

# Actor dynamics in a Polycentric Governance System

Analysing leadership strategies during the Puzzle-phase  
of the NOVEX-program



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## Colophon

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## **Preface**

Dear reader,

It is my pleasure to present to you my thesis for the master's program Environmental and Infrastructure Planning at the University of Groningen. This thesis marks the end of a truly valuable and enjoyable time I was fortunate enough to experience at the Faculty of Spatial Sciences.

I would first and foremost like to thank dr. Ward Rauws and Ingo Bousema MSc for their supervision. Being granted the opportunity to work together inspired me to pursue this topic and their constructive feedback helped me to structure my thoughts and thesis throughout this process. Being met with equal enthusiasm for this topic enabled me to overcome all encountered obstacles.

Then, I would like to thank all respondents for taking the time to share their insights and for allowing me to study their undertakings. Lastly, I would like to voice my gratitude for the family and friends in my surroundings who were misfortunate enough to be around when I projected my thesis-talk in their direction.

I hope reading this thesis is as enjoyable as it was to write it.

Mauk Sewandono  
*Groningen, July 2024*

## **Abstract**

Actors need to acquire the right mental circumstances to gain new knowledge and insights in a collaborative effort between organisations. They require the presence of Adaptive Space and, therefore, understanding how this space is influenced by actor dynamics is crucial. Previous research has primarily focused on individual organisations and mainly relied on authoritative leadership theories as the explanation for newly gained knowledge. A deeper understanding of how actors enable the Adaptive Space in a collaborative process between organisations is required. This thesis investigates how complexity leadership operates in functioning organisations by researching what strategies are being deployed and how actors experience the influence thereof on the Adaptive Space, in order to gain a better understanding of how polycentric governmental programs can progress in a complex and dynamic environment. This research combined a literature review, document analysis, participatory observations and semi-structured interviews to analyse the actor dynamics during the Puzzle-phase of the NOVEX-program. Herein, Enabling Leadership is the collection of strategies deployed by actors which enables Adaptive Space. The results showed that psychological safety is required for proper communications. Increasing most leadership constituents, such as increasing one's personal network and being informed, had a positive effect on the Adaptive Space. Applying pressure and coordinative efforts proved advantageous for the Adaptive Space to a certain degree, after which it is considered an excess that has a negative effect. The findings indicate that the program-design makes certain leadership strategies less likely to be deployed because its effect is incorporated in the program. Furthermore, specific jobs make that particular leadership strategies are more logical to be deployed by one actor compared to another. Future research is needed to create a more complete picture of leadership strategies by comparing results from different polycentric governance systems.

**Keywords:** Complexity Leadership Theory, Enabling Leadership, Polycentric Governance System, Adaptive Space, NOVEX

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### **List of abbreviations**

BZK	Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
CAS	Complex Adaptive System
CLT	Complexity Leadership Theory
IPO	Interprovinciaal Overleg Inter Provincial Consultation
NOVEX	Nationale Omgevingsvisie Extra National Spatial Strategy Extra
PGS	Polycentric Governance System

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Background

Space is not an infinite resource in a small and densely populated country like the Netherlands. The playing field of Dutch spatial planning is therefore set by its borders. At the same time, major challenges and developments battle for the same scarce space. The effects of climate change, the uncertainties of the energy transition, and a serious housing crisis are but a few examples of societal challenges that all demand space in the Netherlands (Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving, 2023). The exact spatial claims of each of these challenges is unclear. Moreover, even less is known about their combined spatial demand (de Jonge, 2022a).

Spatial planners are tasked with shaping and designing our cities and landscapes. Their profession makes it possible to guide developments that influence the outside world. Within spatial planning, a seemingly never-ending debate regarding decentralizing and centralizing can be observed (de Gier, 2011). Legislative instruments and power have shifted both ways throughout the years and the motto “*central when necessary, decentral where possible*” describes the current approach (de Gier, 2011). This generated the feeling that a centrally structured overview of Dutch spatial planning was lacking (de Jonge, 2022b). In an attempt to regain control and to facilitate the successful tackling of spatial challenges, in 2020 the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations first created the ‘National Strategy on Spatial Planning and the Environment’ – or the ‘Nationale Omgevingsvisie’ (NOVI) in Dutch (Ollongren, 2020). The aim of the NOVI was to show a long-term perspective for the living environment of the Netherlands (Ollongren, 2020). To add to the feasibility and realisation of the NOVI, the program ‘Nationale Omgevingsvisie Extra’ (NOVEX) was developed (de Jonge, 2022a). The NOVEX-program consists of the voluntary cooperation between the Dutch provinces and the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. Provinces are asked to ‘lay the puzzle’ that consists of spatial challenges and they are asked to involve both the central government as well as other parties, for example, municipalities and water boards (de Jonge, 2022a). Between December 2022 and early 2024 – also known as the Puzzle-phase – the provinces were asked to create an output containing their initial findings and vision on what their puzzle could look like (Rijksoverheid, 2022; Stribos, 2023).

In advance of writing this thesis, the researcher had the opportunity to assist in a preliminary study concerning adaptive planning in the Puzzle-phase of the NOVEX-program, commissioned by the ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (Bousema and Rauws, 2024). This enabled the researcher to study the governance system in which the NOVEX-program is situated. The governance system in which the NOVEX-program is operating is a Polycentric Governance System: an environment consisting of a variety of decision-making bodies that are semiautonomous and can both compete and cooperate with one another (Carlisle and Gruby, 2019; Berardo and Lubell, 2016; Bousema and Rauws, 2024). For example, provinces and water authorities both have power and authority, yet because their interests are not always aligned it is possible for them to compete over topics e.g., land or finances. On the other hand, it becomes possible for these parties to cooperate when they share a similar goal and they acknowledge that they can combine their powers to achieve it. This system is the context in which all involved actors in the NOVEX-program interact with each other. Conflicting interests and arguments as well as collaborative efforts can be found in this system. How, when and why these actors interact can influence how actors operate and, consequently, this dynamic system impacts the output of the NOVEX-program: the Spatial Proposals.

The Spatial Proposals are the broadly described output of the Puzzle-phase of the NOVEX-program (Rijksoverheid, 2022). Because the exact output is not known beforehand, new knowledge is required which the actors in the program are expected to produce (Rijksoverheid, 2022). This requires from the involved actors that they possess the right conditions to be able to produce this new and beforehand not exactly known knowledge. For



actors to be in the right position to achieve this, Adaptive Space is required to be present, which is a non-physical “space of possibility” (Bond, 2023). This space makes it possible to innovate, learn, and to produce new knowledge and it consists of information flows and the perceived head space of actors (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007; Arena, 2018; Schulze and Pinkow, 2020; Bond, 2023). For example, if an actor does not have the mental space to think creatively, or if they feel unsafe to communicate with others, then their ability to innovate is limited.

Circling back to the governance context of the NOVEX-program, one can imagine that the rich and dynamic setting of actors and interactions can influence an actor's Adaptive Space in various ways. This thesis focuses specifically on the strategies – consisting of the combination of everything an actor does and thinks – that actors employ to study how Adaptive Space is influenced. These strategies are a form of leadership because strategies influence the eventual goal attainment, and ‘to lead’ means to essentially aim to control a situation and steer it towards a desired outcome (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024b; Dinh et al., 2014). Considering the task of the provinces and remembering the goal to create a feasible spatial vision for the Netherlands that is being supported and that is fit to be executed, it is thus important that strategies of leadership actually contribute towards this outcome.

### **1.2.1. Academic relevance**

The concept of a ‘leader’ is generally associated with the one charismatic person as the head of a group, responsible for guiding everyone towards success (Bryman, Stephens and Campo, 1996). It is no surprise that within leadership studies, (neo-) charismatic theories have been the most studied (Dinh et al., 2014). However, as described by Dinh et al. (2014), a growing interest in new and more complex leadership theories can be identified, one of which is Complexity Leadership Theory (CLT). This development can be explained by the increased awareness that leadership is more than just the role of one individual at the top of an organisation (Dinh et al., 2014), and Sims (2009), states that leadership is a “complex dynamic process that emerges in the interaction of agents.” CLT concerns the study of interactions between actors in a Complex Adaptive System (CAS) (Uhl-Bien and Arena, 2017). The NOVEX-program is operating in a Polycentric Governance System, and a Polycentric Governance System is a CAS: “a system of agents that interact among themselves and/or their environment, such that even relatively simple agents with simple rules of behaviour can produce complex, emergent behaviour” (Woods and Branlat, 2011; Carmichael and Hadžikadić, 2019, p.2). One way in which the produced complex, emergent behaviour can be observed is in the form of new knowledge (Tilebein, 2006). In a program like NOVEX where new knowledge is being generated it is desirable to understand how leadership strategies employed by actors contribute to or limit the possibility to create this knowledge. Adopting a complexity perspective is fitting in this context because the NOVEX-program is situated in a Polycentric Governance System which, in turn, is a CAS.

The academic relevance of this research is situated in answering the following knowledge gap. According to Holland (2014, p.8.), the way CAS are structured is through the activities of actors, who “learn or adapt in response to interactions with other agents.” These activities are a combination of what an actor thinks and does and can be understood as leadership strategies, considering that they are employed to steer towards a desired outcome. According to Rosenhead et al. (2019), little is specified in leadership literature regarding how complexity leadership strategies ought to operate in functioning organisations. Moreover, even less is known about how leadership strategies work in a CAS consisting of multiple organisations such as the NOVEX-program.

Leadership literature generally focuses on studying variables, for example, how a particular leadership strategy contributed towards an organisation's success by measuring an increase in the number of shirts being produced (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007).

However, as indicated by Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey (2007), the focus should be on studying the conditions that allow an outcome – such as the increase in number of shirts produced – to occur, and this is exactly what CLT allows to be studied when looking at how leadership strategies affect Adaptive Space. To be more specific, Enabling Leadership – one of the three types of leadership within CLT, which will be explained further in chapter 2 – is of importance because Enabling Leadership strategies are said to be required in an organisational setting to be able to cope with a changing environment (Rosenhead et al., 2019). This is especially relevant in the case of the NOVEX-program because it being situated in a Polycentric Governance System implies a dynamic environment that is not permanently set. What remains unclear is how Enabling Leadership is operationalized in a Polycentric Governance System, meaning that it is unclear exactly how these strategies influence Adaptive Space and how actors experience this (Rosenhead et al., 2019). The academic relevance of this thesis is further grounded in a shortage of case-based evidence for CLT (Rosenhead et al., 2019). Therefore, this research aims to assist in bridging this identified gap and to contribute to the existing literature by identifying what leadership strategies are deployed within this context and how those strategies affect the Adaptive Space.

### **1.2.2. Societal relevance**

Complex Adaptive Systems and organisations wish to thrive and to survive in today's fast-paced world. They can do so by becoming adaptive (Arena and Uhl-Bien, 2016). This entails the ability to change in light of changing circumstances (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024a). In CAS, this adaptive capacity and emergent behaviour is a possible outcome when Adaptive Space is present, which allows actors to innovate and generate knowledge. Studying Adaptive Space, therefore, can clarify potential differences in organisations' adaptive capacity and provide information which allows organisations to enhance their adaptive capacity. More specifically, the societal relevance of this thesis is situated in the relationship between complexity leadership and the Adaptive Space. Studying how strategies of complexity leadership facilitate the possibility for emergent behaviour and adaptive capacity to emerge is beneficial for CAS and organisations in a complex and dynamic environment.

Additionally, a second outcome which is positive for society relates to funding and the nature of the NOVEX-program. By increasing our understanding of how Adaptive Space is influenced in government-funded, polycentric programs such as NOVEX, the conditions of similar programs can be adjusted to ensure effective utilization of public funding. For example, once a general understanding is acquired of how Adaptive Space is best facilitated, especially in this bureaucratic context, then this knowledge can be applied to different programs operating within similarly complex and changing environments. This understanding requires researching leadership strategies and their effect on Adaptive Space. As a result, governmental programs and even ministries can operate more cost-effectively as well as more adaptive in an increasingly complex and dynamic world.

### **1.3. Research objective and research questions**

The aim of the central government is to contribute towards the feasibility of the Dutch National Strategy on Spatial Planning and the Environment (NOVI) via the NOVEX-program (de Jonge, 2022a). Because of the complex and dynamic context of the NOVEX-program it is beneficial to study the Adaptive Space within NOVEX and how leadership strategies are of influence on this space. Therefore, the aim of this explorative study is to investigate how complexity leadership operates in functioning organisations by researching what strategies are being deployed and how actors experience the influence thereof on the Adaptive Space, in order to gain a better understanding of how polycentric governmental programs can progress in a complex and dynamic environment. Complexity leadership, in short, entails here the dynamic process of interactions between actors and is accessible for all actors instead of being a trait

reserved for the select few. The focus of this research is on the Puzzle-phase of the NOVEX-program because of its richness in interactions between actors and because of the timeframe in which this research is being conducted. Furthermore, during the Puzzle-phase, the program was subject to changing circumstances which put the program to the test.

The objective of this research results in the formulation of the following primary research question:

“What leadership strategies do actors deploy during the Puzzle-phase to influence the Adaptive Space in the NOVEX-program?”

Successfully answering this primary research question becomes more likely when it is tackled in a structured manner. Therefore, the following secondary research questions have been formulated:

“How can Enabling Leadership and Adaptive Space be conceptualized in a Polycentric Governance System?”

“How can actors in a Polycentric Governance System influence Adaptive Space?”

“How can the NOVEX-program be understood as a Polycentric Governance System?”

“What is the perceived influence of Enabling Leadership strategies on Adaptive Space in the Puzzle-phase?”

#### **1.4. Reading guide**

This chapter contained an introduction to this thesis and presented the research questions that guide the research. The second chapter forms the foundation of this research and consists of a theoretical framework and conceptual model. Chapter three describes the chosen methodology and includes a description of the NOVEX-program. Chapter four presents the results and chapter five contains an extensive discussion of the findings of this study, as well as a reflection and recommendations for further research. Chapter six presents the conclusion of this thesis. The final chapters contain the references and appendices.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

### 2.1. Adaptive Space

Adaptive Space is not per se a physical environment such as a conference room (Arena, 2018). In fact, it is mainly a fluid and social construction (Arena, 2018; Paananen et al., 2022). It is a space that actors experience and, therefore, actor's perception is important (Arena, 2018). Before discussing the elements out of which Adaptive Space is constructed, it is important to understand what it is that Adaptive Space allows actors to achieve. Firstly, the presence of Adaptive Space allows actors to develop knowledge, innovation, and learning (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007; Arena, 2018). To put it straightforward, this is what the presence of Adaptive Space can result in. Note that it is not a given outcome, however, it does create the possibility for the outcome to be achieved. Secondly, these outcomes eventually can result in adaptability (Arena, 2018). For example, a shoe company can increase its ability to adapt in light of a changing environment, when workers felt Adaptive Space to be present and were able to creatively arrive at a new product that requires less material by effectively designing a shoe for children that can adjust its shape and grow a few sizes in size, adjacent with the child's feet. Adaptability is thus a possible outcome of another possible outcome, namely the development of knowledge, innovation, and learning.

As mentioned earlier, this thesis is not concerned with measuring organisational output such as an increase in shirts being produced. Instead, the focus is on how Adaptive Space makes it possible for organisations to thrive and survive in the modern complex and dynamic world. The creation of Adaptive Space is, therefore, an essential component to grasp. Arena (2018), highlights how Adaptive Space in CLT is created through strategies of social capital rather than human capital. This distinction emphasizes the importance of communicating and connecting between ideas and people, as opposed to the primary focus being on individuals and, for example, how talented they are (Arena, 2018). This is no unexpected insight, considering the two core components that construct Adaptive Space: *head space* and *information flows* (Schulze and Pinkow, 2020; Bond, 2023).

#### 2.1.1. Head space

Recently, Schulze and Pinkow (2020) published their findings on how Adaptive Space is created in the context of consultation firms. Their findings reiterated the function and purpose of Adaptive Space, stating that innovation can be generated via the presence of Adaptive Space and that, consequently, organisational adaptability can be achieved (Schulze and Pinkow, 2020). Their most prominent finding indicates that Adaptive Space requires *head space* to be present among actors (Schulze and Pinkow, 2020). Head space is linked to actors' ability to think creatively and to experiment with innovative ideas (Schulze and Pinkow, 2020). This mainly requires that actors have enough free time. Free time, however, does not mean having plenty of time off but instead refers to free time during working hours in which actors are free to work on tasks other than their normally requested output (Schulze and Pinkow, 2020). Loewe and Dominiquini (2006), similarly described a lack of free time as one of the primary obstacles that prevent actors from being innovative. Sufficient head space is not limited to pursuing innovation and generating new ideas, it also includes being able to think carefully and thoroughly (Fossey, 2022). This can require time as well as the mental head space for actors to utilize their intellectual capacity (Fossey, 2022). One example of head space includes actors having the freedom to manage their own time, where they can schedule hours necessary to complete their tasks, as well as scheduling hours of work in which their activities are not directly linked to their production (Schulze and Pinkow 2020). Although the term *head space* is not mentioned by Bond (2023), their description of how Adaptive Space requires space in the form of time can be similarly understood as the above description.

### **2.1.2. Information flows**

Bond (2023), explicates another component of Adaptive Space labelled *information flows*. Ziebro and Northcraft (2009), deduce the importance of information flows by affirming that *creativity* requires actors to start seeing things differently. Applying a new perspective is most often fuelled by insights gained from other actors and information flows are crucial because they allow actors to understand to apply perspectives and insights that were originally not their own (Ziebro and Northcraft, 2009). This second component of Adaptive Space related to communication is best understood by understanding the three parts of which it is comprised: *the amount of information flows, the clarity of communication, and psychological safety* (Bond, 2023).

Firstly, the amount of information flows that an actor is a part of is relevant for their potential to learn, innovate and to create new knowledge (Henczel, 2000). It is subjective in the sense that actor A might benefit from a wide range of communicative endeavours and rich flows of information, whereas actor B could experience this as an information overkill which limits their Adaptive Space (Henczel, 2000). The *clarity of communication* is strongly linked to the amount of information flows.

Information flows are negatively impacted by a lack of understanding from actors (Bond, 2023). For example, for misconceptions to be solved there can be more information required and then an increase in information flows is thus necessary. The desired organisational output, for example, new knowledge in the case of the NOVEX-program, can be more easily achieved if information is clear and flowing smoothly (Henczel, 2000). So, Adaptive Space benefits from clear communication because this reduces the need for more information flows that could have been prevented, whilst the subjectivity of the preferred amount of information flows requires us to be aware of the fact that there is no objectively correct amount of information flows.

Lastly, the psychological safety when communicating is included by Bond (2023). Psychological safety here concerns how actors feel because this plays a role in how likely an actor is to reach out for help (Bond, 2023). If an actor does not feel comfortable or in cases where they are fearful, they are less likely to ask questions and to ask for help (Bond, 2023). A harsh, unfriendly response from an actor working for a different organisation within the same program, for example, can impede on an actor's likeliness to reach out to that party again. As a result, they can spend more time being stuck in a certain situation, wasting their time and making little to no progress. This limits the possibility to learn, innovate and to generate new knowledge. On the other hand, the presence of feeling psychologically safe makes it easier for information to flow effectively and can accelerate deliverables such as new knowledge (Bond, 2023).

Section 2.1. provided an overview of the academic understanding of Adaptive Space. The following section aims to describe the setting in which Adaptive Space is researched here: a Polycentric Governance System. Together, this provides the partial answer to the first secondary research question: "How can Enabling Leadership and Adaptive Space be conceptualized in a Polycentric Governance System?"

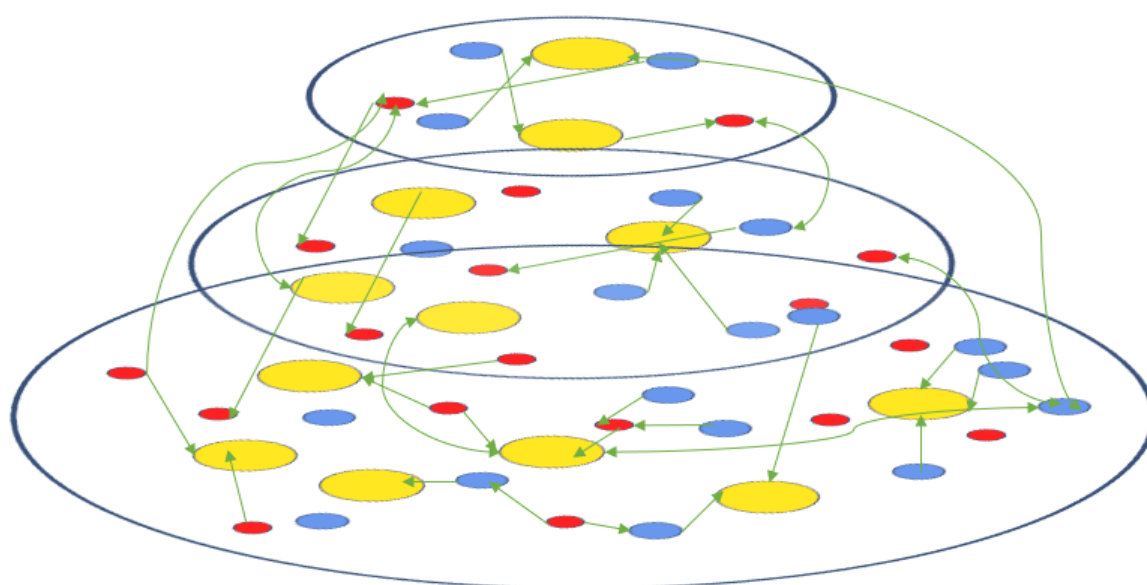
## **2.2. Studying Adaptive Space in a Polycentric Governance System**

The notion of a Polycentric Governance System (PGS) requires a conceptual discussion of its main components before their combined conceptualisation is presented. Firstly, the etymology of 'polycentric', or rather 'polycentricity.' According to polymath Michael Polanyi, the origins of polycentricity can be found in the chemical sciences and biology (Stephan, Marshall and McGinnis, 2019). Here, the state of the reproductive system of plants was being researched. A plant possessing merely one singular reproductive cell would be called 'monocentric', and a plant having multiple reproductive cells would be called 'polycentric' (Stephan, Marshall and McGinnis, 2019). The context in which polycentricity is used here,

however, is not that of biology. The concept of polycentricity was introduced to public administration and political science in 1961 by Ostrom, Tiebout and Warren, observing how metropolitan areas tend to be in absence of one singular, dominant leader and that there were multiple decision-making bodies active (E. Ostrom, 2010; Stephan, Marshall and McGinnis, 2019). In addition to this observation, Ostrom, Tiebout and Warren found that despite the absence of a leader with the final say, the combined actions of the various decision-making bodies still resulted in the producing of the public goods and services required within the metropolitan area (Aligica and Tarko, 2012). Thus, polycentricity refers to a functioning combination of decision-making bodies.

Governance is a complex concept in and of itself. Despite its terminology, governance is not something exclusively reserved for the government. It is a process in which both non-governmental actors and government officials can act (McGinnis, 2011). Governance essentially guides behaviour in a desired direction, which is done through the application and changing of rules, strategies and norms (McGinnis, 2011). It relates to the questions of what actors are applying which strategies, instruments and resources at what level of governance, in order to generate their desired outcome (Bressers and Kuks, 2003; McGinnis, 2011). A polycentric governance system, then, is an environment consisting of a variety of decision-making bodies that are semiautonomous and can both compete and cooperate with one another (Carlisle and Gruby, 2019; Berardo and Lubell, 2016). For example, a water authority can choose to cooperate with a municipality and their ambitions to develop new housing. At the same time, the water authority can choose to compete with their plans against another municipality and their ambitions to develop. Multiple decision-making bodies can be stakeholder and it is rarely the case that one party can make a definite decision completely on their own. Figure 1 depicts a schematic figure of a Polycentric Governance System where the arrows show the numerous connections between various decision-making bodies and where the large, blue outlined circles are three different layers of governance. In the NOVEX-program, this could be understood as the state, provincial layer and municipal layer. The differences in size and colour within these layers show how actors within this system are not always similar and equal regarding their perspectives and influence, and the green arrows indicate the connectiveness and interactions within the system.

*Figure 1 – Schematic figure of a Polycentric Governance System.*



*(Based on Morrison et al., 2019. Created by author, 2024)*

### 2.3. Complexity Leadership Theory

Complexity Leadership Theory (CLT) originates from organisation science and concerns leadership *within* and *of* Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) (Uhl-Bien and Marion, 2009). A CAS is “a system of agents that interact among themselves and/or their environment, such that even relatively simple agents with simple rules of behaviour can produce complex, emergent behaviour” (Carmichael and Hadžikadić, 2019, p.2). A Polycentric Governance System is a CAS because a PGS contains a web of actors that interact, communicate and compete and this results in complex, emergent behaviour. The significance of CLT is grounded in how it includes *complexity* in explaining how this complex, emergent behaviour (e.g. generating new knowledge) is generated (Uhl-Bien and Arena, 2018). CLT does not claim to be able to predict outcomes based on analysing every single component of the system being researched (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007). Instead, it acknowledges how, for example, new knowledge can be generated because of how complex the researched system is. In the case of a polycentric governance system aimed at generating new knowledge, CLT explains that this outcome is possible because of the complex system of actors and interactions in and between organisations (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007). Being exposed to so many different perspectives can then provoke new insights. For example, a simple conversation with a general employee at a water board can trigger a new perspective for an actor working for a province, allowing them to apply this new perspective in their work. This is the first of the two ways in which *complexity* is used in CLT. The second use entails that CLT acknowledges that today's world in itself is complex (Arena and Uhl-Bien, 2016). The fact that the ability to adapt to a changing environment is vital for organisational survival was already identified by Schumpeter in 1949 (Uhl-Bien and Arena, 2018). CLT thus acknowledges that the environment is growing in complexity and, simultaneously, recognises how organisations and their actors are increasingly complex as well. As a result, understanding and applying CLT is vital for organisations to guarantee survival.

Furthermore, applying complexity to organisation science differs fundamentally in how it understands how learning and adaptability emerges compared to traditional organisational views. A traditional viewpoint expects learning and adaptability to be obtained in the organisation's moving towards an equilibrium (Uhl-Bien and Arena, 2018). This entails a stable state in which a lot of order and managerial control is present, where actors are expected to learn and create new knowledge (Uhl-Bien and Arena, 2018). In the context of a program situated in a Polycentric Governance System this would entail, for example, that government officials would continuously have to report back on their progress and their interactions with actors from different stakeholders would be heavily orchestrated in terms of what can be discussed and what cannot be discussed. Complexity theory, on the other hand, states that these improvements are emerging in a more dynamic and instable state where the results of dynamic interactions, e.g. learning and generating new knowledge that enables organisations to progress under changing circumstances, are effective responses to complexity (Uhl-Bien and Arena, 2018). Note that this instable state should not be taken too far, as this would result in chaos (Uhl-Bien and Arena, 2018). Therefore, balance between disturbing and stabilizing elements is key (Uhl-Bien and Arena, 2018). In a Polycentric Governance System, this balanced state would entail that actors are working whilst being aware of unpredictable outcomes such as unforeseen political changes. At the same time, there remains a certain structure present, in this case, the fact that elections were scheduled at an announced moment. Stacey (1995), points out that an instable state is not found in formal spheres of organisations but rather in informality and in actor networks. The required, balanced state in which actors are to learn and create new knowledge thus exists in the overlap of stricter, stable elements and disturbing elements and uncertainties.

### 2.3.1. Complexity Leadership Theory and its basic premises

The following notions form the basic premises on which CLT is built. Firstly, the role of context, in which the informal dynamic is rooted (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007). Interactions and interdependencies between actors are part of what is considered *context*, as well as how hierarchical power is distributed and historical influences (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007). How actors within the observed system interact and depend on one another can at least partially be explained through the context of the situation. For example, previous conflicts or new power shifts can be a motive for actors to behave differently compared to how they would behave in a situation where no conflict and no power shifts took place. In the context of the NOVEX-program this could, for example, mean that an old personal conflict between an actor working for the ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations and an actor working for one of the provinces limits future collaborative efforts because these actors prefer to continue working independently from each other, whereas their colleagues might wish to join forces on more topics.

Secondly, CLT states that *leadership* is not the same as *leaders*. A more traditional view on this topic reduced its scope to the actions of individuals only, and this is part of studying *leaders* (Dinh et al., 2014; Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007; Horner, 1997). These explorations paid attention to individuals and their characteristics, resulting in theories such as Charismatic Leadership Theory which is criticized for various reasons, including a weak explanatory power and insufficiently specified causal relations (Dinh et al., 2014). *Leadership*, however, is not limited to a single person and their characteristics. Instead, leadership is a *process* of formal and informal dynamics (Uhl-Bien and Marion, 2009; Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007; Mackenzie, 2006). Mackenzie (2006), described how, in the context of organisation science, processes are about how change is being initiated, enabled, and sustained. So, the traditional, personalised view on leadership would focus on a single actor and their physical and mental traits, for example, explaining success via the presence of a charismatic leader (Horner, 1997). Moreover, a distinction would be made between *leader* and *followers*, and results would be explained via the identified personal traits of the leader. CLT, however, recognizes environmental and situational factors and their influence. Furthermore, CLT sees leadership as the dynamic interactions between actors and acknowledges that this dynamic is a process instead of a combination of character traits (Mackenzie, 2006). In the context of the NOVEX-program this can best be understood as leadership being something that all actors can carry out, regardless of their position within the program: even active interns can play their part. The focus is on how and when actors interact. A traditional perspective on leadership would state that leadership was something reserved only for those within the program that possessed a few critical character traits and taking up a powerful position. Here, the focus would have been more on isolated individuals and their persona.

The third premise of CLT criticizes how leadership theory primarily researched the formal dimension, including mainly managerial roles (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007). According to CLT, however, leadership does not solely take place in the formal dynamic of organisations. Schneider (2002), in line with this premise, notes how a traditional perspective on leadership describes hierarchy and managerial authority to be where leadership occurs. Instead, leadership can be found in informal dynamics throughout organisations. So, an example of how leadership can be found in informal dynamics would be for actors discussing a relevant topic or issue when waiting at the coffee machine. In the context of the NOVEX-program this could be the linking up between actors from different provinces during one of the centrally organised design sessions (see 3.2). Here, they are not required to discuss such matters, however, initiating a discussion here can provide benefits such as being better prepared before entering a meeting.



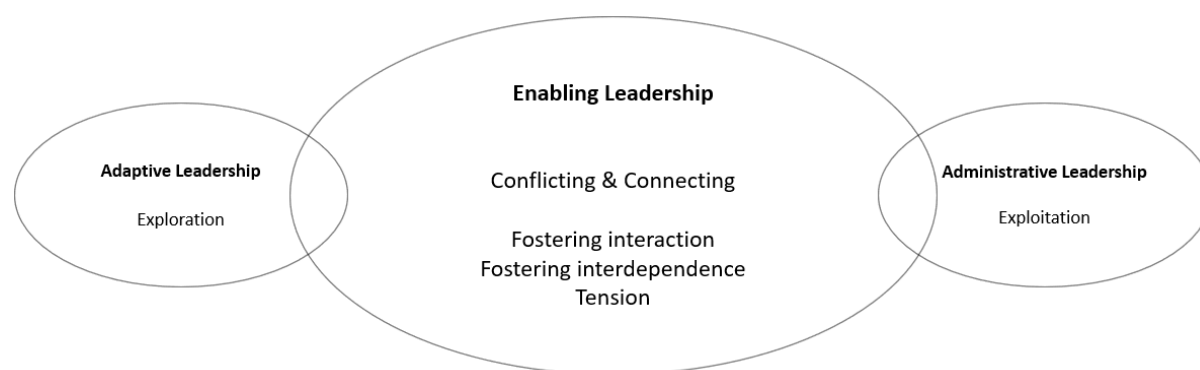
Lastly, the difference between leadership development and management is the nature of the challenge. Instead of being related to more classic, technical problems, CLT concern *adaptive challenges* (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007). Parks (2005), clarifies the distinction between technical problems and adaptive challenges by stating that technical problems, regardless of their complexity, are solvable with knowledge and process that are already available. Solving adaptive challenges, however, necessitates new habitude, innovation, and new learning (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007; Parks, 2005). Solving adaptive challenges regularly involves stress, risks, grief, conflict and creativity being involved (Parks, 2005). For example, in the Polycentric Governance System in which the NOVEX-program is active, it was originally unclear how different documents produced by the provinces could be connected. During the centrally organised design sessions, actors in the program accepted that challenge and this generated conflict, among other things, when multiple provinces felt excluded.

The premises above give shape to how complexity is seen and used. CLT makes use of complexity by understanding the complex and sometimes uncertain state of the world, the nature of the challenge at hand, and recognizing the influence of context. Furthermore, these premises form how complexity is used by acknowledging the complex state of the web of actors and interactions and by shifting from the individual, managerial point of view towards an understanding of leadership being a process that cannot be ascribed to a singular individual. As a result, it becomes possible to explain how and why outcomes, such as the generating of new knowledge, can be observed.

#### 2.4. Types of leadership within CLT

Within CLT, three types of leadership are discerned: Administrative Leadership, Enabling Leadership, and Adaptive Leadership. Enabling Leadership has a central position in this thesis because of its ability to influence Adaptive Space. The following text aims to shortly explain Administrative Leadership and Adaptive Leadership to shed light on the two types of leadership in between which Enabling Leadership thrives. Enabling Leadership operates between the systems in which Administrative and Adaptive Leadership occur and combines the ambidextrous tasks of *exploration* and *exploitation* (Keith, 2018). Thereafter, Enabling Leadership is explained and its importance is elucidated. Figure 2 shows a model of CLT.

Figure 2 – Model of Complexity Leadership.



(Based on Schulze and Pinkow, 2020. Created by author, 2024)

### 2.4.1. Positioning Enabling Leadership

Administrative Leadership concerns a certain decision-making power that results in coordinative actions (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007). These actions can be generalized as having a top-down character and they serve a bureaucratic function, related to the managerial aspects of organisations (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007). Administrative Leadership further entails actions to sponsor new, innovative ideas, meaning that an administrative leader breaks down barriers that can prevent an innovative idea from reaching the formal system (Uhl-Bien and Arena, 2017). For example, engaging in Administrative Leadership within the context of a PGS would be to stimulate the suggestion from an actor to use part of the budget to involve public participation, and to promote the implementation of this suggestion in other programs. Although this implies that Administrative Leadership requires hierarchy and some level of authority, that does not mean that actions of Administrative Leadership only occur at the highest level of an administrative system. Actors at different levels of an organisation can engage in different actions of Administrative Leadership. For example, managing crises is a more suitable task for an actor that embodies a higher, more powerful function – hierarchically speaking (Moynihan, 2005).

Administrative Leadership is tasked with *exploitation*. Exploitation concerns relatively structural strategies that answer organisations' need to produce (Doherty, 2022; Uhl-Bien and Arena, 2018). For example, adhering to rules, avoiding risks, following plans and establishing routines (Rosing, Frese and Bausch, 2011; Schulze and Pinkow, 2020). In exploitation, currently existing knowledge and skills are used and coordinated (Rosing, Frese and Bausch, 2011).

Although central scholar within the field of CLT, Mary Uhl-Bien, applied the term 'Administrative Leadership' themselves in 2007 (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007), in 2018 they criticized the label. Uhl-Bien and Arena (2018), state the possible confusion with administrative roles. Schulze and Pinkow (2020), for example, use *Operational Leadership* to describe Administrative Leadership. However, based on similar decisions in literature (see for example: Keith, 2018), and because the aim to avoid confusion in this regard, this thesis will continue to use the term *Administrative Leadership* to describe strategies in line with the text above.

On the other side of the spectrum, we find Adaptive Leadership. This does not only comprise the acts of a single individual and, instead, it is an interactive dynamic producing adaptive outcomes within a social system (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007). An example of such an adaptive outcome is for an actor to develop creative ideas and to learn as well the generation of adaptability qualities (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007). Such qualities include possessing the mechanism of self-organisation, which represents the ability of an organisation or system to transform in a desired direction in situations of tension, interaction, interdependence, and asymmetrical information (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007). The interactive dynamic that produces such outcomes is an interacting network of interdependent actors. This network can be understood as Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS). Circling back to section 2.1 about Adaptive Space, it becomes clear that Adaptive Leadership is for Adaptive Space to come to fruition. This differs from Enabling Leadership which, as will be explained shortly hereafter in section 2.3.2., consists of strategies that enable actors to utilize their Adaptive Space by creating the right conditions.

Adaptive Leadership is tasked with *exploration*. Exploration, as opposed to exploitation, is more experimental in nature and concerns developing new knowledge, taking risks, participating in and setting up experiments, looking for alternatives and utilizing flexibility (Rosing, Frese and Bausch, 2011; Uhl-Bien and Arena, 2018). Schulze and Pinkow (2020), add to this distinction an emphasis on the particular relation to time, stating that exploitation utilizes existing capabilities, whereas exploration is concerned with imminent capabilities.

## 2.4.2. Unpacking Enabling Leadership

The significance of Enabling Leadership is grounded in what it does and how it manages and operates in 'the in-between'. Firstly, what Enabling Leadership does is enabling and protecting the *Adaptive Space* in which Adaptive Leadership takes place (Uhl-Bien and Arena, 2018). Enabling leaders can decide to either increase or decrease the size of the Adaptive Space, for example, when a decrease is required because actors experience too much tension (Arena and Uhl-Bien, 2016). Furthermore, the correct balance between tightening and loosening the Adaptive Space is essential (Paananen et al., 2022). This comes down to *ambidexterity*: the tension between *exploration* and *exploitation* (Schulze and Pinkow, 2020; Uhl-Bien and Arena, 2018). According to Rosing, Frese and Bausch (2011), innovation requires both exploration and exploitation, as well as flexibility between the two. However, a 'correct' balance is no objective situation and, therefore, it is important to remain aware of subjectivity and how actors in the PGS experience this ambidexterity.

Actors can apply strategies to enable the adaptive process with a dual purpose: to create and stimulate conflicts, and to create and stimulate connecting (Uhl-Bien and Arena, 2018). Uhl-Bien and Arena (2018), provide the following examples of structures and processes which enabling leaders can create to engage both connecting and conflicting: brokering, collaboration, temporary decentralization, network cohesion, and adaptive capabilities. This entails the stimulation of both conflicts between people and ideas, as well as connecting people and ideas (Uhl-Bien and Arena, 2018; Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007). An example in a PGS includes to recommend and share a resource that proved useful, for example, an external research bureau that mapped potential new housing locations. Simultaneously, tactfully refusing to share such knowledge can pressurize other actors in the system to find their own solutions and sources of information. These examples once again stress that how actors experience such strategies remains central in CLT. This dual purpose of connecting and conflicting is desirable because it can trigger and stimulate the creation of new learning, innovation, and adaptive qualities (Uhl-Bien and Arena, 2018).

Enabling Leadership nurtures enabling conditions that activate the Adaptive Space (Bäcklander, 2019; Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007). Three categories of strategies are distinguished: *fostering interaction*, *fostering interdependency*, and *actions related to adaptive tension*. These are the core components of Enabling Leadership (Baltaci and Balci, 2017). It is critical to understand each of these types of strategies to gain insights in how Adaptive Space might be influenced.

### 2.4.2.1. Fostering interaction

Complex Adaptive Systems are nurtured and sustained by interactions (Carmichael and Hadžikadić, 2019). Interaction means for two (or more) things or people to either react to or communicate with each other (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024c). Through interaction in and between CAS, it becomes possible to connect information and the (in)formal transfer of information can result in a type of unscheduled learning (Bailey and Kurland, 1999). Enabling leaders are involved in the structuring of networks and the creation of conditions that allow such complex networks to develop (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007). It is important to note that enabling leaders are not mapping out accurately-designed webs of interactions in advance (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007). Enabling Leadership is about *enabling*; it generates the possibilities for innovation and new ideas to come into existence, and in fostering interaction this is done by effectively shaping the conditions for interactions between people and ideas. This is not limited to interaction within a single CAS, and can extend to interaction between other CAS's as well as to interaction with the environment (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007). Through a polycentric governance point of view, actors from different levels of governance can communicate with and react to each other, and this is possible for actors from other departments and organisations as well. Based on Uhl-Bien,

Marion and McKelvey (2007) and Baltaci and Balci (2017), the following four categories indicate how actors take up their enabling role in fostering interactions related to their: *work environment, personal network, level of being informed, and environmental monitoring*. Table 1 provides an overview of these categories and includes various examples of strategies and actions applicable by actors.

*Table 1 – Overview of enabling strategies to foster interaction.*

<b>Type of enabling strategies</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Improving work environment	Creating open work places where it becomes likely to encounter colleagues in hallways. Communicating via digital communication services such as WhatsApp.
Increasing personal network	Increasing network by actively reaching out to new actors after meetings.
Being informed – internal information	Staying updated on critical topics by reading received documents and preparing for meetings.
Monitoring environment – external information	Following and understanding social and political developments to grasp their relevance and potential influence on the program.

*(Based on Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007. Created by author, 2024)*

#### **2.4.2.2. Fostering interdependence**

Interdependence is an additional ingredient that is needed on top of fostering interaction for the stimulation of Adaptive Space. Interaction facilitates the movement of information, and interdependence pressurizes actors to then do something with said information (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007). The need to act upon information arises exactly because the dependence of one actor on another, and vice versa (Baltaci and Balci, 2017). If the position of actor A in the work environment depends on how well actor B is doing and vice versa, then a pressure to act on information can be observed (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007). Both are constrained in the sense that no progress can be ensured unless action is being undertaken. Literature distinguishes between two types of strategies that positively influence interdependence.

Firstly, by creating an atmosphere in which informal behaviour is stimulated and where autonomous behaviour is encouraged (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007). Autonomy is a crucial aspect in this regard, because it allows actors to solve emerging issues without the presence of formal management being necessitated (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007). An action of Enabling Leadership, then, could for example be to encourage actors to share ideas and suggestions, as well as allowing them to share their concerns and encouraging actors to disseminate original solutions to problems. Traditionally, leadership concerned operating via strict rules and aimed at solving issues in a top-down manner (Plowman et al., 2007). In Enabling Leadership, however, leaders create an environment in which actors do not call for managerial interference for every issue or dilemma and where actors are stimulated to work out conflicts themselves (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007). One possible action that enabling leaders can undertake is the implementation of rules or policy concerning conflict solving. In the context of the NOVEX-program this entails

stimulating actors working for provinces to consult their peers first instead of involving the program-manager immediately.

This is closely related to the second type of actions that influence interdependency, which is to create conditions or rules that harness coordinative pressure (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007). To illustrate, an act of enabling leadership would be to structure the workflow of actors by creating groups that, first, work individually, and at certain intervals have to come together to solve each other's remaining issues before being allowed to continue. The groups have a similar task, which is assigned beforehand. Such a structure allows for innovation and flexibility of approaches, whilst coordination is preserved. Moreover, in doing so, an enabling leader ensures that information is being shared. To harness coordinative pressures in a PGS entails, for example, to set deadlines that are similar for each province and organising a shared moment of reflection, forcing actors to work on their own output whilst ensuring that insights from other actors can be utilized moving forward.

In addition to harnessing coordinative pressures, actors can also nurture coordinative efforts. A coordinative effort could be for actors to create ideas or products with a roughly similar output (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007). Nurturing such an effort means for actors to, for example, participate in working with comparable layouts. Another example, more specific to a PGS context, entails for actors to realign their work to match that of other actors in the system by adjusting their lingo and copying jargon (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007; Malyuga and Orlova, 2018). Problems related to coordinative efforts can arise when actors do not feel as if they share the same goal, which can prevent them from acting in accordance with other actors (Uhl-Bien and Marion, 2009).

*Table 2 – Overview of enabling strategies to foster interdependence.*

<b>Type of enabling strategies</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Stimulate autonomous behaviour	Provide an incentive to solve issues autonomously by awarding actors with more resources after they have settled an argument without managerial assistance.
To harness coordinative pressures and nurture coordinative efforts	Organising moments of reflection after orchestrating that groups of actors first work individually. Copying jargon from actors and rephrasing work to match the general lingo in a program.

*(Based on Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007. Created by author, 2024)*

### **2.4.2.3. Tension**

Tension is the third topic around which strategies of Enabling Leadership are formed. According to Keith (2018), it is not just about injecting tension; protecting actors from an overload of tension is part of Enabling Leadership as well. Literature distinguishes between three categories of how enabling leaders involve tension, where one is *internal* and two are *external*. Here, internal tension is a result of, as well as felt in, informal dynamics, whereas the external tension is tension that does not naturally occur in or follow from those dynamics (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007). That means that external tension is more directly inserted and how this pressure is added will be explained shortly.

The internal stimuli of tension relate to the presence of *heterogeneity*. Wycisk, McKelvey and Hülsmann (2008), state that heterogeneity in this context concerns a discrepancy between actors in their competence, preferences, knowledge and background. Furthermore, actors can be heterogenous in terms of the rules under which they operate

(Wycisk, McKelvey and Hülsmann, 2008). For example, the strictness of an actors' work environment can differ in terms of how much freedom they get to operate autonomously. The present heterogeneity is triggered by interdependence, which pressurizes actors to adapt to their differences (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007). Enabling Leadership thus fosters tension by promoting heterogeneity, by ensuring that diversity among and between actors and ideas is respected (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007; Uhl-Bien and Arena, 2018). An example of Enabling Leadership is to apply non-discriminatory hiring practices where special attention is being paid to differences between applicants and the other actors to prevent the joining of a new team-member who would provide an identical perspective to that of current team-members (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007). In a PGS, tension can be created by generating heterogeneity via the inclusion of external people or organisations in the decision-making process, providing space for their divergent perspectives and varying forms of knowledge.

Tension can also be developed in the sense that it is not based on internal differences. Firstly, via managerial pressures and challenges (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007). The aim is to stress the need to produce, the need for results. An actor is participating in Enabling Leadership when they, for example, set very strict deadlines so that pressure is felt among actors. In a PGS, stressing the need to produce can be done by an actor by requesting stricter deadlines, not just for themselves but for everyone in a similar position.

The second approach to injecting tension is by planting 'seeds of emergence' (Marion and Uhl-Bien, 2001; Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007). The seed-metaphor is striking for CLT because in CLT, leaders do not aim to control everything. Instead, the focus is on creating an environment for actors to arrive at organisational adaptability and to improve creative capacity. By planting seeds and managing circumstances, enabling leaders allow for this growth to occur. Depending on the type of seed, a leader can somewhat steer towards an outcome. However, the outcome itself cannot be completely predicted (Marion and Uhl-Bien, 2001). Seeds of emergence include the possibility to expand an actor's network and to increase their knowledge, for example, by enabling them to attend relevant conferences (Brown, 2021; Marion and Uhl-Bien, 2001; Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007). Furthermore, an enabling leader can plant seeds via the thoughtful allocation of resources. For example, exploration can be supported by informing actors that it is possible to acquire new and yet unspecified resources, if they call for them (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007). In a PGS, this would require for an actor to receive time and resources if they request to do a field study because they expect the results of that study to be extremely valuable for their progress.

*Table 3 – Overview of enabling strategies to inject tension.*

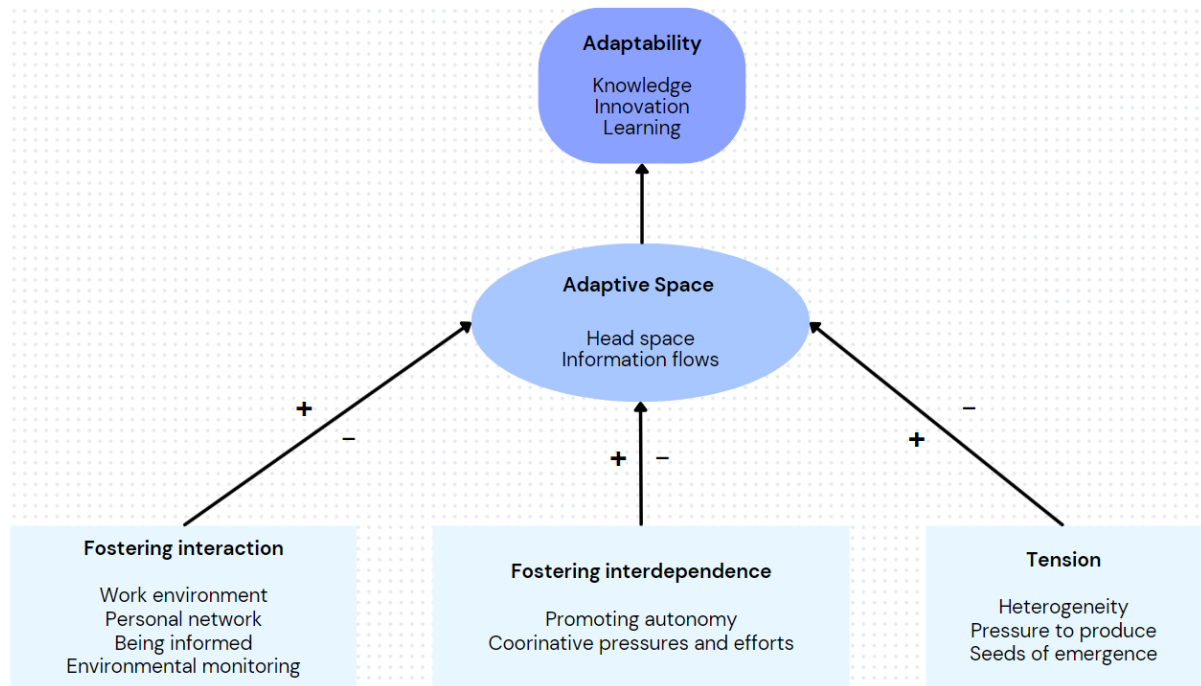
<b>Type of enabling strategies</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Heterogeneity	Include outsiders-perspectives during discussions about what the end-product should look like.
Pressure to produce	Pressurizing actors by setting strict deadlines.
Seeds of emergence	Informing actors that more and yet unspecified resources can be utilized if these are expected to contribute significantly by providing new, critical insights.

*(Based on Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007; Wycisk, McKelvey and Hülsmann, 2008. Created by author, 2024)*

## 2.5 Conceptual Model

The theoretical framework in this chapter discussed the concepts of Polycentric Governance Systems, Complexity Leadership Theory, and the vital role of Enabling Leadership on Adaptive Space. Based on these concepts and how they are related, the following conceptual model (Figure 3) has been composed:

Figure 3 – Conceptual model depicting how Adaptive Space is influenced.



(Created by author, 2024)

The NOVEX-program and its involved actors form the polycentric governance context in which this research is conducted. The three types of strategies of Enabling Leadership – fostering interaction, fostering interdependence, and fostering and injecting tension – are expected to influence how the Adaptive Space is experienced.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Research design**

Clifford et al. (2016), distinguish between two types of approaches within academic research for the collection of data. On the one hand, there is a quantitative approach which focuses on statistics. Researchers can study, for example, the relationship between variables in large datasets by looking for statistical evidence to explain an outcome. A qualitative approach, on the other hand, concerns studying perceptions and interpretations (Clifford et al., 2016). Because Adaptive Space is a subjective concept that depends on actor experiences and perspectives, this research utilizes a qualitative approach in which data concerning actors' perspectives is gathered through semi-structured interviews.

A single-case study will be used in this explorative research to understand what leadership strategies actors deploy in a polycentric governance context, wherein the case contains new actor-dynamics and novel flows of interactions due to its recent origin. Applying a case-study method in leadership research is often done because of its ability to track changes within a complex system and because of its ability to evaluate programs (Parry et al., 2014). Moreover, Uhl-Bien and Marion (2009), emphasize the importance of qualitative approaches and case studies in researching CLT.

The document analysis and passive participatory observations serve two functions. Firstly, they provide essential background information about the NOVEX-program, enabling the researcher to structure their research effectively. Secondly, they allow the researcher to confirm findings that are the result of analysing the semi-structured interviews. For example, respondents stating that there was no heterogeneity among actors is something that can be confirmed if the researcher comes to a similar conclusion based on their passive participatory observations.

This research is designed to answer the primary research question, which is done by first answering the secondary research questions. The first and second of which are answered based on a literature review. Answering the third secondary research requires a better understanding of the NOVEX-program which is provided in section 3.2.1. The fourth secondary research question requires additional interviews with actors within the NOVEX-program.

#### **3.2. Case selection and description**

According to Yin (2003), a case is selected based on its spatial boundary, timeframe, and theoretical scope. This research takes the national borders of the Netherlands as the spatial boundary of this case study. The literature review defined the theoretical scope of this study, and the 'Puzzle-phase' of the NOVEX-program will be researched, which begins with the 'Startpakketten' being published at the end of 2022 (de Jonge, 2022b). The NOVEX-program is selected based on its polycentric governance setting. Various semiautonomous decision-making bodies are active within this program, in which they both compete and cooperate with each other. Furthermore, the NOVEX-program is selected because it is a newly initiated program which provides actors with space to structure new and unknown interactions. The novel and unclear nature of these structures makes that strategies of leadership are expected to be more effective and necessary (King and Badham, 2019).

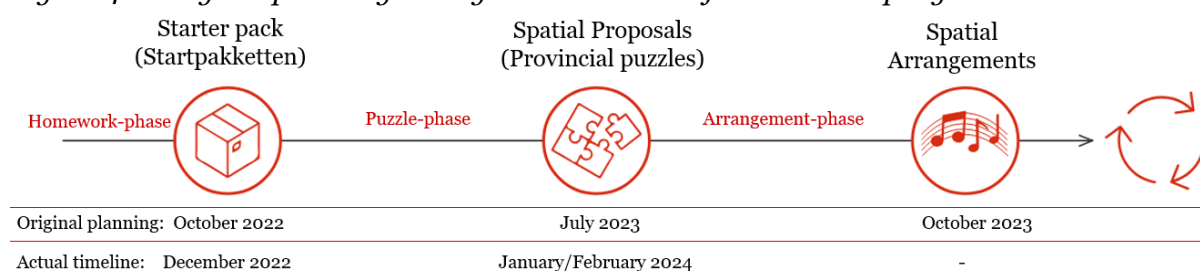
##### **3.2.1. NOVEX-program and interview selection criteria**

The NOVEX-program is designed on request from the minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations to enable the successful realisation of the National Strategy on Spatial Planning and the Environment (NOVI). It aims to connect spatial policies, to combine national programs – for example, 'Space for Economy' from the ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy – and to create clear conditions for the execution of spatial policy (Rijksoverheid, 2022). The



NOVEX-program is structured in three phases, wherein the Puzzle-phase is the most recently completed phase (Figure 4). The Puzzle-phase of the NOVEX-program is structured in three parts with moments of assessment, called 'ijkmomenten'. The aim of the first part is for provinces to decide on the scope, the second part is for provinces to identify opportunities and currents of thought, and the third part results in a contour version of provinces' Spatial Proposal (Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, 2023). Although the future of the NOVEX-program remains unclear, the intention behind the initiative includes for the collaboration to be repeated in the future (de Jonge, 2022b). The program is primarily focused on the collaboration between the state, provinces, municipalities, and water boards (Rijksoverheid, 2022). The most involved actors operating from state-level are from the ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations.

Figure 4 – Original planning and cyclical intention of the NOVEX-program.



(Based on Rijksoverheid, 2022. Created by author, 2024)

The NOVEX-program asks provinces to connect central and decentral spatial challenges, providing them with a difficult task which requires the collaboration with other actors and layers of governance (Rijksoverheid, 2022). Although the NOVEX-program also includes sixteen NOVEX-regions, these are not the topic of this research. This is because the NOVEX-regions do not have legal mandate. Furthermore, NOVEX-regions differ in size, for example, some NOVEX-regions remain within the provincial borders of one province whereas other NOVEX-regions extent into multiple provinces. As a result, the network dynamics for the NOVEX-regions are not similarly distributed. Thus, the inclusion of NOVEX-regions in the polycentric governance system is less interesting compared to that of the provinces.

The following text describes the interview participants selection process. A purposive sampling method is utilized in this research. According to Clifford et al. (2016), a purposive sampling method allows a researcher to select participants based on their relevant experience by making use of pre-set criteria. Within this research, these criteria include for the participants to work for either the Ministry of BZK or for a provincial organisation. Furthermore, the participants had to be involved in the Puzzle-phase of the NOVEX-program. This entails a broad range of functions, differing from policy writers to actors who are responsible for managing a whole team of policy writers and other projects. This broad range is desirable because it allows the researcher to include actors that represent the many different actors participating in the NOVEX-program. The recruitment process took place via e-mail, phone calls, and also utilized contact information gained by assisting in the preliminary study mentioned in Chapter 1.1. Furthermore, snowball sampling was used which entailed that participants could suggest another possible participant and provided the researcher with further contact information (Clifford et al., 2016). In conclusion, this research thus focuses on actors working for the ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations and actors working for the provinces of the Netherlands because of their clear presence within the NOVEX-program and to ensure that the studied actors were in a relevant position concerning their interactions.

### 3.3. Data collection and analysis

#### 3.3.1. Semi-structured interviews

Interviews can be either structured, unstructured, or semi-structured (Longhurst, 2003). Conducting semi-structured interviews provides the interview with sufficient flexibility to address issues and topics that emerge during the interview, whilst maintaining adequate order and structure to ensure that the necessary data is still being obtained (Clifford, 2016; Longhurst, 2003). McIntosh and Morse (2005), value the balance between the purpose of the interview and an interviewee being able to elaborate on their statement. Obtaining the desired information during the interview is ensured by adhering to the interview guide which is created in advance of the interviews. The interview guide is based on the literature review and the document analysis and can be found in Appendix 1.

This research prioritizes two groups of actors, namely: actors working for the state and actors working for the twelve provinces of the Netherlands. This focus is applied because, firstly, the program originates from the state as the main driver behind generating output. Because most input and interactions from state-level concerned actors from the ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations and because other ministries were relatively little involved during the Puzzle-phase, this study aimed to analyse experiences and perspectives from actors working for the ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations only.

The twelve provinces of the Netherlands have been grouped by the ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations in five sections, each containing two to three provinces (see Table 5). Each section has two government officials employed by the ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations responsible for the contact with the provinces within their section. Their function is called *account holder*, and five account holders have been interviewed. Additionally, one NOVEX policy officer has been interviewed to ensure that input is included from actors overseeing the Puzzle-phase. Furthermore, a selection among the provinces was made for the following reasons. Firstly, including actors from every province was not feasible in the given time in which the research was conducted. Secondly, by selecting actors from provinces from each of the five sections, this research aimed to provide an overview of relevant network dynamics and actor perspectives that is as complete as possible. For example, only including actors working for provinces in the Southern-Netherlands selection could generate a distorted image of the Puzzle-phase. Table 4 provides an overview of the respondents and their function and organisation.

*Table 4 – Overview of respondents.*

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Profession</b>	<b>Date</b>
R1	Province of Limburg	Coordinator team provincial spatial vision	22/05/2024
R2	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations	Account holder	23/05/2024
R3	Province of Flevoland	Strategist quality of life	24/05/2024
R4	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations	Account holder	28/05/2024
R5	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations	Account holder	28/05/2024
R6	Province of Groningen	Group director spatial usage	03/06/2024
R7	Province of South Holland	Strategy consultant	04/06/2024

R8	Province of Gelderland	Strategic advisor spatial planning	07/06/2024
R9	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations	Account holder	07/06/2024
R10	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations	Account holder	07/06/2024
R11	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations	Policy officer (NOVEX)	07/06/2024
R12	Province of Utrecht	Spatial development strategist	12/06/2024

(Created by author, 2024)

Table 5 – Overview of group of provinces, provinces selected for interviews made bold.

Name of section	Consisting of provinces
Northern-Netherlands	Drenthe, Friesland, <b>Groningen</b>
Eastern-Netherlands	<b>Gelderland</b> , Overijssel
Mid/North-West-Netherlands	<b>Flevoland</b> , Noord-Holland, <b>Utrecht</b>
Western-Netherlands	Zeeland, <b>Zuid-Holland</b>
Southern-Netherlands	<b>Limburg</b> , Noord-Brabant

(Created by author, 2024)

The interview guide (Appendix 1) served to gather data about the variables in Chapter 2 in a structured and logical manner, meaning that all concepts from the theoretical framework are covered via a logical structuring of the questions (Kallio et al., 2016). Firstly, interviewees were asked about their function and tasks, as well as their experience with the Puzzle-phase. This aimed to confirm the relevance of the position and role of the interviewee. Then, three statements are coined concerning Adaptive Space to which respondents are asked to say whether they agree, are neutral, or disagree. The presence of Adaptive Space can be inferred based on the first responses. The next two questions aim to gather information about the interviewees' *head space* and experienced *information flows*. Here, probes are utilized to acquire additional information supportive of their answer.

The next questions aim to collect data to measure the variable 'fostering interaction'. Four questions are asked, one for every category related to fostering interaction (see Table 1). 'Fostering interdependence' and 'tension' are measured based on data from the next two and three questions respectively (see Table 2 and 3). The probes will be deployed if a respondent provides insufficient information to be able to measure the concerned variable. Lastly, two closing questions are asked. The first question allows respondents to reflect once again upon the Puzzle-phase, this time specifically focusing on possible improvements able to contribute to the potential to generate knowledge more quickly. These responses provide input for future modification based on first-hand experiences. The last question is asked as an opportunity for the respondent to share information and ideas that they consider relevant and which have not yet been touched upon.

The interviewer recorded all interviews via the 'Easy Voice Recorder' application from the Google Play Store. Respondents were sent a consent form indicating the topic of this study as well as how their data will be handled. Furthermore, respondents were asked to sign the consent form and to indicate whether they agreed, among other things, for the interview to be recorded (Appendix 2). In advance of activating the recording, participants were asked again for their permission to have the interview recorded. The researcher transcribed the interviews via Whisper – a program designed to transcribe audio files in a digital and protected

environment, which is currently in a pilot-phase. Thereafter, the transcripts have been coded in ATLAS.ti, a qualitative data analysis program that facilitates the application of codes to transcripts. Coding is the process of marking information with labels that assign symbolic meaning to the data (Elliott, 2018). These labels enable the researcher to identify patterns, similarities, and differences in the data. Two types of code-trees were used: a deductive code-tree and an inductive code-tree. In a deductive code-tree, the labels are formulated before conducting the interviews and the labels are based on expected findings (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). In an inductive code-tree, on the other hand, existing labels are refined and new labels are formulated based on findings during the data analysis process (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). The deductive code-tree used in this research can be found in Appendix 3 and the inductive codes are added in dark blue. The application of the codes constitutes the first stage of the analysis. The second stage is analytical in nature and consists of the examination of the interview data via the co-occurrence and frequency of applied codes, resulting in an improved understanding of influential actions and phenomena and their impact on Adaptive Space (Stewart, n.d.). The strength of this analysis technique is found in how it helps to identify relationships within the data by adding a quantitative component to qualitative data (Scharp, 2021). Furthermore, this is done by “illustrating not just which codes appear together but how often, providing a means of assessing the prominence of the combination” (Guest, MacQueen and Namey, 2012, p. 134). This technique is relevant for this research because it assists in clarifying the connections between variables. For example, if a connection between two specific variables is observed extremely often, then the researcher can deduce the role and influence of these variables and connections during the Puzzle-phase. The researcher uses the output of the co-occurrence analysis for the third step, in which they interpret the acquired results by further reading into the provided responses. To illustrate, a high co-occurrence rate between two variables indicates that respondents mention them together frequently. The researcher can then zoom in on such instances to ascribe meaning to the connection and to provide an explanation for what is found.

### **3.3.2. Document collection and analysis**

Document analysis is used in this research as part of triangulation, which is done by drawing upon multiple sources of evidence in studying the same phenomenon to strengthen the findings (Bowen, 2009). The document analysis involves the appraising and synthesising of data from documents and policies (Bowen, 2009). In this research, the document analysis is used in combination with the theoretical insights from Chapter 2 to create the interview guide and to provide the researcher with sufficient information about the program to ask further questions during the interviews. For example, having identified differences in documents from provinces incentivized the researcher to ask participants to elaborate on the information flows present that led up to the writing of said documents. Not all documents are used in the following sections of this thesis due to their varying level of relevance. Documents were selected based whether they concerned the Puzzle-phase, their potential to provide information about dynamic, and the organisation from which the document originates. Those excluded documents, however, had additional value in generating a better overall understanding of the topic and context of this research. The document analysis took place before the interviews were conducted to fortify the position of the researcher during these interviews and to optimise the available time of the interviewees. An overview of the analysed documents is available in Appendix 5. Although some documents were publicly available, this was not the case for every document. Most internal documents have been acquired through the ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations for the purpose of a preliminary research on adaptive planning, commissioned by the ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. The findings and data gathered by conducting the document analysis is important because it provides insights in how actors communicate and interact with one another. For example, a

document calling upon actors to cooperate can imply that a cooperative attitude within the program is not always present. Furthermore, these findings contribute towards answering the secondary research question related to how actors experience the Adaptive Space being influenced.

### **3.3.3. Participatory observations**

Participating in the aforementioned preliminary research allowed the researcher to attend two meetings for observatory purposes. Applying a participatory observation technique refers to the researcher taking up a role in the subject being studied, allowing them to make observations from an insider perspective of the 'field' (Vestbro, 2005; Crang, 2003). This serves as an additional source of evidence to support findings obtained from the semi-structured interviews and, thereby, contributes to the triangulation in this research (Bowen, 2009). This data provides more insights in how actors interact within the program. Although the researcher will not be able to measure exactly, for example, how cooperative actors are, the researcher does gain a better understanding of the dynamic interplay between actors which is useful information in a study aimed at investigating complex interactions. The first meeting entailed a centrally organised meeting where three external design bureaus were tasked to present a synthesis of progress of the provinces at that time, each bureau focussing on one of the three perspectives of the NOVEX-program: *agriculture and nature*, *organising networks for energy and (circular) economy*, and *liveable cities and regions* (de Jonge, 2022b). Thereafter, time was reserved for discussing the output of the design bureaus. The second meeting entailed an online meeting between provincial actors; the Inter Provincial Consultation. At the end of the meeting, they were joined by the NOVEX program-director and program secretary. An overview of the attended meetings and their date is available in Appendix 6.

### **3.4. Ethical considerations and data management**

According to Hay (2016), ethical behaviour is important for three reasons. Firstly, to protect the rights of those affected by our research. This includes both people and environments. Secondly, to ensure a favourable climate in which scientific research can be conducted. This is done by maintaining public trust. Thirdly, to prevent issues related to accountability, simply by acting ethically and thus preventing anyone from being accountable for unethical behaviour.

Ethical considerations and the management of data within this research can roughly be divided into three parts, the first of which concerns the recruitment of participants. The researcher created an overview of possible participants in Google Spreadsheet via their University of Groningen account, access to which is securely protected via a two-way verification system including a personal authenticator code with limited availability. The overview of possible participants contained names of potential participants, their e-mail addresses, telephone numbers and their job description and the organisation for which they worked. This overview was continually updated during the interview-phase, which is the second part. Furthermore, during the interview-phase and in advance of starting the interview, the participants were properly informed. Firstly, by sending an informed consent form in advance to participants containing details about this research. Interviewees were asked to sign this document before commencing the interview. Secondly, by reminding interviewees of the content of the informed consent form at the start of the interview, ensuring that the participant is well-informed. This included obtaining permission to audio record the interviews. Participants were thanked for their time and contribution at the start and at the end of the interview. The overview of participants and potential participants was deleted at the end of this phase. The audio files of the interviews were uploaded to the digital UWP environment of the University of Groningen where they were transcribed on a local and university protected

system called 'Whisper'. The audio recordings were deleted upon retrieving the transcripts via Whisper and the transcripts were removed from the Whisper-environment as well.

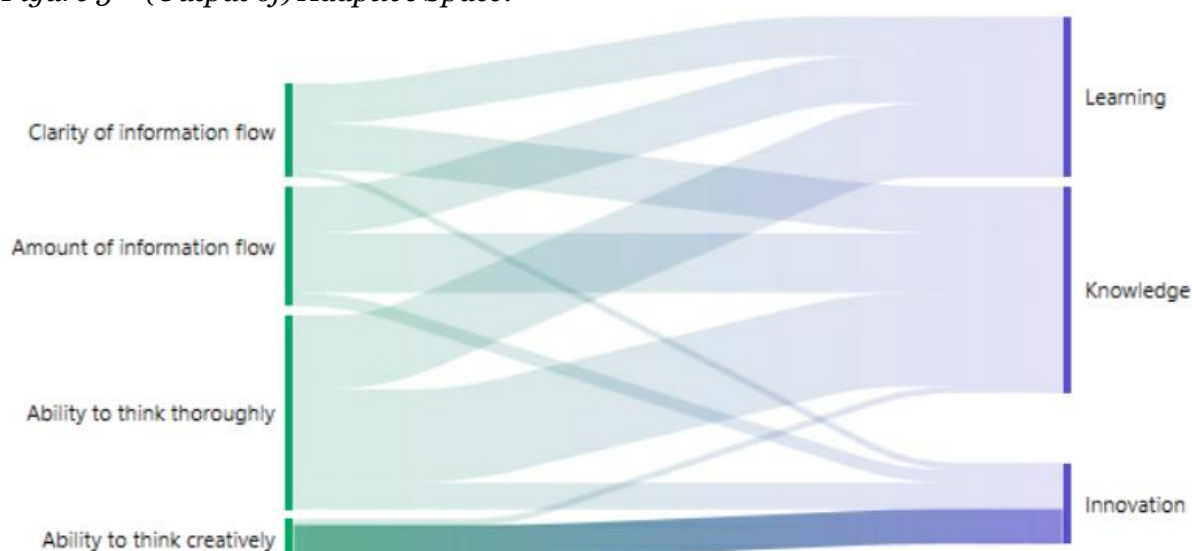
The third phase includes the data during the analysis-phase. Here, if participants approved of this option, they received the transcript of their interview, providing them with the opportunity to confirm the quality of the data. Furthermore, this enabled participants to provide further, more precise comments if they felt the need to do so. Then, the transcripts were uploaded to Atlas.ti in the digital UWP environment of the University of Groningen. This digital environment knows a two-way verification system before access is granted, thus securing the safe protection of the data. All transcripts within this environment will be deleted upon completion of this research project. Additionally, numerous participants received a concept-version of this thesis and a final version is shared with all participants

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Outcomes of Adaptive Space

The actor dynamic during the Puzzle-phase is central in this thesis and will be discussed from section 4.3. onwards. This benefits from a holistic understanding of actor dynamics and their associated outcome. Therefore, section 4.1. first includes the results of respondents where their answers suggest the presence of Adaptive Space during the Puzzle-phase. The presence of Adaptive Space is implied when *innovation*, *knowledge*, and *learning* are outcomes of the Puzzle-phase. A co-occurrence analysis shows that the various components that make up the Adaptive Space are not equally distributed in terms of their co-occurrence with the output of Adaptive Space: learning, knowledge, and innovation. Figure 5 signifies how responses where instances of creative thinking were described are most clearly connected to *innovation*. Cases of *learning* and *knowledge*, on the other hand, are either rarely or never mentioned simultaneously with the ability to think creatively. Furthermore, Figure 5 indicates that instances of *learning* and *knowledge* are significantly more frequently found compared to *innovation* during the Puzzle-phase of the NOVEX-program.

Figure 5 – (Output of) Adaptive Space.



(Created by author, 2024)

The following text briefly describes such instances and uses quotations to highlight these outcomes. Furthermore, a distinction is made between *process* and *content*.

A few innovative adjustments to the process can be observed. Initially, the Puzzle-phase already included a strict planning containing deadlines as well as consultation firms being assigned to provinces to support them in the process towards the Spatial Proposals. Innovation in the process is found in the following. Most dominant is the way in which actors connect with other stakeholders. Spatial planning had left the provincial agenda, disappearing to the background and almost being perceived as some “old-fashioned family-game” (interviewee Ministry BZK). The NOVEX-program put spatial planning back on the table and, as a result, some processes had to be rediscovered. One provincial employee added to this the need to be bold, stating:

“So, you need to dare to break open the administrative processes, and to say:  
‘Now we’re going to do something completely different, something we’re not used to.’”  
(interviewee Provincial org)

This ingenuity extended further, for example, in setting up new consultation tables. Provinces already worked together and consulted each other to coordinate uniform responses coming from their governance layer, which was done via Inter Provincial Consultation, or 'IPO'. The novelty of the NOVEX-program and the rapid and newly created workload resulted in the broad realisation that, parallel to the regular IPO meetings, a new consultation table needed to be organised (interviewee Provincial org). Furthermore, respondents stated that this search for rapid, new and yet thorough consultation and discussions proved a challenge. One respondent ascribed a part of the difficulty to the presence of parallel programs within the province, indicating that it was difficult for other stakeholders within the province to keep up with newly initiated programs (interviewee Provincial org).

In terms of new knowledge and lessons, respondents indicated the following. Firstly, all respondents were aware of the novel nature of the program and recognized that this novelty was part of the cause for certain issues. For example, the Puzzle-phase turned out to be high paced and experienced as such because the original planning was tight. This novelty generated lessons for a future cycle of the program – if this turns out to be followed up by one. One insight concerns the importance of doing such a process step by step, with (interviewee Provincial org) stating:

“It taught me the lesson that it is important to do it step by step. First clarify what the questions are and where the real questions are and only then try and provide the answer. Be realistic.” (interviewee Provincial org)

A second finding entails how role distribution within the program was vague. Although it was clear that many actors from various governance layers were involved, it remained difficult to identify precisely one another's responsibilities and tasks:

“It is a newly designed process, and I think you can notice that. So, I think that if you can do it over, that you can be way clearer about what role you give the provinces, and what role we have ourselves.” (interviewee Ministry BZK)

Furthermore, respondents indicate how the planning suffered delays, indicating that delivering work according to the initial outcome was not feasible for all involved parties. This resulted in the overall comprehension among respondents that a future version of the program should take the necessary time for each phase into consideration.

“I don't remember our initial planning exactly, but I think that by now we should have been well and truly finished according to the original timeline. And we learn that that is impossible. So, for researching we need a lot more time.” (interviewee Ministry BZK)

Although various actors state that the process would improve if it was subject to change because of the flaws in the recent Puzzle-phase, which were attributed mainly to the optimistically designed high-paced process and the unclarity that went along with it, not all actors want the program changed (interviewees Provincial org and interviewee Ministry BZK).

“I think I would do it this way again. Also, because, of course, there will always be something, but I am actually very satisfied with how it went. With both the result and with what it did for the position of the team and my position within the organisation. Spatial planning is really back in a way that we've lost.” (interviewee Provincial org)

Another result concerns an actor expressing their desire for an awareness gained at other departments and how they work, stating:



“Hopefully departments now know that it will eventually collide if we keep working individually.” (interviewee Ministry BZK)

In sum, despite not progressing flawlessly, various outcomes of Adaptive Space in terms of the process of the Puzzle-phase can be observed. Furthermore, the subjectivity of the matter and the importance of perspective is reiterated by the variety of answers in response to being asked whether they would change the program.

The end-product of the Puzzle-phase was a Spatial Proposal from every province. The differences between the Spatial Proposals exemplify how actors applied innovative thinking. For example, South-Holland provided an analysis of the past 50 years to ensure that no facts related to the current situation are missed, whereas Groningen focused more heavily on values and their character (interviewee Ministry BZK and interviewee Provincial org). The designs of the Spatial Proposals showcase innovation as well, with the Spatial Proposal from Groningen being a foldable product instead of the familiar shape of a regular report (interviewee Provincial org). In terms of new knowledge, spatial challenges and demands definitely became clearer. This concerns insights related to existing demands as well as expected challenges. For instance, the relatively weak position of polders, in terms of legal protection, is mentioned by (interviewee Ministry BZK). This generated the additional knowledge regarding the current state of spatial plans in the Netherlands and the fact that choices are necessary:

“We cannot just continue doing everything in that space. You need each other to make choices that eventually make the people happier.” (interviewee Provincial org)

Although nearly all respondents responded immediately and affirmatively when asked whether new knowledge and lessons were learned during the Puzzle-phase, (interviewee Provincial org) was less praising of the program's results. They specified their opinion and stated:

“The national sessions did not teach me many things. Our own puzzle sessions did result in some refining. I don't think that there have been really new insights, but mainly a deepening and refining.” (interviewee Provincial org)

## **4.2. Experienced Adaptive Space**

### **4.2.1. Perceptions of Head Space**

Almost all respondents stress the importance of the role that the amount of time available during the Puzzle-phase had on their ability to work thoroughly.

“We have so many deadlines, we need to work so hard. There was no desire for really structural consultation that was scheduled beforehand.” (interviewee Ministry BZK)

The limiting influence of the rapid pace on actors' ability to think thoroughly is further asserted by government officials working for the ministry as well as provincial employees. One interviewee working for a province does provide nuance by observing that the Puzzle-phase is a long phase, during which the pressure fluctuated. In line with this, an interviewee working for Ministry BZK notices the link between busy moments and the periods with vacation for schools. Although nearly every actor identified the high pressure and its effect on their ability to think thoroughly, many acknowledge that there is a positive side to it as well. (interviewee Provincial org), when asked about their ability to think thoroughly, states:

“Not really, but I don't mind that much. Especially because you need to produce results under pressure, which helps to move past all the talking and all defensive movements you see everywhere.” (interviewee Provincial org)

Space for creativity can be deduced from the various shapes and differing content of the Spatial Proposals. As mentioned in section 4.1., this showcased differences in design and content, ranging from reports to foldable stories and from containing a few maps to a map-based Spatial Proposal (interviewee Ministry BZK and interviewee Provincial org).

#### **4.2.2. Perceived information flows**

As explained in chapter 2, there is no precise amount of information flow that is ideal for all involved actors. This depends on an actor's personal preferred balance between receiving information and being able to produce, as well as the clarity of the information flows in the situation. The polycentric governance system in which the NOVEX-program is situated entails that there are various actor perspectives and experiences of the cooperative efforts. This allows for a fact – for example, the way information is shared – to be experienced differently.

“So (contact person) knew the strategic agenda already, and he also had within the other ministries just really good and close contacts. So that went really well, from the official organisation, so yeah, there it was very, it felt very top-down. ... But we want to do things together, it was a bit like, ‘we decide and you have to listen’. ... I did listen sometimes, but still, it did not always feel so.” (interviewee Provincial org)

The clarity of the flows of information triggered inconsistent responses. The first perspective describes a lack of clarity due to *incomplete* information flows.

“That we as provinces were somewhat disappointed with the Startpakket from the state. And that had to do with the fact that it was somewhat incomplete.” (interviewee Provincial org)

The experienced lack of clarity can thus be traced as far back as the start of the Puzzle-phase. Moreover, the experienced lack of clarity appeared to not be limited to the start of the Puzzle-phase. Instead, the process and the follow-up after the Puzzle-phase felt unclear:

“If you look at the way the procedure went, we have communicated well. We had a core team with regular people. Well, there I think we entered the conversation openly about how things go, etcetera. At the end of the procedure, and especially about the question ‘Oke, and then when it is done, what will we do?’ well there, I must say the image was just not clear.”  
(interviewee Provincial org)

Not only were information flows perceived as incomplete, these flows also appeared to be fluctuating in terms of content:

“I think yes and no. Sometimes yes, but also sometimes not. And especially varying communication, that the one moment it could be this and then a week later it would be slightly different, for example.” (interviewee Ministry BZK)

A widely shared opinion is that the program being new is what caused the experienced unclarity (interviewees Ministry BZK and interviewees Provincial org).

“I think that in advance, for a new phase, I think it is good to have it clearer in advance. To take away a bit of the noise that there is during a first time, based on the experience we've

gained from how it went. I think that a lot of times a lot was unclear for the provinces.”  
 (interviewee Ministry BZK)

“There as well we need to learn and I think that that can be better. There were moments in-between where you sometimes didn't understand each other correctly. Provinces experience some things from the state as 'pushing through'. 'The state keeps barging on.' That sometimes wasn't our intention.” (interviewee Ministry BZK)

According to Bond (2023), an actor asks fewer questions and asks less often for help when they do not feel comfortable or in case they are fearful, implying that psychological safety is a precondition for sufficient and clear information flows. Figure 6 shows the strong tie between this described feeling of safety and the clarity and amount of information flows.

Figure 6 – Co-occurrences with Safety.



(Created by author, 2024)

Interviewees provided different responses concerning how and whether they experienced to feel psychologically safe during the Puzzle-phase. On the one hand, respondents indicated the absence of feeling uncomfortable, describing how they experienced their communication to be open and honest, as well as accessible. On the other hand, two respondents managed to explicitly describe *unsafety*, indicating a kind of fear and feeling an uncomfortable feeling and (interviewee Ministry BZK) links this directly to how they became careful about how and when to communicate. Table 6 provides quotes of both perspectives.

Table 6 – Perspectives on psychological safety.

Open communication	Troubled communication
<p>“Well, I could just call with (contact person) and then I could get rid of my frustration and he tried his best to improve it and to retrieve the information that I needed. So that line of contact was just extremely good, so that prevented frustration.” (interviewee Provincial org)</p>	<p>“I think that we could have communicated a lot more, and I think that often times the ‘pitfall where it went wrong, was that everyone of course is looking for clarity. And that we ... when something was somewhat half clear or 80% already clear but not 100%, that we thought ‘oh but we first need to figure this out.’ And I think also what I experienced ... is that both the directing team and the provinces quite quickly stood on their hind legs like ‘so what is it’ and ‘how is that possible’ and ‘but that isn’t clear’. So that we became really careful, if I speak for</p>

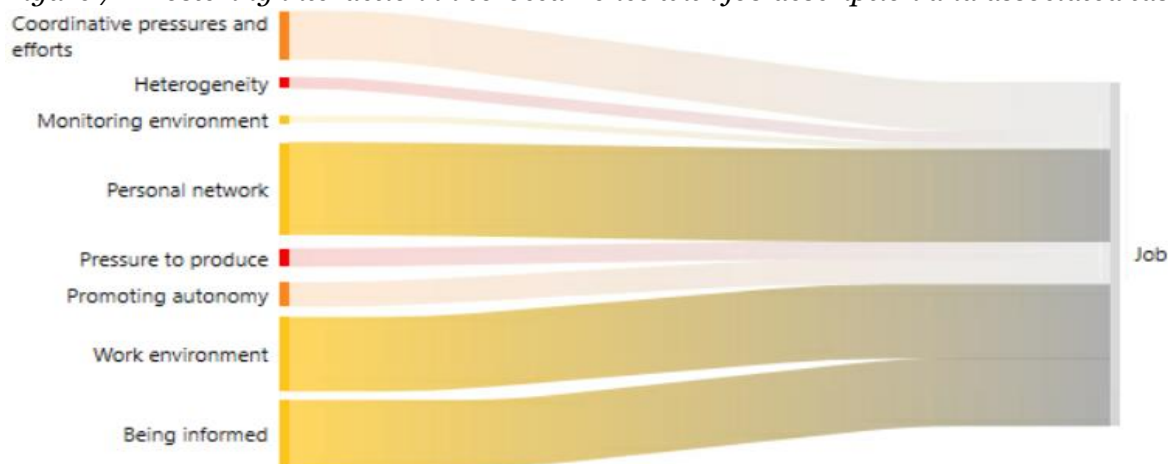
	<p>myself, that I became really careful.” (interviewee Ministry BZK)</p> <p>“For example, how one account holder does schedule consultation sessions between ministries and provinces, and another says ‘No, I won’t do that.’ Also, because that framework isn’t completely set, who exactly does what. Yea and setting the boundaries of that framework, I don’t think that that is being dared, because it will be received so poorly.” (interviewee Ministry BZK)</p>
<p>“Well, I don’t think <i>unsafety</i> was the case. I think that as provinces towards the state we are open and honest.” (interviewee Provincial org)</p>	<p>“Well, I think maybe on both sides. BZK is afraid that our questions will result to delays in their process, or result in complex-doing. That kind of fear. And with us there is a certain fear of ‘are you playing fair and open? What will happen to us after this? Are you truly interested in the solutions we offer in the broad sense, including involved questions and the dilemmas? Or do you just want to overcome those, just want to make the elephant disappear from your desk?’” (interviewee Provincial org)</p>

(Created by author, 2024)

### 4.3. Fostering interaction

The inductively added code ‘Job’ has been applied when respondents stated their function as well as their responsibilities and the associated tasks that they perform. Here, the most frequent co-occurrences concern how actors foster interaction, which is indicated by the highlighted Sankey flow between *personal network*, *work environment*, and *being informed* (Figure 7).

Figure 7 – Fostering interaction in co-occurrence with job description and associated tasks.



(Created by author, 2024)

### 4.3.1. Improving work environment and increasing personal network

Responses concerning actors' work environment were frequently coded in combination with other independent variables. Out of these co-occurrences, responses including descriptions of actors' personal network and their influence thereof can be observed most often (Figure 8).

Figure 8 – Tie between personal network and work environment.



(Created by author, 2024)

Most respondents work mainly from their office and spend some working days working from home. Partially, their work environment is just a given situation. For example, the design and structure of the work floor of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations is largely not subject to changes. Respondents do not actively change this work environment, for the most part. Actors do have a choice in where they work and how they balance this.

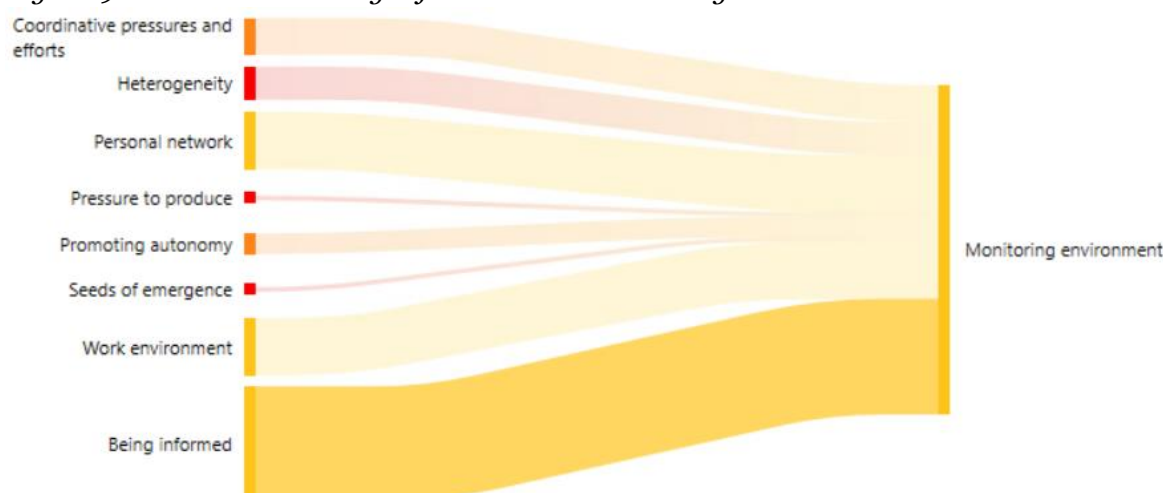
One interviewee working for a province described how they utilize an online environment at their organisation. This digital platform enables them and colleagues to inform one another via regular, voluntary updates. Here they can share, for example, intermediary products and documents to show updates and progress. Furthermore, the interviewee working for a province positively indicates that these messages always trigger responses and thus facilitate interaction.

All respondents indicated that their personal network changed during the Puzzle-phase. This change consisted for the most part of an increase in connections with other actors. Respondents working for a province indicated that they were pleased to reconnect with the central government and its various departments (interviewee Provincial org). Especially the account holders working for the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations saw an increase in this regard. Many account holders were new and some had different backgrounds, requiring them to actively build their network in and around this program (interviewee Ministry BZK).

### 4.3.2. Being informed and monitoring environment

Among the components of the independent variables, the codes 'monitoring environment' and 'being informed' were frequently identified in a conjoined fashion (Figure 9). This implies that respondents' descriptions of how they monitor their environment is often times discussed in tandem with how they describe to remain informed.

Figure 9 – Tie between being informed and monitoring environment.



(Created by author, 2024)

“As account holder you need to be very well aware of what is going on in The Hague, at all different departments, so that you can link that for the province. But the other way around you also need to know what is going on in the province.” (interviewee Ministry BZK)

The quote above expresses how multiple respondents considered being informed and monitoring their environment as part of their job. How this is done differs per respondent and their job. Account holders from BZK indicated that although they are free to orchestrate how they remain informed, a general construction exists in which account holders have divided subjects and departments among themselves (interviewees Ministry BZK). For example, one account holder is focused on Housing, whereas their colleague is focused on Water. This allows them to better remain informed of developments because each account holder shares the new information coming from the subject they are actively following. They function as a team, which enables them to stay better informed than perhaps possible individually:

“There is always someone picking things up and sharing.  
I don't think that we're missing a lot at this time.” (interviewee Ministry BZK)

Provinces have their own approach in how they participate in the NOVEX-program, resulting in different structures and teams. Consequently, how provincial actors remain informed differs. (interviewee Provincial org) has a job that is specifically created to allow for them to be informed of everything relevant for this program. (interviewee Provincial org) works with a structure in which two of their colleagues are only working on the process and, on purpose, are not involved with the content of the program. Furthermore, such a distinction creates a divergence in what is and what is not relevant for an actor to know.

Despite respondents indicating how being informed is a core component of their job, the many things of which they need to remain up to date, from specific topics and departments to political developments, can make it difficult to stay informed of everything:

“So yea, I think that it is inherent that you cannot be everywhere enough. ... Ideally, you know everything, so to say. Or that might be personal, but yea, that is impossible.”  
(interviewee Ministry BZK)

One respondent signified a way related to their work environment on how they try and remain informed. Particularly relevant for actors working in The Hague are the regular social drinks. (interviewee Ministry BZK) states that these meetings at the end of the week enable them to

informally share and discuss progress, not just with colleagues within their own ministry but with government officials working for other ministries as well. This social environment is rich in information, both for it to be communicated outwards as well as for it to be received.

(interviewee Ministry BZK) further notes how attending and joining social drinks is not mandatory. Without implying that this needs to be adjusted, the nature of the social setting is not equally attractive for every actor. For example, some of their colleagues have a family and young children, making it more difficult for them to join after work hours.

#### **4.4. Fostering interdependence**

##### **4.4.1. Stimulating autonomous behaviour**

Respondents revealed that autonomy within the NOVEX-program can be argued via two perspectives. First and most dominant is autonomy in relation to work-situations and problem-solving. (interviewee Ministry BZK) describes this pragmatic form of autonomy by saying how working autonomously is being stimulated for as long as it is functional. When something goes wrong then it is not unusual for someone to raise the alarm over said issue. (interviewee Ministry BZK) confirms this way of working and adds to it that, first, an actor tries to figure out what is going on and where it is going wrong. Then they try and solve the issue themselves or try to help someone else solve their issue. Thereafter, when nobody can seem to figure it out, stepping towards the program manager or director is the next taken step.

The second form of autonomy is found in process-approach and output-style. Organisational structures can differ within the program and, as a result, various team-structures and approaches exist during the Puzzle-phase. For example, some provinces already were working on their Omgevingsvisie (Spatial vision) and could weave the programs into one another with relative ease (interviewees Provincial org).

The output of the Puzzle-phase, the Spatial Proposals, differed per province. Some provinces claimed a higher level of autonomy and designed their output based on their desire and provincial character. One Spatial Proposal could contain many visuals and maps to present their content, whereas another Spatial Proposal would be more based on values and their provincial story which they wanted to showcase (interviewee Provincial org). According to (interviewee Provincial org), this space to claim their autonomy and to allow for their own input is the result of the nature of the program:

“It is an administrative agreement between two parties, it is not an assignment from The Hague, so that presents us the opportunity to present the Groninger perspective with equal emphasis as the national perspective.” (interviewee Provincial org)

According to (interviewee Ministry BZK), however, the taken autonomy is not in line with the initial program-plan. They point at the document ‘Provinciaal startpakket fysieke leefomgeving’ which does describe – at least in part – the content that the Spatial Proposals were supposed to have. For example, it is indicated that the Spatial Proposals consist of text and maps, and that the provinces make use of the three perspectives described in the ‘Ruimtelijke Ordeningsbrief’ – a letter from the minister containing their spatial ambition and corresponding strategy.

##### **4.4.2. Coordinative efforts and pressures**

The NOVEX-program was structured with multiple deadlines to which the provinces, regardless of their individual organisational approach, were asked to adhere to. Various respondents indicated that coordinative pressures and efforts came forth from this program structure (interviewees Ministry BZK). IJkmomenten, for example, coordinated the progress of provinces (interviewee Provincial org). However, the two separate tracks of the NOVEX-program were not always easy to combine:

“In the base there can be no difference, but they are organised very differently. Spatial Proposal was the question for the twelve provinces with twelve provincial boards. It was up to them to deliver the twelve products, whereas the NOVEX-regions, each NOVEX-region knows a very different governance structure, a different type of collaboration as well.”  
(interviewee Provincial org)

Coordinating related to both process and output took place within the program. Interestingly, the program structure played a significant role here. Firstly, on the side of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom relations, account holders were assigned for each of the five parts of the country (interviewee Ministry BZK). These account holders had the coordinating of national programs and demands and communicating this to the provinces as part of their job description. Furthermore, internally there are formats present that actors are expected to work with, which contributes to readability and comparability (interviewee Ministry BZK). Secondly, as well on the side of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, one government official was appointed specifically to coordinate the team of account holders, thus taking up an inherently coordinative role. Thirdly, some provinces adjusted their internal structure to work effectively on the NOVEX-program (interviewee Provincial org). In fact, the function of one interviewee working for a province was specifically created, allowing them to manage and orchestrate their agenda in such a way that coordinating is done most effectively. Interestingly, (interviewee Provincial org) stated that coordinating effectively with other governments and regional partners was made more difficult as a result of the experienced pressure, stating that the pressure limited their ability to thoroughly involve everyone they wished to involve.

Attempts to coordinate did not always receive the expected results. A centrally organised meeting in Utrecht was aimed to showcase an overview of progress. In doing so, a research-by-design method was utilized and a map was made to provide a first glance of what the combination of Spatial Proposals could look like. This indicative map and coordinative approach were not wholly positively received due to the way the map was presented, as well as the process that led to the design of the map. Unclearly regarding input and participation resulted in the exclusion of some provinces and increased tension between organisations:

“I walked away from a meeting in Utrecht.  
To my astonishment, people did not understand why that was.” (interviewee Provincial org)

Language, abbreviations and names of consultation tables proved a relevant component during the Puzzle-phase. Respondents indicate that many involved people speak the same language, for example, because of their experience with governance structures and spatial planning (interviewee Provincial org). They did add to this the statement that this language is somewhat technocratic, which might not add to its understandability. Another critical note mentioned that the usage of ‘putting together a puzzle’ is wrong because, according to them, that is not what is going on here because a puzzle implies that there is a defined set of pieces which ultimately fit together without adjustments (interviewee Ministry BZK). Furthermore, the NOVEX-program caused directly involved actors to clarify to other actors and partners what exactly its position was in relation to other programs. For example, one interviewee working for a province worked with regional partners who referred to ‘NOVEX’ and, in doing so, meant the Spatial Proposals. These partners were not aware of the separate tracks of the NOVEX-program and sometimes caused a confusion of tongues:

“Due to the multiplicity of things and processes and plans and intentions and slightly different people being involved, there was for us quite a challenge to connect all those different things. I noticed with directors, but also with people who were not directly involved



in some things, that it is pretty complicated. People saying that something concerns NOVEX, then I think 'well NOVEX consists of three things – national programs, Spatial Proposals, NOVEX-regions' and then it turns out they only refer to the NOVEX-regions. So yes, there is quite some confusion of tongues." (interviewee Provincial org)

Furthermore, jargon proved difficult to comprehend for actors as well. Especially actors with different backgrounds initially perceived the language within the program as unclear:

"Yes, my God. I used to not understand a word. I came from a non-governmental sector, and (colleague) too. But really all those abbreviations, I really had no idea what we were talking about, 9 out of 10 times." (interviewee Ministry BZK)

## **4.5. Tension**

### **4.5.1. Heterogeneity**

The presence of heterogeneity is acknowledged by nearly all actors. Paradoxically, there is both diversity and a lack of diversity present within the program. On the one hand, respondents indicate that many different perspectives have been included. Respondents mentioned the inclusion and consultation of other provinces, various ministries (mainly BZK, Defence, Economic Affairs, Infrastructure and Water Management, and Agriculture Nature and Food Quality), regional partners, metropolitan agglomerates, water boards, external consultancy bureaus, and the private sector.

Furthermore, a wide range of diverse backgrounds in expertise was present among actors of the NOVEX-program. One interviewee working for the Ministry of BZK mentions a diversity in background and expertise, for example, visible in actors' experience with design, economics, bureaucratic systems, and, furthermore, a pleasant balance in both young-old and male-female people working on the program. Another interviewee working for the Ministry of BZK points out how this diversity is not always planned, stating that it occurred organically. Additionally, an interviewee working for the Ministry of BZK states as a positive effect of heterogeneity that it is a valuable component to have new people question how certain things have always been done.

On the other hand, as pointed out by (interviewee Provincial org and interviewee Ministry BZK), a lack of diversity can be observed as well. This concerns the following: firstly, in how the process included mainly governmental parties. One interviewee working for a province describes to experience the governmental focus, stating: "This process was for the most part an internal governmental get-together." Secondly, the program involved mainly highly educated people (interviewee Provincial org). According to (interviewees Provincial org), the participatory process which include the outsider perspectives from citizens external to the program, is being done mainly in the process of working on an 'Omgevingsvisie'.

### **4.5.2. Pressure to produce**

All respondents acknowledge that there was a lot of pressure on them during the Puzzle-phase. This pressure was felt because of the fast-paced design of the program, in which deadlines were being followed up by new deadlines in a short amount of time. This pressure inherent to the structure of the program resulted, for example, in (interviewee Provincial org) never even considering to put more pressure on their team. An actor's ability to increase or decrease pressure depended upon their role within the program. (Interviewee Ministry BZK) said that they did not believe they possessed the mandate to say: "hand it in a week later."

Furthermore, one actor fell ill with a burn-out, and although their role in the NOVEX-program is not the sole cause, this is expected to have contributed (interviewee Ministry BZK). (Interviewee Ministry BZK) stated that the pressure changed in synch with the recess of school children, something they had never experienced so prevalent before. The widely acknowledged

pressure to produce is not solely in the form of critique. Multiple respondents indicate the positive effect that this experienced pressure had on the outcome of the Puzzle-phase. Furthermore, this positive effect of the pressure within the program is further indicated by multiple respondents saying that, if presented with the opportunity to do it all over, they would either do it the same way or they would not know how to alter the program (interviewee Provincial org and interviewee Ministry BZK).

“Yes, well I think I am someone why, and that’s been in my surrounding as well, I personally like to just set ambitious targets and if you don’t achieve those, that’s fine, you know, aim high and see how far you can get.” (interviewee Ministry BZK)

### **4.5.3. Seeds of emergence**

Seeds of emergence have been identified during the Puzzle-phase. Firstly, the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations hired external design- and consultancy agencies to be used by the twelve provinces. According to one provincial worker, these resources proved more valuable than the nationally-organised meetings (interviewee Provincial org). Secondly, government officials working for the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations followed a seminar at the Nederlandse School voor Openbaar Bestuur (Dutch School for Public Administration). Subject of the seminar was how to come to agreements with one another (interviewee Ministry BZK). Thirdly, some provinces took matters into their own hands and hired more consultancy and advisory bureaus (interviewees Provincial org). One interviewee even stated that their province managed to clear a budget of 200 thousand euros for such causes, allowing them to investigate energy-related spatial developments. Fourthly, on the provincial side and led by the IPO (Inter Provincial Consultation), ‘Learning Circles’ were organised. This included a setting for provincial actors where cases, relevant questions and knowledge was exchanged (interviewee Provincial org). Lastly, according to (interviewee Ministry BZK), they believe such resources to be available. However, an actor needs to be assertive and to ask for such resources instead of just wait for them. (Interviewee Provincial org) adds how their province has many possibilities for learning and development courses and processes. For (interviewee Provincial org), this is at least partially something that happened intuitively. They provide examples of having organised a BBQ for the whole team and inviting the responsible director, as well as having dinner with their account holders and attending the National Spatial Planning Lecture.

### **4.6. Synopsis of leadership and Adaptive Space**

Chapter 4 structured the results by describing the acquired data per variable. This section reiterates the central position of actor dynamics within this thesis by providing a synopsis of the core results and aims to synthesize the relationships between the variables. Table 7 highlights important variables and their influence during the Puzzle-phase.

Unsafe feelings can be linked directly to poorer information flows, both in quantity and in quality (interviewee Ministry BZK). Although this negative effect is not consistently experienced by all respondents, the direct link between the variables and the indicated consequences of the poorer information flows underlines its importance. Contrary to this negative influence, three variables have been identified which had a clear positive effect on the variable *information flows*. An increased personal network assisted in optimizing the amount of information flows (interviewee Ministry BZK). This is closely related to the positive effects of *being informed* and *monitoring environment* information flows. Actors could send and understand information flows more easily when they remained sufficiently informed. This increased clarity benefits from an appropriately expanded personal network because this network fuelled the information flows as well as its reach.

Coordinative efforts and pressures had positive and negative effects. The coordination of information improved actors' ability to think by creating an overview of information. However, technocratic language and jargon proved to be a barrier both among the respondents and beyond.

The high pressure to produce had a seemingly ambidextrous effect on *head space*. On the one hand, the weight of the pressure to produce was noticeably experienced by actors, often limiting their ability to think thoroughly. On the other hand, actors were able to produce and find valuable insights due to the pressure they experienced, allowing them to move past an abundance of consultation and forcing them to make decisions (interviewee Provincial org). Furthermore, *head space* significantly benefitted from *heterogeneity* and *seeds of emergence*. The inclusion of stakeholders and actors with alternative perspectives resulted in an improved ability to think creatively and thoroughly. Respondents indicated that a pleasant variation in personal and professional background enabled their work and thought-processes (interviewee Ministry BZK). The provided and obtained *seeds of emergence* proved valuable by allowing actors with more time to think and enabling them to consider new and particular information such as energy-specific spatial insights (interviewee Provincial org).

This research finds that it is evident that strategies of Enabling Leadership are capable of influencing Adaptive Space. Furthermore, the findings of this research reiterate the role of subjectivity and personal preference in a dynamic cooperative process between organisations. Although the above findings of how strategies of Enabling Leadership influence Adaptive Space can be applied more broadly, aspects remain that are difficult to generalise due to their subjectivity. The *pressure to produce* is used to exemplify. During the Puzzle-phase, pressure can be identified via various components such as by analysing deadlines and by studying how and how often specific words and phrases are used. Here, Enabling Leadership enables the Adaptive Space by applying the right amount of pressure. However, results reiterate how this 'right amount of pressure' is inherently subjective and, as a result, no objectively correct amount of pressure for all actors can be exerted. An important note here is that although the perfect pressure for person A exists, as well as for person B, the source of the complexity here is twofold. Firstly, those actors exerting pressure can by no means know exactly beforehand what the right amount of pressure per actor is. Secondly, adjusting pressure to personal levels and thus differentiating between actors could be experienced as undesirable: actor A being pressured to deliver one week ahead of actor B raises questions about fairness and equality.

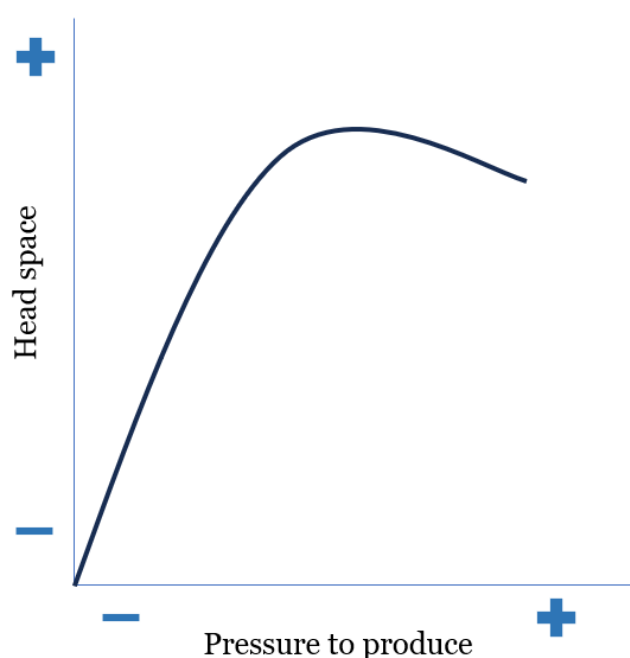
Table 7 – Overview of influence of important variables.

Variables influencing	Variables influenced
Psychological safety	Information flows
Personal network	Information flows
Being informed	Information flows
Monitoring environment	Information flows
Coordinative efforts and pressures	Head space
Heterogeneity	Head space
Seeds of emergence	Head space
Pressure to produce	Head space

(Created by author, 2024)

Multiple types of relationship between strategies of Enabling Leadership and Adaptive Space can be identified, the first of which is a *curvilinear relationship* (Figure 10) (Analytics Simplified, 2024). In general, a lack of pressure is bad for the Adaptive Space, and an increase in pressure has a positive on Adaptive Space up until a certain point. From there on, more pressure has a negative effect on Adaptive Space. Figure 10 does not depict the precise optimum because this cannot be specified for all actors due to its subjectivity. This type of relationship is observed in the *coordinative efforts* as well. Here, more coordination can be efficient in how the Spatial Proposals eventually compare, making it easier to progress in the phase thereafter. However, provinces and their individual character and unique spatial challenges also benefit from a degree of independence, allowing them to create a Spatial Proposal that is truly their own. Too much coordination can thus be limiting here as well, making the relationship between this aspect of Enabling Leadership and its influence on Adaptive Space a curvilinear one, too.

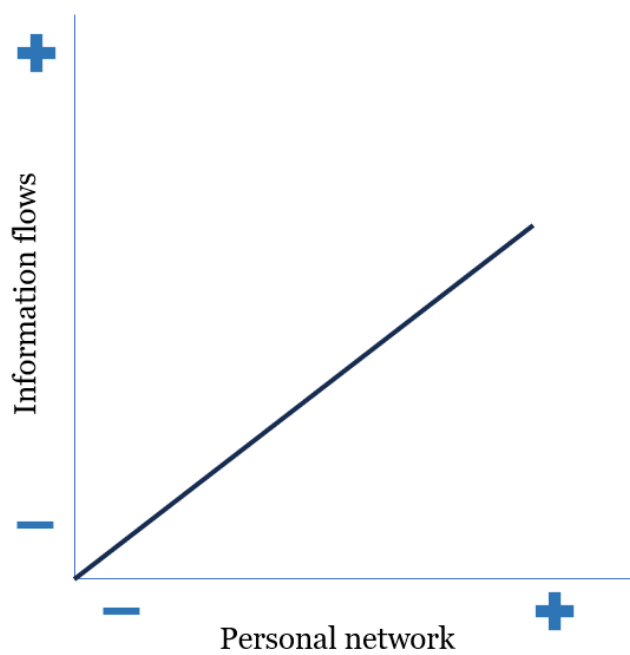
Figure 10 – Curvilinear relationship between pressure to produce and head space.



(Created by author, 2024)

Most strategies of Enabling Leadership appear to have a positive relationship with Adaptive Space, where an increase in the variable of Enabling Leadership results in an improvement of the Adaptive Space (Table 7). This is the case for *personal network, being informed, monitoring environment, heterogeneity* and *seeds of emergence*. For example, increasing one's personal network improves an actor's Adaptive Space. Based on the findings of this research, an example of this relationship can be illustrated as is visible in Figure 11. Chapter 5.7. discusses this relationship and potential deviations to this relationship further.

Figure 11 – Positive relationship between personal network and information flows.



(Created by author, 2024)

## **5. Discussion**

The previous chapter described what information was found per variable. Some interview questions and related respondent answers provided clearer data than others. The following paragraphs highlight interesting findings and, additionally, provide theoretical argumentation in an attempt to position and explain what was found.

### **5.1.1. Heterogeneity**

The novel NOVEX-program included a broad array of actors, including multiple ministries, provinces, municipalities, water boards, regional partners and more. From a heterogeneity perspective, these actors all contributed to the inclusion of divergent perspectives and included specific knowledge. For example, the Ministry of Defence took the opportunity to provide feedback to the provinces after the 'ijkmomenten' by commenting on the output provided by the provinces and in doing so the Ministry of Defence had their own interest central. They asked provinces to carefully consider how they would ensure sufficient space available for future military development and movements, for example, when it comes to military air craft training in combination with noise regulation and proposed land for neighbourhood development.

A Polycentric Governance System operates with and because of this group of stakeholders, which explains why this is observed in the NOVEX-program as well. However, in terms of leadership strategies, the impact of respondents and their ability to influence the level of heterogeneity differed. Firstly, because of the program-design and how this included multiple actors and perspectives. The role of the program-design will be explained further in 5.3. Secondly, not all actors obtained the power to attract or hire new team-members. Hiring new team-members with a different background, for example, in terms of education or gender, positively influences the heterogeneous pressure (Wycisk, McKelvey and Hülsmann, 2008). Some actors had a managerial position within their organisation and, consequently, could more easily obtain the required mandate to expand their team.

The heterogeneity-paradox mentioned in chapter 4.5.1. – which indicates that diversity among actors in the NOVEX-program both is and is not present – is noteworthy. On the one hand, the differences among actors and their perspectives can be explained by the presence of the NOVEX-program within a Polycentric Governance System. This system is not a uniform system with a singular stakeholder. The multitude of stakeholders enables the inclusion of different perspectives and unique knowledge.

On the other hand, two findings which are dominant in terms of similarity can be explained. Firstly, the prevalent presence of mainly governmental actors and stakeholders. Two reasons can be provided to explain this finding: the nature of spatial planning, and the scope of this research. Regardless of spatial planning shifts such as moving planning power from central to decentral government, a pivotal role remains reserved for the government (Rijksoverheid, n.d.). Therefore, it is no surprise that respondents remarked the presence of government agencies. Additionally, the scope of this research included respondents who worked either for the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations or for one of the provinces. Civil servants working for BZK predominantly were in contact with other governmental actors. Government officials working for the provinces, on the other hand, experienced more interaction with non-governmental parties. For example, two provincial workers indicated how they stayed in close contact with their regional partners (i7, i8).

### **5.1.2. Coordinative pressures and efforts**

Both coordinative efforts and pressures have been initiated and experienced during the Puzzle-phase of the NOVEX-program. At BZK, clear coordinative practices can be observed. Firstly, via and between the account holders. By interacting with colleague account holders, they can coordinate updates, progress and even manage information coming from provinces.

For example, different account holders hearing critique from provincial workers on the planning and put these sounds together to address internally (i10). Moreover, one civil servant at BZK was specifically employed to coordinate all account holders (i10).

Secondly, BZK and account holders specifically were tasked with coordinating information and questions from other ministries (i5). Their role was crucial as linking-pin to gather and pass onwards the information that provinces required to construct their Spatial Proposal. The coordinating role of BZK in the NOVEX-program is a logical one considering their position in the Dutch governance structure and because BZK is tasked with spatial development (i6; Parlement, n.d.). Other ministries develop their own programs and plans and some of these programs concern the spatial vision of a ministry. For example, the Ministry of Defence developed 'Programma Ruimte voor Defensie' (Program Space for Defence) in which they indicate their increasing spatial demand (Ministry of Defence, 2023). Coordinating the spatial visions from ministries generates valuable information, enabling provinces to combine spatial demands from central government and decentral and local stakeholders.

At the provincial side of the program, coordinative efforts were made in all directions. Firstly, actors had to coordinate demands from local parties such as municipalities. These needed to be managed and coordinated to ensure that these parties would support the Spatial Proposal (i3). Large municipalities tend to be aware of their relatively strong (financial) position and, as a result, they are inclined to act more independently (i7). Moreover, their support is desired to collaboratively act upon any eventual agreed upon outcome of the NOVEX-program (i11). Secondly, provinces had to coordinate amongst themselves in their communication with BZK. Although not everything needed to be coordinated first, provinces are aware that their position and demand comes across stronger and more serious when uniformity is reached (i4). An existing consultation structure, the IPO, functioned as a valuable instrument by enabling involved actors from the provinces to discuss with one another. For example, on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023, provincial workers held an online IPO meeting. Here they discussed, coordinated and prepared, after which the NOVEX program manager joined the meeting to talk about the program.

Although the created group chat provides actors the opportunity to quickly and informally coordinate, not all actors experience that to be how the instrument functioned. For example, (i8) described how it was just another extra group chat for which they did not always have the time. This finding indicates that sometimes creating the right conditions is not enough, underlining the importance of actors' perception as well as their autonomy. Arguably, some explanatory power behind the coordinative efforts can be ascribed to the novel nature of the program. Due to the newness of the program, actors have to search for ways to involve relevant stakeholders. In some cases, this can be done via existing structures, for example, via an IPO or existing regular meetings with regional partners (i7; i8). However, in searching for the best way to include the correct stakeholders, actors made new connections and had to use coordinative efforts to navigate among stakeholders and information.

Lastly, jargon potentially provides a coordinative, strategic advantage (Malyuga and Orlova, 2018). However, the use of jargon is inconsistently experienced by respondents. The intention behind utilizing similar language is affirmed (i9, i10), however, it proved difficult to quickly apprehend (i9). Furthermore, the copying of jargon appeared to happen naturally rather than on purpose, indicating a limit to actor's ability to purposefully exert influence and promoting the use of jargon.

### **5.1.3. Pressure to produce**

The last and simultaneously most prevalent frequently mentioned finding concerns the pressure experienced to produce. Results indicate high levels of pressure to produce, mainly caused by demanding deadlines and the consequently limited available time (e.g., i1, i2, i3). Actors indicate how difficult it is to find the right balance, indicating how on the one hand

someone fell ill with a burn-out, and on the other hand a respondent indicated that they would not have done the program any different in hindsight (i6, i10). Furthermore, an actor's ability to exert pressure or to provide others more time depends on their mandate. As mentioned by (i2), even if they had wanted to, they did not consider themselves possessing the mandate to extent deadlines. Such job-specific limits set boundaries to an actor's potential to deploy leadership strategies, which will be further explained in 5.3 and 5.4.

### **5.2.1. Subjectivity of safety and its amplifying effect**

Bond (2023), described *psychological safety* as an enabling factor for sufficient and clear information flows. Results indicate that this was not always present for actors during the Puzzle-phase (see 4.2.2.). A possible explanation for why some actors experienced the presence of psychological safety and others did not is the subjectivity of the matter. As described by Edmondson and Lei (2014), how someone perceives a particular context is an individual point of view, where the same situation could be unbothersome for one actor, and clearly unpleasant for another. Another explanation is the position and involvement of an actor, resulting from their role within the program. For example, some respondents did not have to deliver bad news as often as others, reducing the change of being subject to harsh responses.

One respondent directly used the uncomfortable feeling and lack of psychological safety as an argument for the unsatisfactory amount and clarity of information (i10), thus arguing in line with Bond's theory (2023). Furthermore, despite these feelings, there were still information flows present within the program. A possible explanation for the continued participation and sending and receiving of information is the strong interdependence between actors and organisations which forces at least some interaction to keep taking place, making *psychological safety* not a necessary precondition for information flow but rather an amplifying element.

### **5.2.2. Moving beyond the rigid work environment**

Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey (2007), described how improving one's work environment is an element of Enabling Leadership because it can facilitate interaction. A distinction can be made between *physical work environment* and *digital work environment*. Respondents indicate that their physical work environment is mainly their office at the organisation they work for. This workplace is relatively rigid in the sense that it has already been constructed and designed. Moreover, most workplaces are not personal workplaces, limiting an actor's ability to alter the setting even more. Although the physical work environment thus allows limited possibilities for actors to alter the work setting, there remains one main component regarding their physical work environment which actors can influence: their presence. Utilizing the given work setting still facilitates the possibility to interact with colleagues, more so than when an actor is working from home (Källström, 2023). These interactions enable a type of unscheduled learning due to the informally transferred insights (Bailey and Kurland, 1999). This is the result from moments of informal contact which take place, for example, when an actor moves from a meeting to the bathroom and when they stumble upon a colleague. The findings of this research are in line with the above theoretical position. Literature, however, is not explicit in whether the physical encounters are equally valuable in a PGS due to its dependence on inter-organisational collaboration. Further and specific comparative research on this topic is required to assess the relative value of the physical work environment, comparing its role in internal projects and inter-organisational programs.

One respondent stands out due to their unique work situation. (i12) works for two involved organisations, allowing them to interact often and easily, even informally. Furthermore, this allowed them the advantage of being able to transfer thoughts and opinions more quickly, benefiting both organisations.



Collectively creating a new group chat to allow for easily contacting colleagues, especially between different organisations, is a great example of how actors shape their digital work environment (i3). Sometimes, though, even the digital work environment has prearranged components. This, too, does not necessarily preclude actors from exerting Enabling Leadership. As mentioned in 4.3.1., (i3)'s organisation has a digital platform active where colleagues can voluntarily share updates. Although (i3) was not involved in setting up the digital platform, still their voluntarily utilizing it – knowing the high likeliness of triggering responses from colleagues – is the enactment of Enabling Leadership.

### **5.3. Becoming a piece of the leadership-puzzle**

The Polycentric Governance System and the NOVEX-program resulted in the inclusion of actors with various jobs and responsibilities. Some components of Enabling Leadership are included in actor's job descriptions, raising the interesting question of where leadership starts and where it ends, as well as if this can even be fully demarcated.

At BZK, one actor was appointed during the Puzzle-phase and their main task was to coordinate the team of account holders (i10). Their coordinative actions were inherent to their position within the organisation and their role in the NOVEX-program. Alternatively, multiple actors commented that being informed is their core responsibility (i1, i2, i6). Therefore, their actions to gather information are all part of performing the tasks they were hired for to complete.

Although at first sight it may appear as if leadership has here been 'managed away' and divided among a multitude of jobs within the program, this is not the case. Instead, an explanation can be found within the premises of CLT. As stated in chapter 2.2.1., *leadership* is not the same as *leaders*. Leadership is not just an individual trait and should be understood as the collective dynamic, in which different actors have different possibilities to enact such strategies (Mackenzie, 2006; Baltaci and Balci, 2017; Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2007). Taking this perspective in mind, a clearer image of the integral process that leadership is can be obtained by comprehending how, metaphorically, the different actors within the NOVEX-program are a piece of the leadership-puzzle themselves.

In conclusion, the variety of actors and their different jobs make up the leadership process. Within this process, some actors are more easily able to perform specific leadership actions than others, for example, an actor hired to coordinate the program is more likely to act coordinately and have the right instruments to do so. However, this does not exclude other actors from acting out coordinating efforts, as can be concluded from 5.1.1.2. Moreover, autonomy remains in the actor's choice on how and when exactly they perform certain actions.

### **5.4. The dominant contextual influence of the program-design**

Naturally, both the program-design and the program's governance setting play an important role for the actor dynamic. As explained in chapter 5.2., the program's governance setting necessitated certain roles and structured actors' tasks. The program-design is, firstly, in part an outcome of the context (see 2.2.1.). Due to the absence of national spatial planning strategies and increasing spatial challenges, the need for a new planning program developed (de Jonge, 2022b). Having shaped a new program meant that actors had to find their way in terms of connecting and interacting. Although some connections and consultation tables existed before the NOVEX-program was initiated, sufficient space remained in which actors had to find their own way. Furthermore, even pre-existing structures left space for leadership actions of actors, for example, in how they wished to utilize these structures. In the setting of a recurrent program, actors might experience less space to form new connections because structures have already been purposefully set up and connections have been made. Additionally, the NOVEX-program structure clearly had the following leadership components incorporated: *heterogeneity*, *pressure to produce*, and *coordination*. Firstly, the design of the

program and the polycentric governance setting ensured that diverging perspectives were included in the Puzzle-phase. The program-design promoted provinces to consult and cooperate with actors such as water boards and municipalities and, in doing so, the incorporation of divergent perspectives and specific knowledge was stimulated. Secondly, the experienced pressure described in chapter 4.5.2. comes predominantly forth from the program-design. Respondents indicated that their influence on this pressure was either absent, limited, or unnecessary and the program-design took away some of the actors' need to apply more pressure. Thirdly, as described in chapters 4.4.2, 5.1.1.2. and 5.2., coordinative efforts and pressures were noticeably present during the Puzzle-phase of the NOVEX-program. The novel nature of the program necessitated a design in which coordination was incorporated, to prevent developments to occur in unwanted directions and forms.

### **5.5. Complexity Leadership Theory and how NOVEX embraced exploitative and explorative elements**

As described in chapter 2.3. and visible in figure 2, strategies of Enabling Leadership consist of performing actions that nurture the balance between exploration and exploitation. Exploitative components are present first and foremost in the program-design, which was structured to quickly generate a large sum of new information. This design with dedicated phases and, within the Puzzle-phase, the three moments of assessment ('ijkmomenten') was intrinsically exploitative. Furthermore, exploitation resulted naturally from the position of the NOVEX-program within the administrative system and the clear ambition from the minister to identify spatial demands, which stimulated the aspiration to produce.

Explorative components, too, find their presence first and foremost in the program-design. For example, including seeds of emergence in the Puzzle-phase in the form of assigning extra resources such as external consultation and advisory firms encouraged exploration. Furthermore, alternative and new consultation tables and experimental Spatial Proposals indicate that actors explored during the Puzzle-phase. Thus, what this research found about the relationship between Enabling Leadership and Adaptive Space is that strategies of Enabling Leadership manage to enable actors' Adaptive Space which results in actors to both exploit and explore. Interestingly, enabling most explorative endeavours is the result from when Enabling Leadership injected tension. Especially the *seeds of emergence* allowed actors to explore, for example, when cooperating with consultancy firms results in understanding how to combine and structure spatial demands. Exploitative endeavours can be identified as resulting from when Enabling Leadership fostered interaction as well as tension. *Being informed* and *environmental monitoring* greatly improved actors' ability to work and produce effectively. This is indicated by respondents that stated that their job required them to be as aware as possible of all developments and information. Furthermore, the tension in the form of *pressure to produce* effects the Adaptive Space so that exploitation is a direct result: the pressure is experienced as a clear incentive to produce.

Better understanding the role of Enabling Leadership during the Puzzle-phase benefits from zooming out. As a result, exploitation and exploration can be seen in a combined fashion. From the data it can be inferred that actors fostered interaction, interdependence, and tension to nurture the balance between exploration and exploitation. Some actors put more emphasis on exploration as opposed to exploitation, and vice versa. Sections 5.2. and 5.3. provide possible explanations for this observation. Additionally, from a CLT point of view, the need to understand the context of the program and the situational strategies holistically is stressed. This entails the comprehension that not only all forms of complexity leadership are present, but that these are necessarily intermingled as well. To exemplify, the exploitative pressure to quickly produce forced actors the explorative inclusion utilization of seeds of emergence. Thus, the Puzzle-phase contained actions and moments in which both exploration and exploitation were balanced through actions of Enabling Leadership.

## **5.6. Planning theory and planning practice implications**

This thesis produced the following implications for planning theory and planning practice. No perfect program-design exists to optimally connect spatial policies and to combine national programs and their spatial demand with provincial ambitions. Therefore, no ideal program-design can be provided here. However, a better understanding has been acquired of the different factors and components of such a program-design and interrelated actor dynamics that could be subject to change, in combination with their expected impact. The following serves to illustrate how changing the circumstances of the program can result in both advantageous and disadvantageous consequences. Based on the respondents, a future edition of the program could benefit from a less tight schedule. This could lead to more stakeholders being included and more local support. The reduced pressure could also show disadvantages, due the pressure's ability to force action and to move past conversating (i6).

Furthermore, this thesis implies that polycentric planning practices benefit from improved overall clarity. Firstly, actors express that clear expectations would have been valuable (i1). For example, some respondents perceived more freedom in how they designed their Spatial Proposal compared to others (i6, i10). Additionally, the future of the program and the exact position of the Spatial Proposal in the future remains unclear. In general, clearer communication between actors would improve the output of the program as well (Henczel, 2000). The amplifying influence of feeling psychologically safe, as described by Bond (2023), is an important factor. This research found that feeling was not always present and this absence is directly linked to instances of poor and insufficient communication. Planning practice benefits from actors who actively aim to create a feeling of psychological safety, for example, by taking on a more constructive and understanding position within a collaborative program.

## **5.7. Reflection and recommendations**

This thesis aimed to optimally study complexity leadership strategies in a polycentric governance system within the provided context and accompanied limitations. The following limitations and recommendations can be identified. The first limitation concerns the moment of acquiring data. The Puzzle-phase had already ended a few months prior to conducting the interviews. It is possible that the interviewees would have provided different responses if the interviews occurred either during or right after the completion of the Puzzle-phase. Therefore, future research could schedule interviews at the end of the Puzzle-phase to ensure accurate data. Alternatively, interviews could be conducted both during the researched period and at the end thereof to allow for a comparative analysis.

Secondly, although this research included the most dominant actors in the NOVEX-program, not all actors have been included. The scope of this research necessitated the exclusion of smaller governmental actors such as municipalities, as well as other ministries. Inclusion of those actors could put the current findings in perspective and, potentially, lead to the development of other and more complete insights. Therefore, it is recommended that future research aims to include more organisations to contribute towards a more holistic understanding of actor dynamics in a PGS.

Thirdly, as mentioned in Chapter 4.6., most strategies of Enabling Leadership appear to have a positive relationship with Adaptive Space, where an increase in the variable of Enabling Leadership results in an improvement of the Adaptive Space. It is unclear if and when this positive relationship would stagnate and perhaps even reduce the quality of the Adaptive Space. To illustrate, it can be imagined that an actor's personal network is too big for them to reap the benefits, when they receive many requests from their network or when they can no longer oversee how to utilize their network due to the many and difficult to track

changes in profession within their network. Therefore, further research could shed light on, for example, the effects of even larger personal networks and more heterogeneity.

Lastly, this research was conducted within the Dutch spatial planning system. This system is unique with its ministries, provinces and municipalities which are governmental institutes that have a long history in how they compete and collaborate in the Netherlands. Moreover, water boards and other stakeholders add to the complexity of the context. This complexity and specific planning system makes it difficult to identically repeat this study. Future research could be conducted in a different country to allow for a comparative analysis to better understand the role of each specific contextual situation. Alternatively, a historical case analysis with similar planning systems could provide insights in the development and potential evolution of actor dynamics.

## 6. Conclusion

### 6.1. Conclusion and (sub)questions answered

This research aimed to investigate how complexity leadership operates in functioning organisations by researching what strategies are being deployed and how actors experience the influence thereof on the Adaptive Space, in order to gain a better understanding of how polycentric governmental programs can progress in a complex and dynamic environment. A central position was reserved for the actor dynamic and Adaptive Space during the Puzzle-phase of the NOVEX-program. Furthermore, attention is devoted to the outcome of the identified Adaptive Space to contribute to a more holistic comprehension of a complex governmental program and its spatial implications.

The first sub-question was designed to conceptualize Enabling Leadership and Adaptive Space within a Polycentric Governance System. Adaptive Space within a PGS consists of how actors experience sufficient head space and adequate and clear information flows, possibly resulting in innovation, new knowledge and learning. Head space requires for actors to be able to think creatively and thoroughly, whereas information flows concern the quantity and comprehensibility of communication between actors. Enabling Leadership within a PGS includes for actors to connect and conflict to balance between the exploratory and exploitative needs in a PGS. These needs include how, on the one hand, the system needs to be utilized to quickly generate the desired output: the Spatial Proposals. On the other hand, exploration in approaches and dynamics is a necessary result due to the novelty of the NOVEX-program. Enabling Leadership, then, consists of how actors manage the balance between the two.

The second sub-question aimed to identify how actors within a PGS can influence Adaptive Space. The answer is found in actors' ability to apply strategies of Enabling Leadership, which concerns how and when their actions foster interaction, interdependence, and tension. For actors to interact is essential within a PGS because the polycentric nature of the system necessitates interaction. After all, no party holds complete decision-making power and, instead, stakeholders depend on each other in decision-making processes. Carefully considering how and when to interact is part of Enabling Leadership. The aforementioned interdependence is not a given and fixed circumstance. Instead, fostering the interdependent situation shapes the condition for actors to communicate. Additionally, actors can influence the tension within the program. To exert Enabling Leadership strategies includes for actors to correctly adjust this tension.

The third sub-question aimed to clarify the position of the NOVEX-program as a Polycentric Governance System. Polycentricity refers to the plurality of decision-making bodies, functioning in combination with one another and each with their own autonomy (McGinnis, 2019). A governance system includes those actors and organisations that guide behaviour in a desired direction via the application and changing of rules, strategies and norms (McGinnis, 2011). The NOVEX-program is thus a PGS due to its governance and inclusion of multiple semiautonomous decision-making bodies. Here, the decision-making bodies within the scope of the research are the organisations BZK and the twelve provinces.

The fourth sub-question concerned how actors perceived the influence of Enabling Leadership on Adaptive Space. Firstly, actions that foster interaction mainly influenced information flows, for example, by supporting these with sufficient information as a result of staying informed of relevant progress. Furthermore, informal situations such as network drinks are perceived to be valuable because they allow for information to be easily exchanged in a friendly environment. Secondly, actions that fostered interdependence within the program primarily affected actors' information flows. Here, a pragmatic stance on working autonomously and coordinating resulted in the flowing of information at moments that called for it, for example, when assistance was required or when progress benefited from synchronisation via 'ijkmomenten'. Additionally, the supposed coordinative advantage of jargon was negatively perceived by actors, stating that the unclarity and plurality thereof

diminished their ability to think thoroughly. Thirdly, tension being fostered affected actors' head space. Thought-processes were stimulated by the inclusion of divergent perspectives, and the valuable seeds of emergence allowed actors with more time to think and to work with, for example, energy-specific spatial insights.

In sum, respondents provided ample examples of how employing Enabling Leadership strategies in the Puzzle-phase resulted in lessons being learned, new knowledge being generated, and innovative ideas being realized. In doing so, they referred to both the *outcome* and the *process* of the Puzzle-phase.

## **6.2. Key findings and their broader applicability**

Additionally, the following key findings can be underlined. Firstly, the role of context within CLT is emphasized by Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey (2007). They consider context to be one of the premises of CLT due to the dependence of interactions and interdependence on context. This research reiterates the dominant role of context within CLT. The national governmental absence in the spatial planning field caused central and decentral stakeholders to reconnect and to explore new relationships via the NOVEX-program. Furthermore, each province is unique in terms of spatial challenges and demands, as well as in terms of governance structures. For example, Flevoland consists of six municipalities whereas South-Holland consists of no less than fifty municipalities (Statistics Netherlands, 2015). Moreover, large municipalities and metropolitan areas tend to do their own thing and are more difficult to cooperate with (i7, i9). This discrepancy in complexity generates uneven circumstances in which different types of actions are more logical and easily possible.

Secondly, and arguably understood as an extension of the aforementioned, this research generated insights regarding the possibilities for actors to employ leadership strategies. The possibility to employ these strategies is both created and bounded by the program-design and actors' job. The novel program-design necessitated personal networks to grow and the polycentric planning field inherently allowed for heterogeneous perspectives to be included. Furthermore, the tight schedule of the program eliminated the need for some actors to pressurize involved parties even more. Additionally, certain jobs included more opportunities to employ leadership strategies compared to others. A 'coordinator team provincial spatial vision' is more likely to act coordinately compared to a regular policy officer, and a program-director is better equipped to solve a crisis than the designer who illustrates the maps.

The theoretical contribution of this thesis contributes to a broader applicability. Although programs and challenges often have a unique governance setting, Polycentric Governance Systems are found and can be imagined in more situations. For example, an attempt to map sectoral demands and spatial claims in the North-Sea would involve a variety of stakeholders. Similar endeavours benefit from an extensive actor dynamic analysis such as the one presented here. Furthermore, conditions could be shaped appropriately to increase the chance of a successful outcome. To illustrate, if said endeavour expects to benefit from sufficient and clear flows of information, it can be advised to create an environment in which stakeholders experience psychological safety to create the right conditions for the desired flows of information to occur.

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## 8. Appendices

### Appendix 1 – Interview guide

#### Introvragen

- 1- Kunt u mij kort wat vertellen over uw functie en uw werkzaamheden?  
*Probes: rol organisatie, tijd werkzaam*
- 2- Hoe heeft u de puzzel-fase van het NOVEX-programma ervaren?  
*Probes: positieve en negatieve aspecten*

#### Adaptieve ruimte

- 3- Stelling: De puzzel-fase heeft mij veel nieuwe informatie en lessen opgeleverd.  
-oneens  
-neturaal  
-eens
- 4- Stelling: Tijdens de puzzel-fase had ik de ruimte om goed en rustig na te denken.  
-oneens  
-neutraal  
-eens  
*In geval van 'eens': doorvragen of hier ook creativiteit werd benut.*
- 5- Stelling: Tijdens de puzzel-fase werd er voldoende en duidelijk gecommuniceerd.  
-oneens  
-neutraal  
-eens  
*In geval van 'oneens': doorvragen of dit te maken had met gevoel van veiligheid.*

#### Interactie

- 6- Hoe heeft u uw (fysieke) werkomgeving ervaren en heeft u daar zelf iets aan veranderd?  
*Probes: kwam u veel mensen tegen, ook van andere organisaties? Veel individueel gewerkt?*
- 7- Hoe zag uw netwerk eruit binnen dit programma tijdens de puzzel-fase en hoe heeft dit zich ontwikkeld?  
*Probes: met wie en welke organisaties, actief uitgebreid?*
- 8- Hoe zorgde u ervoor dat u voorbereid was in en tijdens uw werk, en geïnformeerd bleef?  
*Probes: hoe volgde u NOVEX ontwikkelingen?*
- 9- En hoe zit dat met het volgen van algemenere ontwikkelingen?  
*Probes: nieuws volgen*

#### Onderlinge afhankelijkheid

- 10- Naar uw mening, werd zelfstandig werken binnen het programma gestimuleerd?  
*Probes: niet alles via officiële kanalen, zelfstanding problemen oplossen*
- 11- Hoe heeft u ervaren dat er geprobeerd werd om werk op elkaar af te stemmen tijdens de puzzel-fase?

*Probes: werd er veel gecoördineerd en moesten dingen in lijn met elkaar zijn, jargon gebruik*

**Spanning**  
**intern**

12- Kunt u mij wat vertellen over de aanwezige diversiteit in inzichten en perspectieven binnen het programma?

*Probes: droeg dit volgens u bij aan de uitkomst, hadden mensen verschillende opleidingsachtergronden*

**extern**

13- Hoe heeft u de werkdruk ervaren, en waar kwam deze druk uit voort?

*Probes: hoeveelheid deadlines, hoe strikt*

14- Zijn er extra's beschikbaar gesteld, zoals de mogelijkheid om een congres bij te wonen of om extra experts te betrekken?

*Probes: werd er tijd en geld vrijgemaakt voor verdieping, netwerken?*

**Slot**

15- Was het wellicht mogelijk om in de puzzel-fase eerder of tot meer kennis en lessen te komen? Zo ja, wat had daartoe kunnen helpen?

16- Heeft u zelf nog punten die nog niet zijn genoemd of die u wilt meegeven?

## Appendix 2 – Consent form interviews

Betreft: Masterscriptie gericht op het onderzoeken van de dynamiek tussen actoren binnen het NOVEX-programma.

Beste (naam),

Hartelijk dank voor uw bijdrage aan mijn onderzoek door tijd te maken voor dit interview. Hierin ga ik met u het gesprek aan om beter in beeld te brengen hoe de dynamiek tussen de betrokken actoren van invloed is op hoe er gezamenlijk nieuwe inzichten kunnen worden gecreëerd. Dit onderzoek kijkt naar de puzzel-fase van het NOVEX-programma.

Het interview zal online plaatsvinden op (xxxx) om (xxxx). Het interview wordt opgenomen en de resultaten verwerkt als u akkoord bent met onderstaande. Het interview duurt naar verwachting ongeveer een uur.

Indien u verdere vragen heeft ben ik bereikbaar via: [m.m.sewandono@student.rug.nl](mailto:m.m.sewandono@student.rug.nl)

Hierbij verklaar ik dat:

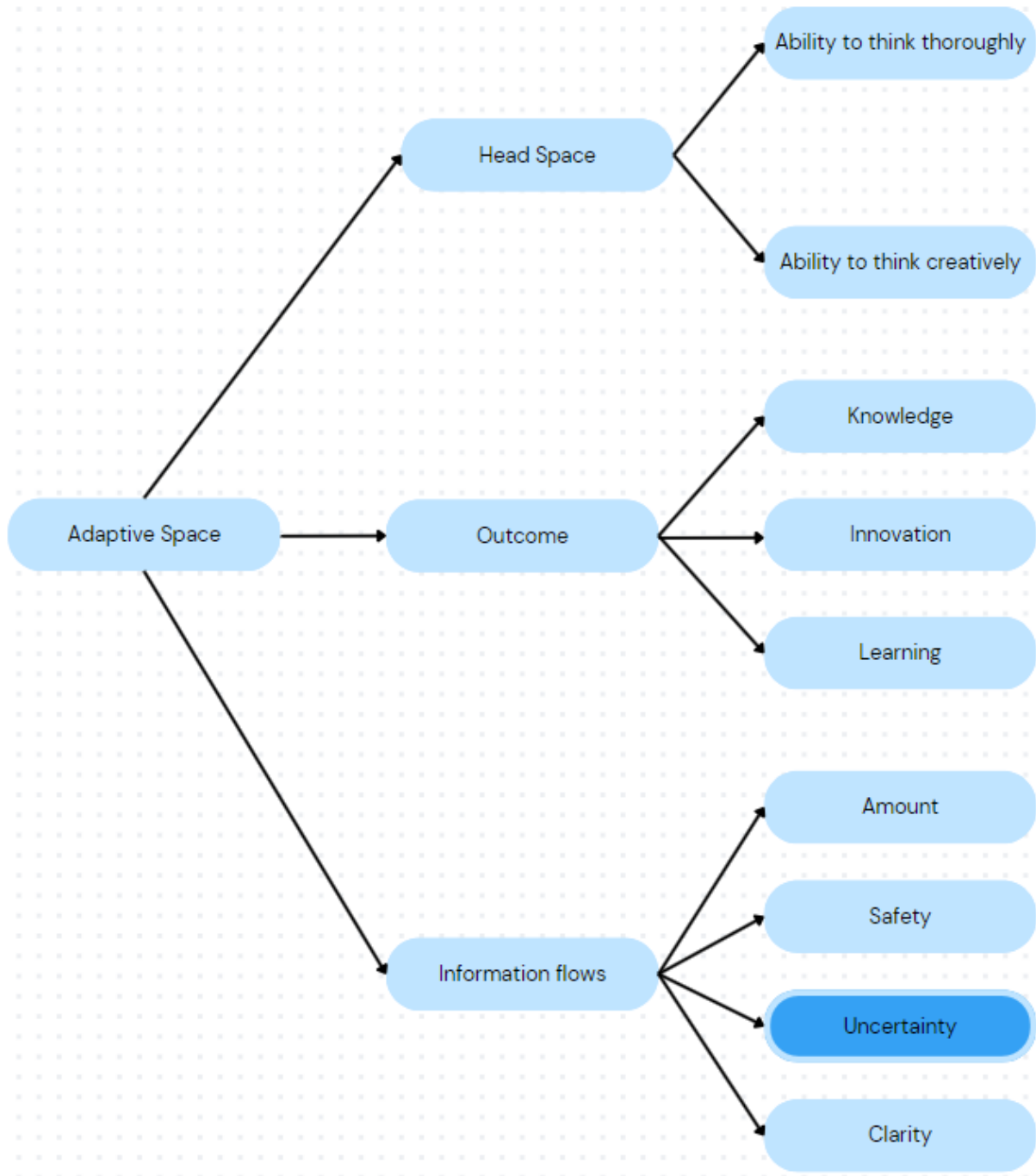
	Ja	Nee
Mijn deelname aan dit onderzoek geheel vrijwillig is, en ik ten alle tijden kan stoppen met mijn deelname.		
De resultaten van dit interview verwerkt mogen worden in het onderzoek.		
Ik toestemming geef voor het opnemen van het interview. (Na uitwerking van het interview wordt de opname verwijderd.)		
De naam van mijn functie in het onderzoek mag worden gebruikt. (Uw naam zal nergens worden vermeld.)		

Datum: .....

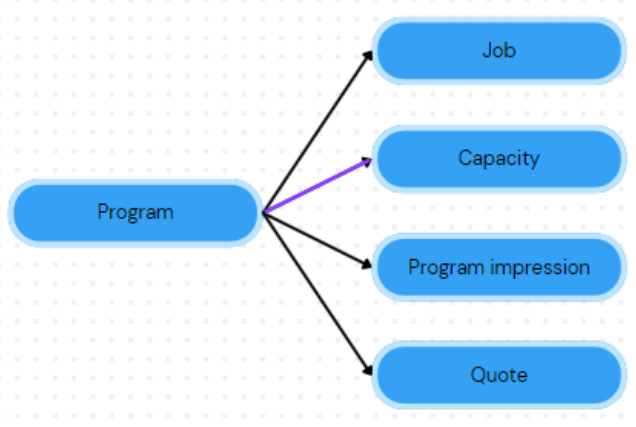
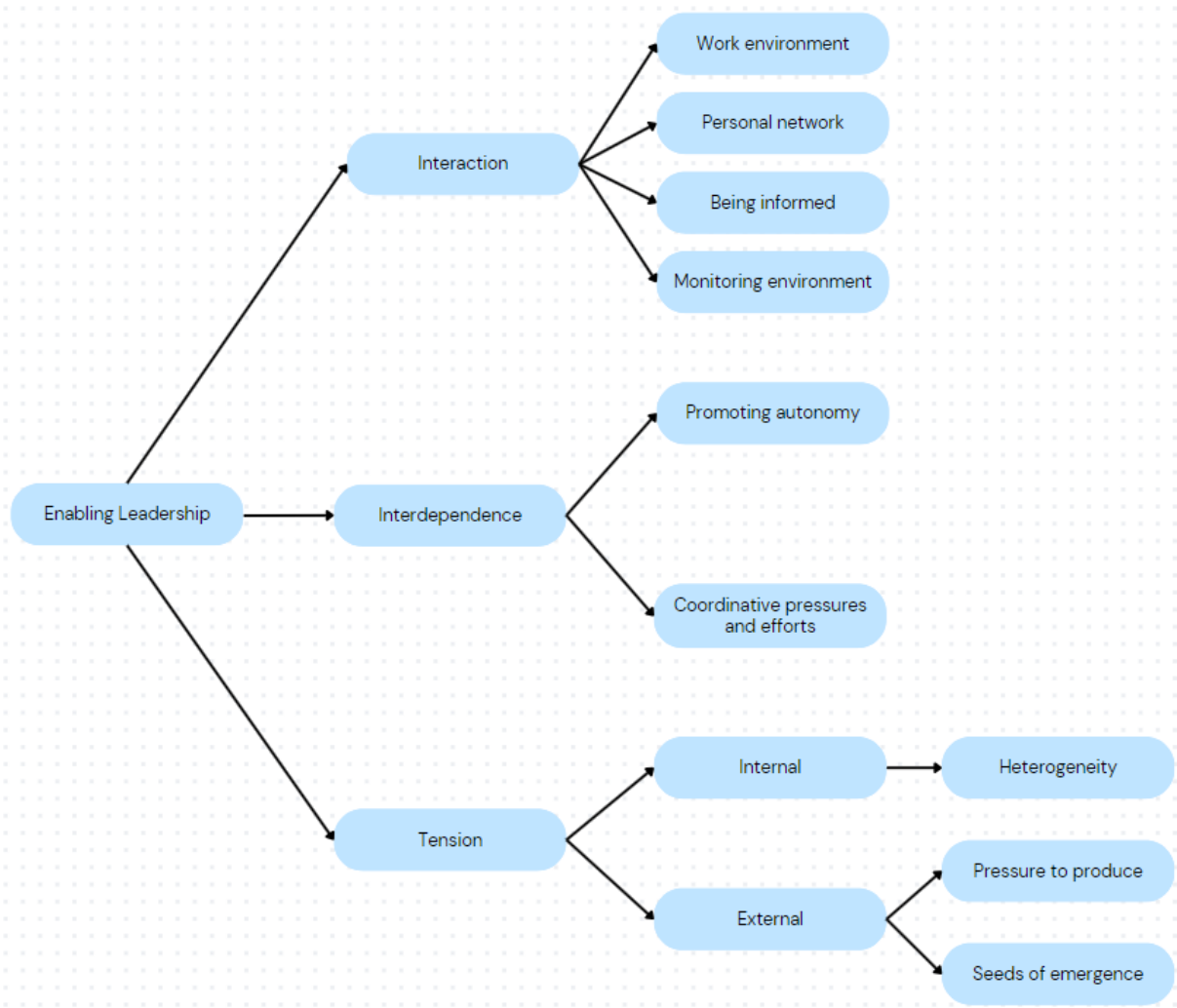
Handtekening respondent: .....

Handtekening onderzoeker: .....

**Appendix 3 – Deductive code tree with inductive codes added in dark blue**







#### Appendix 4 – Overview of analysed documents

#	Name of document	Organisation
1	Provinciaal startpakket fysieke leefomgeving	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
2	Beschrijving nationale programma's	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
3	Planning nationale programma's	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
4	Beschrijving van de opgaven in de NOVEX-gebieden – Tweede Kamerversie	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
5	Vragen per provincie	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
6	Afspraken over de basisset ruimtelijke data, ex ante analyse en het ruimtelijk voorstel	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
7	Provinciaal startpakket fysieke leefomgeving – Tweede Kamerbrief	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
8	Handreiking gebiedsgericht werken – Regie en samenhang in ruimtelijke keuzes	Unie van Waterschappen, Interprovinciaal Overleg, Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten
9	Geef richting, maak ruimte!	Raad voor de Leefomgeving en Infrastructuur
10	Nota Publicatie programma's NOVEX en Mooi NL	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
11	Algemene beleidsbrief portefeuille Volkshuisvesting en Ruimtelijke Ordening	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
12	Programma NOVEX	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
13	Programma Mooi Nederland	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
14	Uitvoeringsagenda Nationale Omgevingsvisie 2021-2024	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
15	Kamerbrief Voortgang regie op de ruimte en programma Mooi Nederland	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations

16	Uitnodiging – Draag bij aan de Nationale Omgevingsvisie	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
17	Kabinetperspectief Nationale Omgevingsvisie (NOVI)	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
18	Notitie Reikwijdte en Detailniveau – voor het PlanMER voor de Nationale Omgevingsvisie	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
19	De opgaven voor de Nationale Omgevingsvisie	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
20	Milieueffectrapport Nationale Omgevingsvisie	Royal HaskoningDHV in opdracht van Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties
21	Nationale Omgevingsvisie – Duurzaam perspectief voor onze leefomgeving	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
22	Voortgangsbrief over de Nationale Omgevingsvisie	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
23	Visuele weergave Mooi Nederland en NOVEX	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
24	Oplegnota contourennotitie Nota Ruimte	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
25	Contourennotitie Nota Ruimte	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
26	Contourennotitie Nota Ruimte – Tweede Kamerbrief	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
27	Participatieplan Nota Ruimte – Doe en denk mee met de nieuwe Nota Ruimte	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
28	Nota Ruimte – Advies over reikwijdte en detailniveau van het milieueffectrapport	Commissie voor de milieueffectrapportage
29	Tekenversie NRD Nota Ruimte – Beslisnota bij Kamerbrief over Notitie Reikwijdte en Detailniveau (NRD) Nota Ruimte	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
30	Notitie Reikwijdte en Detailniveau Nota Ruimte – Tweede Kamerbrief	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
31	Notitie Reikwijdte en Detailniveau – Voor de milieueffectrapportage bij de Nota Ruimte	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations

32	Nota Aanvulling provinciaal startpakket fysieke leefomgeving	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
33	Memo Planning en ijkmomenten	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
34	Memo Productbeelden ruimtelijk voorstel en ruimtelijk arrangement	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
35	Ruimtelijke Arrangement – voorzet, versie eerste ijkmoment	Adviesbureau Berenschot in opdracht van Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties
36	Inventarisatie eerste ijkmoment	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
37	Resultaten ontwerp onderzoek NOVEX: 10 hot topics	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
38	Nota Inventarisatie resultaten eerste ijkmoment	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
39	Inventarisatie tweede ijkmoment en vooruitblik op ruimtelijke arrangementen aan Rijkszijde	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
40	Inventarisatie tweede ijkmoment en vooruitblik op ruimtelijke arrangementen aan provinciezijde	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
41	Nota Inventarisatie tweede ijkmoment NOVEX	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
42	Memo Planning en proces ruimtelijke voorstellen en arrangementen inclusief samenhang Nota Ruimte en Mooi Nederland	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
43	Programma NOVEX- Presentatie voor het CRA	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
44	PLAN VAN AANPAK PROVINCIE GRONINGEN t.b.v. eerste ijkmoment, 6 maart 2023	Province of Groningen
45	Geannoteerde agenda tweede ijkmoment Novex Provincie Groningen	Province of Groningen

46	Op weg naar het ruimtelijk voorstel Groningen	Province of Groningen
47	DIT IS GRONINGEN – Koersdocument Omgevingsvisie	Province of Groningen
48	Omgevingsvisie 'LEVENDE RUIIMTE' Het vervolg op de Next City	Province of Groningen
49	“Overijssel voor elkaar!” – Scopenotitie Provincie Overijssel programma NOVEX	Province of Overijssel
50	Outline voor 2 <sup>de</sup> ijkmoment ruimtelijke puzzel (DO-NOVEX 25 mei) – Overijssel voor elkaar!	Province of Overijssel
51	Overijssel voor elkaar! – Derde IJkmoment – Concept Ruimtelijk Voorstel	Province of Overijssel
52	Overijssel voor elkaar! – Fundament voor de nieuwe Omgevingsvisie	Province of Overijssel
53	SCOPEDOCUMENT PROVINCIE UTRECHT – Provinciaal Ruimtelijk Voorstel Utrecht in het kader van het programma NOVEX	Province of Utrecht
54	NOTITIE DENKRICHTINGEN, UITDAGINGEN EN KANSEN – Ruimtelijk Voorstel Provincie Utrecht in het kader van het programma NOVEX	Province of Utrecht
55	AGENDA PROVINCIAAL RUIIMTELIJK VOORSTEL UTRECHT – Ruimtelijk Voorstel Provincie Utrecht in het kader van het programma NOVEX	Province of Utrecht
56	OMGEVINGSVISIE PROVINCIE UTRECHT	Province of Utrecht

### **Appendix 5 – Overview of attended meetings**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Overzichtsatelier Ontwerpend Onderzoek NOVEX	30-11-2023
Interprovinciaal Overleg Beraad Ruimtelijk Beleid	05-12-2023