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Identifying the feedback processes leading to stakeholder satisfaction and disappointment

Using system dynamics to enhance stakeholder theory

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Abstract

In the literature on stakeholder theory a lot has been written about stakeholder satisfaction, while stakeholder disappointment remains underexposed. Some scholars have provided possible explanations for stakeholder disappointment, but it remains unclear how stakeholder engagement, satisfaction and disappointment relate to each other. Therefore, the objective of this research was to discover the feedback processes and determine the tipping point between stakeholder satisfaction and disappointment by using System Dynamics methodology. This has been done by establishing a preliminary Causal Loop Diagram based on propositions from theory. This preliminary model has been validated by inquiring the Eindhoven Airport case. Seven stakeholders have been interviewed and asked for their experiences as a stakeholder of Eindhoven Airport. Based on their suggestion, the model has been modified and improved. The main conclusions of this research are: 1) the extent to which a stakeholder's claims are met determines for a large extent if satisfaction or disappointment will occur. 2) Expectation management can play a vital role in increasing satisfaction and reducing disappointment. 3) Stakeholder satisfaction and disappointment are connected in a balancing feedback loop, indicating that they influence each other over time.

Preface

In front of you is my master thesis, the final result of five years of studying at Radboud University. Not only is it the last threshold I need to pass before receiving my masters' degree, it is also the crowning glory of my journey from a high school student to an academic (semi) professional. I sincerely hope that this work will not only provide my with my diploma, but it will also benefit someone or some organisation in practice at some point of time.

I would like to thank Inge Bleijenbergh for her supervision, challenges and encouragement. This has been of great help and was exactly what I needed to get this job done. Also I would like to thank my fellow students for reviewing my work and giving some useful suggestions that were so visible but that I did not see myself. I would like to thank my participants who took the time to speak with me, and who were so open about their experiences. Finally, I would like to thank Eindhoven Airport for being such an interesting case in inquire.

Content

1: Introduction

Many scholars agree that the long-term viability and success of a firm depends on its ability to create stakeholder satisfaction on the long run (McVea & Freeman, 2005; Berrone, Surroca & Tribó, 2007). A way to pursue stakeholder satisfaction is to apply an inclusive stakeholder approach (Eskerod, Huemann & Ringhofer, 2015), where an organisation tries to consider in principle all stakeholders that can be identified. However, this puts organisations at the risk of creating stakeholder disillusionment (Reed, 2008) or stakeholder disappointment (Eskerod et al., 2015), which occurs when organisations actively engage stakeholders in a strategic debate, without actually taking the stakeholder's input into account when making the final decision. This raises the question how stakeholder satisfaction can be achieved without the risk of causing disillusionment or disappointment among stakeholders. Unfortunately, little knowledge is available on the exact causes of stakeholder disappointment related to stakeholder satisfaction. Reed (2008) argues that disappointment arises from deficiencies in the stakeholder participation process, while Eskerod et al. (2015) state that stakeholder disappointment is caused by the escalation of stakeholder expectations, which makes it impossible for organisations to integrate all stakeholders input, and thereby leaving at least some stakeholders disappointed. However, the exact causes of stakeholder disappointment remain unclear. Therefore, the aim of my master thesis is to enhance stakeholder theory by contributing to the theoretical knowledge on the causes and effects of both stakeholder satisfaction and disappointment, especially focussing on the feedback processes that might trigger stakeholder disappointment when stakeholder satisfaction is pursued.

1.1: Problem formulation

Stakeholder theory has been an important topic in the management literature ever since the work by Freeman (1984) on the topic, which has been the starting point for many more contributions by other authors (e.g. Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Mitchell, Agle & Wood, 1997; Bryson, 2004; Ackermann & Eden, 2011). The debate about stakeholder theory was triggered one year earlier by Freeman and Reed (1983), who noticed that there that there has been a shift going on from a stockholder approach, where an organisations prime objective is to pay dividends to its owners, to a stakeholder approach where there are other groups whom the organisation is responsible for: the stakeholders. According to Freeman and Reed (1983), these stakeholders include at least shareholders, employees, customers, suppliers, financers and the community, furthermore it includes every group *''without whose support the organisation*

would seize to exist'' (Freeman & Reed, 1983: 2). This statement is a prelude for the distinction in stakeholder theory between the *broad* and *narrow* view on the inclus

ion of stakeholders by organisations. This distinction is important because in practice it determines which stakeholders the organisation will involve, and how they will be involved. Therefore the answer to this question has a significant impact on the stakeholder management strategies practiced by these organisations. The narrow view is related to the Resource Dependency Theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), where stakeholders are selected based on who possesses the resources needed to perform the organisations core activity. More formal, the narrow definition of stakeholders includes groups who are vital to the survival and success of the organisation (Freeman, 1984). On the contrary, the broad definition includes any group or individual that can affect or is affected by the organisation (Freeman, 1984). The latter is often considered as the more moral or responsible definition of a stakeholder (Greenwood, 2007).

For this research, I will take the broad view on stakeholder theory as a starting point and expand the stakeholder theory with some relevant concepts regarding stakeholder inclusiveness, the prioritising of stakeholders by organisations based on their salience, and the possibility to create stakeholder satisfaction or stakeholder disappointment. These concepts will be further elaborated in the theoretical part of this thesis (chapter 2). According to Eskerod et al. (2015), the embracement of a broad range of stakeholder groups can be regarded to as 'stakeholder inclusiveness'. This term is defined as *''the extent to which in principle all stakeholders are considered by the focal organisation''* (Eskerod et al., 2015: 43). The 'in principle' part of this definition refers to the fact that it is impossible for organisations to consider all stakeholders, since it may be impossible to identify all stakeholders (Eskerod & Jepsen, 2013) or because stakeholders can be disaggregated to the individual level (Ackermann & Eden, 2011). Mitchell et al. (1997) identify three dimensions that can be used by organisations to prioritise their stakeholders: Power, legitimacy and urgency. The dimension of power refers to the ability of an organisation to carry out its own will despite resistance (Weber, 1947) . Legitimacy, which refers to socially accepted structures of behaviour, and urgency, which is about the time-sensitivity of a stakeholder's claim, are not the focus of this research because these factors are not mentioned as possible causes of stakeholder disappointment by other authors. The dimension of power however is relevant for this research, because Eskerod et al. (2015) see a relation between the presence of powerful stakeholders and the rise of disappointment among other stakeholders.. However, when applying stakeholder inclusiveness, organisations consider all their stakeholders, regardless of their scores in each of these three dimensions. On a more

practical level, this means that organisations consider all stakeholders regardless of their power in relation to the organisation (Eskerod et al., 2015), therefore the organisational focus is not only on those stakeholders that can help or harm the organisation (Freeman, 1984). For a stakeholder to be considered, it means that the organisation carries out efforts to identify the particular stakeholder's needs and expectations and to address these needs, even though not necessarily to accommodate them (Eskerod et al., 2015).

However, according to management literature, organisations are at risk when applying an inclusive stakeholder approach. Applying an inclusive stakeholder approach creates the danger of stakeholder disillusionment (Reed, 2008) or stakeholder disappointment (Eskerod et al., 2015). Disillusionment refers to stakeholders ''*who feel let down when their claims are not realized''* (Reed, 2008: 2420). This definition follows from the concern that for an organisation, including (too) many stakeholders will lead to conflicting wishes and demands, which makes it impossible for the organisation to embrace all of these demands. Stakeholder disappointment, a term used by Eskerod et al. (2015), also refers to the fact that it is impossible for organisations to find solutions for strategic issues that satisfy all the stakeholder's conflicting requirements and wishes. However, Eskerod et al. (2015) also add another cause to the disappointment of stakeholders. They include the fact that engaging stakeholders through two way communication processes leads to *'expectation escalation',* a consequence of the fact that they are actively engaged. This leads to stakeholder disappointment not only because their specific requirements and wishes are not (all) satisfied, but more because their expectations of the outcomes of the process escalated due to the fact that they were actively engaged. Their disappointment therefore focusses not only on the outcome, but more on the process itself. The process of being actively engaged creates high expectations of their input being taken into account in the outcome of the process, and if this is not the case, it creates disappointment and makes them question why they were involved in the first place. This potentially reduces the likelihood for them to be willing to participate or support the organisation again. To obtain more knowledge about stakeholder disappointment, in this master thesis I will further research the feedback processes related to stakeholder disappointment and stakeholder satisfaction.

Stakeholder engagement, in the broad sense, is an important tool for organisations to interact with their stakeholders in order to achieve stakeholder satisfaction. There are many perspectives on stakeholder engagement, which will be further elaborated in the theoretical chapter. However, as we learned from the insights of Reed (2008) and Eskerod et al. (2015), engaging stakeholders also puts an organisation at risk of inducing stakeholder disappointment, while

they were trying to achieve stakeholder satisfaction. Even though Eskerod et al. (2015) give a possible cause of stakeholder disappointment, they do not provide an answer to the question how stakeholders can be engaged to achieve more stakeholder satisfaction, while minimizing or diminishing the risk of stakeholder disappointment. This problem emphasizes the dynamic nature of stakeholder engagement, satisfaction and disappointment, because applying stakeholder inclusiveness can both have desired and undesired effects. System Dynamics (SD) is a very useful way to explain the cohesion between desired and undesired effects, because it gives insight to the set of causal processes that can be responsible for a certain phenomenon (De Gooyert, 2016). These causal processes are in this thesis referred to as feedback processes. For example, Repenning and Sterman (2002) used SD to explain why useful innovations often go unused, a phenomenon that existing theories failed to explain. It shows that SD is especially useful when current theory fails to explain the observed phenomenon (De Gooyert, 2016), in this thesis the phenomenon of stakeholder disappointment. Therefore, the aim of this master thesis is to contribute to stakeholder theory by examining the feedback processes related to stakeholder engagement, satisfaction and disappointment. I will use SD to construct a preliminary Causal Loop Diagram (CLD) of the causal relations between relevant concepts based on existing theory. This preliminary CLD will allow me to gain deeper insight in the feedback processes related to the occurrence of stakeholder disappointment, and what the specific causes and its consequences are. I will validate the structure of the preliminary CLD by performing a structure-confirmation test (Forrester & Senge, 1980; Barlas, 1996) through disconfirmatory interviews with stakeholders who have actually experienced disappointment or satisfaction. This will increase the validity of the CLD, which refers to the process of establishing confidence in the soundness and usefulness of a model (Forrester & Senge, 1980). The implications from this validation process will lead to a validated CLD which will allow me to enhance stakeholder theory and to come up with practical advice for organisations on how to improve stakeholder satisfaction without possibly causing stakeholder disappointment.

1.2: Relevance

The scientific relevance refers to the extent that this research will contribute to the scientific knowledge on the topic of stakeholder theory. In general, system dynamics is useful for making theoretical contributions because it identifies the causal relations responsible for a phenomenon (Sterman, 2000). The theoretical contribution of this research will be to acquire deeper knowledge in the feedback processes between stakeholder engagement, stakeholder satisfaction and stakeholder disappointment and especially to determine the 'tipping point' when

stakeholder engagement leads to stakeholder satisfaction, and when it will lead to disappointment. This is a small, but yet very specific and useful contribution to the knowledge on stakeholder theory, because very little has been written on this specific phenomenon.

Even though the primary objective of this research is theoretical, it still has an important societal relevance. Stakeholder satisfaction is something organisations pursue to ensure its long-term viability, but the occurrence of stakeholder disappointment has been reported as the cause for many failures in practice (e.g. Dalcher, 2009; Jepsen & Eskerod, 2009). Therefore, by improving the knowledge on the 'tipping point' between stakeholder satisfaction and disappointment, I can give practical implications for both organisations and stakeholders who try to involve in strategic debates and create stakeholder satisfaction, with a smaller risk of creating stakeholder disappointment instead.

1.3: Research objective and research questions

The objective of this research consists of both an internal and an external objective. The internal objective refers to the knowledge that needs to be acquired in this research, while the external objective focusses on the contribution I want to make with this knowledge. These two aspects are captured in the following research objective:

The objective of this research is to contribute to the existing knowledge on stakeholder theory by using system dynamics methodology to build a causal loop diagram to discover the feedback processes and determine the tipping point between stakeholder satisfaction and stakeholder disappointment.

To reach this objective, the following research questions need to be answered:

1. *What are the factors that lead from stakeholder inclusiveness and engagement to either stakeholder satisfaction or stakeholder disappointment?*
2. *What are the feedback processes involved in the relations between stakeholder engagement, satisfaction and disappointment?*
3. *How do these feedback processes match the stakeholder experiences in the Eindhoven Airport case?*
4. *Where is the tipping point between creating stakeholder satisfaction and stakeholder disappointment?*

According to Denscombe (2012), the research questions of any research should have a logical order building from one onto the next, and the answers to the research questions should provide

enough knowledge to fulfil the research objective (Verschuren, 2002). The questions stated above first aim to identify the factors that lead to either stakeholder satisfaction or disappointment, before focusing on the feedback processes between these aspects. The third questions aims to validate the findings so far using a practical case. This will provide the knowledge needed to answer the fourth research question and determine where the tipping point is between creating stakeholder satisfaction or disappointment.

1.4 Methodology

The aim of this master thesis is to contribute to stakeholder theory by examining the feedback processes related to stakeholder engagement, satisfaction and disappointment. In the next chapter, I will discuss the theoretical background of this topic and identify the causal relations between these concepts. I will finish this theoretical background by using SD to construct a preliminary Causal Loop Diagram based on these causal relations that are derived from theory. The empirical part of my research will be the validation of this CLD by inquiring a real-life case: Eindhoven Airport and its stakeholders. Eindhoven Airport NV, the management of the airport, has stated in its annual report that they apply an inclusive stakeholder approach (Eindhoven Airport NV, 2018). This makes it a critical case for this research, because many stakeholders are involved, and based on the wide variety of available news articles, there are both satisfied and dissatisfied stakeholders. Therefore, this case can help me to acquire the knowledge I need to extend the theory (Yin, 2014). There is a range of tests available to validate SD models (Barlas, 1996), and the confidence in a model will gradually accumulate as it passes more of these tests (Forrester & Senge, 1980). I will perform a structure-confirmation test, which is a direct structure validity test with the aim of increasing confidence in the structure of the model (Barlas, 1996). I will select stakeholders of Eindhoven Airport and approach them for interviews that will be structured as disconfirmatory interviews (Andersen et al., 2012) where I will one-by-one discuss the relations in the model with the participants to disconfirm or confirm their existence. These interviews will be individual, because validation through disconfirmatory interviews benefits from having as many individual points of view as possible (Andersen et al., 2012). I will interview seven different stakeholders with opposing interests regarding Eindhoven Airport. Since this sample is relatively small, I will use the richness of this data by summarizing each participants' comments on every relation in the model. This will result in a table with two axis, where one axis represents the different participants and the other the relations discussed during the interview. This table will allow me to validate each structural relationship in the model and to increase the model validity. I will combine this empirical data

with the analysis of several documents, such as the Eindhoven Airport NV annual report and the coalition agreement of the municipality of Eindhoven, especially the part regarding Eindhoven Airport. This analysis allows me to triangulate between different sources of data. Furthermore, during the interviews, potential criticism on the model structure can expressed that might be reason for me to improve the preliminary CLD or to further investigate particular structural elements. I will elaborate on this in the discussion later on in this thesis.

1.5 Outline of the Thesis

In the next chapter I will discuss the theoretical background of stakeholder theory and further elaborate on stakeholder satisfaction and disappointment. The final product of this chapter will be the preliminary CLD showing the feedback processes related to these concepts. In chapter 3 I will elaborate on the methodological aspects of this research regarding the data collection and analysis. In chapter 4 I will analyse the data I have gathered by one-by-one discussing the relations in the model and confirming or disconfirming their existence based on the experiences of the interview participants. Finally, in chapter 5 I will formulate a conclusion to the research questions and present the validated CLD model, before I discuss the implications and limitations of my research.

2. Theoretical background

In the first chapter, I have introduced stakeholder theory in general and in some more detail the concepts of stakeholder satisfaction and disappointment. Also, I have elaborated on the knowledge gap my research aims to fill regarding the feedback processes related to stakeholder disappointment and satisfaction. In this chapter, I will go into depth with the theoretical background of this research, starting with what a stakeholder exactly is, the process of stakeholder engagement itself and moving onto stakeholder disappointment and satisfaction. During the course of this chapter, I will present theoretical propositions that will underly the relations in the preliminary CLD, which will be the final product of this chapter and will be the starting point for the validation process that will be explained in the next chapter.

2.1 From stockholders to stakeholders

Since stakeholders are such an important concept in this research, I will first determine what a stakeholder actually is according to theory. The idea of a stakeholder has not always been widely known and accepted, but it has evolved from the concept of stockholders. This shift from stockholders to stakeholders started in 1983, when Freeman and Reed introduced a new perspective on corporate governance. Freeman and Reed (1983) noticed that in the previous years, the world view of managers had changed, and thereby the organisational life was changing. Their aim was to explain one of these changes by introducing a new concept: the stakeholder. More precisely, Freeman and Reed (1983) noticed a shift in practice of manager's perspective from a stockholder approach to a stakeholder approach. A stockholder refers to the holder of an organisation's equity, so its owner(s) or shareholder(s). Until then, there was a long tradition of stockholders having a privileged place in organisations (Freeman & Reed, 1983). The stockholder approach therefore refers to the idea that it is an organisations prime objective to pay dividends to its owners. However, according to the stakeholder approach, there are other groups whom the organisation is responsible for: the stakeholders, people or groups who have a stake in the actions of an organisation (Freeman & Reed, 1983). In the stakeholder literature, a distinction has been made between the *broad* and the *narrow* view on stakeholders. This distinction has important implications on how organisations manage their stakeholders in practice. The narrow view originates from the Resource Dependency Theory by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), who constructed a model mapping the interaction between organisation and environment based on the relative dependence on resources that are provided by stakeholders. Their position is that organisations can only survive if they effectively manage the demands of interest groups upon which the organisation depends for resources (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978).

According to Freeman (1984) the narrow view includes groups who are vital to the survival and success of the organisation. The broad view however includes not only stakeholders to whom the organisation is dependent, but also stakeholders the organisation is less depending on. Freeman & Reed (1983) define those stakeholders as groups *''without whose support the organisation would seize to exist''* (Freeman & Reed, 1983:2) and include at least shareholders, employees, customers, suppliers, financers and the community. Freeman (1984) uses a broad definition of stakeholders as *''any group or individual who can affect, or is affected by, the achievement of an organisations objectives''* (Freeman, 1984:46), a definition that is still widely accepted in stakeholder literature and is seen as the more moral and responsible definition (Greenwood, 2007). These two definitions emphasize the two-way dependency between organisations and stakeholders, since the stakeholders are influenced by the organisation but they have the power to help or harm the organisation by giving or withdrawing their support (Freeman, 1984). Kaler (2002) looks at stakeholders from a business ethics perspective and divides them into two groups: *claimers* and *influencers*. Claimers are those stakeholders that have a claim on the organisation but have little influence, for instance residents living near an organisation's production site. Influencers are those actors that can influence the organisation, for instance the government or a supplier the organisation is heavily dependent on for its resources. Kaler (2002) then argues that from a business ethics perspective, organisations should pay attention first to those stakeholders who have a morally legitimate claim. This is in line with the broad view of stakeholders, and altogether this forms the starting point for stakeholder engagement and especially stakeholder inclusiveness, two concepts that will be elaborated in the next paragraph.

2.2 Stakeholder engagement and inclusiveness

Stakeholder theory has moved into the mainstream of management thinking (Freeman et al., 2010), and Freeman, Kujala and Sachs (2017) recognise an increasing need to explore how businesses actually engage their stakeholders. Therefore, Freeman et al. (2017) developed the idea that stakeholder management could more appropriately be called stakeholder engagement. Stakeholder engagement is defined by Greenwood (2007) as *''the practices an organisation undertakes to involve stakeholders in a positive manner''* (Greenwood, 2007:315), a definition that I will follow in this research. Greenwood (2007) relates this *positive manner* to the corporate responsibility of an organisation, and especially the efforts of an organisation to act in the interests of legitimate stakeholders. The *involvement* of stakeholders can take many forms, but the principle idea is that the involvement is mutually beneficial for both organisation

and stakeholder, because it marks a person or group as stakeholder and merits them additional consideration over any other human being (Philips, 1997). There are numerous ways to involve different groups of stakeholders, for instance employees might be involved through extensive HRM practices while customers can be included through high-quality customer service. The different ways of involving stakeholders are however beyond the scope of this research. For this research, I will define stakeholder involvement practices as the involvement of stakeholders in decision-making and governance processes (Van Buren III, 2001). More relevant is the proposition that stakeholder engagement refers to practices to involve stakeholders (Greenwood, 2007), and therefore *more* stakeholder engagement leads to *more* practices to involve stakeholders. This is shown in the proposition below:

Stakeholder ————— + ————→ **Practices to involve**
engagement   **stakeholders**
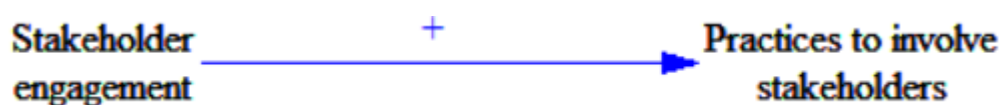
Proposition 1 based on Greenwood (2007)

Now that it is clear what stakeholder engagement is, the question arises what determines the degree of stakeholder engagement organisations apply. Eskerod et al. (2015) acknowledge that in today's organisations strategic debates are complex because of the presence of numerous stakeholders each with specific requirements, wishes, concerns and expectations regarding the content, process and outcomes of the strategic debate. To understand the wishes of all stakeholders, Eskerod et al. (2015) propose to apply an inclusive stakeholder approach: Stakeholder inclusiveness. In general, stakeholder inclusiveness refers to the embracement of a broad range of stakeholders (Eskerod et al., 2015). More formally, in this thesis stakeholder inclusiveness is defined as *''the extent to which (in principle) all stakeholders are considered by the focal organisation''* (Eskerod et al., 2015:43). Considered, in this context, refers to the efforts carried out by an organisation to identify the particular stakeholder's needs and expectations, even though not necessarily to accommodate them (Eskerod et al., 2015). This can be linked to the practices an organisation carries out to involve stakeholders, as discussed in the previous paragraph. The 'in principle' part of the definition above regards to the impossibility to identify all stakeholders, either because the organisation is not aware of them (Eskerod & Jepsen, 2013) or because each stakeholder group can be disaggregated to the individual level (Ackermann & Eden, 2011). Altogether, this leads to the following proposition:

Proposition 2 based on Eskerod et al. (2015)

This proposition implies that when organisations include more stakeholders, their stakeholder engagement will grow, and thereby their practices to involve (or consider, according to Eskerod et al., 2015) stakeholders will grow, as shown in proposition 1. Note that the term 'stakeholder inclusiveness' has been reframed to 'inclusive stakeholder approach', because the degree to which an inclusive stakeholder approach is applied can vary. Therefore, for the purpose of the model the variable 'inclusive stakeholder approach' is used, because in principle, the value of this variable could in- or decrease if an organisation includes more stakeholders.

2.3 Stakeholder satisfaction

The goal organisations try to achieve by engaging their stakeholders through active involvement is to create stakeholder satisfaction. This can be achieved when there is congruence between the actions of an organisation and the ethical societal claims, which refers to the expectations of society based on legitimate claims from constituencies with which the organisation interacts. (Berrone et al., 2007). This means that stakeholders become satisfied when their claims on an organisation are met by the actions of the organisation. Therefore, in this thesis stakeholder satisfaction is defined as *''the extent to which the stakeholder's claims are met by the organisation's actions''* (Berrone et al., 2007:37). This relation between stakeholder satisfaction based on their claims being met by the organisation is shown in proposition 3.

Proposition 3 based on Berrone, Surroca and Tribó, (2007)

However, stakeholder satisfaction is not only about meeting their claims. Eskerod et al. (2015) argue that stakeholders can also feel satisfied by being actively engaged by the organisation. In their case study, Eskerod et al. (2015) found out that applying an inclusive stakeholder approach, will cause the stakeholders to feel more satisfied because of the fact that they are considered to be important by the organisation. This satisfaction comes not directly from the

organisation applying an inclusive stakeholder approach, but because this approach leads to an increase in practices to involve stakeholders. This effect is shown in the third proposition:

Practices to involve stakeholders ——————— + ——————→ Stakeholder satisfaction

Proposition 4 based on Eskerod et al. (2015)

Furthermore, as I have stressed in the introduction of this thesis, the long-term viability and success of a firm depends on its ability to create stakeholder satisfaction on the long run (McVea & Freeman, 2005; Berrone, Surroca & Tribó, 2007), because the support of stakeholders is needed for organisational survival and success. Even though not explicitly expressed in literature, this implies that the support of stakeholders is dependent on their level of satisfaction. Therefore, I propose that stakeholder satisfaction positively influences the (future) stakeholder support. (proposition 5). Also, as argued by McVea and Freeman (2005) and Berrone et al. (2007), the long-term success of the firm is dependent on its stakeholder support (proposition 6).

Stakeholder satisfaction ——————— + ——————→ Stakeholder support

Proposition 5

Stakeholder support ——————— + ——————→ Long term success of an organisation

Proposition 6 based on Freeman and McVea (2005) and Berrone, Surroca and Tribó, (2007)

2.4 Stakeholder disappointment

In the previous paragraph, I stated that organisations try to create stakeholder satisfaction by engaging them in their decision-making and governance processes. Unfortunately, doing so bears the risk of creating an undesired effect: stakeholder disappointment. In this paragraph, I will further explain this concept and its causes.

Eskerod et al. (2015) say that stakeholder disappointment is reported as a root problem that causes many unsuccessful projects (e.g. Dalcher, 2009; Jepsen & Eskerod, 2009). Meanwhile, Reed (2008) noticed that disillusionment has grown amongst stakeholders who feel let down by an organisation. For this research, I will consider these two concepts together under the name of stakeholder disappointment. Even though both Eskerod et al. (2015) and Reed (2008) do not

formally define stakeholder disappointment, they do explain what a d*isappointed s*takeholder is. Eskerod et al. (2015) say that a disappointed stakeholder is someone who's wishes and requirements are not embraced by an organisation, while Reed (2008), in line with this, says that a disappointed stakeholder is someone who feels let down when his claims are not realised. Therefore, in this thesis I define stakeholder disappointment as the feeling a stakeholder experiences when his claims are not realised by an organisation.

Eskerod et al. (2015) and Reed (2008) identify several possible causes that can lead, at least partially, to stakeholder disappointment. The first reason both articles identify is that by applying stakeholder inclusiveness, the number of conflicting requirements and wishes (Eskerod et al., 2015) or stakeholder claims (Reed, 2008) rises, making it impossible for an organisation to meet all these conflicting claims (Reed, 2008; Eskerod et al., 2015). These two causes are captured in the following two propositions: A more inclusive stakeholder approach will lead to more conflicting stakeholder claims (proposition 7) and more conflicting stakeholder claims will lower the organisational ability meet all stakeholder claims.

Inclusive stakeholder approach ———— + ————▶ Conflicting stakeholder claims
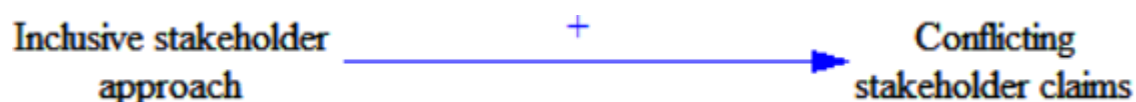
Proposition 7 based on Eskerod et al. (2015)

Conflicting stakeholder claims ———— - ————▶ Organisational ability to meet all stakeholder claims

Proposition 8 based on Eskerod et al. (2015) and Reed (2008)

These two effects summarise that applying a more inclusive stakeholder approach will lead to more conflicting stakeholder claims, reducing the ability of an organisation to meet all stakeholder claims. Furthermore, as Eskerod et al. (2015) and Reed (2008) recognise, the *inability* of an organisation to meet all stakeholder claims is a cause for stakeholder disappointment. This effect is summarised in the following proposition:

Organisational ability to meet all stakeholder claims ———— - ————▶ Stakeholder disappointment

Proposition 9 based on Eskerod et al. (2015) and Reed (2008)

Apart from the rise in conflicting stakeholder claims and consequently the inability of an organisation to meet all stakeholder claims, Eskerod et al. (2015) in their research also

discovered some other possible causes for stakeholder disappointment. One is that when an organisation actively engages their stakeholders, their practices to involve stakeholders increase which causes the expectations of stakeholders to escalate (Eskerod et al., 2015). Because of their engagement stakeholders expect to be taken into account seriously by the organisation when it comes to strategic decisions, and if many stakeholders experience this escalation of expectations it is inevitable that at least some will be disappointed. This effect is shown in proposition 10 and 11:

Practices to involve stakeholders ——— + ——→ Stakeholder expectations

Proposition 10 based on Eskerod et al. (2015)

Stakeholder expectations ——— + ——→ Stakeholder disappointment

Proposition 11 based on Eskerod et al. (2015)

Reed (2008) adds to this cause of stakeholder disappointment that it are also deficiencies in the engagement process that are most commonly blamed for causing stakeholder disappointment. This 'process' consists of multiple aspects, some of which are relevant considering Eskerod et al. (2015)'s point regarding the escalation of stakeholder expectations. Reed (2008) argues that when organisations involve stakeholders, the objectives of the process should be clear to align expectations. Also, the process of involvement should be guided by a skilled facilitator to ensure balanced discussions. Therefore, I will introduce the variable 'quality of involvement process', meaning the extent to which an organisation adequately organises the involvement process with clear objectives and skilled facilitation. If this process is set up appropriately, it balances the increase of stakeholder expectations that raised from them being involved in the first place, and it has a positive effect on the satisfaction stakeholders derive. This is summarised in the following propositions:

Quality of involvement process ——— - ——→ Stakeholder expectations

Proposition 12 based on Reed (2008)

Quality of involvement process → + → Stakeholder satisfaction

Proposition 13 based on Reed (2008)

To finalise, Eskerod et al. (2015) bring in one more cause of stakeholder disappointment. Earlier in this chapter I described how, according to Mitchell et al. (1997), the power of a stakeholder is one of the dimensions via which organisations determine the salience of a stakeholder. Mitchel et al. (1997) have provided a framework for organisations to assist in the identification and prioritisation of stakeholders based on their salience. This framework helps organisations to identify their most relevant stakeholders and to engage those stakeholders that are most salient to the organisation. Mitchel et al. (1997) provide dimensions that altogether determine the salience of a stakeholder: Power, legitimacy and urgency. Urgency refers to the time-sensitivity of a stakeholder's claim, more precisely to the degree that a delay in attending the claim by the organisation is unacceptable to the stakeholder. The legitimacy of a stakeholder refers to his claims being socially accepted, and meeting the moral standards of accepted behaviour. The final, and in the context of this research most relevant dimension is the dimension of power. The definition of power is based on the classic idea of Weber (1947), who sees power as the ability of one actor in a relationship to carry out his own will despite resistance. More in the context of a stakeholder-organisation relationship, Salancik and Pfeffer (1974) describe power as *''the ability of those who possess power to bring about the outcomes they desire''* (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1974:3). This makes power an important factor in the process of stakeholder engagement. In this thesis, a powerful stakeholder is defined as a stakeholder that has the ability to bring about the outcomes they desire.

When organisations apply an inclusive stakeholder approach, an imbalance of power can emerge between the different stakeholders that are included. This can cause organisations to lose focus on those stakeholders that possess the most critical resources (Eskerod et al., 2015). In their case study, Eskerod et al. (2015) found out that this loss of focus will inevitably lead to a re-focus of the organisation's attention to these powerful stakeholders later in the process, once the organisation realises that it needs the support of those stakeholders possessing the most critical resources. This will cause the less powerful stakeholders to feel disappointed because they were actively involved at first, but later were ignored by the organisation when their attention refocused to the powerful stakeholders. Reed (2008) explains this phenomenon by elaborating that the involvement of previously marginalised (less powerful) stakeholders can have negative interactions with the existing power structures between stakeholders (Kothari,

2001), because existing power structures can be reinforced by the group dynamics in the involvement process, discouraging the perspective of the less powerful stakeholders to be expressed (Nelson & Wright, 2005). This will lead to solutions that are dissatisfying for the less powerful stakeholders, which will leave them disappointed. These power-based causes of stakeholder disappointment are summarised in the following propositions: A more inclusive stakeholder approach will lead to a loss of focus on critical stakeholders (proposition 14), and this loss of focus on critical stakeholders will lead to more stakeholder disappointment (proposition 15).

Inclusive stakeholder approach ———— - ———→ Focus on critical stakeholders

Proposition 14 based on Eskerod et al. (2015)

Focus on critical stakeholders ———— - ———→ Stakeholder disappointment

Proposition 15 based on Reed (2008)

An important side note regarding proposition 14 and 15 is that, for an organisation to focus on critical stakeholders does not mean only to focus on stakeholders possessing critical resources and disregarding less critical and therefore less powerful stakeholders. A focus on critical stakeholders means that an organisation, when including many stakeholders, keeps in mind which stakeholder's support is *at least* necessary to stay viable.

Now that I have discussed the possible causes of stakeholder disappointment, it is time to see how stakeholder disappointment itself influences other factors, in order to reveal the feedback processes that are related to it. According to Reed (2008), *''consultation fatigue may develop as stakeholders are increasingly asked to take part in participatory processes where they perceive that their involvement gains them little reward or capacity to influence the decisions that affect them''* (Reed, 2008:2420). This means that stakeholders who are disappointed develop a *consultation fatigue,* meaning they are not likely to support the organisation in the future, and thereby limiting the extent to which the organisation can apply an inclusive stakeholder approach. Based on this, I present the next two propositions: More stakeholder disappointment will lead to a lower level of stakeholder support (proposition 16) while stakeholder support has a positive relation with the degree to which an organisation can apply an inclusive stakeholder approach (proposition 17).

Stakeholder
disappointment ——————————— ▶ Stakeholder
support

Proposition 16 based on Reed (2008)

Stakeholder
support ——————————— ▶ Inclusive stakeholder
approach

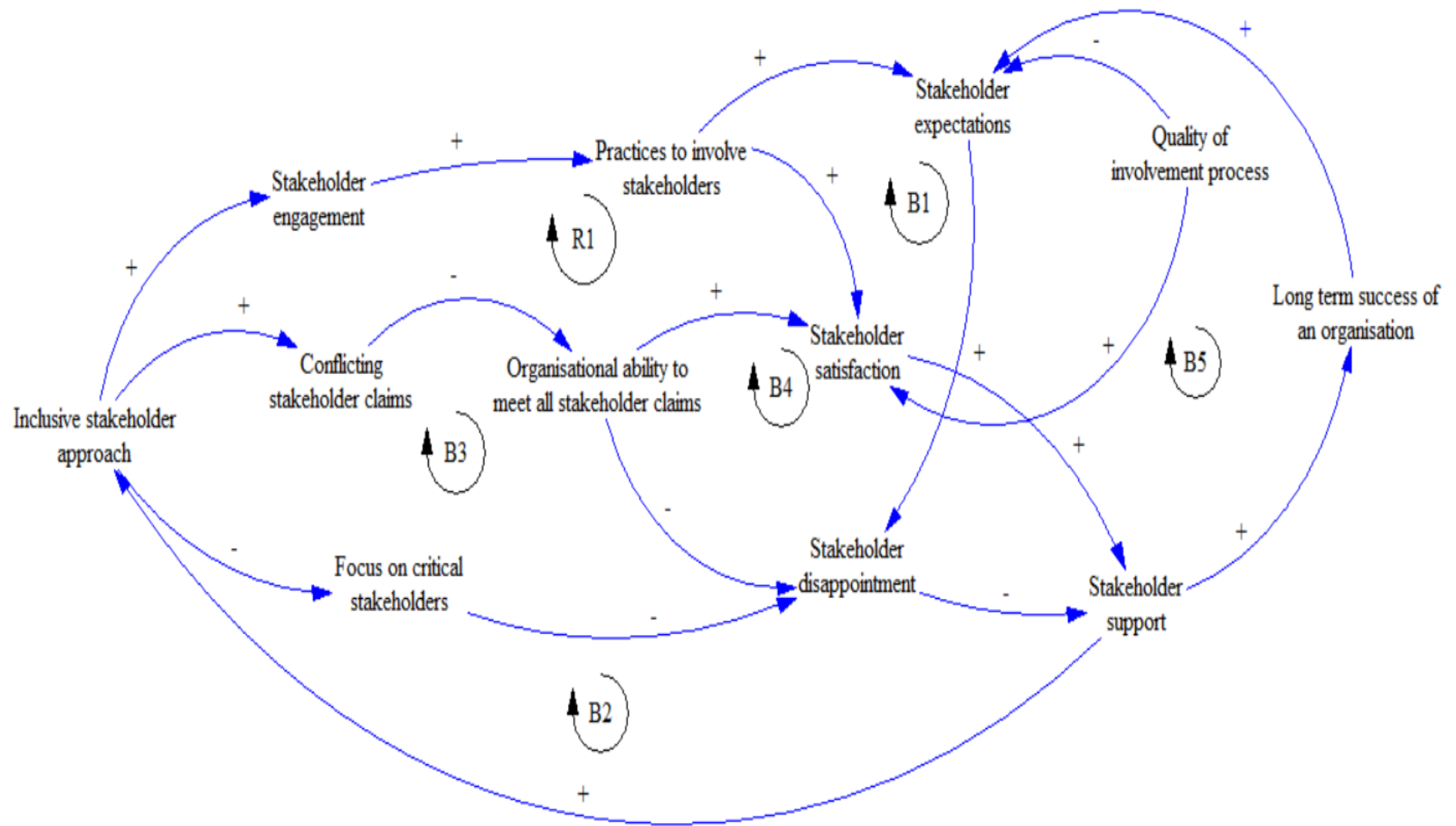*Proposition 17 based on Reed (2008)*

The final proposition that I will present in this chapter can only partially be derived from theory, but however it could play an vital role in the expectations of stakeholders and therefore stakeholder satisfaction and disappointment. According to Waddock and Graves (1997), there is a positive relationship between the prior financial performance of an organisation and the Corporate Social Performance (CSP). CSP is a multidimensional construct, and it involves any social responsible actions such as air pollution control, fair treatment of employees and community relations. Earlier I argued that, based on Freeman & Mcvea (2001), the long term success of an organisation is dependent on the support of stakeholders. In the context of this research and based on Waddock and Graves (1997) this could mean that the long term success of an organisation, at least the financial success, will allow the organisation to invest more into its CSP. Therefore, I will add the proposition to the model that more long term success of an organisation leads to more stakeholder expectations, because more financial resources will be available to meet the claims of different stakeholders.

Long term success of
an organisation ——————————— ▶ Stakeholder
expectations

Proposition 18 based on Waddock and Graves (1997)

2.5 Causal Loop Diagram

In this final paragraph of the chapter, I will process all the propositions derived from theory to a preliminary Causal Loop Diagram. The causal aspect refers to the cause-and-effect relationships that are shown in the CLD, and a loop refers to a closed chain of causes and effects that creates feedback (Ford, 2010), therefore this is called a feedback loop. There are two kinds of feedback loops: Positive and negative. A positive, or reinforcing loop tends to reinforce or amplify whatever is happening in the system (Sterman, 2001), while a negative, or balancing feedback loop counteracts this effect and opposes change (Sterman, 2001). The preliminary CLD representing all propositions described in this chapter is shown on the next page.
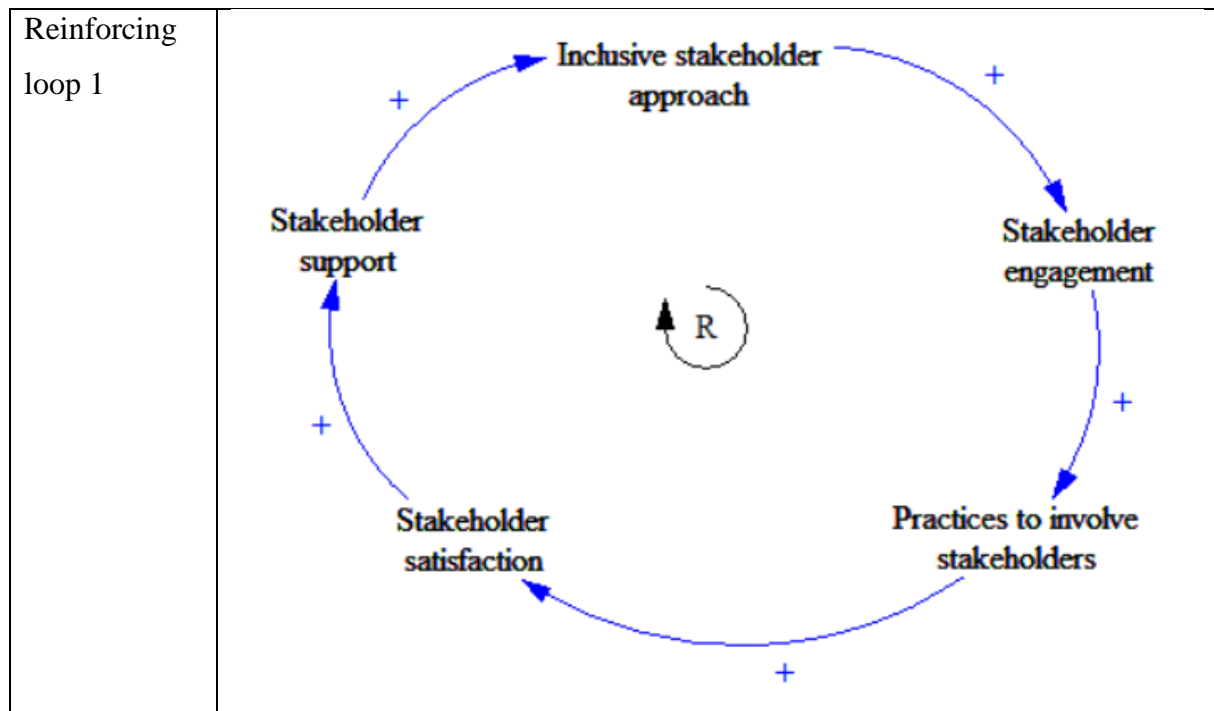
Stakeholder expectations

Quality of involvement process

Practices to involve stakeholders

Stakeholder engagement

B1

R1

Long term success of an organisation

Inclusive stakeholder approach

Conflicting stakeholder claims

Organisational ability to meet all stakeholder claims

Stakeholder satisfaction

B4

B5

B3

Focus on critical stakeholders

Stakeholder disappointment

Stakeholder support

B2

Causal Loop Diagram 1: preliminary model

All the relations and their theoretical foundation are summarised in the table below:

Number	From	To	Polarity	Based on
1	Stakeholder engagement	Practices to involve stakeholders	Positive	Greenwood (2007)
2	Inclusive stakeholder approach	Stakeholder engagement	Positive	Eskerod et al. (2015)
3	Organisational ability to meet all stakeholder claims	Stakeholder satisfaction	Positive	Berrone, Surroca & Tribó (2007)
4	Practices to involve stakeholders	Stakeholder satisfaction	Positive	Eskerod et al. (2015)
5	Stakeholder satisfaction	stakeholder support	Positive	-
6	Stakeholder support	Long term success of an organisation	Positive	Freeman & McVea (2005), Berrone, Surroca & Tribó (2007)
7	Inclusive stakeholder approach	Conflicting stakeholder claims	Positive	Eskerod et al. (2015)
8	Conflicting stakeholder claims	Organisational ability to meet all stakeholder claims	Negative	Eskerod et al. (2015), Reed (2008)
9	Organisational ability to meet all stakeholder claims	Stakeholder disappointment	Negative	Eskerod et al. (2015), Reed (2008)
10	Practices to involve stakeholders	Stakeholder expectations	Positive	Eskerod et al. (2015)
11	Stakeholder expectations	Stakeholder disappointment	Positive	Eskerod et al. (2015)
12	Quality of involvement process	Stakeholder expectations	Negative	Reed (2008)
13	Quality of involvement process	Stakeholder satisfaction	Positive	Reed (2008)
14	Inclusive stakeholder approach	Focus on critical stakeholders	Negative	Eskerod et al. (2015)
15	Focus on critical stakeholders	Stakeholder disappointment	Negative	Reed (2008)
16	Stakeholder disappointment	Stakeholder support	Negative	Reed (2008)
17	Stakeholder support	Inclusive stakeholder approach	Positive	Reed (2008)
18	Long term success of an organisation	Stakeholder expectations	Positive	Waddock & Graves (1997)

Table 1: relations in the Causal Loop Diagram

CLD 1 shows that there are six feedback loops present: one reinforcing and five balancing loops. On the following page I will briefly discuss these six feedback loops and how their feedback structure influence the structure of the model.

Reinforcing loop 1	

This loop has a reinforcing effect because all the relations between variables are positive, meaning that a more inclusive stakeholder approach will lead to more stakeholder engagement, and so on. In the end, this will lead to more stakeholder support, which will allow the organisation to apply an even more inclusive stakeholder approach. Also, the increased stakeholder support will have a positive influence on the long term success of an organisation.
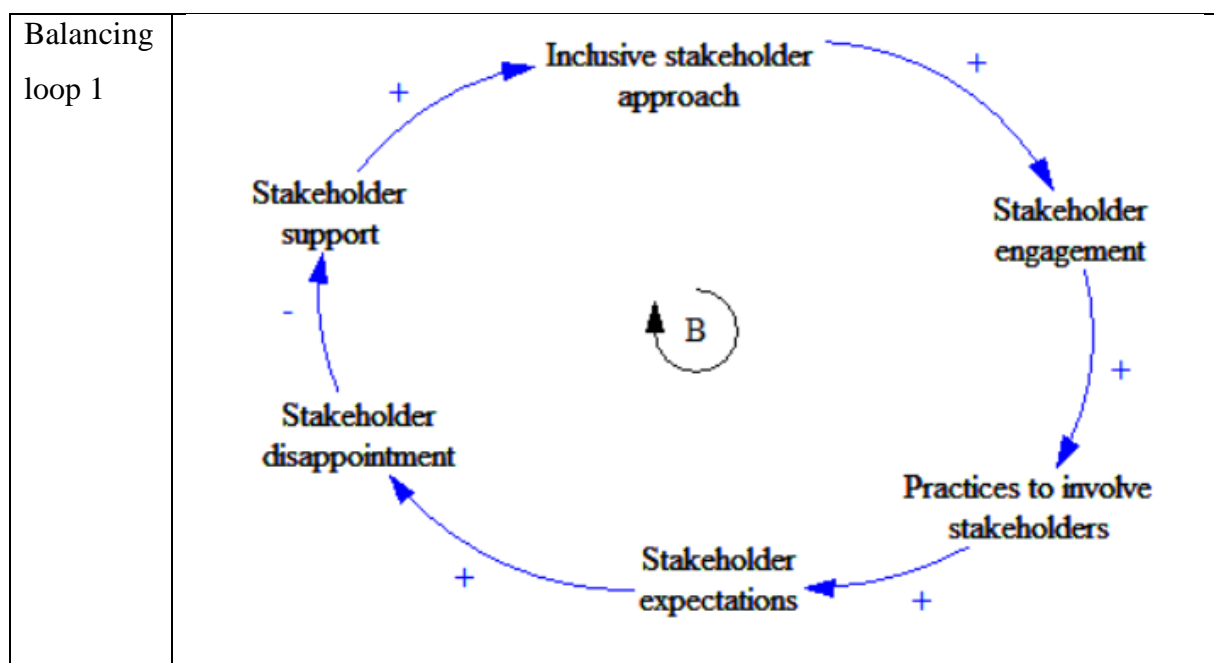
| Balancing loop 1	

This loop has a balancing effect, because there is one negative relation in this feedback loop: An increase in stakeholder disappointment leads to a decrease in stakeholder support. This will

lower the extent to which the organisation can apply an inclusive stakeholder approach, and it also has negative impact on the long term success of an organisation.

| Balancing loop 2	
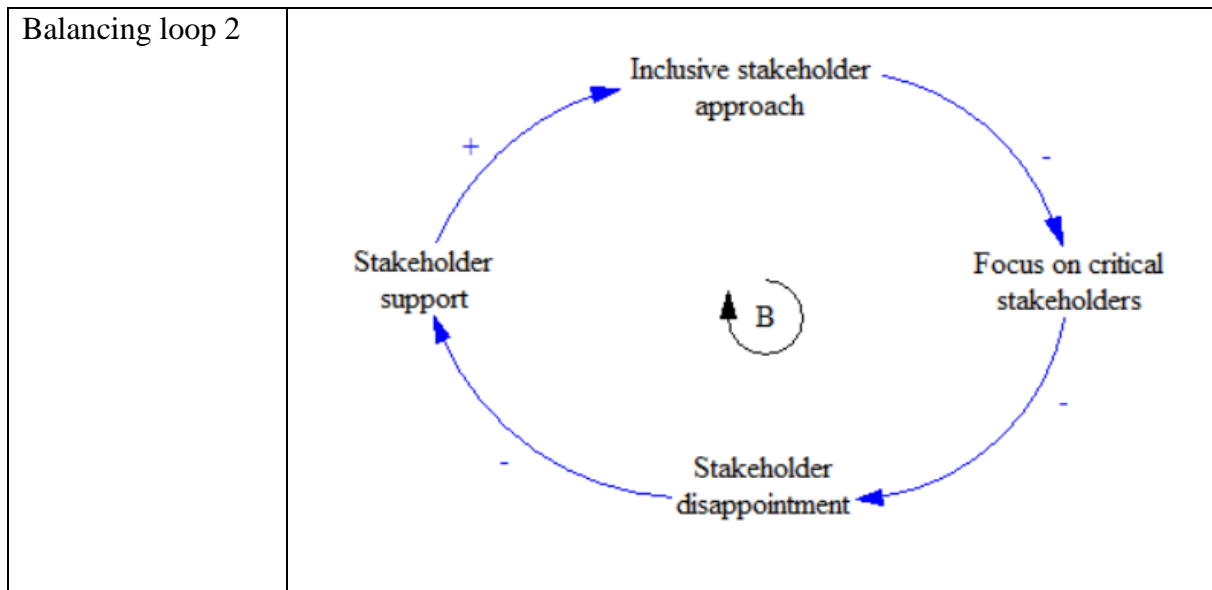
Here, applying an inclusive stakeholder approach will cause a loss of focus on critical stakeholders, which will increase stakeholder disappointment. Therefore, stakeholder support will drop and the ability to apply an inclusive stakeholder will decrease.

Balancing loop 3	
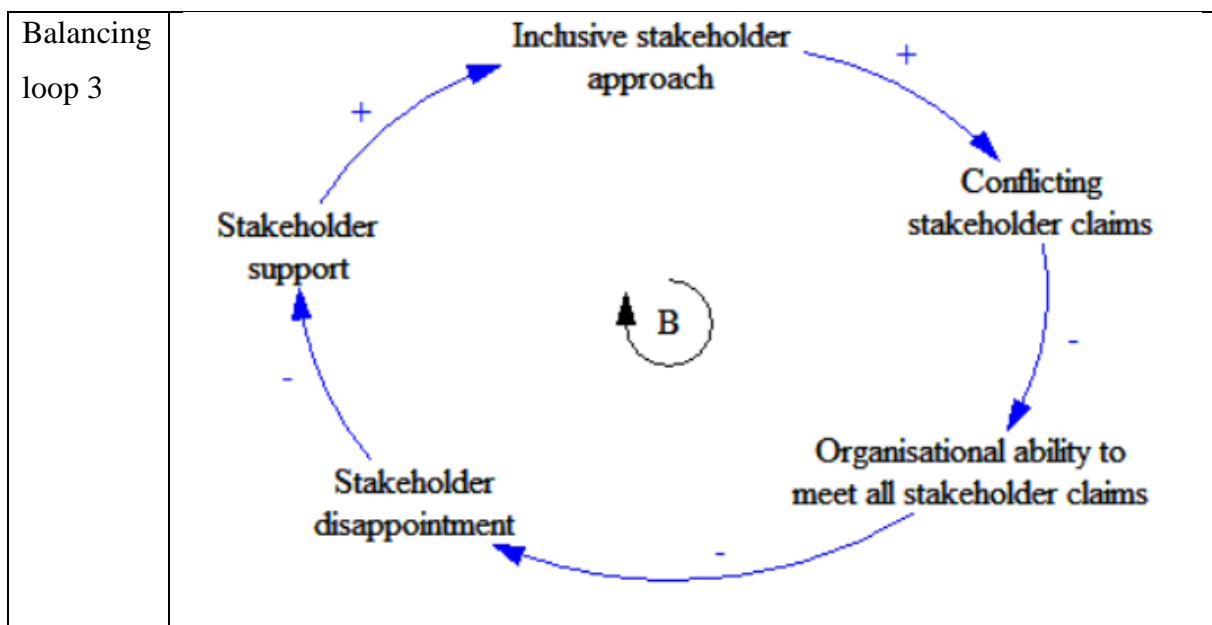
In this loop, the inclusion of more stakeholders will lead to more conflicting stakeholder claims. Therefore, the organisational ability to meet all these claims will drop, leading to more stakeholder disappointment and lower stakeholder support. Therefore, the ability to apply an inclusive stakeholder approach drops.
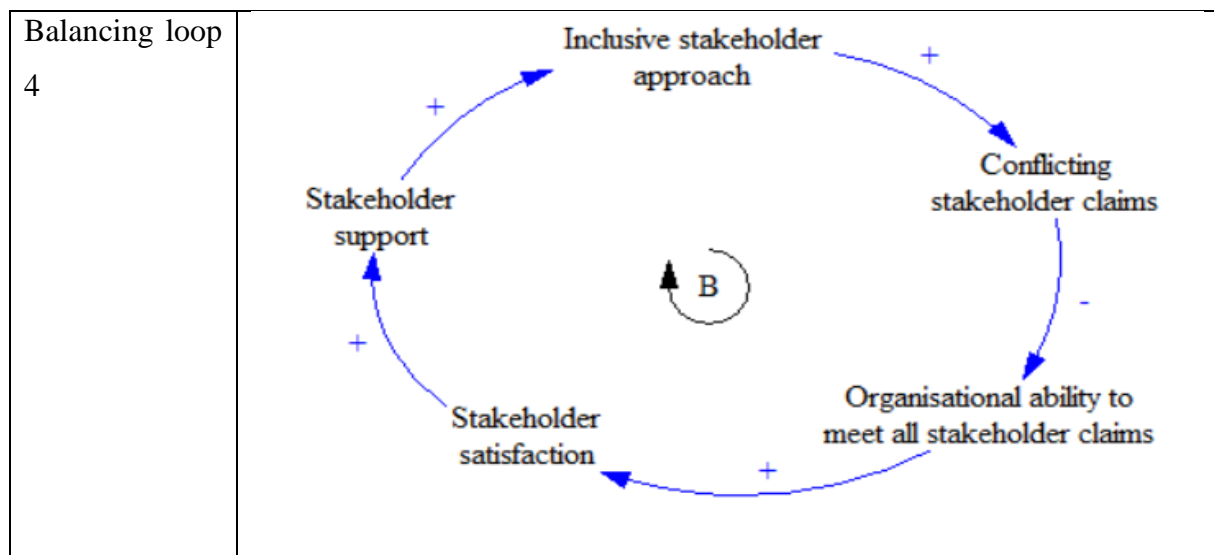
| Balancing loop 4 | |

The structure of this loop is similar to structure of balancing loop 3, only here the decrease in the organisational ability to meet all stakeholder claims will lead to a lower stakeholder satisfaction. This will cause a lower stakeholder support, and a lower ability for the organisation to apply a inclusive stakeholder approach.

| Balancing loop 5 | |
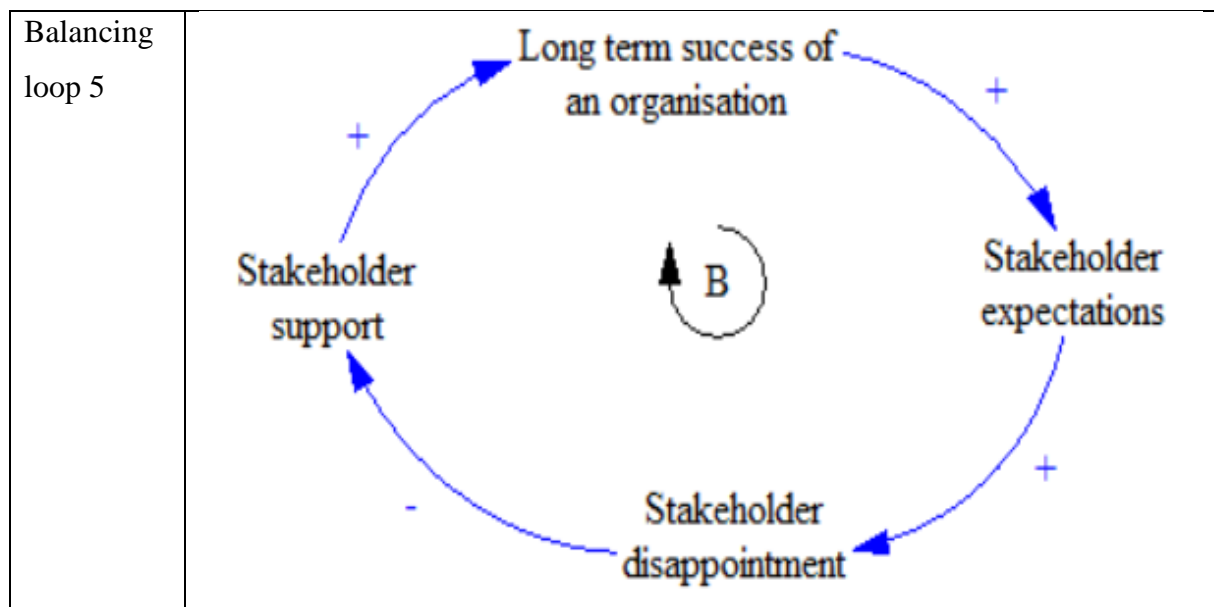
This feedback loop includes the long term success of an organisation. The more long term success an organisation has, the higher the expectations of stakeholder will get. This will lead more to stakeholder disappointment and a lower stakeholder support. This will lower the long term success of the organisation, emphasizing the balancing effect of this feedback loop.

These feedback loops provide insight into possible tipping points between stakeholder satisfaction and disappointment. In the next chapter, I will explain how I will validate this theory-based model empirically to increase its validity.

3. Methodology

In this chapter I will elaborate on the research methodology of this thesis. I will start by explaining how System Dynamics in general can be used to contribute to theory, and how this is relevant for this research. Next I will explain why model validity is important and how I will try to increase the validity of the preliminary CLD constructed in the previous chapter. Following that, the methodological aspects of this research regarding the case selection and data collection will be covered, and I will finish with elaborating on the research ethics.

3.1 SD as method for theory building

De Gooyert (2016) describes several ways how System Dynamics (SD) can be used to contribute to theory. He provides some ways which have proven to be successful for contributing to theory, but also provides some opportunities for future research. In his literature review, De Gooyert (2016) discovered several studies that were successful in delivering a theoretical contribution, even though they were *only* using qualitative system dynamics, such as a Causal Loop Diagram (CLD) or a Stock and Flow Diagram (SFD) without simulation runs. According to Ragin (1994), qualitative approaches are more useful for developing new theoretical ideas through obtaining new, in-depth information on a certain case (Ragin,1994:84), while quantitative research is more useful for identifying the general patterns of a phenomenon across many cases, and making predictions about future behaviours (Ragin, 1994:133). This is in line with the main purposes of qualitative SD De Gooyert (2016) identified in his literature review. He found qualitative SD models, mainly CLD's, to be useful for the purpose of *exploration,* that is, where a theory is build up from the ground using SD to map the causal relations. Also, qualitative SD is successfully being used for e*xplanation,* in situations where the current theories are failing to explain the observed phenomenon. In these situations, qualitative SD can be used to discover feedback processes or missing causal relations to explain a certain phenomenon. Finally, in some articles qualitative SD approaches are used to *critique* existing theories by revealing inconsistencies in theory, or by identifying a gap in the current theoretical knowledge on a subject.

In my research I will provide a CLD, which is a product of qualitative SD, to contribute to the existing stakeholder theory by means of *critique* and *explanation.* The critique of my research focusses on the inconsistency in the existing theory, where it is stated that stakeholder engagement and especially stakeholder inclusiveness will lead to higher stakeholder satisfaction (Eskerod et al., 2015) while it can also cause stakeholder disappointment (Eskerod

et al., 2015; Reed, 2008). This implies that, under some conditions, the existing theory is inconsistent and can produce different outcomes. To get to know what these conditions are, the purpose of explanation of this research is relevant, since the current theory is failing to explain this phenomenon of stakeholder disappointment. I will explain the observed phenomenon by showing how feedback processes can lead to stakeholder disappointment instead of satisfaction. This resulted in the preliminary CLD that I presented in the previous chapter, showing these feedback processes. I will validate the preliminary CLD by obtaining in depth knowledge on the experiences of stakeholders from Eindhoven Airport and the Eindhoven Airport case, which will be introduced later in the chapter. This will allow me to develop new theoretical ideas on the causes of the phenomenon of stakeholder disappointment (Ragin, 1994).

3.2 Model validity

In the previous chapter I have developed the preliminary CLD showing the causal relations and feedback processes involved with stakeholder engagement, satisfaction and disappointment. However, this model is based purely on existing literature and its relations are not validated based upon a real life situation and therefore it is lacking confidence. Confidence in a SD model can be increased by a wide variety of tests that include tests of model structure and model behaviour (Forrester & Senge, 1980). There is no single test that truly validates the model, rather the process of validation gradually accumulates confidence in the model as it passes more validation tests (Forrester & Senge, 1980). Barlas (1996) adds to this that it is impossible to define model validity divorced from its purpose, meaning that confidence in a model can only be increased trough validation tests that keep in mind the purpose of the model itself.

Since the preliminary CLD I have developed in the previous chapter is based on theory, the empirical aspect of this research will focus on the validation of the model and increasing confidence. According to Forrester and Senge (1980), confidence in a model is increased as new points of correspondence between the model and empirical reality are identified. Empirical reality, in the context of model validation, refers to information derived from or guided by experience or experiment (Forrester & Senge, 1980). For this research it means that I will collect data about a diversity of stakeholder experiences in the Eindhoven Airport case. To validate my theory-based CLD, I need to include persons in the validation process that have not been involved in constructing the model (Forrester & Senge, 1980). To be more precise, I will investigate the Eindhoven Airport case, because Eindhoven Airport is an organisation that has to deal with many stakeholders with conflicting stakes and claims. Why I have selected this case and how I will collect the data will be elaborated in paragraph 3.4 and 3.5.

Barlas (1996) designed a framework for SD model validation based on a logical sequence (Figure 1 below). First he made a distinction between *structure validity* and *behaviour validity*. Behaviour validity (category 3 in figure 1) refers to the model being able to reproduce a pattern prediction (Barlas, 1996), however this type of validity is only relevant for quantified SD models and therefore is beyond the scope of this research. Regarding structure validity, Barlas (1996) distinguishes between direct structure tests (category 1) and structure-oriented behaviour tests (category 2). The category of structure-oriented behaviour tests (2) asses the validity of the model indirectly through model-generated behaviour patterns that include simulation (Barlas, 1996). However, since my research concerns a CLD that cannot be simulated, this category of validity tests is also beyond the scope of this research. Direct structure tests (category 1) asses the validity of the model structure by comparing it directly to knowledge about the real system structure (Barlas, 1996). It involves taking each individual relationship and compare it with available knowledge (Barlas, 1996). This specific test is called a structure-confirmation test, and it is done by one-by-one discussing the relations in the model with participants and confirming or disconfirming their existence. I will do this by conducting semi-structured interviews that will be set up as a disconfirmatory interview (Andersen et al., 2012). I will discuss each individual relation in the model with the participant and compare it to the knowledge the participants have through their experiences with the Eindhoven Airport case. These interviews will allow me to answer my third research question and they are the starting point of establishing and increasing confidence in the model.
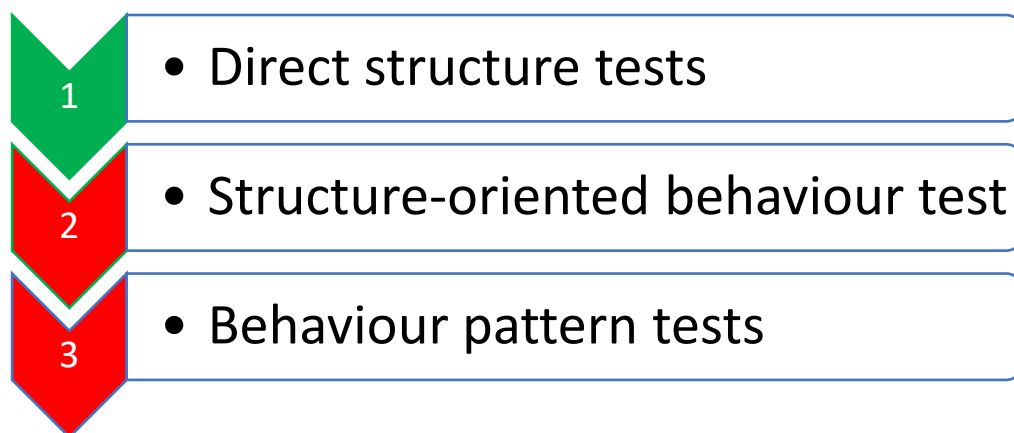
- **1** • Direct structure tests
- **2** • Structure-oriented behaviour test
- **3** • Behaviour pattern tests

Figure 1: Categories of model validation tests based on Barlas (1996)

3.3 Disconfirmatory interview

Above I have concluded that I will perform a direct structure validity test, and more precise a structure-confirmation test. The purpose of this test is to compare the assumptions of the model with the relationships that exist in the real system (Forrester & Senge, 1980), where the real system is the Eindhoven Airport case that is the subject of this research. In order to pass the structure-confirmation test, the structure of the model should not contradict the knowledge on the structure of the real system (Forrester & Senge, 1980). In 2012, Andersen et al. designed a set of relevant themes for the assessment of SD models through the disconfirmatory interview. By model assessment they mean not only the process of building confidence in the model through validation, but also to improve the model (Andersen et al., 2012). The rationale of the disconfirmatory interview is that respondents should seek for instances where their experience do not match the model structure or behaviour, therefore trying to disconfirm rather than confirm the validity of the model (Andersen et al., 2012). They see three formal purposes of the disconformity interview, two of which are relevant for this research: the first is to increase the confidence in the structure and behaviour of the model through a systematically constructed process of disconfirmation, the second relevant purpose of the disconfirmatory interview is to support concrete suggestions on how to improve the model structure (Andersen et al., 2012). This means that criticisms may potentially call for adjustment of the model, or for further investigation of particular structural elements.

Andersen et al. (2012) come up with several advices to design the interviews for this research. The first is to use boundary objects to structure the interviews and facilitate conversation. For my interviews, I will discuss the relations between variables by visually drawing the relation between the two variables, connected by an arrow indicating the direction of the relationship. This way, participants will not be overwhelmed with the complexity of the whole model, but instead be supported by an image of the specific relation that is discussed at that moment. Another advice is to use the deference effect to focus clients on disconfirmation. This means that the focus should be on possible errors or problems in the model in order to find possible areas of improvement. Therefore, during the interviews I will frame the questions in a way that they provoke criticism or disconfirmation. Also, Andersen et al. (2012) suggest to organise the interview around the model's structure, behaviour and structure-behaviour connections, which means that not only these separate parts should be discussed, but also how some structural elements cause certain behaviour. Therefore, I will discuss not only the direct relations between variables, but also the consequences the structure has on the behaviour of other variables more

distant in the model. To do this, I will discuss the six feedback loops identified in the preliminary CLD to make the participants aware of the possible effects of one relation on other variables. Andersen et al. (2012) finish with three more straightforward advices. The first is to tailor the interview to the audience. Since the participants will probably not have any knowledge of SD, I will state the interview questions in a way that they are easy to understand and ply a helping attitude as interviewer to explain in more detail if clarification is needed. The second is to have individual, not group interviews because disconfirmatory interviews benefit from yielding as many individual viewpoints as possible (Anderson et al., 2012). I will simply comply with this by planning interviews with one person at the time. The third and final advice is to explicitly articulate changes, which means that I will keep track of the changes to the model that resulted from each specific interview.

A copy of the final interview scheme that I will use during the interviews can be found in Appendix 1.

3.4 Case selection and context

According to Ragin (1994), qualitative research approaches are useful for developing new theoretical ideas through obtaining new, in-depth information on a certain case (Ragin,1994:84). The corresponding research design is called a case study, which is an inquiry that *''investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident''.* (Yin, 2014: 16). For this research, it means that I seek for a case with active stakeholder engagement and where possibly stakeholder satisfaction is occurring, without clear boundaries between the phenomenon itself and the context of the case. More precisely, I am looking for a case that can represent a significant contribution to knowledge and theory building by extending the theory: a critical case (Yin, 2014). I have found this in the Eindhoven Airport case, where I will investigate how the stakeholder engagement efforts by the airport's management (Eindhoven Airport NV), who say to apply an inclusive stakeholder approach (Eindhoven Airport NV, 2018), were perceived by their stakeholders and how this led to either satisfaction or disappointment.

Eindhoven Airport is the second largest airport in the Netherlands. In 2017, they for the first time welcomed more than 5 million passengers: 5.7 million (Eindhoven Airport NV, 2018). Under their current permit, which will expire in 2019, they are allowed to carry out 43 000 flight movements per year, an amount that they will most probably reach in that same year.

From 2020 onwards, a new permit needs to be issued determining the amount of flights that the airport can carry out each year. According to the airport's management, the new permit should offer enough flight movements to live up to the ambitions of the region. However, they realise that they have to deal with many stakeholders, and they therefore need to achieve this grow in a responsible and socially desirable way (Eindhoven Airport NV, 2018)

According to Yin (2014), a single case can be regarded to as a critical case if it is critical to theory, by which he means that the theory provides a set of circumstances that should be present in this case. For this research it is relevant that the subject of study in the case actively engages its stakeholders or, even better, applies an inclusive stakeholder approach. In their annual report, the airport management states that during the research- and analysis phase for the new permit *''all aspects will be weighed and all stakeholders will be heard''* (Eindhoven Airport NV, 2018:5). They later elaborate: *''We strive to actively and timely engage all our stakeholders (national and international) to our future plans and policies''* (Eindhoven Airport NV, 2018:24). This proves that the airports management actively engages their stakeholders. Given the diversity of the airports' stakeholder groups, e.g. business partners, (local) governments and interest groups, it is likely that there will be conflicting stakes and claims towards the airport, therefore there will be satisfied as well as dissatisfied or disappointed stakeholders. That is why this particular case is relevant for my research.

3.5 Data collection and analysis

I will validate the preliminary CLD I have made in chapter two by analysing the Eindhoven Airport Case. To collect the data to do so, I will perform disconfirmatory interviews. This has been further elaborated in paragraph 3.3. Because the aim is to get in-depth knowledge on this particular case, the *s*ample size (*n*) does not have to be large, but at least sufficient to increase confidence in the model through validation. As Andersen et al. (2012) stated, validation through disconfirmatory interviews benefits from having as many individual points of view as possible. My aim was to interview between 5 and 10 stakeholders. I have been able to arrange 7 interviews with different stakeholders. This allows me to obtain sufficient in-depth knowledge on the case, without losing focus through an overwhelming amount of data. To get in touch with the stakeholders, I have approached interest groups that defend the interests of particular groups of stakeholders. I looked for both stakeholders that are in favour of the growth of Eindhoven Airport, for instance its business partners, and for stakeholders that are against, for instance interest groups of people who experience noise disturbance or pollution from the airport. These groups are numerous, and I appealed on their willingness to participate by

emphasizing that they are the ones knowledgeable and experienced as a stakeholder of Eindhoven Airport. Even though the distinction between stakeholders in favour of the growth of Eindhoven Airport and those against is not always clear, I have managed to get a well-balanced sample. In the end, three stakeholders participated that can be categorised as against the growth of the airport, three stakeholders can be categorised as in favour of the growth of the airport and one stakeholder, the municipality of Eindhoven, cannot be placed in any of the two categories because they hold a special position as a shareholder of the airport, but also representing the stakes of the inhabitants of the city. These seven stakeholders are shown in table 2, below. Also, I have tried to involve representatives of Eindhoven Airport NV itself in my research, but despite several efforts I received declines from three different airport employees due to time limitations. At a later instance, a representative from an external company representing Eindhoven Airport approached me for a meeting. In this meeting he confirmed that it was not possible to organise a formal interview with someone from the airport itself. Therefore, I will combine the empirical data derived from the interviews with the analysis of several documents, such as the Eindhoven Airport NV annual report and the coalition agreement of the municipality of Eindhoven. This combination of data allows me to triangulate between different sources of data.

Name	Organisation	Description
Marcel de Breet	Vereniging Vrienden Eindhoven Airport	The 'Association Friends of Eindhoven Airport' is a group of people that in some way feel connected to Eindhoven Airport.
Didier Barrois	Brainport Development Eindhoven	Brainport Development is an organisation driving the economic development of the Eindhoven city region as Brainport.
Hans Verhoeven	Gemeente Eindhoven	The municipality of Eindhoven owns 24.5% of the shares of Eindhoven Airport. Hans Verhoeven works as program leader for 'environment & healthy urbanisation'.
Bernard Gerard	Beraad Vlieghinder Moet Minder (BVM2)	BVM2 wants to decrease the nuisance from aviation in the Netherlands in general, and from Eindhoven Airport in particular.
Door de Beus	Dorpsraad Oostelbeers	The village council of Oostelbeers represents the interests of the inhabitants of the village.

		They want clear communication from Eindhoven Airport and a decrease in nuisance.
Kees Dankers	Dorpsraad Wintelre	The village council of Wintelre represents the interests of the inhabitants of the village. They want clear communication from Eindhoven Airport and a decrease in nuisance
Hans-Bart Olijhoek	Ondernemers Kontakt Eindhoven Airport	OKEA is an association of different companies located at the industrial area near Eindhoven Airport.

Table 2: Interview participants

Regarding the data analysis, I will follow the same approach as Diker did in Andersen et al. (2012), summarising each participant's comments on each relation in the model and depicting them in a two-column table. He had a relatively small sample size ($n = 10$), which is comparable to the sample size I have achieved. This small sample gives the opportunity to use the richness of the data by summarizing each participants comments on every relation and if applicable feedback loop in the model. This will result in a table with two axes, where one axe represents the different participants, and the other represents the relations that have been discussed during the interview. Then, for each relation the participants comments can be summarised and discussed on their implications, whether they agree or disagree with the proposed relation and if any improvement can be made. This whole table will be shown in the appendix while specific phrases will be elaborated in my analysis in the next chapter.

3.6 Research ethics

For every research, it is important to consider whether the research is socially acceptable. Denscombe (2012) states that primary data collection from human beings and organizations requires ethical approval. Therefore, for this research it was important to comply with ethical standards. The main point was to make sure that participants were not in any way harmed by participating in this research. This relates to psychological, social, economic and physical harm but also any other types of possible harm that could have been caused. The first step to comply to research ethics was to obtain voluntary consent of the participants to take part in the research. For this research, it means that everybody who was approached, had the freedom to decide if they wanted to participate. If they did, they were asked to fill in a form of consent, which is in line with the APA's *five principles of research ethics* (Smith, 2003). I brought a printed version of this form to the interviews, which I also discussed verbally at the beginning of the interview.

This way, the participants could ask questions about the research and their participation that I could answer straight away. The consent form itself informed the participants of the purpose of this research and reminded them about their right to decline or withdraw their participation at any time. A copy of the consent form can be found in appendix 2. Even when they have already started their participation in the interview, they could resign at any time if they felt uncomfortable. Also, I elaborated on the fact that I will use the data for research purposes only, and that their input can be handled anonymously if they want to. The participants might have wished to stay anonymous, considering that the stakeholders in question will have a dependency on the Eindhoven Airport organisation that continues beyond the time span of this research. This means that it would be important to respect confidentiality and privacy (Smith, 2003). However, I have also offered the participants the possibility to be cited by their name and position in a certain stakeholder group, meaning that they allow me to use quotes from the interview and to include their names. This contributes to the quality of the analysis, because it gives context to the specific quote. Fortunately, all seven participants gave their consent to cite them by name. After I have finished the written elaboration of each interview, I have send these to the specific participant to allow them to reconsider, rephrase or delete certain phrases. This way, participants will not be negatively surprised by any quote I might use in my analysis and have the possibility to delete anything they don't want to be publicly available. Furthermore, after this feedback I once again explicitly asked for their consent to use this checked version if the interview elaboration in my analysis. It turned out that in general the participants were happy with my elaborations of the interviews. Changes and additions they made were mainly textual, or some facts that they were unsure about during the interview. Also, they made some nuance to some of their statements. Only very few phrases were deleted because participants felt uncomfortable, for instance because they showed some emotion in a certain answer.

Another important ethical factor according to Denscombe (2012) is scientific integrity. This means that the research uses the best available methods in order to obtain the higher quality of research. This way, the participants time is used in a good way and no time and resources are wasted. Scientific integrity also includes being truthful to the participants and allow them to check my identity as researcher. Also, my judgement as a researcher should not be biased. This is not a danger to this research, because there is no sponsor who might expect certain results from me or from the research, and also for me as a researcher it does not matter what the outcome of the research is, as long as the research itself is conducted in a proper way. However, I have to remember that I unconsciously might have developed a standpoint with regards to the

content of this research, because I have already read a lot on the topic of stakeholder theory and developed the CLD in chapter 2. Therefore, I need to keep an open focus during the analysis of the interviews. Altogether, there is no reason to believe any part of this research would violate the research ethics that are associated with this research.

4. Data analysis

In chapter 2 I have formulated an answer to the first two research questions of this research. First, I have distinguished the different factors that are related to stakeholder engagement and to creating either stakeholder disappointment or satisfaction. The second research question is about the feedback processes that are involved in the relations between stakeholder engagement, satisfaction and disappointment. These feedback processes have been depicted in the preliminary CLD that I presented in chapter 2. In this chapter, I will provide an answer to the third research question: *how do these feedback processes match the stakeholder experiences in the Eindhoven Airport case?* To do so, I will analyse the qualitative data I have gathered during the interviews and the available documents. In a structured way I will one-by-one discuss the individual relations in the model and form a conclusion regarding the validation or reconsideration of each relation or feedback loop based on the comments of the participants Also, I will discuss any adjustments to the model that can be made based on the input I received during the interviews regarding the possible improvement of the model.

4.1 Validating the preliminary CLD and increasing confidence

As I have discussed in the previous chapter, there is no single test that truly validates the model, rather the process of validation gradually accumulates confidence in the model as it passes more validation tests (Forrester & Senge, 1980). However, according to Forrester & Senge (1980), the notion of validity as equivalent to confidence conflicts with the view many scientists hold that sees validity as 'absolute truth'. Barlas and Carpenter (1990) therefore state that a valid model is assumed to be only one of many possible ways of describing a real situation and that no model can claim absolute objectivity. The implication for the data analysis of my research is that I will not strive for a model that represents the absolute truth, but for creating a model that is the best representation of the experiences of the stakeholders that I have interviewed. According to Andersen et al. (2012) model assessment is not only about increasing confidence in the model, but also about improving the model. The structure of the disconfirmatory interview serves this purpose well. When participants disagree with a certain proposition, I will use their experiences and suggestions to improve the model structure. Improving the model can mean both removing a relation from the model and adding another relation that better represents the stakeholder's experiences. This way I will not only increase confidence in the model by increasing confidence in the structure, but also improve the model to be a best representation of the experiences of the stakeholders of Eindhoven Airport. In the next paragraph, I will one-by-one discuss each proposition and the remarks of the participants about this proposition. This

will allow me to conclude if the confidence in this relation has grown, or the particular relation needs to be modified or removed from the model. I will remove a relation if it has been disconfirmed by all or almost all stakeholders. If there is disagreement amongst the stakeholders, I will look for a way to change and improve the model in a way that is best represents the experiences of all stakeholders together. When all or almost all stakeholders agree, confidence is established in the relation and it can remain in the model. A complete overview of all the participant's comments on all proposition can be found in appendix 3.

4.2 Analysis of propositions

In this paragraph, I will one-by-one discuss the propositions derived from theory. I will follow the same sequence as I did during the interviews, therefore the order in which I will discuss the propositions in a different order than in chapter 2. For each proposition, I will form a conclusion if either confidence in the proposition has been established, if the proposition is nuanced or if the proposition is disconfirmed and needs to be disregarded.

The first proposition that I discussed during the interviews is that **more practices to involve stakeholders** will lead to **more stakeholder satisfaction (proposition 4).** Six out of the seven participants agree with this proposition. For instance, Marcel de Breet from the VVEA states: *However, it is true that the activities that are organised in cooperation with Eindhoven Airport cause our level, or at least my level of satisfaction to rise.''* Door de Beus from Dorpsraad Oostelbeers agrees with this proposition because more practices to involve stakeholders also means she receives more information: *''If there are more activities you receive more information, that will make you feel more relaxed and therefore more satisfied.''* Only Kees Dankers from Dorpsraad Wintelre disagrees with this statement, because for him satisfaction only occurs when his claims as a stakeholder are to some extent satisfied: *''They have to communicate better, but communication doesn't take away the nuisance.(…) It is important that when you are involved, you have to get the feeling that your input is taken seriously and they are going to do something with it. That you are not just there for the appearance.''* This implies that he will not feel satisfied as long as his claim, a decrease in nuisance from the airport, is not to some extent satisfied. Therefore, because six stakeholders agree with this proposition, I will conclude that confidence in this proposition has been established along with one modification to the model: I will add a variable 'extent to which stakeholder claims are met' to the model that positively influences stakeholder satisfaction.

The next proposition is that **more practices to involve stakeholders** lead to **more stakeholder expectations (proposition 10).** For this proposition, three participants agree and three participants disagree, while for one participant this proposition is not applicable. It is remarkable to see that the three participants that agree all have a more positive attitude towards Eindhoven Airport, while the three that disagree have a more negative attitude. For instance, Hans-Bart Olijhoek from OKEA says: *''Yes, I think so. When you are more involved, it gives you the feeling that you can give your opinion more. Therefore, you can also expect more.(…) This is also based on results from the past.''* However, Bernard Gerard from BVM2 strongly disagrees with this proposition: *''No, I have never had that idea. You know beforehand that you will not convince each other.''* A suggestion for model improvement is given by both Didier Barrois from Brainport Development and Kees Dankers from Dorpsraad Wintelre. Barrois remarks: *''What I do see in practice is that certain organisations are made to feel very important, while sometimes they just don't have anything to say about a certain decision.''* Dankers adds to this, when discussing a particular meeting that involved stakeholders: *''I don't think that after that meeting many people in Wintelre had expectations for it to get better. They told us before, that our expectations of the meeting shouldn't be too high.''* These remarks imply that (the rise of) stakeholder expectations is not solely a consequence of an increase of practices to involve stakeholders. It is rather a combination of being (more) involved as a stakeholder and the degree to which the stakeholder expectations are managed beforehand. Another factor that might be important is the past experiences from the practices to involve stakeholders. If people experience that not much is done with their input, their expectations for the next involvement process remain low: *''However, in the past our expectations often led to disappointment. Until now there is no reason to believe that this will be different in the near future.''* (Kees Dankers). This might also be an explanation for the fact that the three participants disagreeing with this proposition all have a more negative attitude towards the airport. Therefore, I will conclude that confidence in this proposition can only be established if the effects of 'expectation management' (negative) and 'positive experiences about previous involvement' (positive) on stakeholder expectations are also included in the model. The proposition itself however is nuanced, but with the inclusion of these other two factors this will be the best representation of the experiences of the stakeholders I have interviewed.

The next proposition is that **higher stakeholder expectations** will lead to more **stakeholder disappointment (proposition 11).** Again, for this propositions three participants agree and three disagree, while for one participants this proposition is not applicable. Kees Dankers from

Dorpsraad Wintelre agrees: *''In the past, our expectations have often resulted in disappointment.''* An example: *''Well, in the beginning our expectation about the complaint registration platform 'samenopdehoogte' was that they would actually do something with our complaints. But until now, we see very little happening.''* Hans-Bart Olijhoek from OKEA seems to have a similar opinion: *''Yes, there is definitely disappointment.''. (…) If it doesn't lead to the result the entrepreneur is expecting, than there is disappointment. Frustration even.''* However, other participants disagree with the proposition. Door de Beus from Dorpsraad Oostelbeers remarks: *''No, I have the idea that there is nothing we can win. My expectations regarding Eindhoven Airport are low. Or more realistic. We have conflicting stakes, they have an economic stake and I haven't.''* Bernard Gerard from BVM2 says: *''The airport director will only come to repentance when Schiphol tells him to do so. That has nothing to do with us.''* These two comments imply that for these participants, disappointment does not occur because they expect very little from the airport from the beginning. Also, the comments of Dankers and Olijhoek seem to imply that the disappointment they experienced or witnessed is not only a consequence of the 'escalation of expectations', as Eskerod et al. (2015) describe it, but also of the extent to which a stakeholder's claims are met. Therefore, I conclude that validation shows that relation between stakeholder expectations and stakeholder disappointment is nuanced and needs modification. It can only remain in the model if the negative effect of the 'extent to which a stakeholder's claims are met' on 'stakeholder disappointment' is also included in the model. This is the best way to represent the experiences of the stakeholders and to increase confidence in the model.

The following proposition that has been discussed was **proposition 5: more stakeholder satisfaction** will lead to more **stakeholder support.** This proposition has been discussed with six of the stakeholders, and they all agreed, even though some expressed some restraint. Hans Verhoeven from the municipality of Eindhoven states that if Eindhoven Airport takes their environmental responsibility, he and the municipality will be satisfied and therefore they will be supportive: *''Yes, I think Eindhoven Airport should take responsibility and invest in compensation for the nuisance. (…) This will change something.''* Kees Dankers says: *''I think satisfaction could lead to support if they actually would do something that benefits the people living near the airport.''* However, according to some stakeholders it is not only the level of satisfaction that determines if they support Eindhoven Airport. Didier Barrois remarks: *'' We don't want to lock the airport down. You can consider that supportive. However, I doubt if that support follows from satisfaction, but rather from the stakes that we represent regarding the*

airport.'' Marcel de Breet from the VVEA adds: *'' I can't think of any situation where the management of Eindhoven Airport would do something that would make us say, do you really have to do that? I can't imagine that.''* These remarks imply that stakeholder support is not only derived from the level of satisfaction, but also from the fundamental position a stakeholder has regarding Eindhoven Airport. Especially if there some sort of dependence, there will always be some level of support. This is illustrated by a phrase from the Coalition Agreement 2018-2022 from the municipality of Eindhoven: *''As municipality we are not only a (minor)shareholder of Eindhoven Airport. It is also an airport that is based on our territory and is influencing the living environment of our city and its inhabitants.''* (Gemeente Eindhoven, 2018:23). This proves that because Eindhoven Airport and the Eindhoven municipality are mutually dependent, and therefore there will always be a certain level of support. Therefore, I can conclude that confidence has been established in proposition 5 that more stakeholder support will lead to more satisfaction, but to give a better representation of the situation of the stakeholders of Eindhoven Airport, a variable 'degree of dependence on Eindhoven Airport' will be included in the model with a positive relation with stakeholder support.

The next proposition is related to the previous one: more **stakeholder disappointment** will lead to less **stakeholder support (proposition 16)**. Some of the stakeholders agree with this proposition. For instance, Hans Verhoeven says: *''I think this certainly applies. (...) There are resident groups that involve themselves on the consultation talks. They want improvement, less nuisance. But that is not easy to accomplish. I have seen different groups getting disappointed because they see nothing happening. Then they will drop out.''* His experience is in line with this proposition. However, again some participants remark that satisfaction, or in this case disappointment, is not the only factor determining the degree of stakeholder support: *''If in 10 years' time it turns out that the growth of the airport focussed on irrelevant destinations, then we will be disappointed. It's not useful from our economic viewpoint, but will I withdraw my support? I will be okay with the outcome.''* (Didier Barrois). Also, in the village of Wintelre Kees Dankers experiences two responses to stakeholder disappointment: *''The first is that people despite their disappointment still want to continue talking and are open for communication. The second is that people turn away from the situation. There are a lot of people that quit.''* This quote perfectly summarises that more stakeholder disappointment can lead to less stakeholder support, but that a dependence on Eindhoven Airport can be the cause of a supportive attitude despite disappointment. Therefore, confidence in proposition 16 has

been established, and the positive relation from the added variable 'degree of dependence on Eindhoven Airport' on 'stakeholder support' is further supported.

Proposition 17 is the first proposition that will be disregarded from the model. This proposition is that more **stakeholder support** will lead to a more **inclusive stakeholder approach.** On a more practical level, this would imply that greater support would create more willingness among stakeholder to participate in involvement practices, and therefore enabling the organisation to apply a more inclusive stakeholder approach. During the interviews, this relation has mostly been discussed the other way around: whether a decrease in support of a stakeholder would lead to a smaller willingness to participate in involvement practices, or even to no willingness at all. All participants disagree with this proposition, therefore it is the first to be disconfirmed. Bernard Gerard from BVM2 says: *''We will speak to anyone. If the VVD invites us we speak to them, and if Eindhoven Airport invites us we will speak to the airport. What the outcome will be, is another question.''* Hans-Bart Olijhoek witnesses a similar attitude at OKEA members whose support decreased because of disappointment: *''No, I think they keep on trying every time. It's not that they give up and drop out. They stay involved to get their interests through.''* Door de Beus from Dorpsraad Oostelbeers has a slightly different reason to stay involved: *''No, it's the opposite. Knowledge is power. The more you hear and see, the more you know and maybe you can think of something to change the situation.''* Overall, the data clearly suggests the disconfirmation of this proposition and its removal from the model.

Now the focus will be on a different part of the model. During the interviews, I have introduced this part by first explaining what an inclusive stakeholder approach is and elaborating on the statement of Eindhoven Airport NV in their annual report that they want to involve all stakeholders, and therefore they say to apply an inclusive stakeholder approach (Eindhoven Airport NV, 2017). The first proposition of this part is **proposition 7**, that a more **inclusive stakeholder approach** will lead to more **conflicting stakeholder claims.** VVEA chairman Marcel de Breet agrees with this proposition: *''Absolutely, that* (the inclusion of in principle all stakeholders) *causes the compromising the airport's management has to do between all these different stakes.''* Door de Beus agrees: *''Yes, I do think so. It is difficult to be on the same page.''* However, some other stakeholders doubt this. Hans Verhoeven remarks: *''You will always come back to the weighted average of all claims. (…) The majority of the parties involved by Eindhoven Airport are in favour of growth.''* Kees Dankers elaborates on this: *''At the Alderstafel, it is clear what they did. They just invited more stakeholders with a positive stake in Eindhoven Airport than they invited stakeholders with a negative attitude.''* The point

they make is that even though Eindhoven Airport says they apply an inclusive stakeholder approach, in practice, at least in the recent past, they only involve(d) a limited amount of stakeholders that have a positive attitude towards (the growth of) the airport. This implies that because Eindhoven Airport applies a less inclusive stakeholder approach, there are less conflicting stakeholder claims. This is in line with proposition 7, but only framed the other way around. Therefore, based on the participant's comments I can say that confidence in proposition 7 has been established.

Proposition 8 states that more **conflicting stakeholder claims** will lead to a smaller **organisational ability to meet all stakeholder claims.** The majority of the participants agree with this statement. Hans-Bart Olijhoek remarks: *''Yes, I think so. Everyone has an opinion. Those opinions can be conflicting. (...) The more people you put together, the more opinions and disappointment. All these opinions can't be translated to one solution.''* Kees Dankers adds that the amount of conflicting claims is not only rising, but also these claims are getting more extreme: *''Well, I think the situation is getting more and more extreme. Both the nuisance and the opposition is getting more extreme The nuisance and its consequences are getting so big, that its extremely hard to find a compromise. (...) So it is getting harder and harder to find a solution that is acceptable for all parties.''* Only Marcel de Breet seems to disagree: *''If you agree that the airport doesn't have to be removed, then there is space for negotiation. And from that starting point, solutions can be found that satisfy all parties.''* He nuances the relation between conflicting stakeholder claims and the organisational ability to meet all stakeholder claims. Therefore, because it is only nuanced by one participant enough confidence has been established to maintain this proposition in the model.

The next two propositions were discussed together during the interviews: a bigger **organisational ability to meet all stakeholder claims** will lead to less **stakeholder disappointment (proposition 9)**, and a bigger **organisational ability to meet all stakeholder claims** will lead to more **stakeholder satisfaction (proposition 3)**. When it comes to proposition 9, of the six stakeholders with whom this proposition has been discussed with, five agree. Only Marcel de Breet from the VVEA is neutral: *''We appreciate it when the airport is doing well and growing. The claim of our association is to get certain activities facilitated by the airport.''* Until now, that claim of the VVEA has always been satisfied by Eindhoven Airport. As De Breet repeatedly expressed, the VVEA and Eindhoven Airport are in a 'status quo' where they claim very little, and Eindhoven Airport satisfies these claims. Therefore, De Breet has not experienced disappointment yet. De Breet however agrees with proposition 3: *''I*

enjoy it when I see that a part has been built to the airport, or when a destination or a new airline is added. That is personal.'' It gives him satisfaction when his claim, a strong and successful Eindhoven Airport, is satisfied. Other participants agree with both propositions. Door de Beus remarks: *''When you are dealing with local residents, I think it is impossible to meet all stakeholder claims. There will always be people who are very disappointed, while others will be satisfied. It will always be this way.''* This is in line with proposition 9 and 3. Also, she says: *''Well, very concrete, I was very happy when the air force said they were going to look into the flight paths here.''* This confirms her feeling of satisfaction when her claims were at least partially satisfied. Bernard Gerard from BVM2 expressed that he hasn't felt satisfied as a stakeholder for a long time: *''It is a long time ago that I felt satisfied about the way Eindhoven Airport is listening to our claims..(...) Back then, there was a mutually agreed growth path with complements. It was the time when you could still talk to the airport.''* This shows that his feeling of satisfaction was derived from being listened to in the first place, and from the organisation being able to satisfy his claims when determining the growth path. Finally, Didier Barrois from Brainport development summarises his experiences very clear: *''It depends on your starting point. But the organisational ability to meet your claims as a stakeholder does lead to disappointment or satisfaction. You have to get to know what the stakeholder really wants.''* Altogether, there is much agreement among the participants that these two propositions match their own opinions and experiences. Therefore, confidence in both proposition 9 and 3 has been established. However, earlier in this chapter the variable 'extent to which stakeholder claims are met' was introduced to the model, because it appeared to be an important factor causing either stakeholder satisfaction or stakeholder disappointment. From the comments of the participants, it turns out that their satisfaction or disappointment is not directly caused by the organisational ability to meet all stakeholder claims, but more by the extent to which their particular claims are actually satisfied. Therefore, to give the best possible representation of the comments of the participants, the organisational ability to meet all stakeholder claims will influence the extent to which stakeholder claims are satisfied positively. A higher extent to which a stakeholders claims are satisfied will lead to either stakeholder satisfaction (positive relation) or stakeholder disappointment (negative relation).

According to Eskerod et al. (2015) organisations that apply an inclusive stakeholder approach can lose focus on those stakeholders that possess the most critical resources. This was the basis for **proposition 14:** a more **inclusive stakeholder approach** leads to less **focus on critical stakeholders.** This proposition has been completely disconfirmed in the Eindhoven Airport

case. According to Marcel de Breet, Eindhoven Airport focusses on the most important stakeholders: *''They are speaking to shareholders, so to Schiphol, Eindhoven municipality and the province.''* Hans Verhoeven agrees with this: *''No. I think that they keep their focus very well on the critical stakeholders. Even if they would have to choose in the future, they will keep their focus on the critical stakeholders.''* Door de Beus has a slightly more nuanced opinion, but still she makes clear that Eindhoven Airport focusses on the most critical stakeholders: *''No. I think that they do involve local residents, but only through politics. (…) I think their focus is on the critical stakeholders, and they are just forced to take parties like the BOW or the BVM2 into account.''* Altogether, I can conclude that the inclusive stakeholder approach Eindhoven Airport says to apply does not at all lead to a loss of focus on critical stakeholders, therefore proposition 14 is disconfirmed and will be removed from the model.

Even though all stakeholders disconfirmed proposition 14, with some of them I still discussed **proposition 15**: a lower **focus on critical stakeholders** will lead to more **stakeholder disappointment**. I asked the participants if they could think of a situation in the past where Eindhoven Airport did lose their focus on the critical stakeholders and stakeholder disappointment occurred. The responses however were clear: Hans-Bart Olijhoek: *''They know very well who their stakeholders are.''* Door de Beus: *''I think their focus is only on the critical stakeholders.''* Also Hans Verhoeven disagrees with the proposition: *''They only focus on those stakeholders that are important to them.''* Therefore, I consider this proposition as disconfirmed in the Eindhoven Airport case and I will remove it from the model.

Proposition 18 is that more **long term success of an organisation** leads to higher **stakeholder expectations.** Most of the stakeholders agree with this proposition. Again, only Marcel de Breet does not agree: *''No, I don't think so, because the facilities we would receive from Eindhoven Airport would not increase.''* This is based on the 'status quo' he mentioned earlier, where the VVEA claims very little from the airport and gets their claim satisfied year after year. This indicates that he has already reached a high level of satisfaction. It is however no disconfirmation of this proposition. Other stakeholders do agree with the proposition. Didier Barrois from Brainport Development says: *''You need money to take, for example, sound-proofing measures. And you see in practice that stakeholders get certain expectations.''* According to Hans Verhoeven, the municipality of Eindhoven also has specific expectations caused by the long term success of Eindhoven Airport: *''That is true. Last year, on the initiative of our city council, we have made this very explicit at the annual shareholders meeting. (…) Eindhoven Airport should contribute to People-Planet solutions.''* Hans-Bart Olijhoek looks at

it from the perspective of social responsibility: *''Yes. I agree. As a big organisation, you have to take more and more responsibility. (...) But people expect that from the airport. Also regarding Co2 reduction, the bigger the airport gets, the more people expect to achieve some results on that issue. (...) The region and stakeholders see how well Eindhoven Airport is doing. So they expect something back.''* Altogether I can say that confidence has been established in the relation between long term success of an organisation and stakeholder expectations.

The next proposition (**proposition 12)** is that a higher **quality of the involvement process** leads to higher **stakeholder expectations.** The responses to this proposition were mixed, perhaps because it sometimes was unclear what quality of involvement process actually means. Didier Barrois has the following perception: *''When the quality of the process is good, that is, people are involved timely, provided with good information and it is clear what the roles in the process are, it can match the expectations and the outcomes in the end.''* This shows that for him, the alignment and management of expectations is part of a high-quality involvement process. Hans Verhoeven also believes clear expectations are critical: *''I don't know if it works that way. (...) I do know that Eindhoven Airport is always very clear about what they can and what they can't do. This way, expectations are tampered.''* Door de Beus, who participated in a masterclass organised by the air force, experienced a rise in expectations because the quality of this way of involvement was high: *''Yes, for the air force, this is true. The air force is really trying to do something with our input. (...) I have very high expectations from them.''* This experience is in line with the proposition. However, Kees Dankers participated in the same masterclass but didn't experience a rise of expectations: *''It was said at the meetings from the masterclass, that our expectations shouldn't be too high.''* To get the best representation of the experiences of the stakeholders, I conclude that the relation between quality of the involvement process and stakeholder expectations is disconfirmed and will be removed from the model. Instead, a new relationship will be added from the previously added variable 'expectation management' to 'quality of involvement process'. This depicts the reality of the stakeholders I have interviewed, who experienced a high quality involvement process because their expectations were managed, and because of that did not experience a rise of their expectations.

The last proposition that has been discussed during the interviews is **proposition 13,** that a higher **quality of involvement process** leads to higher **stakeholder satisfaction.** When discussing the previous proposition, it already became clear that some stakeholders experience satisfaction. When I explicitly discussed this proposition, almost all stakeholders agreed. Marcel de Breet expresses his satisfaction about the involvement by the airport: *''We are on*

good terms with the management of Eindhoven Airport. I think we are informed by them very well. There is a status quo.'' Door de Beus expresses her satisfaction about the high-quality masterclass organised by the air force: *''We as audit-committee have participated in information meetings organised by the air force. (...) When you know all of that, it gives you more rest. (...) This is a very concrete example, and it gives me more rest and satisfaction.''* About this masterclass, Kees Dankers remarks: *''The possibilities were limited, but at least it was an open discussion. What will happen with the conclusions remains unclear, but it was interesting.''* This again illustrates the influence of stakeholder management on the quality of the involvement process. Because none of the interviewed stakeholders disagrees with this proposition, I will conclude that confidence has been established and a higher quality of involvement process does lead to higher stakeholder satisfaction.

There are three propositions left that have not been explicitly discussed during the interviews. The first of these is **proposition 1**: more **stakeholder engagement** will lead to more **practices to involve stakeholders.** In the theoretical background of this thesis I have elaborated that according to Greenwood (2007), stakeholder engagement refers to practices to involve stakeholders. Therefore, more stakeholder engagement means there will be more practices to involve stakeholders. This is a more fundamental relation, it is rather a operationalisation from a theoretical concept to a variable to a more practical level. Therefore, this variable can remain in the model. Stakeholder engagement however does not increase without reason. According to Eskerod et al. (2015), stakeholder inclusiveness is the extent to which in principle all stakeholders are considered by the focal organisation. Based on this, **proposition 2** states that a more **inclusive stakeholder approach** will lead to more **stakeholder engagement.** In their annual report, Eindhoven Airport says they want to engage all stakeholders: *''We strive to actively and timely engage all our stakeholders (national and international) to our future plans and policies''* (Eindhoven Airport NV, 2018:24). This implies that they apply an inclusive stakeholder approach with the aim of increasing stakeholder engagement. During the interviews, I asked the participants how they perceive this inclusive stakeholder approach. There is a lot of disagreement between the different stakeholders on if and how Eindhoven Airport applies an inclusive stakeholder approach. Didier Barrois from Brainport Development agrees with the proposition: *''The different information meetings are shared broadly and repeated. This gives more people, local residents and representatives of businesses the opportunity to visit these meetings.''* This is in line with the Experience of Hans-Bart Olijhoek, who also believes Eindhoven Airport applies an inclusive stakeholder approach to create more

stakeholder engagement: *''I see that they do many things to create support in the region. At different places. (...) They talk a lot to municipalities and local residents to create support for further development of the airport. So I see them collaborating actively with the region.''* However, other stakeholders don't experience an inclusive stakeholder approach from Eindhoven Airport: *''I don't notice anything from that. They speak to their shareholders, so Schiphol, Eindhoven municipality and the province. And probably BVM2 will be invited. But we as VVEA will definitely not receive an invitation, I am sure about that.''* (Marcel de Breet). Also, Bernard Gerard feels he and the BVM2 are not involved: *''We are only being involved or listened to when they* (Eindhoven Airport) *are forced to it (...). That is how the relationship is. Joost Meijs* (Eindhoven Airports director) *does not come to us to talk. What he only does is go to meetings in communities where he is invited, where we happen to be as well. That is when we meet facing each other.''* Altogether, the stakeholders I have interviewed don't agree on whether Eindhoven Airport actually applies an inclusive stakeholder approach. However, considering proposition 2, the stakeholders that do think Eindhoven Airport applies an inclusive stakeholder approach seem to experience more stakeholder engagement. On the other hand, the stakeholders that think Eindhoven Airport does not apply an inclusive stakeholder approach don't experience more stakeholder engagement. This implies that they agree with proposition 2 framed negatively: a less inclusive stakeholder approach leads to less stakeholder engagement. Therefore I conclude that confidence has been established in proposition 2, meaning that a more (less) inclusive stakeholder approach leads to more (less) stakeholder engagement. The extent to which Eindhoven Airport actually applies an inclusive stakeholder approach remains questionable, but the proposition itself has not been disconfirmed.

The final proposition that needs to be discussed is **proposition 6:** more **stakeholder support** will lead to higher **long term success of the organisation.** Just as with proposition 1, it is a more fundamental relation based on McVea and Freeman (2005) and Berrone, Surroca and Tribó (2007). They state that for an organisation to viable on the long term, it needs to create stakeholder satisfaction on the long run. This satisfaction will lead to more support for the organisation, allowing the organisation to maintain its position and to become more successful on the long term. However, I have not discussed this proposition during the interviews because it is impossible for a stakeholder to estimate how their degree of satisfaction and support influenced the long term success of Eindhoven Airport. Therefore, because of the theoretical foundation of this proposition and the fact that is has not been disconfirmed, enough confidence is established to remain this proposition in the model.

Besides the propositions based on theory that have been discussed during the interviews, I have also analysed the interview transcripts for any suggestions for model improvement that are not directly related to any of the propositions. Almost all suggestions for model improvement that were given by the participants have been covered in the analysis so far. Many of the suggestions stressed the importance of expectation management and its negative relation with stakeholder disappointment, how the extent to which stakeholder claims are met influences stakeholder satisfaction and how stakeholder support for an important part is determined by the degree of dependence on Eindhoven Airport. There is however one possible improvement that has not been covered so far. This suggestion has not been explicitly articulated, but when I analysed the interviews I realised that this effect should be included in the model. During the interview with Kees Dankers from Dorpsraad Wintelre, we were discussing the effects of a rise in conflicting stakeholder claims on the organisational ability to meet all stakeholder claims. He responded: *''Well, I think the situation is getting more and more extreme. Both the nuisance and the opposition is getting more extreme. Where in the past a compromise could have been reached with only small measures, this will become harder in the future. The nuisance and its consequences are getting so big, that its extremely hard to find a compromise. (…) The stakes are getting more extreme, so it is getting harder and harder to find a solution that is acceptable for all parties.''* This implies that because stakeholder claims are not being met, stakeholders get more an more disappointed. This effect has already been added to the model. However, because of rising disappointment, the stakes and claims of these stakeholders tend to get more extreme, making it harder for the organisation to meet all these claims. Based on this, I will add one more relation to the model: more 'stakeholder disappointment' will lead to more 'conflicting stakeholder claims'. Even though this specific effect has only been mentioned by one participant, there are no instances were other participants said something that disconfirms this effect. Therefore I will add this relation to the model.

In table 3 on the next page an overview can be found of all the propositions and whether they have been disconfirmed, if they are nuanced or if confidence in them has been established. Furthermore, table 4 contains an overview of the relations that have been added to the model based on the suggestions for model improvement given by the participants.

Validated propositions

Number	From	To	Polarity	Status
1	Stakeholder engagement	Practices to involve stakeholders	Positive	Confidence Established
2	Inclusive stakeholder approach	Stakeholder engagement	Positive	Confidence established
3	Organisational ability to meet all stakeholder claims	Stakeholder satisfaction	Positive	Confidence established *
4	Practices to involve stakeholders	Stakeholder satisfaction	Positive	Confidence established
5	Stakeholder satisfaction	stakeholder support	Positive	Confidence established
6	Stakeholder support	Long term success of an organisation	Positive	Confidence established
7	Inclusive stakeholder approach	Conflicting stakeholder claims	Positive	Confidence established
8	Conflicting stakeholder claims	Organisational ability to meet all stakeholder claims	Negative	Confidence established
9	Organisational ability to meet all stakeholder claims	Stakeholder disappointment	Negative	Confidence established*
10	Practices to involve stakeholders	Stakeholder expectations	Positive	Nuanced
11	Stakeholder expectations	Stakeholder disappointment	Positive	Nuanced
12	Quality of involvement process	Stakeholder expectations	Negative	Disconfirmed
13	Quality of involvement process	Stakeholder satisfaction	Positive	Confidence established
14	Inclusive stakeholder approach	Focus on critical stakeholders	Negative	Disconfirmed
15	Focus on critical stakeholders	Stakeholder disappointment	Negative	Disconfirmed
16	Stakeholder disappointment	Stakeholder support	Negative	Confidence established
17	Stakeholder support	Inclusive stakeholder approach	Positive	Disconfirmed
18	Long term success of an organisation	Stakeholder expectations	Positive	Confidence established

Table 3: validation of the propositions

Added relations

|			
A1	Expectation management	Stakeholder expectations	Negative
A2	Expectation management	Quality of involvement processes	Positive

A3	Positive experiences about previous involvement	Stakeholder expectations	Positive
A4	Organisational ability to meet all stakeholder claims	Extent to which stakeholder claims are met	Positive
A5	Extent to which stakeholder claims are met	Stakeholder disappointment	Negative
A6	Extent to which stakeholder claims are met	Stakeholder satisfaction	Positive
A7	Degree of dependence on Eindhoven Airport	Stakeholder support	Positive
A8	Stakeholder disappointment	Conflicting stakeholder claims	Positive

*To get the best picture of the real situation, the variable 'organisational ability to meet all stakeholder claims' will positively influence the added variable 'extent to which stakeholder claims are met'. This variable will than have a positive influence on 'stakeholder satisfaction' and a negative influence on stakeholder disappointment.

4.3 Validated model and feedback structure

In the previous paragraph I have elaborated on the validation of the theoretical propositions. In this last paragraph of the chapter I will show what the validated CLD looks like and how the modifications to the model changed its feedback structure. On the next page, a picture of the validated CLD is shown. The green arrows indicate a relation in which confidence has been established, the yellow arrows indicate relations that have been nuanced and the blue arrows indicate model improvements based on the participant's suggestions.

There have been some significant changes to the structure of this validated model based on the experiences of the stakeholders compared to the preliminary model based on theory: 5 of the 6 feedback loops that were present in the preliminary model are not present anymore in the validated model. Instead, one more balancing and one reinforcing feedback loop emerged. The main reason for the disappearance of the 5 feedback loops is the removal of the relation between 'stakeholder support' and 'inclusive stakeholder approach' from the model. This relation was part of these 5 loops, and the disconfirmation of this relation is the cause for these loops to not be closed anymore, and therefore they can no longer be seen as a feedback loop. There is however one feedback loop that is still part of the model structure: Balancing loop 5 from the preliminary model:
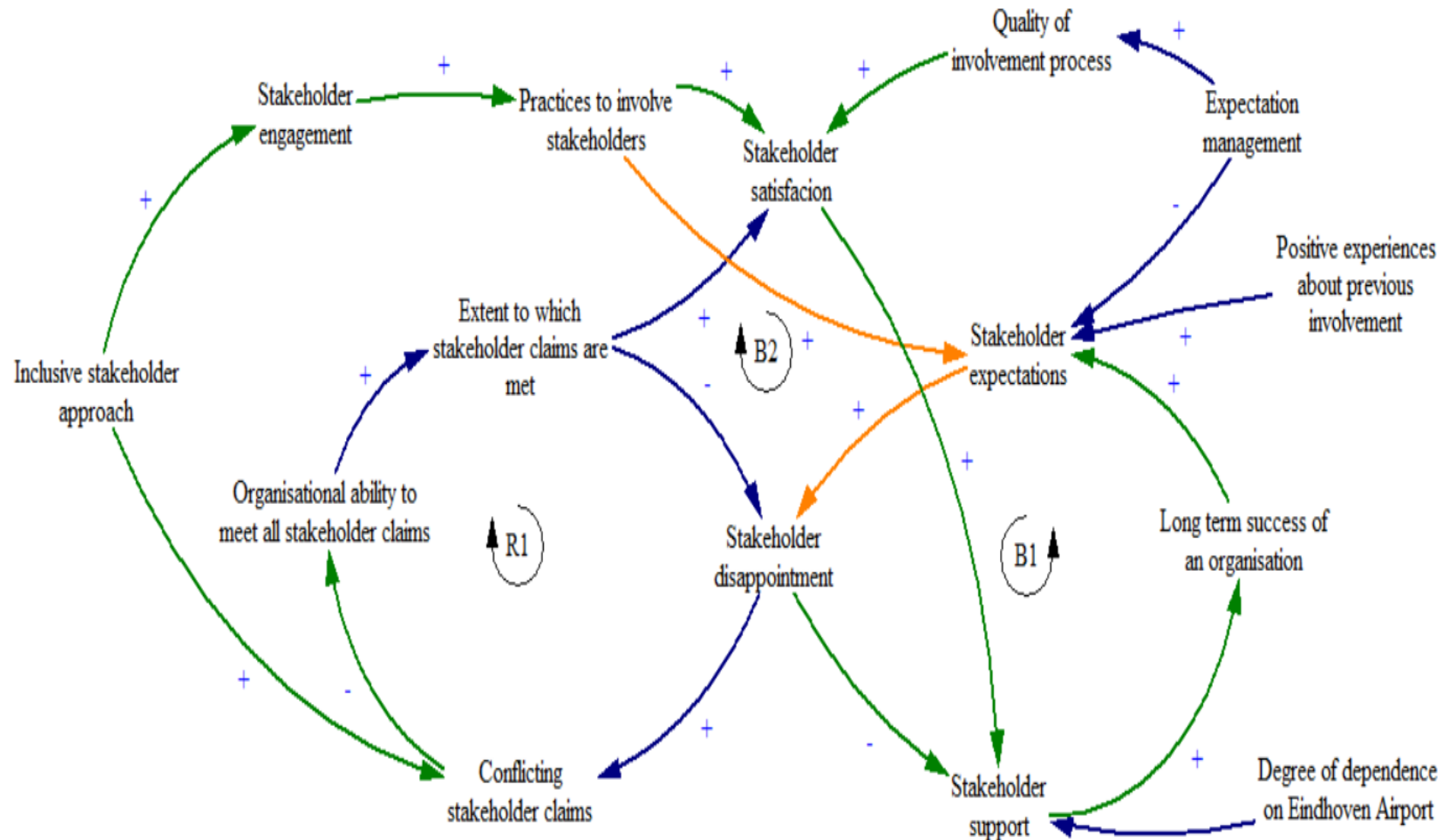
Causal Loop Diagram 2: validated model
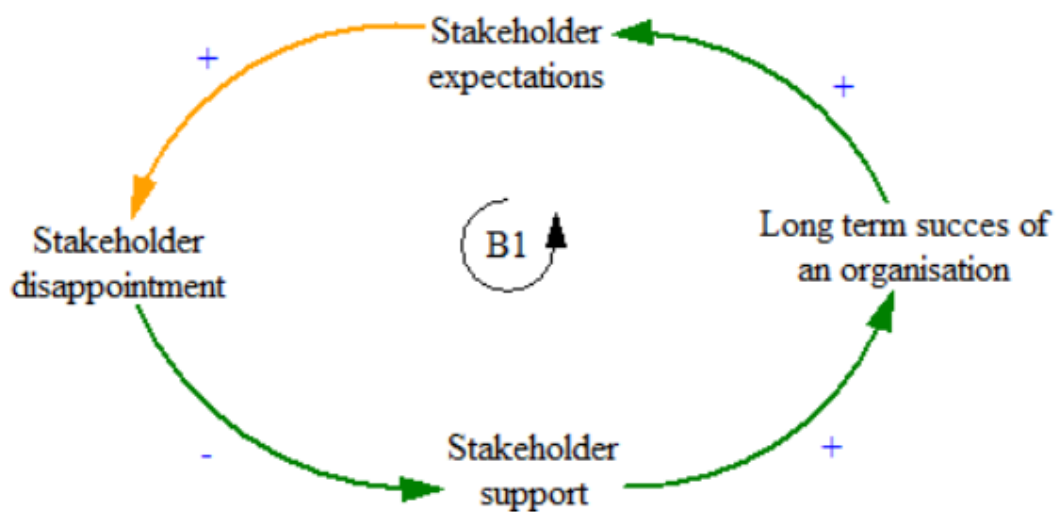
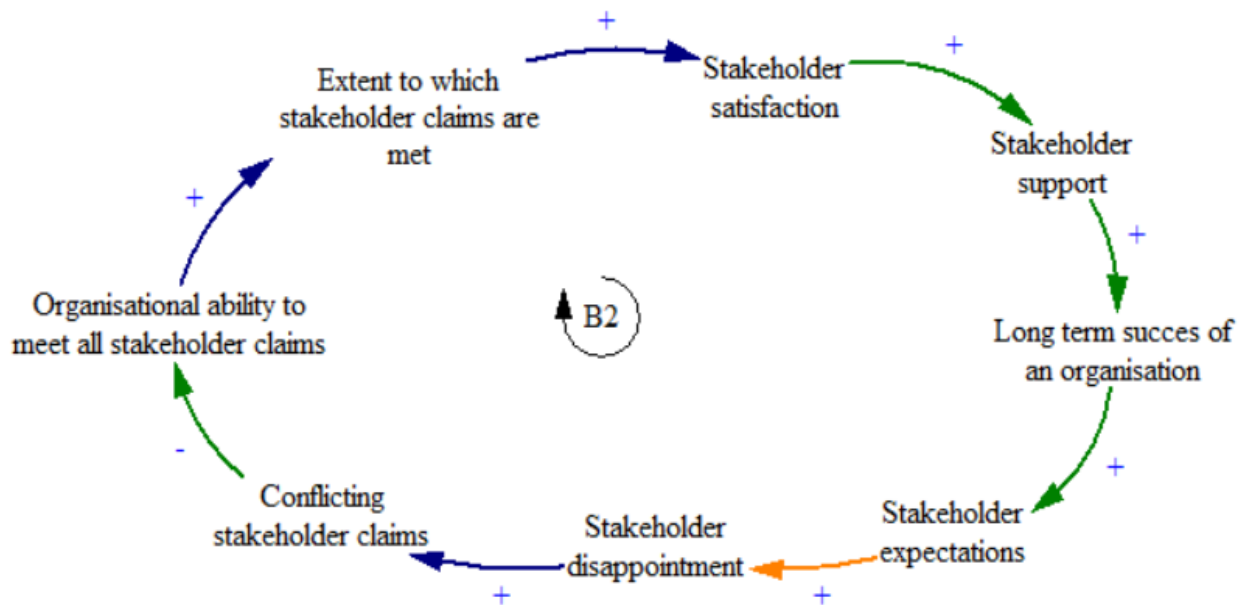*Validated feedback loop: balancing loop 1*

This feedback loop indicates that a higher long term success of an organisation causes the stakeholder expectations to rise. This in turn causes more stakeholder disappointment to occur, which will lead to lower stakeholder support. Because stakeholder support is needed for an organisation to be successful in the long term, this decrease in stakeholder support will cause the long term success of the organisation to decrease as well. Therefore, this feedback loop is balancing. This loop consists of 3 relations in which confidence has been established, and one relation that has been nuanced.
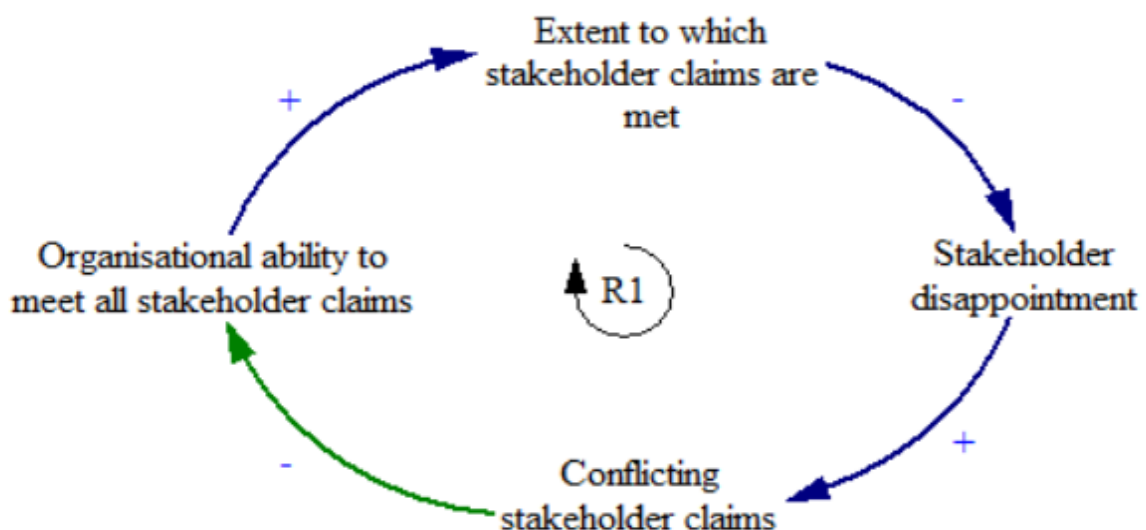
Validated feedback loop: reinforcing loop 1

The first feedback loop that has been added to the model is reinforcing loop 1 above. This loop emerged because of the modification of the model based on participant's suggestions for model

improvement. The addition of the variable 'extent to which stakeholder claims are met' and the positive relation between 'stakeholder disappointment' and 'conflicting stakeholder claims' cause this feedback loop to appear. This feedback loop shows that if stakeholder claims are met to a lower extent, stakeholder disappointment will grow. There will be more conflicting stakeholder claims which will lower the organisational ability to meet all stakeholder claims. This causes the extent to which stakeholder claims are met to be even lower, again inducing more stakeholder disappointment, and so on, emphasizing the reinforcing character of this feedback loop.


Validated feedback loop: balancing loop 2

The last feedback loop (balancing loop 2) that emerged consist of eight variables and covers a large part of the whole validated model. It includes both validated relations between variables and relations that have been included based on suggestions for model improvement. The feedback loop starts in a situation where stakeholder support has been increased. This leads to an increase in the long term success of the organisation and thereby the stakeholder expectations. This however induces stakeholder disappointment and an increase in the amount of conflicting stakeholder claims. The organisational ability to meet all stakeholder claims decreases, just as the extent to which stakeholder claims are met. Stakeholder satisfaction drops, causing the stakeholder support to decrease. This has a negative effect on the long term success of the organisation, emphasising the balancing effect of this feedback loop. This feedback loop is an interflow of validated balancing feedback loop 1 and validated reinforcing feedback loop 1, with the inclusion of the variable 'stakeholder satisfaction'.

It is now clear what the validated CLD looks like and what the feedback processes in this model are. In the context of research question 4 it is interesting to look at one more aspect. Research question 4 is about determining where the tipping point is between creating stakeholder satisfaction and stakeholder disappointment. To answer this question it is interesting to see which factors can influence both stakeholder satisfaction and stakeholder disappointment. The Vensim software package offers the possibility to view a 'causes tree', that is a visual representation variables in the model influencing certain variable. Now that the model has been validated, I can use this option to see which factors determine stakeholder satisfaction and stakeholder disappointment.
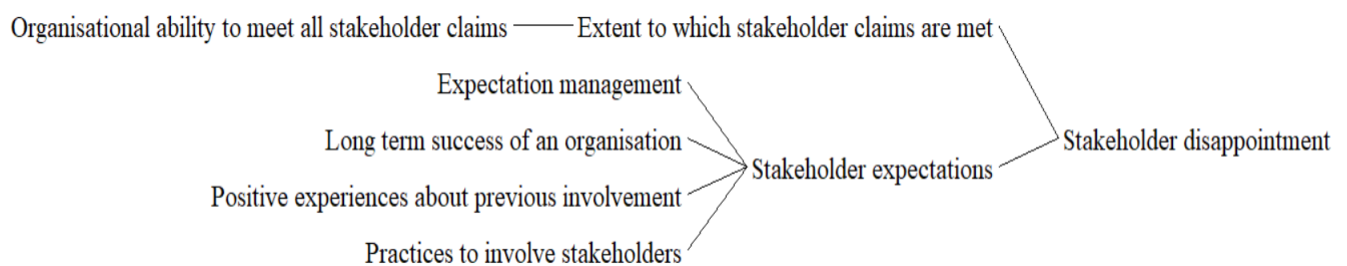
Causes tree 1: stakeholder disappointment
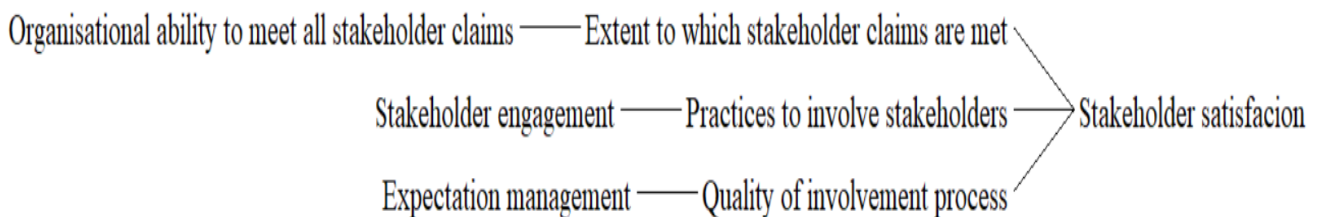
Causes tree 2: stakeholder satisfaction

The two causes trees above give insight in the factors that influence both stakeholder disappointment and satisfaction. The first factor is the extent to which stakeholder claims are met. Stakeholders whose claims are met by the organisations will feel more satisfied, while stakeholders whose claims are not met will feel more disappointed. These effect are also captured in reinforcing feedback loop 1 and balancing feedback loop 2. The other factor that influences both stakeholder disappointment and stakeholder satisfaction is expectation management. Regarding stakeholder disappointment, expectation management can tamper stakeholder expectations and therefore decrease the change of stakeholder disappointment. On the other hand, expectation management also positively influences the quality of the involvement processes which will make stakeholders feel more satisfied.

5. Conclusion and discussion

Now that I have analysed all the empirical materials and constructed a validated CLD, it is now time to come to a conclusion by formulating an answer to the research questions and to discuss what the implications of these conclusions are for both theory and practice. In this chapter, I will first formulate answers to the research questions before discussing their implications. I will finish by reflection on the methodology of this research and on my role as a researcher.

5.1 Conclusion

The first research question was as follows: *What are the factors that lead from stakeholder inclusiveness and engagement to either stakeholder satisfaction or stakeholder disappointment?* This question has been covered in the theoretical chapter of this research. According to theory, there are three ways how applying an inclusive stakeholder approach can lead to either stakeholder satisfaction or disappointment. This first is that applying an inclusive stakeholder approach will lead to more stakeholder engagement and more practices to involve stakeholders. These practices can lead to stakeholder satisfaction on one hand, but on the other hand they can also lead to higher stakeholder expectations. These higher expectations then increase the possibility of inducing stakeholder disappointment. Eskerod et al. (2015) refer to this phenomenon as *expectation escalation.* The second way is that applying an inclusive stakeholder approach will lead to more conflicting stakeholder claims and therefore lowering the organisational ability to meet all stakeholder claims. This would lead to lower stakeholder satisfaction and higher disappointment. The third way is that applying an inclusive stakeholder approach can cause a loss of focus on critical stakeholders by the organisation. This loss of focus will lead to a re-focus of attention to the critical stakeholders later in the process, and thereby inducing disappointment on the other stakeholders. These are the three ways how according to theory stakeholder inclusiveness and engagement can lead to stakeholder satisfaction or stakeholder disappointment.

Research question 2 was aimed at discovering the feedback processes: *What are the feedback processes involved in the relations between stakeholder engagement, satisfaction and disappointment?* To answer this question, I constructed a causal loop diagram consisting of 18 propositions derived from theory that were translated into relations between variables. This preliminary CLD has been shown and discussed in chapter 2. The structure of this model consists of six feedback loops: one reinforcing and five balancing loops. These six feedback loops describe the feedback processes that are present in the preliminary model. In general, they describe how a more inclusive stakeholder approach via different ways can lead to stakeholder

satisfaction or disappointment, and how this influences other variables in the model. In the end, these feedback processes come back to the starting point: stakeholder inclusiveness. How these feedback loops exactly work has been extensively discussed in chapter 2.

Research question 3 focussed on the validation of the preliminary CLD: *How do these feedback processes match the stakeholder experiences in the Eindhoven Airport case?* In the previous chapter, I have analysed all the empirical material to determine how the stakeholder experiences in the Eindhoven Airport case match the preliminary CLD. Through the validation process, confidence has been established in 12 of the 18 relations. 4 have been disconfirmed and 2 have been nuanced. Furthermore, 8 relations have been added to the model based on suggestions for model improvement the participants expressed. Altogether, I can say that the feedback processes from research question 2 match the stakeholder experiences in the Eindhoven Airport case to some extent, but there are also important differences. None of the stakeholders recognised a (loss of) focus on critical stakeholders in practice, therefore all relations involving this variable have been removed from the model. Furthermore, the stakeholders expressed that their degree of satisfaction or disappointment is mainly caused by the extent to which their claims are satisfied by Eindhoven Airport. Therefore, this variable has been added to the model. Also, the role of what Eskerod et al. (2015) call *expectation escalation* is nuanced because both the relation from practices to involve stakeholders to stakeholder expectations, and from stakeholder expectations to stakeholder disappointment are nuanced by the participants. Expectations as a stakeholder are not primarily determined by the practices the airport undertakes to involve stakeholders, but more by the stakeholder's experiences from previous involvement and especially by the way their expectations are managed before and during the process. Finally, in this case it appears to be true that more long term success of Eindhoven Airport leads to higher stakeholder expectations and therefore to a higher possibility of stakeholder disappointment if these expectations are not met. All the modifications to the model have an impact on the feedback structure: from the six preliminary feedback loops, only one remains (balancing loop 5). However, two other feedback loops emerged in the model: one reinforcing loop and one larger balancing loop connecting the other two smaller feedback loops. I can conclude that the feedback processes from the preliminary model match the experiences of the stakeholders from Eindhoven Airport to some extent, but based on their suggestions for improvement significant changes to the model and its feedback structure have been made.

The first three research questions have been a prelude to the fourth and final research question: *Where is the tipping point between creating stakeholder satisfaction and stakeholder*

disappointment? The three feedback loops and the two causes trees shown in the previous chapter provide the basis for an answer to this question. In line with the experiences from the stakeholders of Eindhoven Airport, the extent to which stakeholder claims are met is the most important tipping point between stakeholder satisfaction and stakeholder disappointment. Stakeholders that get their claim satisfied experience satisfaction, while stakeholders whose claims are not realised experience disappointment. The feedback process described in reinforcing loop 1 illustrate how this feeling of disappointment could get more and more extreme. There is however one other critical factor that can be a tipping point between stakeholder satisfaction and disappointment: expectation management. Even stakeholders whose claims were not realised, expressed that they still experienced some degree of satisfaction because their expectations were tempered before and during the process. This way, their expectations didn't rise and therefore they experienced no disappointment. In conclusion I can say that there are two tipping points between creating stakeholder satisfaction and stakeholder disappointment: the extent to which stakeholder claims are met and the way expectations are managed. Stakeholders whose claims are realised will feel satisfied, and stakeholders whose claims were not realised but whose expectations were successfully managed can still experience satisfaction instead of disappointment. Stakeholders whose claims are not realised and whose expectations were not successfully managed will most probably feel disappointed.

5.2 Discussion

The objective of this research was to contribute to the existing knowledge on stakeholder theory by determining the tipping point between stakeholder satisfaction and stakeholder disappointment. This objective is highly theoretical, but from this theoretical contribution practical lessons can be learned as well. In this part of the chapter I will discuss the theoretical and practical implications of this research and give suggestions for future research on this topic.

5.2.1 Theoretical implications

Stakeholder satisfaction has been a common topic in the stakeholder management literature ever since there is consensus that the long term success of a firm depends on its ability to create stakeholder satisfaction on the long run (McVea & Freeman, 2005; Berrone, Surroca & Tribó, 2007). Even though stakeholder satisfaction seems to be closely related to stakeholder disappointment, only very little has been written on the latter topic. The main contributions on this topic come from Reed (2008) and Eskerod et al. (2015), whose work has been extensively

discussed earlier in this research. Therefore, the main theoretical contribution of this research comes from the fact that stakeholder satisfaction and disappointment have been investigated together, along with other factors influencing these two. Freeman in his 2010 preface for the reissue of his famous book from 1984 says he believes many people wrongly suggested that dealing with multiple stakeholders leads to trade-offs and conflict (Freeman, 2010). Instead, he holds the vision that where stakeholders interest conflict, there is an opportunity for value creation to come to solutions that satisfy all stakeholders (Freeman, 2010). From this point of view, it is not strange that the topic of stakeholder disappointment has never been extensively discussed in the theoretical works by Freeman. In his eyes, there are always opportunities to create satisfaction for all stakeholders. However, since stakeholder disappointment has been reported as the cause for many failures in practice (e.g. Dalcher, 2009; Jepsen & Eskerod, 2009) it would be somewhat naïve to leave this topic underexposed in the stakeholder literature.

This research has contributed to the debate on stakeholder theory and especially stakeholder satisfaction and disappointment by further investigating the causes of these two phenomenon's and the feedback processes that are involved. The first implication of this research is that a loss of focus on critical stakeholders as a cause of stakeholder disappointment has been disconfirmed. Even though there were critical stakeholders in this case, mainly the majority and minority shareholders Schiphol, Eindhoven municipality and the Province of Noord-Brabant, and the airlines flying to and from Eindhoven Airport, a loss of- and (re)focus on these critical stakeholders did not lead to stakeholder disappointment at all. This implies that stakeholder disappointment might have other causes, perhaps causes that have yet been undiscovered. Another important implication of this research is that stakeholder disappointment is mainly caused by the extent to which a stakeholder's claims are satisfied. This suggest that the definition from Reed (2008) of disappointed stakeholders is accurate: stakeholders ''*who feel let down when their claims are not realized*'' (Reed, 2008: 2420).

The main theoretical implication of this research is made by determining the turning point between stakeholder satisfaction and disappointment. The findings of this research imply that stakeholder satisfaction and disappointment can be seen as multi-dimensional constructs. The first dimension is about the degree to which the claims of a stakeholder are satisfied by an organisation: if their claims are satisfied, stakeholder satisfaction will occur and if claims remain unsatisfied, there is the danger of stakeholder disappointment. However, the occurrence of stakeholder disappointment and satisfaction is not that straightforward, because there are other factors that influence these two. This second dimension indicates that a stakeholder whose

claims are not realised could be made to feel satisfied instead of disappointed, while the level of satisfaction of stakeholders whose claims are already realised could be increased. A key factor in this is expectation management. Stakeholders whose expectations about the involvement process are tampered can experience satisfaction even though their claims are not realised. They will feel satisfied about the fact that they are involved in the first place and that they receive information about important topics, but because their expectations didn't rise stakeholder disappointment will not occur. For satisfied stakeholders whose claims are already satisfied, the quality of the involvement process can increase satisfaction even further. This quality is also determined by expectation management, but other factors might play an important role as well.

Finally, the feedback structure of the validated CLD of this research implies that the levels stakeholder satisfaction and disappointment change over time and actually influence each other. Balancing loop 2, as discussed in the previous chapter, involves eight variables among which are stakeholder satisfaction and stakeholder disappointment. Higher stakeholder satisfaction can lead to higher stakeholder disappointment, which will eventually lead to lower satisfaction. The balancing effect of this feedback loop implies that stakeholder satisfaction and disappointment should always be considered together since the one cannot be understood without the other.

5.2.2 Future research

Now that I have discussed the theoretical implication, I will also discuss some suggestions for future research based on the findings of this research.

My first suggestion is based on the fact that in this case Eindhoven Airport claims to apply an inclusive stakeholder approach, while in practice the stakeholders experience different. They feel Eindhoven Airport focusses on the most important stakeholders, and mainly those stakeholders that have a positive attitude towards the airport. Therefore, building on this research only it is hard to come to conclusions regarding the effects of an inclusive stakeholder approach. For future research it will be interesting to investigate a case where an inclusive stakeholder approach is proven to be applied. This way, knowledge can be created on the effects of this inclusive stakeholder approach on other factors regarding stakeholder satisfaction and disappointment.

My second suggestion would be to construct a causal loop diagram about stakeholder satisfaction and disappointment with the use of Group Model Building (GMB). This approach

is based on system dynamics methodology and is a way to tackle messy problems (Vennix, 1996). It involves a group of people, in this case stakeholders of a certain organisation, that together construct a system dynamics model including all the factors that are related to stakeholder satisfaction and disappointment. This process is guided by one or multiple facilitators who are skilled in both system dynamics methodology and group facilitation. The main difference between this approach and the approach followed in this research is that this researched involved a preliminary CLD based on theoretical propositions, while in the GMB-approach the participants start from zero and build a model completely based on their experiences as a stakeholder. It will be very interesting to see if this approach yields different results than the approach followed in this research.

My final suggestion for future research would be to more closely investigate the variables that have been added to the model based on the participant's suggestions for model improvement. These variables are 'expectation management', 'positive experiences about previous involvement' and the 'degree of dependence on Eindhoven Airport'. For a system dynamics model, the behaviour of the system should primarily be determined by the system as a whole and not by individual parts (Vennix, 1996). Therefore, the model boundary encloses the system of interest. The behaviour of the model within this system should be created by the interaction of the components within (Vennix, 1996), not by forces from outside the model. In the validated CLD, the three variables mentioned above are included in the model because they influence other variables, but they themselves are not influenced others. For this reason, they are not part of any feedback loop The same is true for the variable 'inclusive stakeholder approach', because the relation influencing this variable has been disconfirmed. These four variables are included because according to Vennix (1996), all relations between elements which are considered to be important should be included in the model. However, to further improve the model and thereby the knowledge on stakeholder satisfaction and disappointment, it will be interesting to investigate those factors that are not influenced by other variables. Because these variables are added based on suggestions for model improvement, I in this research did not have the opportunity to investigate them any further. That will be the next step in the improvement of the model.

5.2.3 Practical implications
Now that it's clear what the theoretical implications of this research are, I will also discuss the implications it has for practice. These implications will be divided into implications for organisations in general and implications for Eindhoven Airport specifically.

I will start with practical implications for organisations in general. The main finding of this research was that stakeholder satisfaction and disappointment for a large part are determined by the extent to which stakeholder claims are met. Therefore, organisations should be aware that the degree to which they satisfy the claims of different stakeholder groups is the main cause for stakeholder satisfaction and disappointment. Based on this, organisations can give extra attention to those stakeholders who are at risk of getting disappointed because their claims are not realised. However, it is even better if organisations actively manage the expectations of stakeholders beforehand. They can perform a stakeholder analysis and determine which claims of stakeholders the organisation can and can not satisfy. Based on this analysis organisations can manage (or tamper) the expectations of stakeholder to prevent stakeholder disappointment from occurring because of too high expectations. Furthermore, it is important for organisations to realise that involving stakeholders in the first place can already lead to satisfaction. Stakeholders appreciate it when they are being engaged and when practices to involve stakeholders are organised. Especially when the quality of this involvement process is good, that is with skilled facilitation and clear expectation management, stakeholder satisfaction can increase. The stakeholders in this research said to appreciate it when they are involved and informed, even when their claims can not be realised. Furthermore, organisations should realise that both stakeholder satisfaction and disappointment are part of a balancing feedback loop. There is no guarantee that a satisfied stakeholder will remain satisfied, just as it is not certain that a disappointed stakeholder will remain disappointed. As discussed earlier, the long term success of organisations is to some extent determined by the ability of the organisation to create stakeholder satisfaction (and support) on the long run. However, if the organisation is more successful, expectations of stakeholders will rise and therefore the risk of stakeholder disappointment will increase. Organisations should be aware of this and realise that not only is the support of stakeholders needed to be successful, but success will also lead to higher expectations. The management of stakeholders and their claims is therefore an ongoing process that can never be seen as completed.

Besides these practical implications for organisations in general there are some implications for Eindhoven Airport as the subject of this research. My first advice is to suit the action to the word and actually apply an inclusive stakeholder approach. Even though they say to do so in their annual report (Eindhoven Airport NV, 2018) clearly the stakeholders experience otherwise. Based on their comments, it seems to be the case that Eindhoven Airport particularly involves those stakeholders that are in favour of the growth of the airport or stakeholders that

Eindhoven Airport is in some way dependent on. I believe it would benefit both Eindhoven Airport and the stakeholders if they would also involve stakeholders that have a more negative attitude toward the (growth of) the airport, even though Eindhoven Airport itself is not dependent on them. The participants in this research repeatedly expressed that they understand that not all their claims can be realised, but that they appreciate it if they are involved in a fair and transparent process. Therefore my advice to the airport is to engage more with all the stakeholders, to clearly communicate why certain decisions that affect them have been made and to manage their expectations about the involvement process well. This will make the stakeholders feel more satisfied and recuse the risk of stakeholder disappointment.

5.3 Reflection

Now that I have provided an answer to the research questions and discussed the implications, I will take the opportunity to reflect on the methodological aspects of this research and to reflect on my personal role as a researcher.

5.3.1 Methodological reflection

In this paragraph I will reflect on the methodological approach of this research by discussing its validity. Validity refers to the question whether the empirical observations match the phenomenon that is the subject of the research questions. The first research question was about the factors that lead from stakeholder inclusiveness and engagement to either stakeholder satisfaction or disappointment. It was easy to answer this question based on theory, but it was harder to compare this theory-based answer to the empirical reality as observed in the Eindhoven Airport case. The reason for this is that Eindhoven Airport, according to the participants, does not apply an inclusive stakeholder approach. Therefore I could not come to any conclusions regarding the effects of stakeholder inclusiveness itself. That is a limitation of this research, but at the same time it is an opportunity for future research.

Another limitation is the small sample size (*n)* of this research. I managed to arrange interviews with seven stakeholders of Eindhoven Airport. I could have got a more complete overview of the situation in the Eindhoven Airport case if I had interviewed more stakeholders. Also, the validity would have been higher if a representative from Eindhoven Airport NV itself would have agreed for an interview to elaborate on their stakeholder management strategies and how they want to translate their intent of applying an inclusive stakeholder approach to concrete actions. However, despite the small sample size, I believe the amount of data I collected already led to data saturation for this part of the process of increasing confidence in the model. The

seven stakeholders that I have interviewed already had a lot of suggestions for model improvement based on their specific experiences. It was already a challenge to translate all these suggestions to a model that is a best representation of the experiences of all these stakeholders. Therefore, I believe the small sample size has not been a limitation for this research because it provided more than enough data to improve and increase confidence in the model. Instead, it would be more valuable to repeat this structure validity test with the current model and another group of stakeholders to further increase confidence in the model and to inquire if this model is also a good representation of the experiences of other stakeholders.

A strong aspect of the methodological approach of this research were the semi-structured interviews where I systematically discussed each relation in the model and asked for the experiences of the participants. This method allowed me to obtain in-depth knowledge on how a proposition from theory is embedded in practice. Vital was the openness and enthusiasm of the participants, because without exception they were passionate about the topic and answered my questions in all honesty. This is also illustrated by the fact that they all allowed me to cite them by their name and they all are interested in the conclusions of this research. I believe that the experiences of all stakeholders, and that all stakeholders can relate to on the individual level. This model formed the basis for the theoretical implications earlier in this chapter, underlining the importance of this validated model.

5.3.2 Personal reflection

To conclude this master thesis I will reflect on my personal role as a researcher. A vital aspect of any thesis project is the selection of an appropriate topic that is interesting and inviting for further research. For me, it was easy to find this specific topic when I was reading the literature on the field of stakeholder theory. A lot has been written on stakeholder satisfaction, while stakeholder disappointment was underexposed. Naturally I felt the need to further investigate this aspect, and system dynamic methodology offered the perfect tools to inquire the tipping point between stakeholder satisfaction and disappointment. The selection of a relevant case was also straightforward. For me, a former inhabitant of the city of Eindhoven, and with the growing societal controversy about the negative consequences and nuisance of aviation, it was obvious which case I wanted to investigate: Eindhoven Airport. Because of this combination between an interesting topic and a relevant case I remained passionate and motivated to complete this research.

As a researcher, I learned that it is not always easy to get access to the data you want to acquire, especially if the data you need are derived from personal face-to-face interviews. When I approached stakeholders of Eindhoven Airport, many replied positively and agreed to arrange a meeting. However, is was hard to get in touch with (a representative of) Eindhoven Airport because I received a rejection several times. Apparently they didn't have the time for someone to speak to me, or perhaps they didn't approve my research topic with the airport as subject. Nevertheless, I am happy with the useful information I obtained during the interviews and I hope that in the future Eindhoven Airport will have a more open attitude for requests for scientific research, since they play an important role for the economic environment of the Eindhoven region, but also because of their important societal role offering airport facilities to the community.

Finally I will reflect on my role as an interviewer. The seven interviews, which in total lasted for almost 10 hours, learned me some great lessons about doing interviews. An aspect that challenged me was to maintain the structure of the interview without being disruptive to the participants. Some participants had the tendency to speak very extensively and going very much into detail. This is valuable if it is on a relevant matter, but on some occasions this happened on matters that were not relevant to the research. Because for most interviews the time was limited, I didn't want to lose too much time speaking about other matters. However, at times it was challenging to find a way to guide the conversation more into the direction I wanted, without disrupting the participants and making him or her feel uncomfortable. For any future interviews I will perform, I will make sure to timely steer the conversation in the right direction so it doesn't get carried away from the topic. Another lesson that is especially valid for disconfirmatory interviews about SD models is the use of printed relations to visualise the relation that is being discussed. This was already hinted by Andersen et al. (2012). For the first interview, I forgot to bring these printed relations and I noticed during the interview that is was hard for the participant to understand the relation and think about examples from practice at the same time. For the next interviews I did bring the printed relations, and it was far more easy for the participants to think about the relations because they could actually see the one we were discussing. This contributed to the quality of the interview.

Altogether I am very satisfied with the course of this research and the results it has yielded. I think it has made a contribution to theory and delivered implications for practice, and also I feel that I have developed myself further as a researcher.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Interview Scheme

Appendix 2: Consent form

Appendix 3: Participant's comments per proposition

Appendix 1: Interview scheme

This is a translated version of the questions I have asked during the interviews. The original interviews were performed in Dutch and therefore the questions were also asked in Dutch.

Once again thank you very much for your willingness to participate in this interview. First, I will ask you some more general questions about the role of your organisation as a stakeholder of Eindhoven Airport. Afterwards, in a more structured way I will submit some relations between two variables and ask you for your experiences. If you at any time have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask them so I can explain more clearly.

1. Could you elaborate on the daily activities of your organisation?
   (What is the goal, what pursuits do you have?)

2. Could you elaborate on your specific role within this organisation?

A stakeholder is any person or group that has a certain stake in the actions of a particular organisation, in this case Eindhoven Airport.

3. Can you elaborate what your organisation's stake is regarding Eindhoven Airport?

4. In which way are you (your organisation) involved with the strategic plans of Eindhoven Airport?
   (Which initiatives are there to involve you?)
   (How can you influence the plans of Eindhoven Airport?)

5. According to theory, a rise in the **practices to involve stakeholders** (from Eindhoven Airport) will make your **satisfaction as a stakeholder** increase. Does this match your own experiences? *(Why does or doesn't it?)*

6. According to theory you would have **higher expectations** about the degree to which Eindhoven Airport take your stakes into account, if there are **more practices to involve stakeholders.** Does this match your own experiences? *(Why does or doesn't it?)*
   (Expectations regards to the expectations you have about Eindhoven Airport seriously considering your stake in important decisions)

7. According to theory, having **high expectations** regarding the consideration of your stakes will lead to **stakeholder disappointment.** Does this match your own experiences? *(Why does or doesn't it?)*

8. According tot theory you would be more inclined to **support** Eindhoven Airport if you feel **satisfied as a stakeholder.** Does this match your own experiences? *(Why does or doesn't it?)*
   (Support regards to accepting decisions, supporting decisions and not resisting to decisions)

9. On the other hand, when you are **disappointed as a stakeholder,** according to theory you will be less likely to support Eindhoven Airport. Does this match your own experiences? *(Why does or doesn't it?)*

(Support regards to accepting decisions, supporting decisions and not resisting to decisions)

10. According to theory, when you are **more/less likely to support Eindhoven Airport**, in the future you **will/will not participate again** in activities organised by Eindhoven Airport to involve you. Does this match your own experiences? *(Why does or doesn't it?)*
(Customise to satisfied or disappointed stakeholder)
(Ask about the willingness to participate in involvement practices and the possibility for an inclusive stakeholder approach)

Thank you for your answers so far. I would now like to focus on another aspect. Eindhoven Airport state, in their annual report and on the website, that they include in principle all stakeholders that they can identify in their strategic debates. Therefore, they involve as many stakeholders as possible.

11. How does this intention from Eindhoven Airport work out in practice?
(Are many stakeholders actually involved? Are, to your opinion, all different stakeholders being involved?)

12. According to theory the **involvement of in principle all stakeholders** would lead to **more conflicting stakeholder claims.** Does this match your own experiences? *(Why does or doesn't it?)*
(Doe more conflicts arise due to the different stakes, or does including more stakeholders lead to more consensus?

(Depending on the answer to question 12)
13. According to theory the **rise in conflicting stakeholder claims** lowers the **organisational ability to meet all stakeholder claims.** Does this match your own experiences? *(Why does or doesn't it?)*

14. A: According to theory you would experience **disappointment** if Eindhoven Airport **does not satisfy your claim.** Does this match your own experiences? *(Why does or doesn't it?)*

B: According to theory you would experience **satisfaction** if Eindhoven Airport **does satisfy your claim.** Does this match your own experiences? *(Why does or doesn't it?)*

15. According to theory the **involvement of in principle all stakeholders** by Eindhoven Airport would lead them to **lose focus** on the most critical stakeholders. Does this match your own experiences? *(Why does or doesn't it?)*
(Critical stakeholder are those stakeholders that Eindhoven Airport is most dependent on)

16. (Only when 15 has been confirmed)
According to theory a **(re)focus on the most critical stakeholders** would lead to you feeling more **disappointed** as a stakeholder. Does this match your own experiences? *(Why does or doesn't it?)*

Finally I have 2 more questions about possible factors that might influence your expectations as a stakeholder.

17. According to theory, the **long term success** of the organisation, in this case Eindhoven Airport, would increase your **expectations** regarding the consideration of your stake by Eindhoven Airport. Does this match your own experiences? *(Why does or doesn't it?)*

18. According to theory, the **quality of the involvement process** would lead to higher **expectations** regarding the consideration of your stake by Eindhoven Airport. Does this match your own experiences? *(Why does or doesn't it?)*

So far, we have discussed some individual relations to check if what has been stated in theory also matches your personal experiences. To finalise I would like to discuss some feedback loops containing the relations we have just talked about. A feedback loop is a circle of relations that influence each other, causing each variable in the loop to influence itself again in the end. Let's go over these loops and see if they match your personal experiences.

Loop 1

Loop 2

Loop 3

Loop 4

Loop 5

Loop 6

Appendix 2: Form of consent

This form of consent refers to the interviews from Jesper Slaats, masters student Business Analysis & Modeling at Radboud University in Nijmegen, with different stakeholders of Eindhoven Airport.

Purpose of the research and the interview

The purpose of the research is to obtain knowledge on how stakeholders are involved by organisations, especially to find out when stakeholders satisfaction and when stakeholder disappointment occurs. This interview therefore serves the purpose for me to learn about your experiences as a stakeholder of Eindhoven Airport. Based on your experiences I can determine if the current theory on stakeholders matches the reality.

Voluntary consent

You have agreed to participate in this interview, for which I'm very thankful. I would like to point out to you that you can always pause or end the interview if you feel the need to. You are also free to not answer certain questions if this is difficult for you. If you at any time have questions about the interview, please don't hesitate to ask them.

Recording

With your permission I would like to audio-record the interview so I can make an elaboration of the interview based on this recording. I will use these elaborations only as empirical material for my research and they will only be available to myself and my direct supervisor.

Possibility for anonymity

If you wish so, it is possible for me to treat this interview anonymously in the analysis of my research. This would mean that you will not be cited by name, and only quotations will be used that can not be traced back to you or to the organisation that you are part of.

However, I would like to use this interview in my analysis and cite you by name. I will do this only of you give your consent. Also, this would mean that I will send you my elaboration of the interview afterwards, to allow you to reconsider or rephrase certain parts.

☐   I take part in this interview on voluntary basis and I am aware that I can pause or stop the interview at any point in time

☐   I give permission for making an audio-recording of this interview

☐   I consent to be cited by name, after an elaboration of the interview has been send to me for control.

Name: Signature:

Date and place:

Appendix 3: Participant's comments per proposition