect redefinition of collective values. This approach will encourage the creation of a « new collective identity »[9].

---

[9] In the example of Pennsylvania, Sabel portrays the double process of creating an identity in the organisations in the foundry sector, plastic materials, clothing and fixtures. He identifies the presence of a new policy which favours the collective definitions of services in which each actor- firms, professional associations, trade unions, education institutions and local authorities- needs on an individual and collective basis. The actors have to recognise their mutual dependence in order to define their distinct interests. In the course of the collaborations, they will create step-by-step a « new self-defined collective ».

In this way, the collaboration between the public employment service and the organisation for socioprofessional reintegration when implementing a project of mobilization for jobseekers would provide, on principle, a new collective identity. The latter would be defined by the presence of representatives (agents from the interactional partnerships of the PES and employees from the socioprofessional organisations) and a set of common values (the right to professional training for all, client satisfaction, collaboration and respect, etc). The reflexivity dimension emerges when the system of interactions has become autonomised, what Teubner (1993) calls « *autopoïèse* ». The identity of the partnership becomes an object of reflexion in its own right. Luhmann posits this as the move from interactional trust to systemic trust. Reflexivity is a condition of autonomisation.

3.2.2. What is an interactional partnership? How is it constructed?

The management approach does not cover in depth the way the choice of partner is carried out and how it is constructed. The interactional dimension reveals information on the emergence and evolution of the partnership. It is interested in the interactions between partners when there is an interactional imbalance and signs of uncooperative behaviour. It is clear the trustworthiness of an individual or a partner raises questions, as the following extract from an interview illustrates: « *Can we rely on this private operator? Is he honest? What do we do if we are being taken for a ride? (Agent from Actiris)* ».

The frontier between trust and wariness is, fuzzy [10], as recognized by Sabel (1992). Neuville (1998: 87) proposes to move away from the dualist vision where opportunism is opposed to trust: to be or not to be opportunistic; trust or not trust. By leaving aside the main paradigms linked to the utilitarian aspect of human nature, he proposes to reintegrate opportunism into concrete relationships. From this perspective, choosing to adopt opportunistic behaviour is not a problem in itself. The difficulty is situated at the level of the other partner’s perception who interprets the behaviour as a betrayal.

[10] The expression « Opportunistic trust » can be employed as can « limited distrust » to qualify an interactional partnership.

Box 4: A PES agent seeks information about a future partner

« We always meet new operators in the framework of a call for projects. We have no preconception with respect to them but we have a look at their internet website, we ask around in house (the PES) to see if others have already dealt with them. Besides, we noticed that a professional trainer was actually undergoing a training programme himself, this raised our suspicions. This set us thinking. We thought here is an operator with a piggy bank under his eyes. One mustn't be naive. » (Agent from the Forem)

Opportunism is therefore an interactional problem: it does not lie with the outside observer to define opportunism but the actors who are in the relationship. The fact that the partner interprets the behaviour as a « betrayal » (Callon, 1986: 199) also bestows him with the status of opportunistic behaviour. Consequently, it is vital to bear in mind the partners' interaction in the PPP.

There are venues which offer the possibility of capturing partners' interactions such as selection committees, the team meetings in the interactional partnerships' services (PES), the project support committees realised between the PES and the private operators, visits to the private operators, information sessions for the service providers, etc. Supporting the agents – responsible for interactional partnerships – in the public employment service in their daily work gives the researcher numerous opportunities to capture these interactions.

Box 5: Tension in the collaboration. Observation of a follow-up committee

During a follow-up committee, an operator complains about the recruitment procedure for jobseekers. The PES commits to sending candidates to the private operators for the realisation of their professional training session. The operator had too few candidates. He asked for help from the PES. The PES reacted too late so the operator could not start the training session.

This situation manifests itself through the tension within the interactional partnership. Attending the follow-up committee enables the perception of the unfolding of the exchanges between both partners, solving or not solving the problem and, as a consequence, the reduction or not of the tension. Gathering the data constitutes an opening towards a deeper understanding of interactional partnerships during an interview with each stakeholder. It is interesting to grasp the way in which each party experienced the interaction and to see the impact this has on trust.

In addition to observing, it is essential to focus on the actors' discourse because the same signs of trust engender different effects, even contrasting ones, depending on the individuals (Karpik, 2006: 113). The discourse takes place during the semi-directive interviews with, in our case, the public employment service agents but also the service providers.

3.2.3. What do the actors say about their interactional partnerships?

A partner whether he is from the private or public sector can react differently when faced with a collaborative proposal. One may just go ahead whilst another one may feel he is taking a tremendous risk if he agrees. The possible diverse reactions have been grouped by Albert Ogien, into four logical patterns. The latter broaches trust in an original way in his article « Elements for a grammar of trust » in which he states the different manners of speaking about trust. These types of logic are useful to describe critical situations experienced by different stakeholders within the partnership. These situations can be generated by one or the other partner, even an external factor. Here are a few examples of situations to qualify.

Box 6: Critical situations to qualify

The public employment service sends the partnership contract to the private operator too late or does not send jobseekers to the service provider. A mistake is made in the partnership contract or the deadline for handing in the activity reports is changed, etc. From their perspective, the private operators cannot provide all their services, cannot reach their target or do not fulfill their administrative obligations towards the jobseekers, etc.

The first type of logic is the pledge which « supposes that when you have given your word it is a guarantee of respect, which can be lost if the commitment is not met » (Ogien, 2006: 228). Trust is perceptible when, for example, you shake hands, an onomatopoeia, etc. The act of trust only lasts a moment and can materialize without even having thought about it. This logical pattern forces us to conceive trust as an act accompanied with a « guarantee of representation ». It could be a contract, a reputation, a brand, a notoriety, etc. It is important to point out that this logical pattern is more utilized to describe the behaviour of someone who is seeking to win someone's trust rather than the person who is giving it.

The second theme is a gamble which can be identified when there is « an absolute freedom *someone has to respect or not the given word* » (Ogien, 2006: 226). The first constraint concerns the fact that it is forbidden to anticipate the consequences which could ensue from the proposition. Another intrinsic element linked to the « gamble » is the absence of a clearly presented stake. It is a real test or stake, which is absent from the discourse and where the promise may not be kept. The modalities of this commitment in this sort of pattern have a simplified alternative outcome with no intermediate possibility in other terms either a loss or a success.

The third type of logic is sacrifice in other words « to trust» comes under a « *positive practice of ignorance*» (Ogien, 2006). This practice adapts to the circumstances, which makes it « *unconditional* » (the support of close colleagues is not questioned where an interactional dependence is present), « *controlled* » (when the commitment is combined with an evaluation of future risks) or « *relative* » (when the need to ensure that what is said or done, is not necessary, with respect to the consequences of the actions being accomplished).

The fourth type of logic is a challenge, which means the individual decides « to trust » by envisaging this act as a deliberate compromise ». The seriousness of what is at stake will determine the degree of compromise, ranging from the commonplace act (lending a small amount of money to someone) to an audacious act (crossing a river on a wintry day just to prove one is a man) to a risky act (shifting illegal products). Ogien posits that, this type is apparently more infrequent. The whole set of critical situations experienced by the partners will be analysed based on the four logics of trust. We can look at some examples to illustrate the procedure.

Box 7: Qualification of critical situations

« In the application file, the operator does not give enough detailed explanations on the project. It is not clear what the jobseeker is going to do there, if he will have support or not ». (Agent from Actiris)

The ratification of a partnership contract between a private organism and a public employment service for the reintegration of jobseekers can be experienced like a « gamble ». For the agent quoted below, the stakes of the project carried out by the operator are not clear.

« We have already been financially sanctioned for one of these contracts because you need a specific number of candidates for each phase. But we didn't have the required number of candidates ». (Partner from Actiris)

When the private operator does not receive jobseekers from the public employment service, he experiences the collaboration like a « challenge ». A lack of candidates can signify the organism is in danger of losing part of the subsidy.

3.3. The procedural approach as an analytical step: taking the measures into account

The management approach opts for an analytical approach where the existence of the partnership is not put into question. The moment a contract is signed, the partnership becomes a substantial reality which can be targeted. However, the focus for a sociological analysis of trust is quite different. The latter will concentrate on a processual approach because it highlights the mechanisms which make the partnership exist. It does not consider the partnership as just a reality but as an element to construct and therefore, bring into existence. The partnership can be compared to music. When applying Hennion (2007), with the example of music, the partnership does not exist independently from what/who makes/make it exist.

A sociological analysis of trust tackles the identification of procedures and measures which make the partnership exist and which confer to the individuals and organisms their partnership quality. Resorting to measures of judgement and promise, according to Karpik (1996), these instruments reduce opportunism and the opacity of the market; elements which possibly perturb the conclusion and execution of a contract of collaboration. These measures are aimed at transforming problematic commitments into credible ones. The measures of judgement reduce ignorance as far as the actors are concerned. On the other hand the measures of promise are part of the protection mechanisms which neutralise the effects of human malignancy facing a market dominated by radical uncertainty.

The measures of judgement are founded on one hand on personal trust and on the other hand impersonal trust. They can be characterised into « categories » (covering diplomas, reputation (Orléan, 1994)), the « designations » (labels, certifications, protected designation of origin, brands, etc.) and the « guides » (Karpik, 1996). Chassigneux (2007) adds other founding instruments of trust like codes of conduct, guides or practical models, the selection procedures and the follow-up of projects and *best practices.*

These measures or instruments act as « *delegates* » (Karpik, 1996: 539) in the name of those who are supposed to conform to their verdicts. These measures operate like « intermediaries » between supply and demand. They are analogous to « medias of communication » as commented by Luhmann (2006). Karpik estimates they are neither neutral nor interchangeable because each one has its own criteria of judgement, making a specific « sphere of singularity » visible.

> ***Box 8: The symbolic objects of a PPP in the field of employment and professional training***
> *We can identify the selection procedures (with their objectivity, equity and neutrality values), the application file, the partnership contract, the administrative and financial guide, the methodological documents, the minutes of the support committees, the activity reports, the internet websites, the forums, etc.*

As far as the measures of the promise are concerned, they include the social relationships and social norms. Karpik underlines the importance of the social relationship because distrust can be attenuated by a judgement on the quality of the person as well as the dynamic of the interactions. The last two elements are, consequently, trust generators. The social norm, or more precisely the normative measures, contributes to the enforcement of the initial commitment between the partners. It favours the continuity of the exchange through time as a « *symbolico-material arrangement* » (Karpik, 1996: 542). It is the bearer of principles of orientation of the action shared by the partners but equally combined with social sanctions.

All these measures, those concerning judgement as well as promise can intervene in a simultaneous way in a situation. This phenomenon is called « *distributed trust* » (Karpik, 1996: 545) and can act in a contrary fashion, for instance it can strengthen or weaken the credibility of the commitments according to the convergence or divergence of the measures at stake. These measures can crystallise the interactions between individuals and allow the autonomisation of trust. One measure, for example a partnership contract, maintains the relationship between the partners, whether or not individuals change. It permits the surpassing of the interactional level of trust in order to enter into a systemic type of trust.

4. Proposal of an analytical model

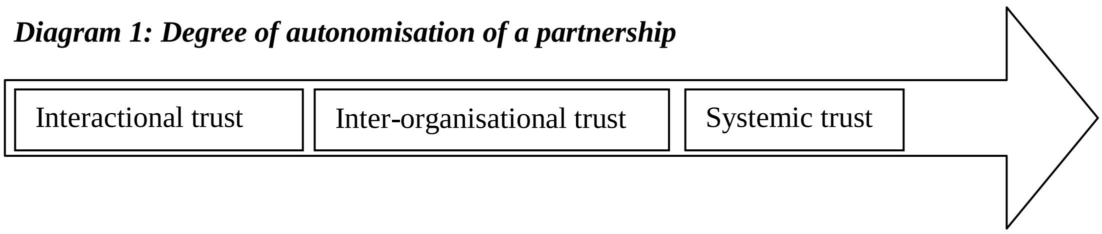
We are in a position to propose an analytical model of PPPs. A sociological analysis of trust enables us to take an interest in the identity dimension, the interactional dimension and the measures which found the partnership.

Table 3

Analytical model of PPPs	
1) Identity dimension	- Identification of individuals and organisms - Enrolment of actors (power plays or crafty strategies) - Self -presentation (individual, organism) - Construction of a common identity
2) Interactional dimension	- Principle of tiny steps - Definition of the perimeters of familiarity - Construction of a community (values, rules, norms, activities, roles, functions, etc) - Linguistic styles to define the partnership relationship (critical moments, betrayals, etc)
3) Measures	- Judgement measures - Promise measures

The in-depth study of these three aspects will give us an idea of the degree of the PPP's autonomisation. The partnership can be situated at three levels on a scale of autonomisation: 1) the interactional level; 2) the inter-organisational level; and 3) the systemic level. The interactional level corresponds to the trust between individuals. The inter-organisational level refers to the trust between members within a community or partnership. The systemic level refers to trust within a system of exchanges and communications relatively autonomised where the procedures and the measures manage the partnership in some ways a partnership distant from physical co-presence.

Diagram 1: Degree of autonomisation of a partnership



Conclusion

In the framework of this article, we have sought to surpass the limits of the management approach, the usual approach in the field of research on PPPs. There are three limits : it principally resorts to a level of analysis based on the meso-sociological level (organisational or institutional), it focuses on an analysis of resources and results of a partnership and it opts for an analytical substantialist approach meaning which signifies the partnership is an obvious fact whose substantial reality is not to be questioned.

A sociological analysis of trust would allow, according to us, to surpass these three limits with a view of focusing on a more in-depth analysis of the mechanisms of the partnership dynamic of a PPP. It also allows us to include, whilst taking into account the meso-sociological level of analysis, the micro and macro-sociological levels thanks to Luhmann’s work on interactional and systemic trust. It gives us the opportunity to open the black box of partnerships to understand what happens between the supply of resources and the production of results. Therefore, it proposes to consider the ways the actors conceive and talk about dynamic relationships (representation of actors and organisms, collective identity, interactions between individuals and/or organisms). Lastly, it builds on the symbolic dimension of measures because its role is to strengthen trust between partners.

These contributions have allowed us to propose a new analytical model for PPPs. The model not only takes into account the identity and interactional dimensions but also the measures present in the partnership. These elements deal with a form of trust (interactional, inter-organisational or systemic). The study of these elements enables us to define the degree of the partnership’s autonomisation. This model deserves to be tested by case studies.

Appendix 1: The PPPs legal frameworks in the field of socioprofessional reintegration in Belgium

For the Brussels-Capital region, the ruling of 18 January 2001 concerning the organisation and functioning of the Regional Office of Employment of Brussels, invites Actiris (PES) to participate in the constitution, capital or management of organisms, companies or associations, public as well as private, with a view to accomplishing its missions (art.7). The ruling of 26 June 2003 on mixed management of the labour market in the region of Brussels-Capital causes the suppression of the public monopoly on employment.

For the Flemish Region, the Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding (VDAB) has to, among other things, to gather and share the data related to the labour market and its functioning but also encourage sustainable partnerships in order to promote the placement, training, supervisory services in the perspective of reintegration into the labour force (art.5). The decree of 13 April 1999 concerning the private placement in the Flemish Region and the Flemish government's decree of 8 June 2000 only gives the conditions to grant or withdraw autorisation from a private placement office.

For the Walloon Region, the Forem has a management contract where it is stipulated, according to the Convention 181 of International Labour Organisation (ILO), its new role of Manager-Leader in accentuating and developing partnerships in order to successfully accomplish its missions. Article 7 of the decree of 6 May 1999 gives information concerning the execution of the missions by the Office in the form of partnerships (§1). The Walloon government defines the partnership in the following way: « *§2. The term partnership implies all forms of association or collaboration with public and/or private stakeholders, with/through whom financial, human or material means can be put in common in order to pursue an objective applicable to the Office's missions* ». The decree of 13 March 2003 of the Walloon Region relative to the autorisation of placement agencies and the Walloon government's decree of 3 June 2004 obliges placement agencies to provide the Walloon Office for professional training and employment (FOREM) « *the information needed for the accomplishment of active mission management and the diffusion of information and knowledge on the labour market* (art.20) ».

Part of the Walloon Region, called the « German-speaking Community », has their own employment office, « Arbeitsamt der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft » (ADG). The German-speaking community adopted a decree (18 December 2006) concerning the authorisation of private placement agencies. Article 19 stipulates that the government has instituted a platform for « placement » whose objective is to promote collaboration between the employment Office and private placement agencies. The platform allows, the exchange of information related to the evolution of supply and demand of jobs as well as the organisation and realisation of joint projects. It invites the private organisms and the Office to use common terms in order to improve the transparency at the level of the labour market's functioning.

Bibliography

BAUMSTARK, L. HUGE, A. MARCADIER, C. & MAUBERT, C. (2005). Partenariat public privé et actions locales. Les cahiers du Plan, 9, pp. 82.

BELHOCINE, N. FACAL, J. & MAZOUZ, B. (2005). Les partenariats public-privé : une forme de coordination de l'intervention publique à maîtriser par les gestionnaires d'aujourd'hui. *Télescope*, 12 (1), pp. 2-14.

BERNIER, P. (2005). Nouveaux partenariats entre le public et le privé : conditions d'émergence d'un modèle québécois. *Télescope*, 12 (1), pp.80-92.

BLONDIAU, P. (2004). Observations à propos du Livre vert sur les partenariats public-privé et le droit communautaire des marchés publics et des concessions. Union des Villes et Communes de Wallonie asbl, pp.7.

BREWER, B. & HAYLLAR, M.-R. (2005). Building Public Trust Through Public-Private Partnerships. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 71 (3), pp.475-492.

CALLON, M. (1986). Eléments pour une sociologie de la traduction. *Année sociologique*, 36, pp.169-208.

CAMPAGNAC, E. & al., (2009/a). *Evaluer les partenariats public-privé en Europe. Quelles conséquences pour la commande et le projet ? Quels impacts sur la qualité des bâtiments et des services ? Quelles méthodes d'évaluation ?*. France : Presses de l'école nationale des Ponts et chaussées.

CHASSIGNEUX, C. (2007). La confiance, instrument de régulation des environnements électroniques. *R.D.U.S.*, 37, pp.441-472.

CHATRIE, I. & UHALDEBORDE, J-M. (1996). Partenariat public-privé et développement territorial. *Revue d'Economie Financière*, 35.

COMMISSION DES COMMUNAUTES EUROPEENNES, (2004). Livre vert sur les partenariats public-privé et le droit communautaire des marchés publics et des concessions.

DANIS, G. (2004). Les partenariats public-privé (PPP) : mythes, réalités et enjeux. Education Internationale (http://download.ei-ie.org/docs/IRISDocuments/Education/OECD%20Conference/2007-00029-01-F.pdf)

GIAUQUE, D. (2009). Les difficultés de gestion des partenariats public-privé en Europe. Pour une lecture institutionnelle. *Revue française d'administration publique*, 130, pp.383-394.

GOFFMAN, E. (1973). *La mise en scène de la vie quotidienne. La présentation de soi*. Paris : Les éditions de minuit.

GRANOVETTER, M. (1985). Economic action and social structure the problem of embeddedness. *American Journal of Sociology*, 91 (3), pp.481-510.

HENNION A. (2007*). La passion musicale. Une sociologie de la médiation*. Paris : Métailié, coll. « sciences humaines ».

INSTITUT DE LA GESTION DELEGUEE, (2004). Livre vert de la Commission des Communautés Européennes sur les partenariats publics-privés. Réponse de l'Institut de la Gestion Déléguée à la consultation.

KARPIK, L. (2006). «Pour une conception substantive de la confiance in OGIEN, A. & QUERE, L. *Les moments de la confiance. Connaissance, affects et engagements.* Paris : Economica, pp.109-116.

KARPIK, L. (1996). Dispositifs de confiance et engagements crédibles. *Sociologie du travail*. 38 (4), pp.527-550.

KEE, J.E. & FORRER, J. (2008). *Privation Finance Initiative – The Theory Behind Practice, Journal of Public Administration*, 31, pp.151-167.

KOENIG, G. (1994). Introduction : repérage des lieux. Dossier : L'apprentissage organisationnel : pratiques et théories. *Revue française de gestion*, 97, pp.76-83.

LIENHARD, A. (2006). Les partenariats public-privé (PPP) en Suisse. Expériences, risques et possibilités, *Revue Internationale des Sciences Administratives*, 72 (4), pp.587-604.
LUHMANN, N. (2006). *La confiance : un mécanisme de réduction de la complexité sociale*. Paris : Economica.
LUHMANN, N. (2001/4). Confiance et familiarité. Problèmes et alternatives. *Réseaux*, 19 (108), pp.15-35.
MANGEMATIN, V. & THUDEROZ, C. (2004). *Des mondes de confiance : un concept à l'épreuve de la réalité sociale.* France : CNRS Sociologie.
MARTY, F. VOISIN, A. & TROSA S. (2006). Les partenariats public-privé. Paris : La découverte.
MARTY, F. & VOISIN, A. (2006/2). Le contrat de partenariat constitue-t-il une private finance initiative à la française ? Le périmètre du recours aux contrats de partenariat à l'aune de l'expérience britannique. *Revue internationale de droit économique*, 20 (2), pp.131-150.
MAZOUZ, B. (2009). Les aspects pratiques des partenariats public-privé. De la rhétorique néolibérale aux enjeux, défis et risques de gestion des PPP. *Revue française d'administration publique*, 130, pp.215-232.
MEAD, G.H. (2006). *L'esprit, le soi et la société.* Paris : Presses Universitaires de France.
NEUVILLE, J.-P. (1997). La stratégie de la confiance. Le partenariat industriel observé depuis le fournisseur. *Sociologie du travail*, 3, pp.297-319.
NEUVILLE, J.-P. (1998). La tentation opportuniste : Figures et dynamique de la coopération interindividuelle dans le partenariat industriel, *Revue Française de Sociologie*, 39 (1), pp.71-103.
OGIEN, A, (1995). *L'esprit gestionnaire. Une analyse de l'air du temps*. Paris : Éditions de l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales.
OGIEN, A. (2006). Eléments pour une grammaire de la confiance in Ogien, A. & Quéré, L. *Les moments de la confiance. Connaissance, affects et engagements.* Paris : Economica, pp.217-232.
ORIANNE, J.-F. (2005). Le traitement clinique du chômage. Thèse de doctorat en sociologie, Université Catholique de Louvain.
ORLEAN, A. (1994). Sur le rôle respectif de la confiance et de l'intérêt dans la constitution de l'ordre marchand. *Revue du MAUSS*, 4, pp.17-36.
PREFONTAINE, L. RAMONJAVELO, V. & SKANDER, D. (2009). La capacité partenariale, pilier de la réussite d'un partenariat public-privé : résultats d'une étude canadienne, *Revue française d'administration publique,* 130, pp.323-336.
QUERE, L. (2001). La structure cognitive et normative de la confiance, *Réseaux*, 19 (108), pp.125-152.
ROUSSEAU, D.M. SITKIN, S.B. BURT, R.S. & CAMERER C. (1998). Not So Different After All : A Cross Discipline View of Trust. *Academy of Management Review*, 23 (3), pp.393-404.
SABEL, C. (1992). Elaborer la confiance : de nouvelles formes de coopération dans une économie volatile in FORAY, D. & FREEMAN, C. (dir), *Technologie et richesse des nations*. Paris : Economica, pp.419-450.
SEN, A. (2000). *Repenser l'inégalité,* France : Seuil.
SIMMEL, G. (1987). *La philosophie de l'argent.* Paris : PUF.
SIMON, E. (2007). La confiance dans tous ses états. *Revue Française de Gestion,* 175, pp.83-94.
TEUBNER, G. (1993). *Le droit, un système autopoïétique.* Paris : Presses Universitaires de France.
TEUBNER, G. (1996). *Droit et réflexivité. L'auto-référence en droit et dans l'organisation.* Belgique : L.G.D.J. – Bruylant.

WILLIAMSON, O.E. (1985). *The economic Institutions of Capitalism.* New York : Free Press.

ZAHEER, A. McEVILY, B. & PERRONE, V. (1998). Does Trust Matter? Exploring the Effects on Inter-organizational and Interactional Trust on Performance. *Organizational Science*, 9 (2), pp.141-159.

ZUCKER, L. (1986). Production of trust: institutional sources of economic structure: 1840-1920, *Research in Organization Behaviour,* 8, pp.53-111.