

Governance Structures and Processes

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- Aim of this presentation:
 - Summary of major theoretical orientations towards governance
 - Discussion of governance structures and mechanisms within the OPAALS NoE based on empirical data
 - Supporting an open and transparent community building process and a better (self)understanding of the OPAALS community



Introduction

- Governance can be seen as a community's core dimension
- In digital networks, governance mechanisms typically evolve over time and in a bottom-up process
- Rules and power structures are usually less explicit
- Example: OPAALS-NoE:
 - Principles of collaboration: openness, engagement, transparency and accountability
 - Explicit policies and regulations are kept to a minimum
 - Self-generation of an organisational structure that is conditioned by its members, their needs and interactions



Governance from an analytic perspective

- “Governance” evolved particularly in policy-research and economic theory research contexts
- Generally perceived as an analytical perspective for describing patterns of interdependencies between stakeholders or agents
- Explicit forms of governance: law, formal rules and hierarchies
- Implicit forms of governance: unwritten rules and working practices



Network Governance

- Two basic forms of governance in socio economic theory: market and hierarchy

Governance mechanisms in networks:

- The price-mechanism of markets is replaced by collaboration
- Formal relationships associated with commands and power in hierarchies are replaced by trust.



Governance in Digital Networks

- Benefits of ICT for the coordination and collaboration in geographically dispersed networks
- However, online collaboration and community building also implicate specific challenges as communication patterns and conditions differ from offline activity
- Altered conditions of online communication require the creation of a specific form of (self-)governance...
- ... with policies that are strong enough to guide community behaviour but also flexible enough to change as the community evolves



Governance of Scientific Networks

- Scientific process requires a high level of autonomy
- Steering of science is only possible by the indirect design of its functional constraints (resources, institutional arrangements, intellectual property rights, and agenda setting)
- Peer-review is a genuine governance procedure in science
- Scientists' decisions to conduct research are mostly interdependent from decisions of other scientists
- Formal and informal communications are of importance



Governance of Scientific Networks

- Science is becoming increasingly distributed: geographically and in the contributions of a variety of institutions in specific projects
- Higher coordination costs
- Problems associated include diverging institutional structures, different scientific norms in distinct cultures and languages, and slower decision making processes
- Challenge for the governance of research projects



- Four ways to deal with these challenges (Cummings & Kiesler, 2007, p. 6f.):
 - (1) Division of responsibilities in different tasks to specialists in order to reduce failure costs
 - (2) Resource-sharing through websites, ICT-tools
 - (3) Learning and knowledge transfer through exchange programmes and joint paper writing
 - (4) Enabling meetings and spontaneous discussions



Governance Case Study: OPAALS

Challenges regarding the development of governance mechanisms and structure in OPAALS

- Grass-root, bottom-up -> time constraint
- Multitude of (indirect) functional constraints
- Multitude of (domain) languages and cultures
- Further constrains: geographically dispersed network, ICT dependency, etc.



- The following principles of the OPAALS research community can also be seen as the pillars of the explicit and implicit governance framework of the project:
 - accountability
 - transparency, and
 - trust



Governance Case Study: OPAALS

- (1) Division of responsibilities in different tasks to specialists in order to reduce failure costs
⇒ **Domain leaders, WP leaders, Task leaders**
- (2) Resource-sharing through websites, ICT-tools
⇒ **OKS**
- (3) Learning and knowledge transfer through exchange programmes and joint paper writing
⇒ **Researcher Exchange Programme, OPAALS conferences, OPAALS Summer School**
- (4) Enabling meetings and spontaneous discussions
⇒ **Meetings, OPAALS Summer School, Group Chats**



Governance Case Study: Explicit Rules

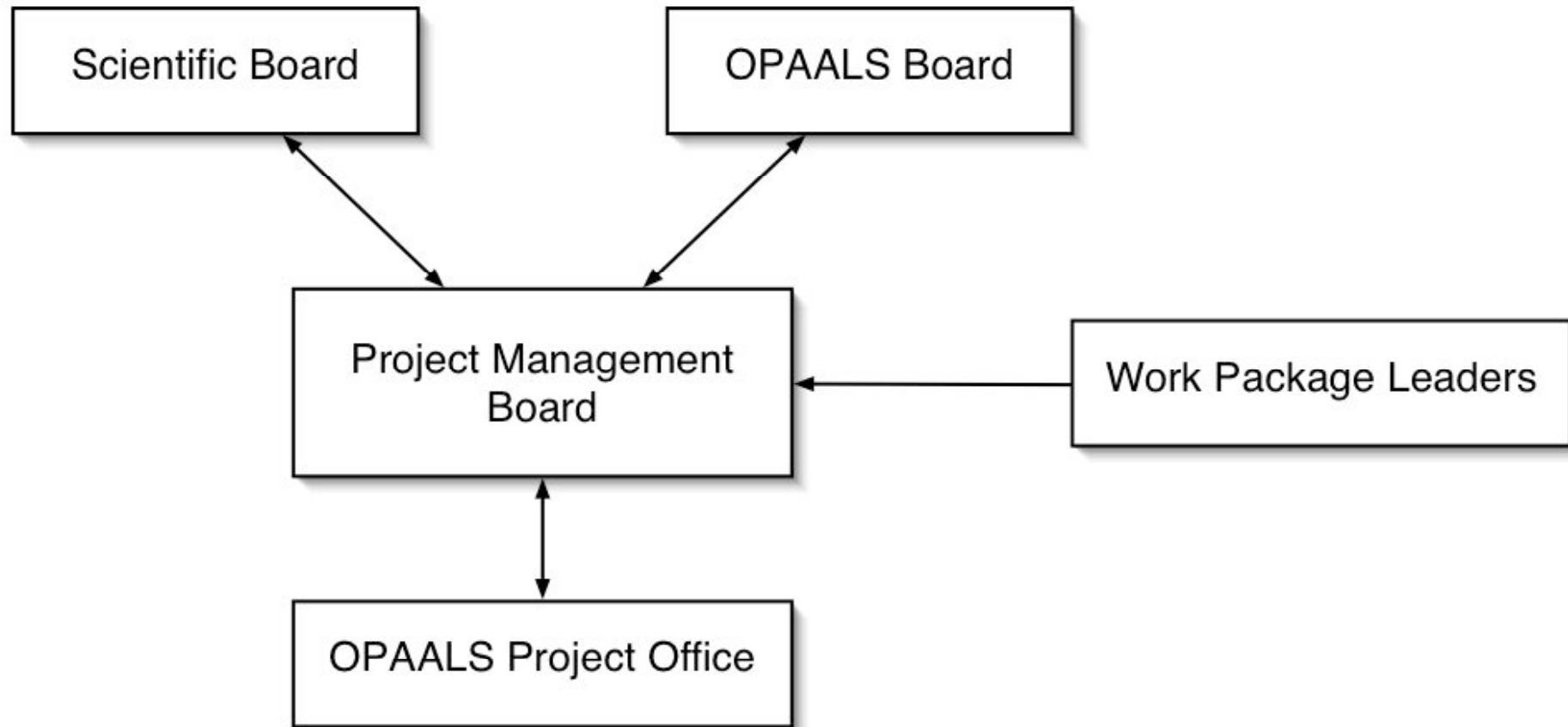


Figure. OPAALS management structure

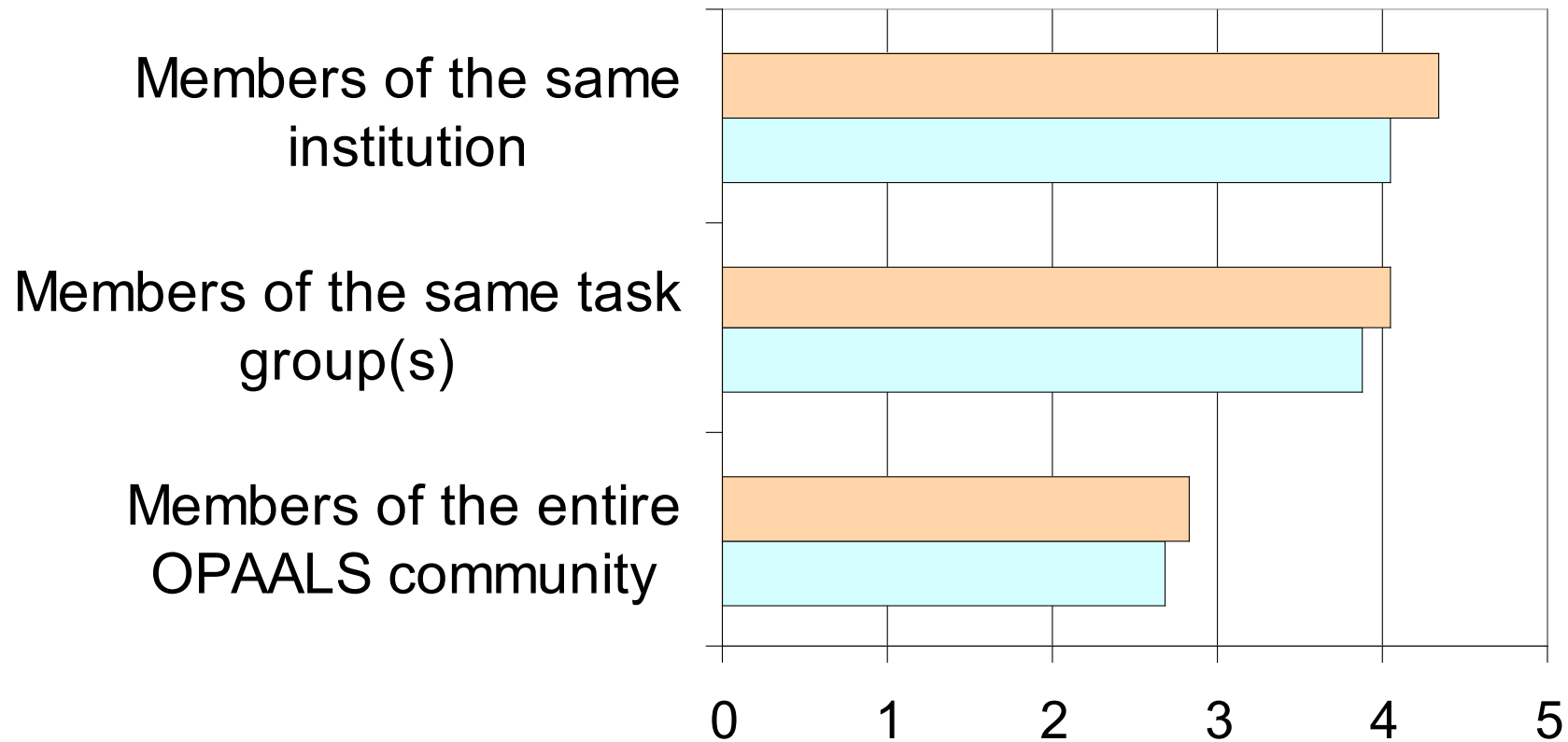


Governance Case Study: OPAALS

- Data basis: OPAALS survey
- Sample: 87 researchers
- Field period: 22.11.2007 - 17.12.2007 (2nd wave)
- Completed questionnaires: 56 (64%)



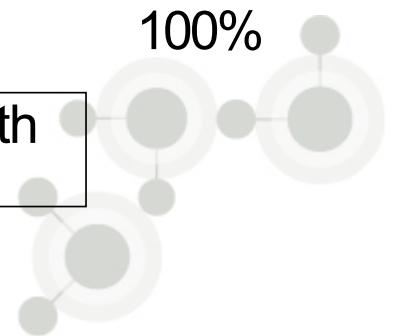
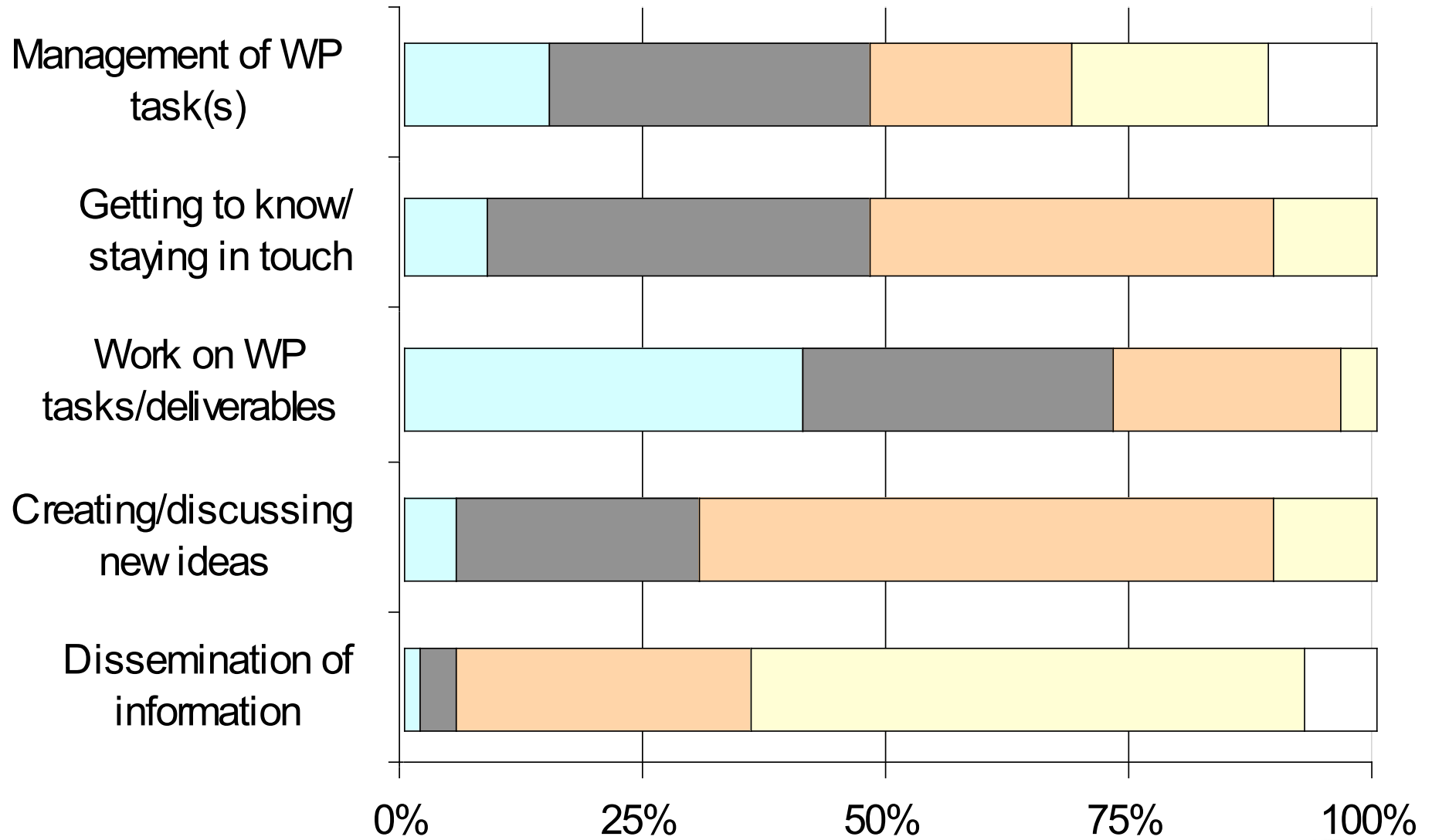
Formal and Informal Interaction



□ Informal interaction □ Professional interaction



Work Process



Decision Making Processes



Item	N	%
For a major decision to pass in our work, it must have the approval of the majority	10	17,86
We have a supervisor who is responsible for decision making	10	17,86
The democratic decision style is our underlying concept, but sometimes decisions are made authoritatively because of different constraints	25	44,64
Decision making is not based on specific rules, it is more ad hoc	11	19,64

Question text: "[...] Please evaluate the decision making process on the work package level (if you participate in different work packages, think of the one you are currently most active)."



Thank You!

