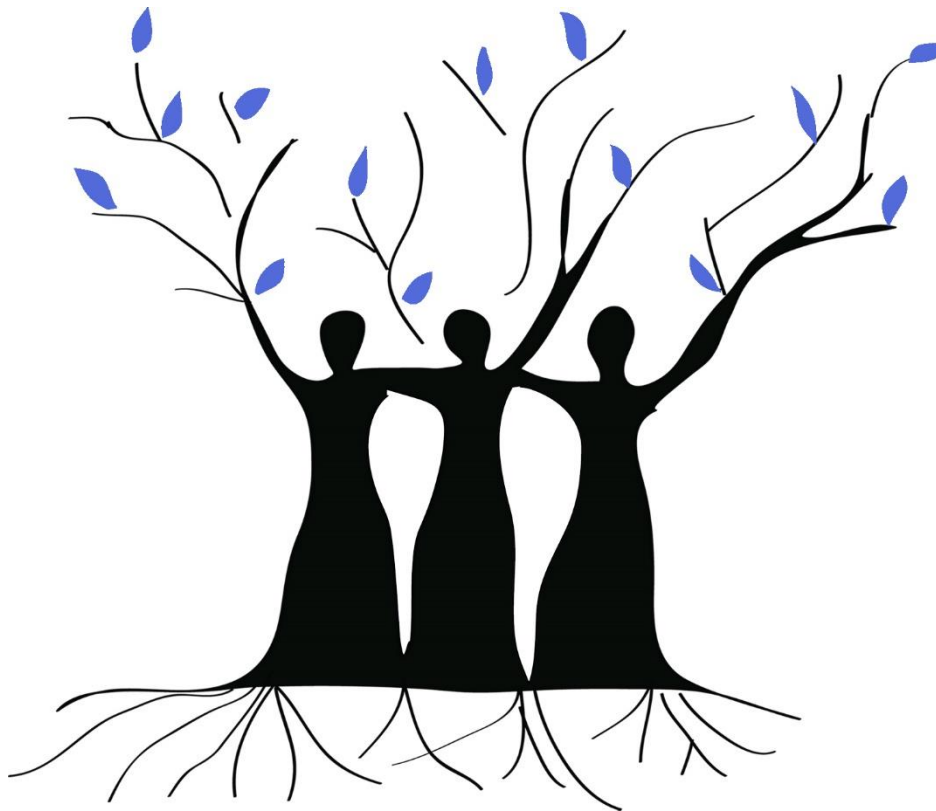# The effect of the role of the coordinator on family control in FGC: an exploratory meta-analysis

Thesis MSc in Public Administration

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Summary

Although originally from New Zealand, 'family group conferencing' (FGC) is currently being practiced throughout many countries of the world. Family group conferences are local governance models that are used in the decision-making processes regarding problems of families and the support from human service organizations. In a FGC, a family experiencing problems, their closely related social network, professionals from relevant human service organizations, and an independent coordinator come together to cooperatively draft a plan on how to deal with the problems of the family. A fundamental idea behind FGC is empowering families by giving them the power to decide upon their own situation, called 'family control'. Although the literature on FGC emphasizes that the role of the coordinator is essential to achieve family control, little knowledge exists on how this relationship comes about. In this thesis, it is assessed how structural and cultural aspects of the role of the coordinator affect family control in FGC.

Using the theoretical 'Institutional Analysis and Development Framework' and general insights from role theory, as well as more specific theories relating to the role of the coordinator in FGC and his relationships with other relevant actors, 12 hypotheses have been formulated on the impact of structural and cultural aspects of the role of the coordinator on family control. Through an exploratory meta-analysis of 20 existing empirical studies on FGC, these hypotheses have been tested. This thesis thus assesses what knowledge can be derived from the existing empirical studies on the impact of the structural and cultural aspects of the role of the coordinator on family control in FGC.

In terms of the structural aspects of the role of the coordinator, it seems, based on the findings from the meta-analysis, that restricting the discretion of coordinators through obligations is more conducive to family control than providing coordinators with discretion through rights and authorizations. Moreover, this thesis also found that it can impede family control to make FGC outcomes binding and consequential, that the coordinator's access to information and the degree to which he shares information with other participants enhances family control, and that his skills in terms of 'cultural competence' also enhance family control. In terms of the cultural aspects of the role of the coordinator, it is found that too much paternalism of the coordinator impedes family control, but that a bit of paternalism can actually enhance family control. Finally, it is found that it is conducive to family control when coordinators feel free from- or resist being guided by bureaucratic and legalistic pressures of the own organization. More abstract, this thesis found that policies and practices of FGC that focus too strongly on family control can actually impede family control, and that decision-making power of coordinators and family control can in some cases be complementary rather than contradictory.

Based on these findings, this thesis has provided recommendations for policy and practice of FGC. Moreover, based on a discussion of the limitations of this thesis, recommendations are provided for further research. Although there are considerable limitations to this thesis, mainly relating to the fact that relationships between aspects of the role of the coordinator and family control are tested bivariately, this thesis constitutes the start of acquiring knowledge on the effect of the role of the coordinator on family control. Because this thesis is the first academic account focusing on this effect, it functions as the basis from which further research can depart. Until this further research is conducted, findings and recommendations of this thesis are the best practical guidance available on increasing family control through the role of the coordinator.

Preface

The writing of this master thesis has been a great learning experience, both academically and personally. Academically, I have gained much insight into methodological issues of research. Moreover, although I found it challenging to combine thinking analytically with presenting findings as clearly as possible to the reader, I have learned much in this respect. Personally, the writing of this master thesis has taught me to keep faith in myself and to approach challenges positively. After six months of hard work and lots of coffee, it is my pleasure to present the findings of this research. I hope that people will learn from it and take advice out of it.

Needless to say, I could not have done this without the help and support of others. First and foremost, I would like to thank prof. dr. Bas Denters and prof. dr. Ariana Need for their kind and competent supervision. During my research process, they were always there to give me advice and to put me with my feet back on the ground. They helped me to keep the right focus, gave relevant instructions and inspired me to aim for the best.

Also on the personal level I have received a lot of support. I am thankful for my friends who have supported and distracted me. You gave me renewed energy after days of hard work. I also want to thank my parents and my boyfriend. Your support and patience gave me the faith and energy necessary to complete this thesis.

Suzanne Coehorst

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Content

1. Introduction

In 1989, New Zealand introduced a new governance model in its childcare and protection legislation that would later spark global interest and challenge the traditional relations between human service organizations and families in terms of decision-making in many countries. In the 1980s, the population in New Zealand became dissatisfied with the child care and protection system in that country, mainly because many children were being placed outside of their (extended) family and because families did not have any say in this process (Connolly, 2006). Especially the indigenous population of New Zealand, the Maori, felt marginalized because of the overrepresentation of Maori children in the child care system and because the placement of these children outside their familial network resulted in alienation from the Maori culture and lifestyle that the Maori are keen to protect. As an answer to the dissatisfaction and alleged marginalization of the Maori, as of November 1989, all children in New Zealand considered to be in need of care and protection were to be referred for a Family Group Conference (FGC).

In short, a FGC is a meeting in which a family experiencing problems, their extended family or closely related social network, professionals from relevant human service organizations, and an independent coordinator come together to cooperatively draft a plan on how to deal with the problems of the family. While social work and human service organizations in many countries have traditionally relied upon systems in which professionals were the 'directors' of solving clients' problems by assessing needs and making decisions, the fundamental idea of FGC is to give families themselves the power to decide upon their own situation (referred to as 'family control') and on whether and how they want to be supported by human service organizations. However, as human service organizations and social workers in this context still have the responsibility to ensure the safety of family members and minimize risk, these workers can only approve the plans drafted by the family that fall within the worker's boundaries of safety and protection. In this light, the rationale of FGC can really be seen as a partnership between professionals and families. The idea of giving families themselves the power to decide over their own situation in part stems from broader considerations of empowerment and increasing the effectivity of state-provided services. In terms of empowerment, it is thought that giving people themselves decision-making power over their own situations enhances their feeling of responsibility, making them more likely to become active participants in society rather than passive care-receivers (Shera and Page, 1996; Trethewey, 1997). In terms of increasing the effectivity of state-provided services, it is thought that, because families decide themselves on the support they need, FGC enables professional support to be flexibly and specifically tailored to the needs of the family. In this light, FGC ensures that professional support is only employed when families and their networks cannot do it alone.

In general, and especially compared to traditional models of decision-making, evaluations of FGCs throughout the globe have reported positive results. Generally, studies have demonstrated that FGC participants like the process, that they are satisfied with how the conferences go, that agreements are reached to the satisfaction of participants, and that families mostly feel they have an actual say in the process (Pennell, 2004; Sieppert et al., 2000). However, because contextual aspects, power dynamics and actual behaviors of participants are crucial to the extent to which individuals feel empowered, 'it cannot be assumed that the existence of FGCs directly increases the power of families or necessarily reduces the power of the state' (Connolly and Masson, 2014, p. 405). Therefore, close attention must be focused to the wider context and roles of participants in FGC and their relationship to power dynamics in family group conferencing. Throughout the literature, especially the role of the coordinator has been emphasized as being crucial to ensuring the participation of family members in decision-making (Darlington et al., 2012; Levine, 2000; Merkel-Holguin, 2004). Indeed, it is the task of the coordinator to be an independent facilitator of family control, managing the tensions inherent in

FGC between the professionals' responsibility to keep the family members safe and the FGC-objective to give the family control over its own situation. While it is throughout the literature thus emphasized that the role of the coordinator is important in relation to family control, little has been said about how this relationship actually comes about. In this thesis, it will be assessed how the role of coordinators in FGC affects the degree to which families can exercise control over their own situation.

Because participatory decision-making has internationally become an increasing focus since the 1980s and because FGC has spurred much enthusiasm across the globe, the FGC model originating from New Zealand is now used in many countries. In the United States, the practice is incorporated under the name Family Group Decision Making, and Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, Sweden, Israel, Belgium, and the Netherlands have also adopted FGC. While FGCs were designed in New Zealand to deal with child care and protection issues, they are now being used across the world for many other issues such as (youth) justice, child behavior difficulties, educational problems, etc. (Holland and O'Neill, 2006). Because FGC predominantly occurs within child welfare and protection, this thesis will focus on FGCs in this area. Within this area, problems revolve around parents who are unable to take care of their children due to maltreatment, neglect, substance abuse, etc., and often these conferences focus on the question of whether and how their child(ren) are placed out of home.

1.1. Method

Although very little literature discusses how the relationship between the role of the coordinator and family control actually comes about, many studies exist that provide information on aspects of the role of the coordinator on the one hand and family control on the other. Whether these studies then specifically link these aspects of the role of the coordinator to family control or not, comparing aspects of the role of the coordinator and outcomes in terms of family control throughout multiple studies can provide knowledge on how the role of the coordinator affects family control. In this exploratory study, it is aimed to identify what knowledge on the relationship between the role of the coordinator in FGC and family control can be derived from the already existing studies. Therefore, in order to integrate findings from multiple existing studies, a meta-analysis of 20 relevant studies is conducted. In a meta-analysis, original findings are analyzed and from the researcher's own interpretation integrated into a broader analysis (Zimmer, 2006). Indeed, a meta-analysis is pre-eminently suited to explore what knowledge can be derived from existing literature about a particular subject: integrating findings from multiple studies can provide knowledge that would be unavailable from individual studies alone. In this thesis, findings from 20 relevant studies on differing FGC aspects are integrated into an analysis of how the role of the coordinator affects family control. In this meta-analysis, 'relevant' studies consist of both qualitative and quantitative empirical work that has been published in peer-reviewed academic journals since 2000, specifically focusing on family group conferences and providing information on the degree of family control in the particular FGC instances discussed. The 20 studies included in the literature sample were selected using academic search engines and 'snowball-sampling', and report on FGC in New Zealand, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and Sweden.[1]

Throughout the international literature, many FGC variants have been empirically researched, some of them also providing information on the degree of family control. Through a meta-analysis of the latter studies, it is assessed how the role of the coordinator in FGC affects family control. The meta-analysis tests several hypotheses on the bivariate relationships between aspects of the role of the coordinator and family control. These aspects of the role of the coordinator consist of 'structural' and 'cultural' aspects, the reasons for which will be discussed in the theoretical framework. Although there are many

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[1] No Dutch studies on FGC are included in the literature sample because no Dutch studies appeared using the sampling methods of academic search engines and 'snowball-sampling'. The sampling methods will be discussed in more detail later in this thesis.

differences in how FGCs are held throughout the globe and within countries, it is not in the scope of this thesis to compare how different FGC variants and their contexts affect family control. Indeed, this thesis will purely focus on the hypothesized bivariate relationships between aspects of the role of the coordinator in FGC and family control. In chapter 2, a more elaborate consideration of methodological issues is provided.

1.2. Research question

Attested by a meta-analysis of relevant literature issued since 2000, how do structural and cultural aspects of the role of coordinators in family group conferencing affect the degree to which families can exercise control over their own situation?

1.3. Research aims and relevance

As mentioned before, it is a common conception that the role of the coordinator is essential to ensure family participation in FGC. However, very little empirical knowledge exists on how this effect actually manifests itself. In this thesis, an exploratory meta-analysis of empirical literature is conducted to provide knowledge on the relationship between the (interpretation of the) role of the coordinator and family control. In terms of its academic relevance, this thesis aims to contribute to the knowledge on FGC in two ways. First of all, through the exploratory meta-analysis, this thesis aims to provide an overview of what is known about the subject and to indicate in which specific areas research is most necessary. Secondly, this thesis aims to contribute interesting insights into the effect of the role of the coordinator on family control in FGC, so that it might inspire other scholars to delve deeper into the subject.

Apart from its academic aspirations, this thesis is also relevant to the practical performance of FGC. In this regard, this thesis aims to inform FGC implementers and practitioners of how the role of the coordinator affects family control so that the workings of this effect can be taken into account when making arrangements for implementing and conducting family group conferences. After all, as FGC becomes increasingly common in several societies and because evidence-based practice is becoming increasingly demanded, it is important to understand the dynamics and the roles of different actors and their effects on the outcomes of FGC.

1.4. Structure of the thesis

This thesis starts with a theoretical framework, in which the hypotheses are formulated that will be tested in the meta-analysis. This section will present, based on theoretical literature, aspects of the role of the coordinator that are in the meta-analysis tested in relation to family control. Here, explanatory variables will be divided into 'structural' and 'cultural' variables. Following the theoretical chapter, a methodological chapter will explain how the meta-analysis of this thesis is conducted. Chapter 4 will function as a more general informative chapter, discussing general characteristics of FGC so that the reader gains a more detailed understanding of what family group conferencing entails. Chapter 5, 6 and 7, all data-analysis chapters, present the findings of the meta-analysis on the relationships between aspects of the role of the coordinator and family control. While chapter 5 and 6 present findings relating to two different categories of structural aspects of the role of the coordinator, chapter 7 focuses on the cultural aspects of the role of the coordinator. After these theoretical and analytical chapters, chapter 8 will answer the research question and discuss the limitations as well as broader implications of the findings of this thesis for policy, practice and research.

2. Theoretical framework

As the research question of this thesis focuses on how the role of coordinators in family group conferencing affects the degree to which families can exercise control over their own situation, the concept of 'role' is an important part of this thesis. In this chapter, a theoretical framework will be presented in which the term 'role' will be theoretically assessed and in which the role of the coordinator and family control in family group conferencing will be 'translated' into (variables for the) hypotheses of this study. First of all, the 'Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) Framework' by Elinor Ostrom, Gardner and Walker will be presented (Ostrom et al., 1994). This framework constitutes a useful tool to describe and analyze structural arrangements and behaviors of actors as well as their effects on outcomes in governance situations. However, since IAD is fairly general, it needs to be specified to fit the field of family group conferencing and the role of the coordinator therein. Therefore, it will throughout this chapter be complemented with insights from role theory and substantiated with more specific theories on relations of coordinators in FGC with other relevant actors. From role theory, which will be presented after the IAD framework, it will become clear that social roles are intrinsically linked to relations with other relevant actors. Moreover, from combining role theory with the IAD framework, it follows that 'structure', 'culture' and 'behavior' are important aspects of social roles and that structure and culture together influence behavior (Ostrom et al., 1994; ter Heine et al., 1983). After presenting the relatively general theories, the remainder of this chapter will be more specifically focused on FGC, substantiating and operationalizing the vague variables identified to that point. Here, the 'outcome' of FGC in terms of 'control over the own situation' will first be operationalized into the dependent variable of the hypotheses. Because the hypotheses will be formulated in terms of how explanatory variables are related to the dependent variable, operationalizing the explanatory variables constitutes the next step. This will be done based on the relevant relations of coordinators in family group conferencing. Eventually, the framework of Ostrom substantiated with these theories and combined with role theory will constitute the basis for the identification of the explanatory variables in the meta-analysis. Thus, from the theories combined in this theoretical framework, hypotheses will be formulated.

2.1. General theories

2.1.1. Institutional analysis and development framework (IAD)

In family group conferencing, professionals from different organizations are required to cooperate with each other and with families in order to find solutions to problems of the families involved. In line with this idea, family group conferencing constitutes a form of network governance in which several different actors with differing values and goals deliberate on a certain outcome. Moreover, the fact that FGC is based on the idea of empowering families makes the dynamics between the actors in FGC even more complex. In order to gain insight into the workings of this complex governance situation and to see how certain aspects of the governance situation impact on the outcome, the Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework of Ostrom can be used. The IAD framework integrates multiple efforts of researchers to understand the ways in which structural arrangements and behaviors of actors interact and affect outcomes in governance situations (McGinnis, 2011).
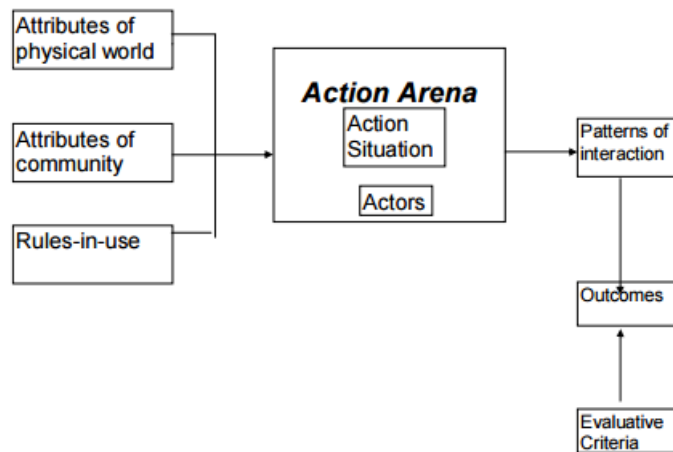
Fig. 2.1: the IAD framework (Ostrom et al., 1994, p. 37).

2.1.1.1. Rules – in – use

According to Ostrom et al, policy-making processes consist of an 'action arena', consisting of the behaviors of participating actors (Ostrom et al., 1994). In the IAD framework, the action arena is influenced by 'rules-in-use', 'attributes of the community' and 'attributes of the physical world', (Ostrom et al., 1994, p. 37). With rules-in-use, Ostrom means the rules that individuals use to shape their own behavior (Ostrom, 1990, p. 51). These rules reflect thus not necessarily the rules made by authorities (formal rules), but constitute the 'working rules' or 'informal rules' that individuals have 'formalized' themselves through social processes (Johnson, 1997, p. 15). However, as informal rules often also reflect formal rules, the rules-in-use meant here likely also include some formally existing rules. According to Ostrom, the rules-in-use consist of (1) position rules, the specific positions to be filled by participants; (2) boundary rules which set the entry, exit and domain conditions for participants; (3) authority rules which specify rights, responsibilities and obligations of actors that are derived from their position and prior actions of themselves and / or other participants[2]; (4) scope rules which specify the allowable outcomes; (5) aggregation rules specifying how decisions are being made; (6) information rules specifying the information available to each position and finally (7) payoff rules specifying the distribution of costs and benefits among actions and outcomes (Ostrom, 2005; Ostrom, 2011, p. 11). Because Ostrom argues that these rules directly influence the 'action arena' and thus the actors' behaviors, these rules constitute a basis for identifying explanatory variables in the meta-analysis on the role of coordinators in FGC. How these rules can be specified to fit the field of FGC will be elaborated upon later.

2.1.1.2. Attributes of the community

Apart from the rules-in-use, both 'attributes of the physical world' and 'attributes of the community' directly influence the action arena and thus the actors' behaviors in the IAD framework. According to Polski and Ostrom, the attributes of the community revolve around values, beliefs and preferences of participants in terms of policy activities and the degree to which these are shared among participants (Polski and Ostrom, 1999, p. 13). In operationalizing the attributes of the community, Polski and Ostrom emphasize factors such as 'participants' values and preferences with respect to strategies for achieving outcomes and outcomes themselves'; 'participants' beliefs about the relationship among

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[2] 'Authority rules' are in later work of Ostrom referred to as 'choice rules' (Ostrom, 2005).

policy-oriented strategies, actions, and outcomes; and 'participants' beliefs about other participants' strategy preferences and outcomes' (Polski and Ostrom, 1999, p. 13). Because the attributes of the community consists of norms, preferences and values, these attributes are also seen as the 'cultural context' of the governance situation (Polski and Ostrom, 1999, p. 14). Since this cultural context is, as emphasized by Ostrom and others, fundamental to understanding patterns of interaction and thus actors' behaviors, attributes of the community will be included in the meta-analysis (Johns, 2006, p. 388; Ostrom, 2011, p. 11; Polski and Ostrom, 1999, p. 14). However, the way in which it will be included and operationalized will be elaborated upon further throughout this chapter.

2.1.1.3. Attributes of the physical world

Just as the attributes of the community, attributes of the physical world are held to directly influence the action arena of governance situations. Attributes of the physical world constitute the existing conditions for provision and production of services that are 'given' and that cannot be directly influenced by the actors or actions in the action arena (Polski and Ostrom, 1999, p. 9). In terms of family group conferencing, many attributes of the physical world can be identified. For example, characteristics of families and of the professionals involved constitute attributes of the physical world that may affect FGC outcomes. In relation to the role of the coordinator which is the focus of this thesis, skills and competences of the coordinator as well as financial resources available to him are throughout the literature argued to have considerable influence on FGC outcomes (Connolly, 2006; Hasenfeld, 1987; Love, 2000; Merkel-Holguin, 2004). Because it is impossible to account for all attributes of the physical world relevant to FGC in this thesis, skills of coordinators and financial resources available to him will be discussed in this thesis as attributes of the physical world. Indeed, both skills of the coordinator and financial resources available to him will constitute explanatory variables in the meta-analysis. All other attributes of the physical world will be taken into account in the meta-analysis as contextual factors. The way in which the identified explanatory variables can be operationalized to specifically fit family group conferencing will be discussed later in this chapter.

Although on the right side of the IAD model of Ostrom et al it is shown that 'evaluative criteria' also impact upon the outcome, assessing how instances of FGC are being evaluated in the process falls beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, this thesis can more broadly itself be seen as an evaluation, hoping to eventually influence FGC- outcomes in general in a positive way. Up to this point, the IAD model of Ostrom has been explained, both in general and in terms of its relevance in relation to the research on family group conferencing conducted in this thesis. While the IAD framework provides guidance in analyzing the complex process of FGC, it also constitutes a starting point for the integration of general and more specific theories into a relevant theoretical conceptualization for this study. Since this chapter thus starts with general theories and proceeds towards increasingly specific ones, role theory constitutes the next step in this theoretical conceptualization. Indeed, role theory itself is still a rather general theory, applicable to an innumerable amount of situations. In any case, because this thesis focuses on the effects of the role of coordinators on outcomes in FGC, it is important to gain insight into what a 'role' actually entails and what implications it has for the choice of explanatory variables in the meta-analysis. Indeed, while the dependent variable relates to the outcome of FGC in terms of family control, the explanatory variables are largely derived from a combination of the IAD framework with role theory and more specific theories.

2.1.2. Role theory

The term 'role' is commonly used and has many meanings, which makes that some scholars argue that it has too many applications for it to be used and discussed academically (ter Heine et al., 1983, p. 27). However, in sociology, a 'social role' is a widely discussed concept and is even the subject of a whole theoretical perspective called 'role theory'. Within this perspective, any definition of social roles includes certain core aspects of social roles (Biddle, 1986; Solomon et al., 1985, p. 102; ter Heine et al., 1983, p. 29). The first key aspect of a social role is that the 'rolekeeper', the person who 'occupies' the role', has a certain position based upon relations with others (Biddle, 1986; ter Heine et al., 1983, p. 29). This position is fairly structural, since it is embedded in a social context in which relations between multiple positions are typically defined in a set of rules. When relating this core aspect to the IAD framework of Ostrom, it can be seen that this aspect is already incorporated into the meta-analysis through the explanatory variable of the rules-in-use. A second core aspect of social roles, according to role theory, is that a role results in behavior (ter Heine et al., 1983, p. 29). Finally, a third core aspect of social roles is that roles are dependent upon expectations from relevant actors in relation to the behavior of the rolekeeper (Solomon et al., 1985, p. 103; ter Heine et al., 1983, p. 29). According to role theory, both perceptions of the rolekeeper himself and expectations of other relevant actors are central to this last aspect (Biddle, 1986; ter Heine et al., 1983, p. 32). Moreover, one's own role perception is often largely determined by expectations of others (ter Heine et al., 1983). Because of this interrelatedness, it is arguably problematic to treat own role perceptions and role expectations from others as separate role-aspects. Because of this, role perceptions of the rolekeeper and role expectations of other relevant actors are merged into one explanatory variable called 'role perceptions and expectations'.

As role perceptions and role expectations are related to norms, perceptions and values which are culturally determined, role perceptions and role expectations can be seen as cultural aspects of social roles (Biddle, 1986, p. 69). When looking at the core aspects of social roles from a somewhat broader perspective, these aspects can be seen to represent three higher abstractions, namely 'structure', 'behavior', and 'culture'. The 'culture' component here, in line with the operationalization of 'attributes of the community' of Ostrom, consists of role perceptions and expectations in terms of values and preferences of actors relating to their own roles and roles of others. The three abstractions of 'structure', 'culture' and 'behavior' can also be found in the IAD framework of Ostrom, where the 'rules-in-use' and the 'attributes of the physical world' can be argued to constitute 'structure', 'attributes of the community' constitute 'culture' and the action-arena consists of behavior. While the first two aspects of structure and culture are macro-phenomena because they are the product of a web of relations between relevant actors, the aspect of behavior constitutes more of an individual aspect. In this thesis, the main focus lies on the macro-aspects of structure and culture in terms of the role of coordinators in FGC, and the explanatory variables in the meta-analysis related to this role will thus be derived from structural- and cultural role-aspects.

2.1.2.1. The relationship between structure, culture and behavior

While the distinction between structure and culture in the meta-analysis may suggest that they can be seen as separate aspects of social roles and governance situations, this is certainly not the case. Informal rules and role perceptions and expectations are closely interrelated. For example, perceptions and expectations are sometimes codified in rules, and rules often shape perceptions and expectations. In relation to governance processes, it is often emphasized that the formal structure of rules and cultural perceptions of actors are not only interrelated but also strongly dependent on each other in terms of outcomes (Caudill, 1973; Merton, 1938; Need, 2010). Indeed, this 'interaction hypothesis' emphasizes that outcomes and behavior of actors result from *a combination* of cultural values and preferences of actors on the one hand and structural opportunities to act on those values and

preferences on the other (Need, 2010, p. 13). Then, when applying this to the role of the coordinator in relation to family control, it means that the structural and cultural aspects of the coordinator's role must correspond with each other and must together be conducive to family control in order to increase it. However, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to incorporate the interaction between 'structure' and 'culture' of the role of the coordinator into the analysis on the effect of the role of the coordinator on family control. Instead, 'structure' and 'culture' are used as separate 'categories' in the meta-analysis, and aspects of the role of the coordinator within these categories are assessed in their bivariate relationship with family control.

Thus, while the 'structure' and 'culture' of the role of the coordinator together influence the degree of family control in FGC, they are separately assessed in the meta-analysis. While so far relatively general theories have been presented, the next section will focus specifically on family group conferencing and will operationalize and substantiate the general explanatory variables presented so far. However, because the explanatory variables are only important in their relation to the dependent variable, this dependent variable will first be provided. Since this thesis focuses on the effects of the role of the coordinator on the degree to which families can exercise control over their own situation, the dependent variable will represent this degree of control. From this point onwards, more specific theories relevant to family control in FGC and the role of coordinators will be elaborated upon to operationalize the variables for the meta-analysis.

2.2. Specific theories: family group conferencing

2.2.1. The dependent variable: family control

As has become clear from the introduction of this thesis, family group conferencing is a local governance-construction that emphasizes empowerment of clients. The idea behind empowerment is that people must rely more on themselves and on each other in order to decrease the reliance on professional organizations for support and to make individuals and communities active participants in society rather than passive care-receivers. However, whether families have actually become empowered through family group conferencing, and thus whether FGC has been 'successful' in these terms, is difficult to determine. It would require an in-depth assessment of the family's situation some time after the FGC, based on measurable variables of 'empowerment'. Because it is expected that the literature provides very little information on 'success' of FGC in terms of empowerment, the primary dependent variable of the meta-analysis in this thesis will focus on an important part of empowerment: the degree to which families can exercise control over their own situation.

Because 'control over one's own situation' is still a vague and general variable, it must be operationalized in order to be useful in the meta-analysis. In this regard, a fundamental means to provide families with control over their own situation inherent in FGC is to give family members themselves a say in determining solutions to their problems. In this thesis, the 'voice' and influence of families in determining solutions to their own problems and in drafting a plan by themselves constitutes the definition of family control. Throughout the literature, it is thought that giving family members such influence provides them with a feeling of responsibility, has the potential to strengthen family relations and consequently strengthens their self-organizing capacity (Burford and Hudson, 2000, p. xx & p. 2; Karl, 1995). However, situations of multi-problem families sometimes make it impossible for professionals and coordinators to give the family members complete freedom to decide upon their own situation. As curtailing risks remains an important task of the professional organizations, some decision-making power remains inevitably in the hands of professionals (Adams, 2008, p.3). Therefore, within the variable of family control over the own situation, attention is focused on whether the outcome of FGC is *as far as possible* determined by the family members themselves.

Moreover, especially important is here the degree to which family members perceive to have decision-making power, because this perception generates the mentioned positive feelings of responsibility and empowerment.

While the variable of family control is now operationalized as families having a voice and having influence in determining solutions to their problems, there is a gap between 'having a voice' and actually influencing the outcome. Therefore, family control constitutes a matter of degree, ranging from 'feeling listened to', to 'having a voice' to actually influencing decision-making. Apart from this, it would be rather naïve to expect from family group conferencing that all family members within the family would experience the same degree of control. Naturally, some individuals within the (extended) family or social network of the family are more dominant than others, claiming in the FGC process more overweight in decision-making. Because dominance of some individuals within the family group might decrease 'voice' and 'influence' of others, it is assumed in this thesis that the more the decision-making dynamics within the extended family and social network occur in a democratic way, the higher the degree of family control actually is. The degree to which these dynamics occur in a democratic fashion is referred to as 'intra-familial democracy'.

From the foregoing follows that the dependent variable for the meta-analysis of this thesis addresses degree to which family members have a say in determining the solution to their own problems. As this thesis is about the effect of the role of the coordinator on family control, the explanatory variables comprise factors that are theoretically important for this role. In the more general theoretical sections above, the basis of some explanatory variables has already been provided. However, these variables have not been operationalized to fit the field of application of family control in FGC and the role of coordinators in this. From role theory it has become clear that roles are highly dependent upon relations with other relevant actors. Indeed, in the light of this theory, the relationships of coordinators with the other relevant actors in FGC can be used to connect the general explanatory variables with the specific role of coordinators in FGC and thus to operationalize the general explanatory variables. The next section will, by elaborating upon these relationships, operationalize existing variables for the meta-analysis.

2.2.2. Structural explanatory variables

Next to the fact that roles depend on relationships with others, these relationships might even be of special importance in family group conferencing because of its inherent collective character. When attention is focused to the effect of the role of the coordinator on family control, this also requires a discussion of relationships of this rolekeeper with other actors. The most important relationship in this thesis naturally consists of the relationship between coordinators and their clients (the families). Other relationships that are of special relevance to this thesis are the relationship between coordinators and their own organizations, as well as the relationship between coordinators and other professional organizations. However, the latter two relationships are only relevant where they influence the relationship between coordinators and their clients. Although the relationship between coordinators and the social network of clients are also relevant in terms of the effect of the role of coordinators on family control, this relationship falls beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss.

2.2.2.1. Rules-in-use

Because the research question of this thesis focuses on the effect of the role of the coordinator on family control in FGC, authority rules, scope rules, aggregation rules and information rules of Ostrom's rules-in-use are specifically relevant. The content of the payoff rules, which is mostly about financial resources, will be dealt with later under the header 'financial resources. Thus, authority rules, scope

rules, aggregation rules and information rules constitute explanatory variables in the meta-analysis of this thesis. In the meta-analysis, it will be seen how these rules, with specific regard to the coordinator and his relevant relationships, influence family control.

In this thesis, it is generally expected that the rules-in-use exist in such a way that they enable coordinators and professionals to provide families with a voice and influence in determining their own situation. In terms of the authority rules, which stipulate the broader rights, authorizations and obligations of the coordinator derived from his position and prior actions of participants, this can work in two ways (Klok and Denters, 2002; Ostrom, 2005). First, the authority rules can provide coordinators and professionals with particular rights and authorizations to act according to own insights. This coordinator would then be 'empowered to empower', as his empowerment of the coordinator with rights and authorizations would result in empowerment of families. Second, the authority rules can provide coordinators and professionals with certain obligations, focused on ensuring the voice and influence of families in the decision-making process of FGC. Obligations can here be seen as the opposite of rights and authorizations to act according to own insights, since obligations restrict the freedom of coordinators to act according to own insights. In general, it is expected that both rights and authorizations deliberately granted to coordinators and designed obligations for coordinators enshrined in the authority rules positively impact upon family control. Thus, two hypotheses have here been identified. The first hypothesis is that rights and authorizations of coordinators to act according to own insights enhance family control. The second hypothesis entails that obligations restricting the discretion of the coordinator also enhance family control.

The second set of rules-in-use, the scope rules, consist of two types of rules; procedural scope rules and substantive scope rules. The procedural scope rules specify how governance processes are phased, what each phase is about and when the process proceeds to the next phase (Klok and Denters, 2002). The substantive scope rules specify the span of allowable outcomes from interactions in the whole governance process but also in separate phases in the process (Ostrom, 2011, p. 20). When applying substantive scope rules to specific actors rather than to the general process, substantive scope rules specify what kind of outcomes of collective decision-making can be affected by which actors throughout the governance process (Ostrom, 2005, p. 211). In FGC, collective decision-making occurs in the private family time and in the final stage of agreeing to the plan. In FGC, scope rules focus on the degree to which coordinators are obliged to make the collective decisions made in these stages binding and consequential. Because the degree to which decisions are binding in private family time is inseparable from the aggregation rules determining the decision-making power of coordinators and professionals after private family time, the degree to which private family time-decisions are binding will be discussed later. In this thesis, the scope rules focus on the degree to which final decisions are binding. These scope rules affect the role of the coordinator because the coordinator has the responsibility to ensure compliance with the decisions when they are binding and to decide on how to proceed when decisions are not binding. For example, in some cases FGC models with non-binding decisions, coordinators can call for new FGCs. Because it is believed that families are more eager to have a say in decisions that are binding than non-binding, it is expected that the more binding final FGC outcomes are, the more this results in family control. Thus, it is thought that scope rules obliging coordinators to make final FGC outcomes binding and consequential enhance family control.

The third set of rules-in-use, the aggregation rules, specify how collective decisions in an arena are being made based on contributions of different participants (Klok and Denters, 2002). In FGC, a basic principle is that families must be the primary decision-makers as opposed to professionals and coordinators. Therefore, a scope rule generally exists that outcomes from private family time are binding unless coordinators and professionals judge the outcome to be a risk for child welfare. This scope rule, in turn, results in the aggregation rule that coordinators and professionals in practice have a veto power. This veto power thus consists of the power to reject decisions from the private family time only when they are deemed to be a risk to child welfare. However, it could be the case that, since

coordinators are supposed to function as independent facilitators of family control, 'widening' this veto of the coordinator and thus giving him more decision-making power, could enhance family control. For example, giving the coordinator the power to disagree with the plan if he believes the family has had too little control over the plan or if he believes there was too little intra-familial democracy, might enhance family control. Therefore, it is expected that aggregation rules widening the veto power of the coordinator enhance family control. This constitutes hypothesis 1c.

The fourth and final set of rules-in-use, the information rules, prescribe which information is available to participants and how various participants are required to provide other actors (access to) information (Klok and Denters, 2002). According to Ostrom, information rules consist of authorizations and obligations relating to the information flow among participants (Ostrom, 2005). However, there are many types of information. In FGC, the main types of information consist of family-information and process-information. Family information includes information such as cultural values and traditions of the family as well as sensitive information on the problems of the family. Process-information, in contrast, consists of the philosophies and rules of the FGC model used as well as information on the boundaries of the decisions to be made. In terms of the families, it is expected that the more process-information families have and thus the clearer they understand the purpose of the conference they engage in, the more this results in family control. In terms of the coordinator, it is expected that the more family-information he has, the more he can make sure that families can decide over their own situation. In translating the foregoing expectations to information rules on the role of the coordinator, two hypotheses can be identified. The first hypothesis consists of the expectation that information rules granting access to family-information to the coordinator enhance family control. In terms of the second hypothesis, it is expected that information rules directed towards coordinators stipulating that and how they must share process-information with other participants enhance family control. In summary, the following hypotheses have been derived from the theoretical literature relevant to FGC:

- *H1a1: rights and authorizations of the coordinator to act according to own insights enhance family control*
- *H1a2: obligations restricting the discretion of the coordinator enhance family control*
- *H1b: scope rules obliging coordinators to make final FGC outcomes binding and consequential enhance family control*
- *H1c: aggregation rules widening the veto power of the coordinator enhance family control*
- *H1d1: information rules granting access to family-information to the coordinator enhance family control*
- *H1d2: information rules for coordinators stipulating that and how they must share process-information with other participants enhance family control*

2.2.2.2. Skills and competences

As mentioned, skills and competences of coordinators are thought to constitute important 'physical attributes' of FGC that influence behavior and thus outcomes. Therefore, skills and competences of coordinators constitute an explanatory variable in the meta-analysis. First of all, because training and experience of coordinators are expected to generally increase the facilitating skills of coordinators, it is expected that general facilitating skills of coordinators derived from training and experience enhance family control. Apart from the general facilitating skills, one skill is specifically mentioned in the literature as being of fundamental importance for social work practices. Indeed, in the social work literature, it is often emphasized that social workers must be 'culturally competent' to successfully support clients (Adams and Chandler, 2004; Love, 2000). Cultural competence has been defined as 'the ability to work with people in the context of their own specific history, culture and environment to deliver services that are meaningful and responsive to their lived experience' (Sheets et al., 2009, p. 1187). Then, cultural competence includes the degree to which coordinators can act independent

despite own assumptions, values and biases, the degree to which they understand and show respect of cultural values and the degree to which they take these cultural values into account in the conference (Umbreit and Zehr, 1996; Waites et al., 2004). When bringing the foregoing in relation to the outcome of family control, three hypotheses can be identified. First of all, it is expected that the coordinator's general facilitating skills derived from training enhance family control. Similarly, it is expected that the coordinator's skills derived from experience enhance family control. Thirdly, it is expected that the cultural competence of coordinators also enhances family control. In summary, the following hypotheses have been identified here:

- *H2a: the coordinator's general facilitating skills derived from training enhance family control*
- *H2b*: *the coordinator's skills derived from experience enhance family control*
- *H2c: cultural competence of coordinators enhances family control*

2.2.2.3. Financial resources

Throughout the literature on network governance, many theorists have stressed the importance of financial resources for the behavior of actors and outcomes of governance processes (Fenger and Klok, 2001, p. 162; Ostrom, 2011, p. 11; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). Also in the literature on empowerment in social work and the literature on FGC, it is emphasized that financial means available largely influence the degree of empowerment and autonomy of families, because the realization of plans requires financial means (Hasenfeld, 1987; Love, 2000; Merkel-Holguin, 2004). Apart from the fact that the realization of plans requires financial means in FGC, financial resources are also necessary to set up the conference in terms of for example transport of participants and child care. The resources necessary to set up the conference influence family control because they can be used to create satisfactory characteristics of the conference for families. However, as the families' satisfaction with characteristics of the conference has already been discussed in relation to family control, the financial resources discussed here will focus on the resources to realize family plans. In FGC, the financial means available determine the scope of the plans that can be drafted by the families and thus also influence the degree to which families can actually be in control over their own situation. An important question related to this is which actors must provide for the financial resources. It is debatable whether families can become truly empowered and in control over their own situation when they are for the solution of their plans financially dependent upon professional organizations. The resource-position of the families, the coordinators of the professional organizations are relevant here. On the one hand, it can be argued that families can only be in control of their own situation when they are financially independent from professional organizations, and that financial dependence can only mean a loss of autonomy for the family. On the other hand, because empowerment has become a focus in social work, it can be imagined that financial means from professional organizations can help families in realizing their plans. In FGC, it is the role of the coordinator to manage these dynamics and to find a balance between family control and financial support. Because it is the coordinator's task to be an independent facilitator of family control, it is expected that the access to financial resources of the coordinator enhances family control. In this section, the following hypothesis has been identified:

- *H3: the access of the coordinator to financial resources enhances family control*

2.2.3. Cultural explanatory variables

Predicted by role theory and confirmed by the academic literature on empowerment of clients in social work, the relationships of the social worker with other relevant actors are fundamental for the outcome in terms of the degree of empowerment (Cowger, 1994; Gutierrez et al., 1995; Saleebey, 1992). Within these relationships, role perceptions and role expectations have received much

attention (Abramson, 1985; Evans and Harris, 2004; Hasenfeld, 1987; Reamer, 2013; Shardlow, 2003; Sundell et al., 2002; Threthewey, 1997). As shown before, role perceptions and role expectations are in this thesis seen as the 'attributes of the community' of Ostrom and more broadly as the 'cultural' aspect of social roles. Moreover, they are held to consist of norms, values and preferences of actors relating to their own role and roles of others and, recollecting the operationalization of Polski and Ostrom, especially relate to such preferences regarding 'strategies of achieving outcomes' and outcomes themselves (Polski and Ostrom, 1999, p. 13). With regard to outcomes in FGC, this thesis focuses on family control which entails that families have a certain autonomy in relation to professionals and coordinators in FGC in terms of deciding upon their own situation. However, the literature on social work and the relationships between social workers and other relevant actors emphasizes that social workers tend to have role perceptions that might encompass a tension with family control (Blom, 2004; Reamer, 2013; Shardlow, 2003). Two of such role perceptions of social workers, relevant to the role of coordinators in FGC, are paternalism and a lack of professional autonomy (Evans and Harris, 2004; Reamer, 2013). Both of these perceptions will constitute a specific focus within the explanatory variables on role perceptions and expectations.

2.2.3.1. Paternalism

The first of these perceptions, paternalism, refers to a role perception of social workers in relation to clients. Traditionally, before social work became influenced by the discourse of empowerment, social workers constituted the 'directors' and 'problem-solvers' of clients' situations (Hasenfeld, 1987, p. 478). Social work consisted of oppositional dynamics between 'social workers' and 'social service users', which resulted in the situation that social workers obtained a paternalistic mindset towards clients of 'I know what is good for you' (Healy, 2000, p. 65; Tuckett, 2006). This mindset of paternalism, which can thus be defined as 'benevolent decision-making in another's best interests', is argued to be at odds with the idea of FGC that families control -and thus decide upon- their own situation (Adams, 2008, p. 3; Adams and Chandler, 2004, p. 109; Tuckett, 2006). Regardless of this tension, the mindset of paternalism is according to the literature still present in many professionals in FGC (Gambrill, 2001, p. 171; Levine, 2000, p. 527; Schmid and Pollack, 2009). Apart from being reflected in behavior influencing decision-making in a way thought to be in another's best interest, a paternalistic mindset often includes a lack of trust in the workings of the FGC process in general and in the ability of families to draft appropriate plans to solve their own problems in particular (Levine, 2000). Moreover, while a tendency of 'risk aversion' is being noted in social work, a focus on such risk aversion arguably pushes professionals towards more paternalistic and professionally-driven practices, leaving less room for family participation (Morris and Connolly, 2012; Spratt, 2001). Lacking trust in FGC and believing that families must be told what to do in order to protect their children, professionals in FGC are often reluctant to cede decision-making power to families and retain, whether overt or disguised, influence in decision-making (Levine, 2000; Merkel-Holguin, 2004; Nixon et al., 2001; Robertson, 1996). That professionals might have a paternalistic mindset is however not only the result of the role perception of these professionals. As emphasized by role theory, role expectations of other participants in FGC also influences the behavior of professionals. Indeed, the literature on social work and FGC contends that families sometimes still expect professionals to tell them what to do (Holland et al., 2005; Merkel-Holguin, 2004).

Because paternalism likely shifts decision-making power away from families and into the hands of coordinators and professionals, it is expected that the role perceptions of coordinators and professionals in terms of paternalism influence the degree of family control in FGC. Since coordinators are in FGC supposed to be independent facilitators of family control, their mindset is arguably especially important for family control in FGC. Since this thesis focuses on the effect of the role of the coordinator on family control, it will be analyzed how the role perception of the coordinator in terms of paternalism influences family control. If the mindset of many professionals in FGC is paternalistic,

as has been argued, it is important to assess the paternalism of coordinators in relation to professionals. For example, if coordinators perceive their role as 'guards' of family control making sure that professionals do not behave paternalistic, coordinators do not have a paternalistic role perception. In contrast, when coordinators do not see their role as to restrain paternalism of professionals and instead view themselves more as 'directors' of families' situations, coordinators can be judged to have a paternalistic role perception. Because paternalism, as mentioned, likely shifts decision-making power from families to coordinators and professionals in FGC, it is expected that a paternalistic mindset of the coordinator impedes family control. Thus, the following hypothesis has been identified here:

- *H4: paternalism of the coordinator impedes family control.*

2.2.3.2. Professional autonomy

The second role perception of social workers according to the literature consists of a lack of professional autonomy, and pertains to the relationship of the coordinator with the 'own organization' and the families in FGC. This professional autonomy is the subject of Lipsky's theory on 'street-level bureaucracy', in which street-level bureaucrats constitute workers in the public sector that are at the very end of the policy process and thus implement policies in direct relation to citizens (Lipsky, 2010, p. xi). Coordinators in FGC are thus also street-level bureaucrats. Throughout the academic literature on social work and FGC, it is held that the traditional systems of social work in the welfare states and before the focus on empowerment were characterized by a reliance on regulation, investigations, court hearings and other bureaucratic measures that had little eye for families' perspectives (Guttierez et al., 1995; Pennell, 2004). It is also held that in such a system, 'workers operating at the bottom of such bureaucratic structures often feel disempowered in their ability to help families in distress' (Holland et al., 2005, p. 75; Pennell, 2004). With the increasing focus on empowerment instead of regulation and the introduction of the family group conference in many countries, workers acquired, at least in theory, more freedom to listen to people's perspectives. However, many scholars note that in practice, bureaucratic and legalistic pressures of organizations still impede their own FGC workers to listen to families (Adams and Chandler, 2004; Dalrymple, 2002; Spratt, 2001). For example, it is held that FGC must still meet regulations and objectives such as avoidance of litigation, avoidance of risk, reaching a quick outcome and restriction of costs (Family Rights Group, 2002; Nixon et al., 2001).

However, professional autonomy, or the freedom of coordinators to listen to families' wishes, also has a cultural component. This cultural component entails questions of how constrained coordinators feel by their own organization, and to what extent coordinators themselves develop bureaucratic ideologies resulting from the ideology of their own organization. According to Lipsky and other theorists, pressing circumstances in public work such as 'huge caseloads and ambiguous agency goals' make that street-level bureaucrats themselves are required to creatively interpret and act upon their task (Evans and Harris, 2004; Lipsky, 2010, p. xiv). This, in turn, makes that street-level bureaucrats develop perceptions of their roles that might be different from the expectations that their managers assign to these roles (Evans and Harris, 2004, p. 891; Lipsky, 1980). In any case, the degree to which coordinators feel that they can give families a voice and influence in decision-making, and thus the degree to which coordinators feel free from- or resist being guided by bureaucratic and legalistic pressures of the own organization, constitutes the mindset of professional autonomy. When comparing the mindset of professional autonomy with paternalism as defined in this thesis, professional autonomy constitutes a more practical mindset and paternalism is more psychological. Indeed, a paternalistic mindset focuses on the trust the coordinator has in families and the process of FGC to arrive at safe outcomes for the children involved, and professional autonomy focuses on the degree to which coordinators feel they can give families influence in decision-making based on the practical policies of their own organization. Not surprisingly, it is expected that the more professional

autonomy coordinators feel, the more this results in family control. The following hypothesis has thus been identified:

- *H5: The mindset of coordinators of feeling free from- and resisting being guided by bureaucratic and legalistic pressures of the own organization enhances family control*

Since all hypotheses and explanatory and dependent variables have now been identified and substantiated, both a simplified image and an elaborate overview of all explanatory and dependent variables will follow to conclude this chapter.

Structure

    Rules-in-use:

    authority rules   +

    scope rules   +

    aggregation rules   +

    information rules   +

    Professional skills

    derived from training   +

    derived from experience +

    cultural competence   +

    Financial resources

    resource-access   +

Family control

Culture

    Paternalism   -

    Professional autonomy   +
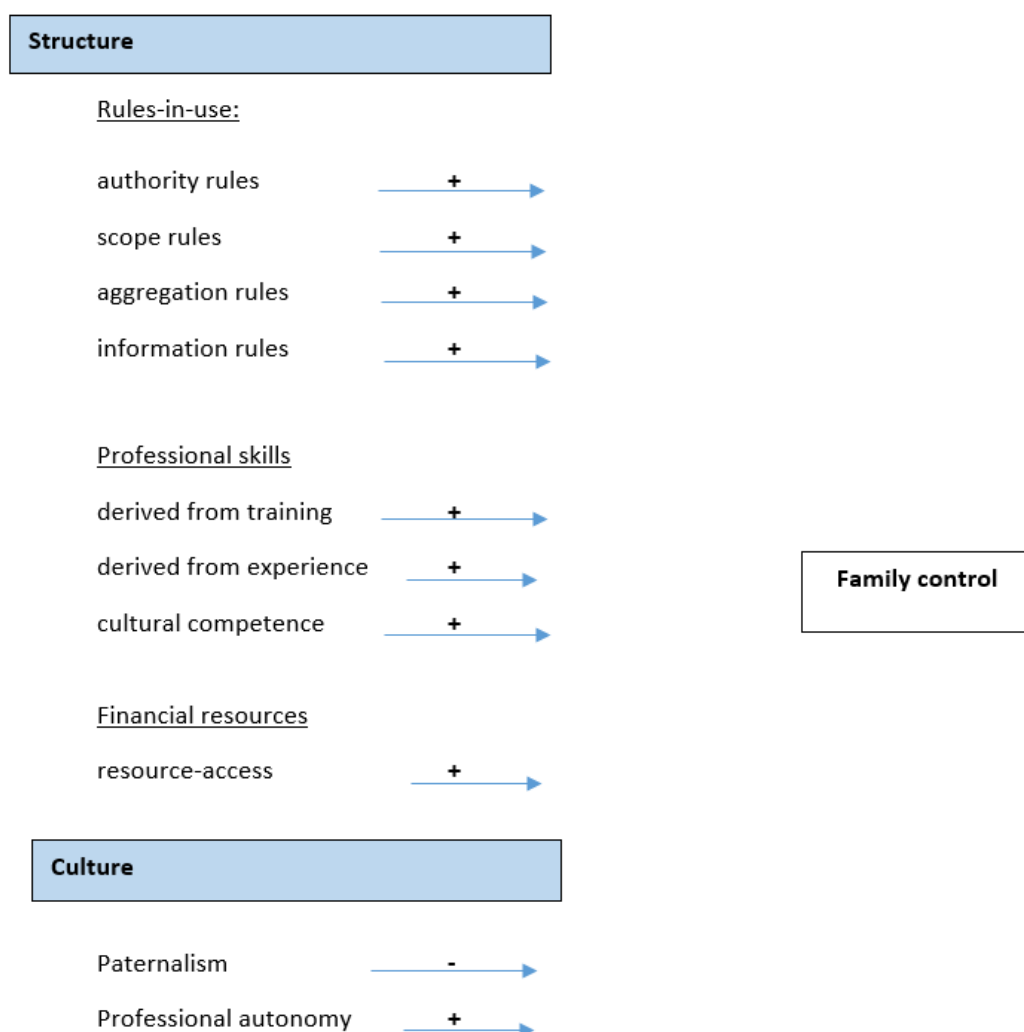
Fig 2.2: a simplified image of the theoretical model presented

2.3. Overview of the formulated hypotheses

Structure

1. <u>Rules-in- use</u>

   Authority rules
   H1a1: Rights and authorizations of the coordinator to act according to own insights enhance family control
   H1a2: Obligations restricting the discretion of the coordinator enhance family control

   Scope rules
   H1b: Scope rules obliging coordinators to make final FGC outcomes binding and consequential enhance family control

   Aggregation rules
   H1c: Aggregation rules widening the veto power of the coordinator enhance family control

   Information rules
   H1d1: information rules granting access to family-information to the coordinator enhance family control
   H1d2: information rules for coordinators stipulating that and how they must share process-information with other participants enhance family control

2. <u>Professional skills</u>

   General facilitating skills derived from training
   H2a: The coordinator's general facilitating skills derived from training enhance family control
   Skills derived from experience
   H2b: The coordinator's skills derived from experience enhance family control

   Cultural competence
   H2c: Cultural competence of coordinators enhances family control

3. <u>Financial resources</u>

   Resource-access of the coordinator
   H3: The access of the coordinator to financial resources enhances family control

Culture

4.   Paternalism

Paternalism

H4:   Paternalism of the coordinator impedes family control

5.   Professional autonomy

Professional autonomy

H5:   The mindset of coordinators of feeling free from- and resisting being guided by bureaucratic and legalistic pressures of the own organization enhances family control

3. Methodology

As discussed in the introduction of this thesis, family group conferencing is a subject that has achieved considerable academic attention. However, very little research has been done on the role of the coordinator in FGC. As mentioned, this thesis assesses what information can be extracted from the existing studies on FGC about the effect of the role of the coordinator on family control. In order to do this, a meta-analysis of existing literature has been conducted. In a meta-analysis, original findings are analyzed and from the researcher's own interpretation integrated into a broader analysis (Zimmer, 2006). In the previous chapter, hypotheses have been presented on the relationships between explanatory variables on the role of the coordinator and the dependent variable on family control. Using the meta-analysis, this thesis tests these hypotheses. In this chapter, it will be discussed how this has been done. First, the use and utility of the method of the meta-analysis will be discussed, both in general and for this thesis in particular. In this section, it will also be discussed how the meta-analysis has been conducted in this study. After that, the literature sample of this thesis will be presented and it will be shown how its content has been selected. Finally, it will be shown how the meta-analysis is employed to test the formulated hypotheses. Indeed, here, the rules for testing or rejecting hypotheses ('decision-rules') will be identified.

3.1. The use and utility of the meta-analysis

3.1.1. The meta-analysis in general

As mentioned, in a meta-analysis, original findings are analyzed and from the researcher's own interpretation integrated into a broader analysis (Zimmer, 2006). However, this description of the method of the meta-analysis is too broad and vague to precisely understand the use and utility of the method. Meta-analyses are used in different forms and with different objectives. For example, statistical meta-analyses often systematically combine data from several selected studies to develop conclusions with more statistical power (Himmelfarb Health Sciences Library, 2011). In these statistical meta-analysis, conclusions have more statistical power because more data is used to support the conclusions (Himmelfarb Health Sciences Library, 2011). Apart from these statistical meta-analyses, qualitative meta-analyses also exist. In these meta-analyses, findings from qualitative studies on the same research variables are analyzed and again, integrated into a 'stronger' conclusion than the conclusions drawn from individual studies (Weed, 2005). These described types of meta-analyses often have difficulty selecting their research sample of studies, because the data in these studies must be comparable. This means that the studies in the research sample of these meta-analyses must all be about the same variables and must be researched in the similar contexts (Crombie and Davies, 2009; Weed, 2005). Apart from these meta-analyses, there are also other meta-analyses that do not aim to achieve 'stronger' conclusions or generalizations, but that integrate findings from different studies to describe the 'bigger picture' of the researched phenomenon, or to answer newly posed questions with existing data (Anello and Fleiss, 1995). In such meta-analyses, variables and the contexts of the studies in the research sample may vary.

3.1.2. The meta-analysis in this thesis

The meta-analysis conducted in this thesis has the form of the latter type of meta-analyses described in the previous section. In the meta-analysis of this thesis, findings from different studies are integrated in order to answer a newly posed question, being the question of how the role of the coordinator in

FGC impacts on family control. The aim of the meta-analysis conducted in this thesis is an exploratory one: it aims to identify what information can be extracted from the existing studies on FGC about the effect of the role of the coordinator on family control. Because this goal requires an integration of findings from different studies, the method of the meta-analysis is highly suitable for this thesis. In the meta-analysis of this thesis, the literature sample consists of both quantitative and qualitative studies. While Malterud argues that data of quantitative and qualitative studies cannot be integrated because such data require strongly different procedures for analysis, she asserts that integrating findings of qualitative and qualitative studies can generate a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon in question (Malterud, 2001, p. 487). Integrating findings from different studies is precisely what the meta-analysis in this thesis does.

Although very little literature on FGC discusses how the relationship between the role of the coordinator and family control actually comes about, many studies exist that provide information on aspects of the role of the coordinator on the one hand and family control on the other. These studies have been used in the meta-analysis. In the meta-analysis, aspects of the role of the coordinator have been compared with outcomes in terms of family control throughout multiple studies. These aspects of the role of the coordinator have, as seen in the theoretical framework, first been categorized into explanatory variables. Then, these explanatory variables have been assessed in their relation to the dependent variable, family control. Because the literature sample of the meta-analysis consists of studies on FGC models implemented in different ways and contexts, it is inevitable that the aspects of the role of the coordinator and thus the manifestations of the explanatory variables across these different studies also differ. For example, while in one FGC model researched it is obligatory to provide families with 'private family time', in another FGC model families are not left alone during the conference. The differences between the FGC models in terms of the role of the coordinator are in the meta-analysis of this thesis thankfully used. Indeed, these differences have made it possible to assess how different aspects of the role of the coordinator affect family control. This underscores the value of the method of the meta-analysis for this study. Using the meta-analysis in the way described can produce knowledge that would be unavailable from individual studies alone. Indeed, while no individual study exists that focuses on the relationship between the role of the coordinator and family control, knowledge on this relationship is produced through the meta-analysis in this thesis.

3.1.3. How the meta-analysis has been conducted

The kind of exploratory meta-analysis conducted in this thesis, including both qualitative and quantitative studies in the literature sample and focusing on a newly posed question instead of aiming to achieve 'stronger' conclusions than those drawn from individual studies, is not widely being conducted. Therefore, no methodological literature exists that discusses how such a meta-analysis can (best) be conducted. In this section, it will be shown which steps have been taken in the process of conducting the meta-analysis of this thesis.

As a first step of the meta-analysis, the researcher read a lot of relevant literature on the subject of family group conferencing. In this step, first general literature on family group conferencing was focused on, and after some time theoretical literature became more important. In step 2, the researcher identified explanatory and dependent variables, based on the theoretical literature. In step 3, hypotheses were formulated based on this theoretical literature, and 'decision-rules' for testing hypotheses were identified. Then, when the 'theoretical' work was done, the studies for the literature sample were selected in step 4. How, and based on which criteria these studies were selected will be discussed in the following section of this chapter. When the literature sample was established, the reading began. In step 5, the studies of the literature sample were thoroughly read. Up to this point, all the steps in the research process were carried out solely by the researcher. In step 6, the studies of

the literature sample were accurately re-read and information relating to the explanatory and dependent variables was highlighted, just as contextual information and general outcomes of evaluations of the FGC models researched. While the data of the meta-analysis was thus already partly coded in step 6, step 7 consisted of the actual coding phase: the highlighted data was arranged and categorized into a 'coding document' in which it was for each study in the literature sample clearly displayed which information the study provided on which variable and which general outcomes resulted from evaluations of the FGC model researched. Although all studies were coded by the researcher in this coding phase, two studies were also coded by the researcher's first supervisor so that coding styles and findings could be compared. Doing this systematically was unfortunately beyond the practical boundaries of this thesis, which is a limitation of this thesis that will be discussed in chapter 8. In the step that followed (step 8), the researcher elaborately read and analyzed the information in the coding document, and connections and relationships between the findings from the studies were looked for. In the final step, step 9, the researcher tested the hypotheses based on the 'decision-rules'. These 'decision-rules' will be touched upon later in this chapter. In table 3.1, the steps of the meta-analysis of this thesis are synoptically presented and it is shown, where possible, in which sections of the thesis the process and results of the conducted steps are described.

Step	Activities	Process and result description
Step 1	Start: reading on FGC	
Step 2	Deriving explanatory and dependent variables from the theoretical literature	Chapter 2
Step 3	Identifying hypotheses and 'decision-rules' for testing hypotheses	Chapter 2 Chapter 3
Step 4	Literature selection	Chapter 3
Step 5	Thoroughly reading the studies of the literature sample	
Step 6	Re-reading the studies and highlighting relevant information	
Step 7	Coding: arranging and categorizing highlighted information into a 'coding document'	
Step 8	Reading and analyzing coding document and identifying relationships	
Step 9	Testing hypotheses based on the 'decision-rules'	Chapters 5 t/m 7

Table 3.1: an overview of the steps of the meta-analysis in this thesis and the locations in the thesis of where the process and results of the steps have been described.

3.2. The literature sample

In the foregoing sections, the use and utility of the method of the meta-analysis has been discussed both in general and in terms of this thesis. Moreover, it has been shown how, through which steps, the meta-analysis of this thesis has been conducted. In this section, it will be discussed how the literature sample of the meta-analysis was selected. In order to avoid selection bias, which would exist when studies in the literature sample would be selected purely based on the researchers' preference in terms of the outcomes of the study, the selection of the literature sample has been conducted on the basis of reproducibility.

For the selection of the studies in the literature sample of this thesis, four selection criteria were established. First, the literature sample must consist of only empirical studies on FGC. Thus, literature providing theories or opinions on FGC are left out of the sample. Secondly, the literature sample only includes studies that have been published in peer-reviewed academic journals. Whether journals were peer-reviewed was checked in the online database of 'Ulrichsweb' (Ulrichsweb, 2015). Third, only studies are included in the literature sample that have been published in or after the year 2000, in order to ensure that FGC forms and processes discussed in the studies are not too outdated. Finally, empirical studies on FGC are only included in the literature sample when they provide information on the identified explanatory variables and/ or the dependent variable.[3] Indeed, according to Zimmer, the sample for a meta-analysis consists of individual studies selected on the basis of their relevance to a specific research question posed by the analysis (Zimmer, 2006, p. 312).

In order to produce a reproducible literature sample and to make sure that the most relevant studies are included in the literature sample, the sample was selected based on two selection methods. First, it has been checked which literature in the result lists of the search for 'family group conferencing coordinator' in two search engines meets the mentioned criteria of literature selection. The search engines that were used for this method are Google Scholar and FindUT, the search engine of the University of Twente. The second method used for literature selection is the method of 'snowball-sampling'. In this method, the reference list of each article included in the literature sample is examined. Each study in this reference list that also meets the criteria of literature selection is added to this thesis' literature sample. Although a literature sample is often required to be representative of the research population or models, this is not a requirement in this thesis. As mentioned, the meta-analysis of this thesis does not compare different FGC models throughout the world with each other, but uses the differences between them to assess the effect of different aspects of the role of the coordinator on family control. Therefore, the literature sample preferably includes studies on as many different FGC models as possible.

Via the first method of entering the terms 'family group conferencing coordinator' in the search engines of Google Scholar and FindUT, the following studies emerged that met the selection criteria: Berzin et al., 2007; Brown, 2003; Connolly, 2005; Darlington et al., 2012; Holland and O'Neill, 2006; Ney et al., 2013; O'Shaughnessy et al., 2013; Pennell, 2004; Pennell and Burford, 2000; Rauktis et al., 2011; Sheets et al., 2009; Sieppert et al., 2000; Sundell et al., 2002; Waites et al., 2004. Then, through the method of 'snowball-sampling', the following studies emerged:
- from the literature list of Connolly, 2005: Connolly, 2006.
- from the literature list of Holland and O'Neill: Dalrymple, 2002; and Holland et al., 2005.
- from the literature list of Berzin et al., 2007; Bell and Wilson, 2006
- from the literature list of Darlington et al., 2012: Healy et al., 2012
- from the literature list of Ney et al., 2013: Holland and Rivett, 2008

Eventually, 20 studies emerged from these selection methods. Table 3.2 provides an overview of the literature sample of this thesis[4].

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[3] In only one instance, the article of Rauktis et al., 2011, this criterion was believed to be met during literature selection but appeared not actually of use in the final analysis.

[4] Some studies in the literature sample use the same data. This is the case for the studies of Connolly (2005, 2006), and for Holland et al. (2005), Holland and O'Neill (2006) and Holland and Rivett (2008). This constitutes a limitation of this thesis. Because each of these studies has a different focus and uses the data for answering a different research question, it has been chosen to allow the inclusion of studies using the same data.

No.	Author + year	Title	Location	Method
1.	**Bell and Wilson, 2006**	Children's views of family group Conferenc…	United Kingdom	Interviews and questionnaires with participants of a FGC model
2.	**Berzin et al., 2007**	Assessing model fidelity in two family group decision-making programs: is this child welfare intervention being implemented as intended?	United States	Interviews with FGC-participants of two different models
3.	**Brown, 2003**	Mainstream or margin? The current use of family group conferences in child welfare practice in the UK.	United Kingdom	Surveys for government councils on their use of FGC
4.	**Connolly, 2005**	Fifteen years of family group conferencing: coordinators talk about their experiences in Aotearoa New Zealand.	New Zealand	Interviews with 13 coordinators
5.	**Connolly, 2006**	Up front and personal: confronting dynamics in the family group conference.	New Zealand	Interviews with 13 coordinators
6.	**Dalrymple, 2002**	Family Group Conferences and youth advocacy: the participation of children and young people in family decision making.	United Kingdom	Focus groups with participants of a FGC model
7.	**Darlington et al., 2012**	Parents' perceptions of their participation in mandated family group meetings.	Australia	Interviews with participants of a FGC model
8.	**Healy et al., 2012**	Family participation in child protection practice: an observational study of family group meetings.	Australia	Observations of a FGC model
9.	**Holland and O'Neill, 2006**	'We had to be there to make sure it was what we wanted': Enabling children's participation in family decision-making through the family group conference.	United Kingdom	Interviews with participants of a FGC model
10.	**Holland and Rivett, 2008**	'Everyone started shouting': making connections between the process of family group conferences and family therapy practice.	United Kingdom	Interviews with participants of a FGC model
11.	**Holland et al., 2005**	Democratising the family and the state? The case of family group conferences in child welfare.	United Kingdom	Interviews with participants of a FGC model
12.	**Ney et al., 2013**	Voice, power and discourse: experiences of participants in family	Canada	Interviews & discourse analysis

		group conferences in the context of child protection.		
13.	**O'Shaughnessy et al., 2010**	Building Bridges in Liverpool: exploring the use of family group conferences for black and minority ethnic children and their families.	United Kingdom	Statistics of- and interviews with participants of a FGC model
14.	**Pennell, 2004**	Family group conferencing in child welfare: responsive and regulatory interfaces.	United States	Quantitative: seeks correlations between aspects of FGC and results
15.	**Pennell and Burford, 2000**	Family group decision making: protecting children and women.	Canada	Experiment of a FGC model
16.	**Sheets et al., 2009**	Evidence-based practice in family group decision-making for Anglo, African American and Hispanic families.	United States	Survey data from family-group participants of a FGC model
17.	**Sieppert et al., 2000**	Family group conferencing in child welfare: lessons from a demonstration project.	Canada	Questionnaires for participants of a FGC model
18.	**Sundell et al., 2002**	Social workers' attitudes towards family group conferences in Sweden and the United Kingdom.	Sweden and United Kingdom	Questionnaires for social workers of a FGC model
19.	**Rauktis et al., 2011**	Perceptions of fidelity to Family Group Decision-Making principles: examining the impact of race, gender, and relationship.	United States	Survey of participants of a FGC model
20.	**Waites et al., 2004**	Increasing the cultural responsiveness of family group conferencing.	United States	Focus group narratives of participants of a FGC model

Table 3.2: an overview of the literature sample of the thesis

3.3. Testing hypotheses: decision-rules

In the previous section, it has been shown how the literature sample of this thesis has been selected. In this section, it will be discussed how the meta-analysis uses the findings from these studies in the literature sample to test the hypotheses identified before.

3.3.1. Two relationships

First of all, in order to test the hypotheses on the effect of aspects of the role of the coordinator in family control, the meta-analysis focuses on two types of relationships between explanatory variables and the dependent variable of family control. First of all, the meta-analysis assesses whether a direct relationship exists between explanatory variables and family control (A). A 'direct relationship' here means that empirical findings within studies in the literature sample suggest that the explanatory variable has a direct effect on family control. Taking as an example the skills of the coordinator in terms of cultural competence, a direct relationship exists when a study for example finds that respect of the

coordinator for cultural traditions enhances the feeling of families to voice their opinion and to participate in decision-making. The second relationship between explanatory variables and family control on which the meta-analysis focuses consists of 'causal mechanisms' (B). Causal mechanisms can be seen as the 'reasons' for the direct relationship. Sometimes, for example in the study of Pennell in 2004, no 'reasons' are provided for a direct relationship. For example, Pennell has found that respect of the coordinator is positively (correlation of 0.511) related to family control (Pennell, 2004, p. 130). Here, no reasons or 'causal mechanisms' are presented that make this direct relationship likely. A causal mechanism operating between the variables of respect of the coordinator and family control could for example be 'feeling to be taken seriously'. Thus, if it was found that respect of the coordinator makes families feel being taken seriously, which itself enhances family control, a causal mechanisms has been identified. Thus, causal mechanisms are 'reasons' for direct relationships. Most of the direct relationships found in the literature sample already include causal mechanisms.

Thus, in terms of testing hypotheses, the meta-analysis focuses on finding the following relationships between the explanatory variables and family control:
(A): A direct relationship between the explanatory variable and family control
(B): Causal mechanisms operating between the explanatory variable and family control, substantiating the likelihood of the direct relationship found at (A).
These relationships are presented more visually in figure 3.3.
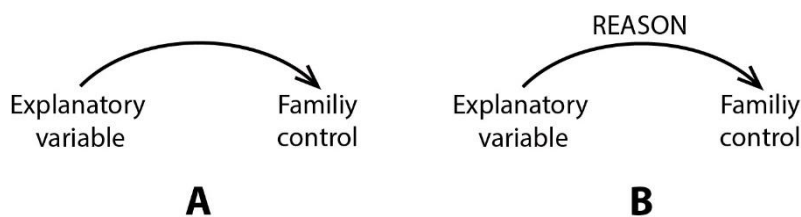
Fig 3.3: the relationships between explanatory variables and family control focused on in the meta-analysis

3.3.2. The decision-rules

Then, based on the relationships discussed above, the 'decision-rules' of the hypotheses can be presented. These decision-rules constitute the criteria that must be fulfilled in order to accept hypotheses. In order to accept hypotheses, the following is required:
- (1) (A) A direct relationship between the explanatory variable and family control, operating in the hypothesized direction.
- (2) (B) Causal mechanisms operating between the explanatory variable and family control, substantiating the relationship at (A).
- (3) No direct relationships may be found between the explanatory variable and family control that indicate an effect opposite to the hypothesized effect.
Thus, if one study finds a direct relationship between an explanatory variable and family control in the opposite direction as the hypothesized one, the hypothesis must be rejected. In other words: in order to accept a hypothesis, all studies that empirically test the effect of the explanatory variable on family control must have results that confirm the hypothesis. Thus, both 'perfect correlation' (no study may find results contradicting the hypothesis) and 'causal mechanisms' are necessary to accept hypotheses.

In this chapter, the methodology of this thesis has been discussed. It has been discussed how the meta-analysis in the presented form suits the research goal of this thesis and it has been shown how the meta-analysis has been conducted. Moreover, the process of literature selection has been set out, and the eventual literature sample has been presented. At the end of this chapter, the decision-rules for testing hypotheses have been presented. In the following chapter, the 'basic model' of family group conferencing will be presented. The basic model that will be described in chapter 4 follows from the FGC forms researched in the literature sample, and is thus based on empirical information. However, because the aim of chapter 4 is not to elaborately analyze data pertaining to the research subject but rather to give the reader a deeper understanding of the concept of FGC, chapter 4 functions as a bridge between the introductory and theoretical part of this thesis and the data-analysis part.

4. The basic model of FGC

As mentioned in the introduction, family group conferences originate from New Zealand but are currently held in many developed countries. In the literature sample used for the meta-analysis, empirical studies are included that focus on FGC projects in New Zealand, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and Sweden. It may not be a surprise then, that there are differences between the empirically researched FGC-models in terms of the structural informal rules, in terms of skills and resources, and in terms of cultural values and mindsets. Indeed, the role of the coordinator employs some differing aspects in all of the FGC models researched in the literature sample. Regardless of this, it has been possible to identify a 'basic model of FGC' by comparing the FGC models researched in the literature sample and identifying some general characteristics. In this short chapter, this basic FGC model will be discussed in order to give the reader a deeper understanding of the general characteristics of family group conferencing. This deeper understanding is necessary to fully grasp the content of the data-analysis chapters that will follow this chapter. To be sure, the basic model does not consist of the foundation for every FGC model, but it entails an overview of how many FGC models researched in the literature sample are structured.

4.1. The basic model

It follows from the meta-analysis that FGC models generally include three broad stages. First, there is a referral stage, in which it is decided that a problem family receives a FGC. After that, a preparation stage follows, in which participants are being prepared. Finally, the actual conference commences, which itself also consists of three phases.[5]

4.1.1. Referral

In most FGC models throughout the world, social 'case' workers have a discretion to refer families for a FGC if it deems children in the family to be at risk or in need of protection. In New Zealand, however, and in some provinces and regions in other countries throughout the world such as Queensland in Australia, social workers do not have a discretion but are obliged to make a referral in such situations (Connolly, 2005; 2006; Healy et al., 2012). In any case, after a referral for a FGC is made, responsibility is shifted to an independent coordinator who is charged with convening the conference. The word 'independent' used here, has however some different meanings across different FGC models. Generally, in the FGC models in the literature sample, an 'independent' coordinator means that the coordinator has no 'case-carrying responsibility', meaning that has not been in any way involved with the family concerned before the case was referred to him (Berzin et al., 2007; Connolly, 2005; 2006; Pennell, 2004; Holland and O'Neill, 2006; Sheets et al., 2009). In certainly 8 instances, the coordinator is employed by the child protective agency of the government of the particular country (Brown, 2003; Connolly, 2005; 2006; Darlington et al., 2012; Healy et al., 2012; Ney et al., 2013; Sheets et al., 2009; Sundell et al., 2002). However, in certainly one instance throughout the literature sample, 'independence' of the coordinator means that he is employed by an external non-governmental organization (O'Shaughnessy et al., 2010). In any case, the coordinator is charged with the responsibility to convene and prepare the family group conference in all FGC models in the articles that provided information on this (Berzin et al., 2007; Connolly 2005; 2006; Dalrymple, 2002; Holland

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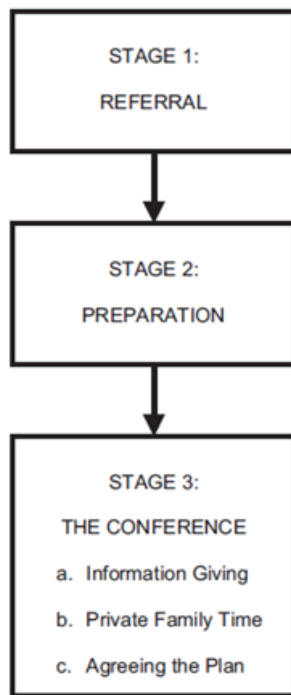[5] Rules about the stages of FGC and the phases of the actual conference constitute procedural scope rules.

and Rivett, 2008; Pennell, 2004; Pennell and Burford, 2000; Sieppert et al, 2000; Sundell et al., 2002; Waites et al., 2004).

4.1.2. Preparation

With referral constituting the first 'stage' of the conference, the second stage consists of preparation. The coordinator thus generally has the responsibility to conduct this 'pre-conferencing work', which normally consists of notifying and recruiting the participants, making arrangements for a location and time for the conference to take place, arranging travel, child care and other logistics, assessing potential risks and preparing family group and professionals for the conference by providing them with information on their roles and the procedure (Berzin et al., 2007; Pennell, 2004; Sieppert et al, 2000). In six FGC models researched in the literature sample, informal rules stipulated that coordinators must determine together with the family or follow the family's wishes in terms of who may be invited to the conference, the time and location of the FGC as well as other (cultural) preferences such as the opening of the conference and the food and drinks served (Berzin et al., 2007; Holland and O'Neill, 2006; Holland and Rivett, 2008; Sheets et al., 2009; Sundell et al., 2002; Waites et al., 2004).

4.1.3. The conference

After the preparation stage, the actual conference takes place. The actual conference itself also generally consists of three phases, being the information phase, the private family time and the phase of agreeing on –or negotiating the plan (Connolly, 2005; 2006; Berzin et al., 2007; Holland and O'Neill, 2006; Holland et al., 2005; Holland and Rivett, 2008; O'Shaughnessy et al., 2010; Pennell, 2004; Pennell and Burford, 2000; Rauktis et al., 2011; Sundell et al., 2002). Both the preparation stage and the information phase include many informal information rules. During the information phase, generally the philosophy, aims and procedure of the FGC is explained, and professionals voice their concerns on the situation of the family, along with possible resources for finding a solution and boundaries within which the solution can be found (Berzin et al., 2007; Connolly 2005; 2006; Holland and O'Neill, 2006; Pennell, 2004; Sieppert et al., 2000). Typically, it is the responsibility of the coordinator that the family group has all the information necessary to produce an approvable plan (Berzin et al., 2007; Connolly, 2005; 2006; Darlington et al., 2012; Healy et al., 2012; Holland et al., 2005; Holland and O'Neill, 2006; Holland and Rivett, 2008; Pennell, 2004; Waites et al., 2004). After the information phase, the professionals and the coordinator typically withdraw from the meeting, providing the family group the time and opportunity to deliberate on a plan in private. In thirteen of the FGC models researched in the literature sample, it was specifically mentioned that private family time was included in the conference (Bell and Wilson, 2006; Dalrymple, 2002; Pennell, 2004; Pennell and Burford, 2000; Holland and O'Neill, 2006; Holland et al., 2005; Holland and Rivett, 2008; Ney et al., 2013; Rauktis et al., 2011; Sheets et al., 2009; Sieppert et al., 2000; Sundell et al., 2002; Waites et al., 2004). After the private family time, the professionals and coordinators are invited back into the conference for the final phase, in which the professionals and coordinator agree on- or negotiate the plan. Generally, the informal aggregation rule is that the plan drafted in the private family time is binding, unless this plan is considered by professionals and coordinators to bring the child's wellbeing at serious risk. This essentially means that professionals and coordinators generally have a veto power, which thus in practice means that final plans are made based on consensus (Connolly, 2005; 2006; Berzin et al., 2007; Pennell and Burford, 2000; Sieppert et al., 2000) In terms of the coordinator, this thus means that he must agree with the plans made in private family time as long as the plan is lawful and it does not endanger the child's welfare (Berzin et al., 2007; Holland and O'Neill, 2006; Holland et al., 2005; Pennell and Burford, 2000; Sieppert et al., 2000).

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┌─────────────────────┐
│     STAGE 1:         │
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│     REFERRAL        │
└─────────────────────┘
          │
          ▼
┌─────────────────────┐
│     STAGE 2:         │
│                     │
│   PREPARATION       │
└─────────────────────┘
          │
          ▼
┌──────────────────────────┐
│     STAGE 3:              │
│                          │
│   THE CONFERENCE         │
│                          │
│  a.  Information Giving   │
│                          │
│  b.  Private Family Time  │
│                          │
│  c.  Agreeing the Plan    │
└──────────────────────────┘
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Fig. 4.1: the basic model of FGC. (Hayes and Houston, 2007, p. 995).

In this chapter, a 'basic model of FGC' has been presented by comparing the FGC models researched in the literature sample of the meta-analysis and by identifying general characteristics that most of the FGC models share. Because this chapter included empirical data but mostly aimed to provide the reader a deeper understanding of FGC necessary to grasp the following chapters, this chapter constituted a 'bridge' between the introductory and theoretical part of this thesis on the one hand and the analytical part on the other. Indeed, the following chapter constitutes the first data-analysis chapter. In chapter 5, the findings from the meta-analysis will be presented on the relationship between the rules-in-use relating to the role of the coordinator and family control.

5. The rules-in-use of the coordinator and their relation to family control

In the theoretical framework, hypotheses have been formulated relating to the relationship between the role of the coordinator and family control in FGC. In the present chapter, the hypotheses focusing on the relationships between the rules-in-use and family control will be tested (hypothesis 1a1 t/m 1d2). As has become clear from the theoretical framework, the rules-in-use relevant to the research subject consist of authority rules, scope rules, aggregation rules and information rules. First, the findings from the meta-analysis on the relationship between the authority rules and family control will be discussed. Here, both the rights and authorizations of the coordinator to act according to own insights on the one hand and obligations on the other will be assessed in their relation to family control. After the authority rules, the scope rules will be discussed. The third paragraph will elaborate upon the aggregation rules, and subsequently the findings from the meta-analysis on the relationship between information rules and family control will be presented. Toward the end of this chapter, a schematic overview of the findings of the meta-analysis will be provided. Finally, the findings of this chapter will be summarized and a schematic overview will be given of the results of the hypotheses-test.

5.1. Authority rules

The first aspect of the role of the coordinator that will be discussed in relation to family control is constituted by the authority rules. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, authority rules consist of rights, authorizations, and obligations of the coordinator that are derived from his structural position (Klok and Denters, 2002). Because this thesis focuses on three particular relationships of the coordinator, the authority rules derived from the coordinator's position in relation to (1) families, (2) professionals and (3) the 'own organization' of the coordinator are relevant here. In this thesis, it is generally expected that rules-in-use exist in such a way that they enable coordinators and professionals to provide families with a voice and influence in determining their own situation. In this light, two hypotheses have been formulated regarding the authority rules of the coordinator. The first hypothesis, h1a1, is that rights and authorizations of the coordinator to act according to own insights enhances family control. In essence, this is the 'empower to empower' hypothesis, which means that it is expected that when the coordinator is empowered through rights and authorizations to act according to own insights, this also results in empowerment of families. This is, of course, provided that the coordinator also actually uses these rights and authorizations granted to him in a way that empowers families. The second hypothesis of authority rules entails that it is expected that obligations restricting the discretion of the coordinator also enhance family control. In this paragraph, the findings from the meta-analysis on the relationship between the authority rules of the coordinator and family control will be presented. First, the rights and authorizations of coordinators and their effect on family control will be discussed. After that, particular obligations of the coordinators and their effect on family control will be assessed.

5.1.1. Rights and authorizations to act according to own insights

Very little information about rights and authorizations of the coordinator has been found throughout the literature sample that focuses on rules about the relationship between the coordinator and the families (relationship 1). In many FGC models studied throughout the sample, coordinators can veto the final plan drafted by the family. However, this veto constitutes an aggregation rule rather than an

authority rule and will thus be discussed later in this chapter. In FGC projects in Sweden and the United Kingdom, the coordinator had the right to exclude individuals of the family or the social network of the family from the conference if this was absolutely necessary (Sundell et al., 2002). However, there were no indications that the right of coordinators to exclude people (or the threat for participants to be excluded) has any effect on family control. In terms of the rights and authorizations of coordinators prescribing the relationship between coordinators and professionals (relationship 2), also very little knowledge has emerged on the relation with family control. Although in one studied FGC model coordinators had the right to challenge the thoughts and information of professionals when they believed professionals engaged in dangerous behaviors, and this right was actually exercised, there were no indications that this in any way influenced family control (Connolly, 2006).

As follows from the theoretical framework, in the academic literature it is thought that coordinators are increasingly impeded by bureaucratic and legalistic pressures of their own organizations to provide families control over their situations (Adams and Chandler, 2004; Dalrymple, 2002; Spratt, 2001). In terms of the rights and authorizations of coordinators in relation to their own organization (relationship 3), some evidence is found in the meta-analysis that coordinators are restricted by their own organizations in their structural professional autonomy. In the study of Connolly in New Zealand, coordinators' roles were devaluated compared to when the FGC was first introduced (Connolly, 2005). In the beginning, 'the role of the coordinator was positioned senior to the role of the social worker' (Connolly, 2005, p. 6). However, after some time, the coordinator 'had been sidelined into an increasingly narrow coordinating role' (Connolly, 2005, p. 6). Although the coordinators interviewed in New Zealand thus experience a loss of authorizations and rights, it has not been precisely stipulated which authorizations and rights have been lost (Connolly, 2005). Moreover, this loss of rights and authorizations was not brought into relation with family control.

Thus, in the meta-analysis, three specific types of rights and authorizations for the coordinator to act according to own insights have been found, each type affecting the coordinator's relationship with a different actor. However, in none of these cases, indications were found on how these rights and authorizations impacted on family control. Thus, no information has been found that could suggest a relationship between rights and authorizations of the coordinator to act according to own insights on the one hand and family control on the other. Therefore, nothing can be said regarding hypothesis 1a1 that rights and authorizations of the coordinator to act according to own insights enhance family control. In the following section, it will be assessed how obligations of the coordinator restricting his discretion affect family control.

5.1.2. Obligations restricting the coordinator's discretion

In relation to the suggestion that FGC workers are sometimes not stimulated by their own organizations to provide family control, the governmental child protection authority in Queensland, Australia, was criticized for not providing enough safeguards in FGC to ensure that families are influential in decision-making (Healy et al., 2012). These safeguards constituted obligations on the part of the coordinator, who were employed by the governmental authority (Healy et al., 2012). In the study conducted by Healy et al., in which it was judged that the lack of governmental enthusiasm for FGC resulted in a lack of obligations for coordinators to ensure family control, it was observed that professionals took a dominant role in decision-making and that there was thus very little family control (Healy et al., 2012). In the study of Healy et al., the governmental child protection authority in Australia was criticized for failing to oblige the coordinator to invite children to the meetings and to provide families with private family time (Healy et al., 2012). Both these obligations will be discussed here, as well as the obligation to give participants support from an advocate or support worker, to give families

a voice in terms of the characteristics and invitees of the conference and the obligation to invite, where possible, more family members and people from their social network than professionals.

5.1.2.1. Inviting children to participate in the FGC

Throughout the meta-analysis, evidence has been found that the inclusion of children who are the subject of the conference enhances the degree of family control over one's own situation. In the study of Holland and O'Neill, children who were interviewed about their participation voiced that they felt that they were heard and that they were influential in the decisions made (Holland and O'Neill, 2006). 11-year old Mark and his 10-year old sister stated: 'we had to be there to make sure it was what we wanted' (Holland and O'Neill, 2006, p. 101). In the study of Holland et al., interviewed parents sometimes even held that their children's wishes dominated in the decision-making (Holland et al., 2005). In another study conducted in the United Kingdom, children who participated in the FGC felt listened to and empowered, and felt, because of their inclusion in the FGC, more able to understand the issues affecting them (Bell and Wilson, 2006). Moreover, a causal mechanism has also been found to operate between inviting children to the FGC and family control. According to Holland et al., it occurs sometimes that the presence of children in the FGC makes dominant family members more restrained, resulting in a higher degree of intra-familial democracy (Holland et al., 2005). As seen, intra-familial democracy is assumed to be conducive to family control.

Thus, throughout the meta-analysis, multiple studies found positive direct relationships between inviting children to the FGC and family control. As can be seen in table 5.2, no studies in the literature sample suggested a negative direct relationship. Moreover, a causal mechanism has been found to operate between inviting children and family control, substantiating the likelihood of a positive relationship. Therefore, it can be assumed that the obligation of the coordinator to invite children to the FGC enhances family control.

5.1.2.2. Providing private family time

As mentioned in chapter 4, in 13 of the 20 FGC models researched in the literature sample it was specifically stated that private family time was included in the conference. Although the idea behind private family time is generally to make sure that plans are drafted by family members rather than professionals, the meta-analysis did not only find positive direct relationships between private family time and family control. Indeed, two studies in the literature sample (albeit on the same FGC model in the United Kingdom) found that private family time can also negatively influence family control (Holland and O'Neill, 2006; Holland et al., 2005). In these studies, private family time in the FGC had considerably often resulted in a loss of experienced family control (Holland and O'Neill, 2006; Holland et al., 2005). In the study of Holland et al., only in a minority of conferences were all members of the family group and social network happy with the private family time (Holland et al., 2005). Here, causal mechanisms were also found operating between private family time and family control. In 7 of the 17 families interviewed, members stated that they did not want to be left alone to deliberate, mainly because professionals and coordinators were expected to maintain a calm environment throughout the deliberations (Holland et al., 2005). Moreover, in these studies, it was found that some children felt that they were not listened to and did not have any power during private deliberations because other family members immediately took the lead in a very oppressive manner (Holland and O'Neill, 2006; Holland et al., 2005). Although most interviewed children in the two mentioned studies were able to speak up during family time, the obligation of coordinators and professionals to withdraw cannot be said to be systematically conducive to family control. Indeed, it seems that the degree to which private family time enhances family control is dependent on contextual factors such as for example family characteristics.

That some family members strongly wish not to be left alone for private family time may suggest that an obligation for coordinators and professionals to abstain from private deliberations might not always be effective to ensure family control. Perhaps would a discretion for coordinators to offer family time be more effective. However, no research exists on this effect, and the study of Healy et al. in which this discretion existed and in which very little FGCs consequently included private family time, conferencing did not have favorable outcomes in terms of family control (Healy et al., 2012). Although this may have several reasons different than private family time, two other studies suggest that private family time, regardless of an obligation or discretion, is conducive to family control. In the study of Pennell in the United States, it was found that whether the coordinator grants participants private family time strongly enhances family control (Pennell, 2004). Moreover, in a study conducted by Berzin et al. also in the United States, two FGC models were compared with each other in which one model (Fresno) included private family time and in which the other model (Riverside) did not (Berzin et al., 2007). It was found that in Fresno, due to the fact that private family time was included, families felt more influential in the decision-making than in Riverside (Berzin et al., 2007). Although the different outcomes in terms of family control sketched here cannot be solely attributed to private family time, this section shows that the meta-analysis found, apart from positive direct relationships between private family time and family control, also evidence for negative direct relationships between the two variables.

In this section, it was shown that the meta-analysis found two types of direct relationships operating between providing private family time and family control. In some studies, a positive direct relationship was found between private family time and family control. In other studies, evidence suggested a negative direct relationship between these two variables. Thus, although it appears from the meta-analysis that private family time enhances family control in many cases, an obligation of coordinators and professionals to withdraw from the deliberations is not systematically conducive to family control. Based on the meta-analysis, it can be carefully suggested that an obligation to include private family time might be too strong of a measure to ensure family control and that a discretion might be too weak. This, however, will be discussed later.

5.1.2.3. Providing the opportunity to have a support worker or advocate

As shown in the previous section, it occurs in FGC that some family members or members of the social network of the family dominate the decision-making process, reducing intra-familial democracy and thus also reducing family control as a whole. In an effort to make sure that all participants feel that they have the opportunity to voice their opinions and influence the deliberations, 3 FGC models studied in the literature sample oblige the coordinator to allow individuals to have a support worker or advocate (Dalrymple, 2002; Darlington et al., 2012; Holland and O'Neill, 2006). Advocates and support workers exist in many different forms throughout the studies in the literature sample. In two studies in the United Kingdom in which advocates are included, advocates include laymen, professionals and sometimes even members of the social network who have the specific task to ensure in an independent way that the voices of children are heard and included in the deliberations (Dalrymple, 2002; Holland and O'Neill, 2006). While support workers in the study of Darlington et al included legal representatives, workers from family and/ or disability support services and indigenous workers, the study of Healy et al included support workers that were more generally defined as 'community support workers employed by a range of governmental and nongovernmental agencies' (Darlington et al., 2012; Healy et al., 2012).

It has been argued in the FGC literature that the use of advocates and support persons stands in contrast with the philosophy behind FGC that family group conferencing empowers families by strengthening family unity and their self-organizing ability (Dalrymple, 2002; Holland and O'Neill, 2006). Indeed, the use of advocacy and support persons arguably implies a conflictual rather than a

uniting view of the family (Holland and O'Neill, 2006). Although it is not specified whether advocates and support workers are allowed to be present during private family time, all of the experiences with advocates and support workers in FGC models studied in the literature sample were positive in terms of family control. Indeed, only positive direct relationships were found between the use of advocates and support workers on the one hand and family control on the other. Moreover, causal mechanisms were also found, again only substantiating the likelihood of a positive relationship between the two mentioned factors. In the study of Holland and O'Neill in the United Kingdom, all of the experiences with child advocates were positive and conducive to family control (Holland and O'Neill, 2006). In the study of Dalrymple also conducted in the United Kingdom, in which professionals and people from the social network of the family were assigned the task of advocating for children, it was found that advocates empowered children in three ways; personally, within the family network and in relation to professionals (Dalrymple, 2002). Children reported that they felt that advocates helped them to understand the process and issues better (for example through translating jargon) and that advocates made them able to say what was really on their mind (Dalrymple, 2002). This made them feel more listened to and influential in the deliberations in relation to both their own family and the professionals. Moreover, children stated that the use of advocates also increased their power in the family deliberations through letting the advocates occasionally speak on their behalf. Also, children held that advocates made them feel more confident to speak for themselves (Dalrymple, 2002). In the study of Dalrymple, the adults involved felt that they had, as a result of the inclusion of child advocates, a better understanding of the child's perspective (Dalrymple, 2002). In the Australian study of Healy et al, it was found that parents who had the opportunity to have a community support worker present were more likely to feel included in decision-making processes (Healy et al., 2012). Finally, in the study of Darlington et al which also reports on findings from Australian FGC endeavors, it was found that the support from legal advocates and individual support workers generally enhanced conference experiences, helping individuals to contribute to the discussion (Darlington et al., 2012). In the study of Holland and O'Neill, it was mentioned that allowing advocates and support workers into FGC is not a neutral endeavor and might change the dynamics of family participation (Holland and O'Neill, 2006). However, it is nowhere studied to what extent and how this is the case.

Similar to the obligation to provide private family time, two sets of authority rules are relevant to the relationship between the obligation to provide individuals the opportunity to have an advocate or support worker on the one hand and family control on the other. The first set of rules consist of (A) the rules stipulating whether coordinators have the obligation to provide individuals the opportunity to have an advocate or support worker. The second set of rules constitutes (B) the rules specifying the form and capacity of the advocate and support worker (support worker vs. advocate; legal representative vs. indigenous worker; one support worker per individual vs. more support workers per individual; etc.), as well as the rules specifying the role and behavior of the included advocates and support workers. Because the second set of rules (B) is not related to the role of the coordinator in FGC but to that of the advocates and support workers, these rules fall outside of the scope of this thesis. In terms of the first set of rules (A), it seems from the meta-analysis that an obligation to allow participants an advocate or support worker enhances family control. This is because the meta-analysis found only positive direct relationships between the inclusion of advocates and support workers on the one hand and family control on the other, as well as causal mechanisms only substantiating the likelihood of a positive relationship between the two. Moreover, because individual participants may decline the offer to have an own advocate or support person present at the FGC, advocates and support persons do not interfere and promote a participant's position against that participant's will. In sum, an obligation for the coordinator to offer participants the opportunity to have an advocate or support worker present seems only positively related to family control. However, as mentioned, it does not follow from the studies whether advocates and support workers were also allowed to participate in private family time. Therefore, it requires research to establish whether participation of advocates and support workers enhances family control in situations when they are included in private family time, when they are excluded from these deliberations or in both of these situations.

5.1.2.4. Letting families determine conference-characteristics

In 6 FGC models studied in the literature sample, the coordinator let the family determine the characteristics of the conference in terms of location, time, invitees from the extended family and social network, and the inclusion of cultural customs (Berzin et al., 2007; Holland and O'Neill, 2006; Holland and Rivett, 2008; Sheets et al., 2009; Sundell et al., 2002; Waites et al., 2004). Throughout these studies, evidence suggested that the power of the family to determine the characteristics positively influenced conference experiences and, albeit less specifically mentioned, family control. No empirical evidence throughout these studies suggested an opposite effect. In the American study of Waites et al., in which cultural minority communities could present guidelines and protocols to set out cultural rules on the conferencing process, and in which these guidelines were subsequently followed, this resulted in families feeling 'culturally included', in turn resulting in an environment for productive problem-solving and decision-making by the families (Waites et al., 2004). For example, in the study of Waites et al, certain minority communities stated that the elderly occupied a fundamental authoritative role in their cultures, and incorporated in the guidelines that, in their view, the inclusion of the elderly was fundamental to their ability to determine a plan (Waites et al., 2004). In the study of Pennell in the United States, it was found that, whether the conference was held in ways that felt right to the family group (in terms of location, time, food and invitees) was positively related to the degree of satisfaction with the whole conference (Pennell, 2004).

It also follows from other studies in the literature sample that it is conducive for family control to let families decide on the characteristics of the conference. Some studies provided evidence on causal mechanisms operating between letting families determine conference characteristics and family control. In the study of Healy et al., in which the coordinator did not let family members decide upon the conference characteristics, members of the family group sometimes went out of the conference to look after their children because it was held at a venue where no child care was arranged (Healy et al., 2012). It is thus shown that arranging an appropriate venue in which families feel comfortable is an important task of the coordinator, actually influencing the degree of family control. From the meta-analysis, it follows that family preferences in terms of location strongly differ per family and community. In the study of Waites et al., it was found that minority communities prefer churches and community centers as FGC venues, whereas it is mentioned in the study of Connolly that some families prefer government facilities for reasons of safety and neutrality (Connolly, 2005; Waites et al., 2004). Thus, because family preferences differ and because satisfaction with the (cultural) characteristics of the conference enhance family control, an obligation of the coordinator to let families determine these characteristics seems an effective method to stimulate family control. Naturally, it must be noted here that families can only determine the characteristics of the FGC within boundaries of practicability and safety. In a way, providing families the power to determine the characteristics of the conference already constitutes a form of family empowerment. Because the studies in the literature sample only found positive relationships between letting families determine conference characteristics on the one hand and family control on the other, and because causal mechanisms have been found substantiating this positive relationship, it seems that this type of empowerment in turn empowers families to decide upon a final plan.

5.1.2.5. Inviting extended family and closely involved social network

A fundamental idea behind family group conferencing is that members of the (extended) family and closely involved social network are invited into the conference to support the family in question during the deliberations and to fulfil supporting functions for the family in the final plan drafted. As mentioned in the previous section, in 6 FGC models studied in the meta-analysis, families are allowed to determine which members of the extended family and social network are to be invited to the conference. Although in most FGC-studies in the literature sample extended family and members of the closely

involved social network were included, including these people constituted nowhere, except for the model in the study of Pennell and Burford, an obligation of the coordinator. In the model researched by Pennell and Burford in Canada, the coordinator was required to include more people from the nuclear family, extended family and social network in the FGC than professionals (Pennell and Burford, 2000). This was required in an attempt to shift the balance in terms of participants more towards family control than to professional domination. Although in the study of Pennell and Burford no indications are found that the obligation to invite more members of the extended family and social network than professionals had any direct influence on family control, it was found that including such people into the FGC increased family unity (Pennell and Burford, 2000). In the Australian study of Healy et al., in which professionals largely outnumbered members of the nuclear- and extended family and social network and in which FGC outcomes were overall professionally-dominated, it was suggested that ensuring a balance between professionals and family- and social network members enhances family participation in decision-making (Healy et al., 2012). Moreover, in the study of Pennell, it was found that there was a positive correlation between inviting more members of the family group into the conference than service providers on the one hand and family control on the other (Pennell, 2004). Thus, evidence is found suggesting a positive direct relationship between the involvement of more family- and social network members than professionals and family control. No evidence was found suggesting a negative relationship between these variables.

When looking at the mere inclusion of members of the extended family and social network into the FGC rather than situations in which these people outnumber professionals, it also seems that this enhances family control. This finding emerges because the meta-analysis has only found positive direct relations between the inclusion of members from the extended family and social network on the one hand and family control on the other, as well as causal mechanisms substantiating the likelihood of this positive relationship. In the study of Holland et al in the United Kingdom, it was found that participants felt that inclusion of members from the extended family and social network was helpful to the decision-making process (Holland et al., 2005). In this study, members of the extended family often took on a facilitative or leadership role in the decision-making process. Although a 'leadership role' of extended family might have implications for intra-familial democracy, it is only mentioned in the study that participants felt that this engagement of extended family helped the family to actually make decisions. In the Canadian study of Sieppert et al., in which a relatively high amount of extended family and social network members participated in the FGC, two-thirds of the families reported that they felt strengthened in their decision-making because they felt the right persons attended the conference (Sieppert et al., 2000). In several other studies, it was found that families valued the inclusion of members of the extended family and social network, albeit providing little information on how this relates to family control (Bell and Wilson, 2006; Darlington et al., 2012; Holland and O'Neill, 2006; Pennell and Burford, 2000). In the studies of Bell and Wilson and Holland and O'Neill, it was found that participants highly valued the opportunity to work as an extended family together on a problem (Bell and Wilson, 2006; Holland and O'Neill, 2006). In the study of Pennell and Burford in the United Kingdom, it was found that the inclusion of extended family and other 'close supports' stimulated family unity (Pennell and Burford, 2000). Only in the study of Connolly in New Zealand a negative effect of the inclusion of extended family and closely involved social network was mentioned, being that some communities might not be appreciative of discussing their issues with others (Connolly, 2005). However, it was only mentioned that in these cases family relationships are not necessarily strengthened, but there were no indications of how this impacts on family control.

Throughout the meta-analysis, causal mechanisms have been found that substantiate the likelihood of positive relationships between family control on the one hand and inviting members from the extended family and social network, as well as inviting more members of this 'family group' than professionals, on the other. An example of such a mechanism is family unity: that inviting (more) members of the extended family and social network (than professionals) has increased family unity might constitute part of the explanation of why positive direct relationships exist between the

mentioned situations and family control. Apart from this, the meta-analysis has found only positive direct relationships between including extended family- and social network into the conference on the one hand and family control on the other. Similarly, only positive direct relationships have been found between family control and including more members of the 'family group' than professionals into the conference. It follows then, that it seems conducive to family control in FGC to oblige coordinators to invite extended family members and members of the closely related social network, and to make sure that more family members and social network members participate in the conference than professionals. Then, another set of authority rules must stipulate how the members of the extended family and social network are selected and what the role and behavior of these members during the conference must be. While the authority rules on the selection of these invitees have already been addressed, the other authority rules do not concern the role of the coordinator and thus fall outside the scope of this thesis. In sum, obligations of coordinators to invite members from the extended family and closely involved social network and to ensure that more 'family group' members participate than professionals seem conducive to family control.

5.1.3. Authority rules: a tentative conclusion

In this paragraph, findings from the meta-analysis on the relationship between authority rules of the coordinator and family control have been presented. In the first paragraph, no information has been found on the relationship between rights and authorizations of the coordinator to act according to own insights on the one hand and family control on the other. Thus, no information exists regarding hypothesis 1a1 that rights and authorizations of the coordinator to act according to own insight enhances family control. In terms of obligations, it has become clear in the second paragraph that obligations of the coordinator mostly enhance family control. However, this effect has been stronger for some obligations than for others, and in one situation an obligation was not systematically conducive to family control (see table 5.1 below). First of all, it seems that the obligation of the coordinator to include children who are subject to the FGC in the conference makes children feel more influential in decision-making. Secondly, in terms of providing private family time, it seems that an obligation of the coordinator to provide private family time is too strong of a measure, as it is found to be not systematically conducive to family control. Both the obligations to give participants the opportunity to have an advocate or support worker present and to let family members determine the characteristics of the conference have appeared to be conducive to family control. Finally, it has been shown that the obligation of the coordinator to invite members from the extended family and closely involved social network as well as the obligation to ensure that more 'family group' members participate than professionals enhance family control. However, more research is required to confirm the suggested relationships of these actions with family control.

As mentioned, no information has been found regarding hypothesis 1a1 that rights and authorizations of the coordinator to act according to own insights enhances family control. In terms of obligations, it has been found by the meta-analysis that most obligations mentioned enhanced family control, but that this was not the case for all obligations. Therefore, hypothesis 1a2 that obligations restricting the discretion of the coordinator enhance family control cannot be supported. Regardless of this, it appears that obligations of the coordinator are generally more conducive to family control than rights and authorizations. However, not all possible obligations and rights and authorizations of coordinators have been discussed here, and it is possible that in some cases a discretion of a coordinator to conduct a certain action enhances family control rather than an obligation. Therefore, further research is necessary to account for this question. Until then, the meta-analysis conducted in this thesis has suggested that the idea of empowering the coordinator to empower the families seems, in terms of the authority rules, not very sensible.

Obligation	Enhances family control?
Obligation to invite children	Yes
Obligation to provide private family time	No
Obligation to allow advocate or support worker	Yes
Obligation to let families determine conference-characteristics	Yes
Obligation to invite extended family and social network	Yes

Table 5.1: an overview of the relationships between the obligations focused on in the meta-analysis on the one hand and family control on the other.

5.2. Scope rules

The second set of rules-in-use relevant to the role of the coordinator in FGC considered by the meta-analysis in this thesis consist of the scope rules. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, scope rules include two types of rules; procedural scope rules and substantive scope rules. The procedural scope rules prescribe how governance processes are phased and what each phase consists of. The procedural scope rules in terms of family group conferencing have already in a general way been discussed in chapter 4. In this present paragraph, procedural scope rules of FGC will not be analyzed in relation to family control, because several variances to procedural scope rules and their effects on family control have already been- and will be discussed elsewhere. For example, the relationship between providing private family time and family control has already been discussed in the previous paragraph. In the present paragraph, the findings from the meta-analysis on the relationship between substantive scope rules and family control will be discussed. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, substantive scope rules specify the span of which outcomes of collective decision-making can be affected by which actors throughout the governance process (Ostrom, 2005, p. 211). In other words, the substantive scope rules specify per phase of collective decision-making which actors can make which decisions. Thus, while authority rules focus on the actions of individuals in terms of rights and obligations, scope rules focus on the characteristics of collectively-made decisions.

In family group conferencing, collective decision-making occurs in the private family time and in the final stage of agreeing to the plan. In FGC, scope rules focus on the degree to which the collective decisions made in these stages are binding and on what the consequences of these decisions are. Because the degree to which decisions are binding in private family time is inseparable from the aggregation rules determining the decision-making power of coordinators and professionals after private family time, this will be discussed later along with the aggregation rules. Consequently, the scope rules in this thesis focus on the degree to which final decisions are binding. In the meta-analysis, it has been found that the final plan deliberated upon in the agreeing phase in some FGC models has a more consequential character than in others. In the FGC model in New Zealand studied by Connolly, it is likely that, when no agreement on a plan is reached with the professionals in the final agreeing phase, the social worker (who has also made the referral) takes the matter to court for resolution (Connolly, 2006). In another model, the FGC model in Riverside in the United States studied by Berzin et al., it was more likely that the coordinator would convene another FGC when no plan could be reached in the first one (Berzin et al., 2007). Although the study of Berzin et al did not assess this factor in its relationship to family control, the study of Connolly found a direct relationship with causal mechanism operating between the consequential character of FGC and family control. This finding actually suggests that the consequential character of the FGCs studied actually decreased family

control. Because families felt the pressure that a plan had to be reached to prevent a court-hearing, families were considerably 'coerced' into acceding to the position of the social worker (Connolly, 2006).

In the theoretical framework, hypothesis 1b has been formulated that the degree to which the coordinator is obliged to make final FGC outcomes binding and consequential enhances family control. However, the meta-analysis found that increasing the extent to which these outcomes in FGC are binding and consequential does not increase family control. Rather, as can be seen in table 5.2, the only information on this relationship found throughout the meta-analysis suggests that making final outcomes binding and consequential actually impedes family control. Thus, because a negative direct relationship has been found instead of the hypothesized positive one, hypothesis 1b must be rejected. However, since only 1 of the 20 studies of the literature sample provided information on the relationship between the extent to which final outcomes are binding on the one hand and family control on the other, more research is necessary to gain actual insight into this relationship.

5.3. Aggregation rules

The third set of rules-in-use relevant to the role of the coordinator in FGC considered by the meta-analysis in this thesis is constituted by aggregation rules. In the theoretical framework it has been shown that aggregation rules specify how collective decisions in an arena are being made based on contributions of different participants (Klok and Denters, 2002). In all FGC models studied in the literature sample, decisions resulting from private family time were binding unless the coordinator and professionals judged the plan to be at risk of serious harm to the child (Connolly, 2005; 2006; Holland and O'Neill, 2006; Holland et al., 2005; Holland and Rivett, 2008; Sundell et al., 2002). As mentioned before, this rule that decisions resulting from private family time are binding unless it is rejected by professionals and coordinators itself constitutes a scope rule, in turn producing the aggregation rule that coordinators and professionals in practice have a veto power. Again, this veto power can only be used when outcomes of private family time are thought to be harmful to the child. As shown in the theoretical framework, family control in FGC entails that the agreed upon plan in FGC is *as far as possible* determined by the family itself. 'As far as possible' here means that the plan must be determined by the families themselves within the boundaries of safety that are set by coordinators and professionals. Thus, FGC coordinators and professionals have the minimal amount of decision-making power in relation to families and in terms of family control. However, since coordinators have the function of being independent facilitators of family control, it has been hypothesized (hypothesis 1c) in the theoretical framework that aggregation rules widening the veto power of the coordinator enhance family control. Indeed, it can be imagined that giving the coordinator a 'wider' veto including the power to disagree with the plan if he believes the family has had too little control over the plan or if he believes there was too little intra-familial democracy, might enhance family control. This is then provided that the family gets the chance to come up with a new plan after the veto has been expressed.

In terms of the foregoing, it can be imagined that one situation in which a widened veto of the coordinator might increase family control is when the coordinator is given the power to veto plans when these plans have been dominated by professionals. Indeed, even though the fundamental idea behind FGC is to give families control over their own situation and to let them decide the plans as opposed to professionals, it has been seen that professionals in practice sometimes anyway influence the decision-making process, whether this occurs deliberately or not. For example, in the study of Healy et al in Australia and in the study of Berzin et al on the FGC model in Riverside in the United States, it was found that professionals influenced decision-making in a relatively strong way (Berzin et al., 2007; Healy et al., 2012). In terms of the veto power of coordinators and professionals, the study of Connolly suggests that it could be imagined that families, due to veto power of coordinators and

professionals, draft plans during private family time reflecting what they think will be approved by professionals and coordinators rather than what they really want. This situation, decreasing family control, also occurred in the study of Connolly, albeit in that study there was an extra pressure because of the consequential nature of the final outcome (the possibility of a court-hearing) (Connolly, 2006). However, no information has been found in the meta-analysis on solely the relationship between the veto of coordinators and professionals in practice and family control. Therefore, more research is required on this relationship. All in all, as can be seen in table 5.2, throughout the meta-analysis no empirical findings have emerged that provide information on the relationship between aggregation rules widening the veto power of the coordinator and family control. Therefore, nothing can be said regarding hypothesis 1c that aggregation rules widening the veto power of the coordinator enhance family control.

5.4. Information rules

The final set of rules-in-use, the information rules, prescribe which information is available to participants and how various participants are required to provide other actors (access to) information (Klok and Denters, 2002). In this paragraph, the findings from the meta-analysis are discussed on the information rules relating to the coordinator and their effects on family control. It follows from the definition of information rules provided here that these rules focus on two aspects; the information-access of participants and the degree to which participants are required to provide other actors information. In applying this to the role of the coordinator, this section will start with a discussion of the relationship between information-access of the coordinator and family control. After that, the information rules stipulating for coordinators that and how they must share information with other participants will be elaborated upon. Indeed, these rules will also be assessed in their relationship with family control.

5.4.1. Information-access of the coordinator

In the theoretical framework, a distinction has been made between two types of information in family group conferencing: process-information and family-information. While family-information includes information on cultural values and traditions of families as well as sensitive information on families' problems, process-information consists of the philosophies and rules of the FGC model used as well as information on the boundaries of the decisions to be made. In terms of the first type of information, hypothesis 1d1 has been formulated, constituting that rules granting access to family-information to the coordinator enhance family control. Thus, it is expected that coordinators, when they have more access to family-information, are better equipped to give families control over their own situation. From the 20 studies in the literature sample, 4 studies provide information on the relationship between access of coordinators to family-information on the one hand and family control on the other. In only 1 of the 20 studies in the literature sample it was specifically mentioned that coordinators had access to family-information (Waites et al., 2004). In the study of Sundell et al., it is found that at the time of their study only 46% of the Swedish social workers and 22% of the social workers from the United Kingdom thought that coordinators should have access to detailed information about families' problems (Sundell et al., 2002). However, from the study of Connolly in New Zealand, it appears that access of coordinators to family-information can certainly enhance family control (Connolly, 2006). In Connolly's study, it was found that social workers, who must in the 'information giving phase' of the conference state the reasons for the conference and set out the deeper problem-situation of the family, sometimes gave a less than up-front outline of the problems of the family (Connolly, 2006). This occurred because social workers felt uncomfortable in terms of talking about sensitive topics in front of the family and the other participants (Connolly, 2006). However, it was also found in 3 studies

in the literature sample that being clear and open about the family's problems, without withholding any relevant but sensitive information, results in a climate of honesty and openness and allows the family to directly confront their issues (Connolly, 2005; 2006; Healy et al., 2012). Following from this, it can be suggested that giving coordinators next to case-carrying professionals access to family-information could increase the climate of honesty and openness and thus the degree to which families can directly confront their issues. This would thus arguably enhance family control. Thus, the foregoing suggests that the coordinators' ability to create a climate of honesty and openness constitutes a causal mechanism suggesting a positive direct relationship between access to family-information of the coordinator and family control.

In the study of Waites et al, minority communities could present guidelines and protocols on how they wished the conference to be conducted taking their cultures into account (Waites et al., 2004). Although this situation applies to authority rules and has already been discussed in section 5.1.2.4, the provision of guidelines and protocols by minority communities also constitutes a way of providing coordinators with information on cultural values of families. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, information on cultural values of families is part of family-information. In the study of Waites et al, it was found that when coordinators followed these guidelines and consequently made the conferences culturally responsive, this enhanced family control of these minority communities (Waites et al., 2004). Implicitly, it follows from this that access of coordinators to information on the cultural values of families, provided that they actually incorporate this knowledge into the conference, enhances family control. Thus, although providing coordinators access to family-information might not constitute a universally desired practice, the meta-analysis has found positive direct relationships between access of the coordinator to family-information on the one hand and family control on the other. Moreover, causal mechanisms have been found substantiating this relationship. As can be seen in table 5.2, the meta-analysis produced no empirical findings that suggest a negative relationship between the two variables. Therefore, hypothesis 1d1 that information rules granting access to family-information to the coordinator enhance family control can be accepted. However, as the studies in the literature sample likely only provide information on a small part of all effects of access to family-information of the coordinator on family control, further research is necessary to confirm the relationship found here.

5.4.2. Sharing process-information with participants

It has been mentioned in chapter 4 that many information rules apply regarding both the preparation stage of FGC and the information-giving phase of the actual conference. Generally, during the preparation stage, coordinators are expected to prepare the family group and professionals for the conference by providing them with information on their roles and the procedure. Then, in the information stage, the coordinator must make sure that all participants understand their roles, the philosophy, the aims and the procedure of FGC. Also, the coordinator generally has the responsibility to ensure that families clearly know what problems need to be solved during the conference and within which boundaries the solutions are to be discussed. Although the coordinator thus has responsibility that family members are clear on this, the professionals involved are often expected to present the problems and to set out the resources and boundaries for the solution. In all studies in the literature sample providing information on the preparation stage and information-giving phase of the FGC model used, the information rules as stipulated above applied. As can be seen in table 5.2, the meta-analysis found indications that sharing process-information with other participants enhances family control.

First, in terms of coordinators sharing process-information with families, the study of Connolly has emphasized that it is conducive to family control to clearly state the conditions that a plan must meet before sending the family into private family time (Connolly, 2005). Moreover, confirming the

importance of setting boundaries for the family plan, the Australian study of Healy et al reported on cases in which family members became overwhelmed by learning new information that child protection orders were to be extended (Healy et al., 2012). However, in relation to this, two studies have found that 'the setting of boundaries' can also be abused by professionals, taking the opportunity of setting boundaries to influence the decision-making in a professionally-desired direction (Holland et al., 2005; Connolly, 2005). Therefore, the study of Connolly suggests that the degree to which families are informed about their rights and about how the conference is supposed to work is positively related to family control (Connolly, 2005). Moreover, it also appears from other studies that sharing process-information with families enhances family control. In the study of Holland and Rivett in the United Kingdom, the coordinator told the family at the beginning of each meeting that each family member would be given the space to speak and be listened to (Holland and Rivett, 2008). It was found that this made family members able to communicate more calmly and effectively, arguably resulting in a higher degree of family control (Holland and Rivett, 2008). In the study of Healy et al., it was found that telling families that they, instead of professionals, could be the first speakers during the conference, actually resulted in families' voices being heard and valued (Healy et al., 2012). Finally, it was also found throughout the meta-analysis that sharing process-information in the form of preparing families for the high emotional impact of FGC could prevent family members from becoming overwhelmed by their emotions during the conference (Holland and Rivett, 2008).

According to the study of Waites et al in the United States, many communities lack trust in the American child support system. Therefore, it was suggested that communities, before engaging in FGC, must be 'educated' into the 'new' philosophy of empowerment in child support (Waites et al., 2004). Although the influence of this type of 'education' on family support was not tested in this study, the meta-analysis found indications that such education into the philosophy and practice of empowerment, but then offered to professionals, could enhance family control. As will be seen later, many professionals engaging in FGC throughout the world have difficulty to cede decision-making power to families. In the study of Connolly, it was found that 'if a social worker believes to have *shared responsibility* with families, then there is a greater likelihood that he or she will want to have a greater role in determining the content of plans rather than ensuring that a plan addresses key issues' (Connolly, 2005, p. 15). Therefore, informing professionals about their role, the aims and philosophy of FGC seems to be conducive to family control. From this citation of the study of Connolly also follows that the way in which information is shared is very important. This appears true for information-sharing towards both families and professionals. As appears from the study of Connolly, when families have the right expectations regarding their decision-making power in the conference, thus that they have 'influence' rather than absolute power, this enhances effective participation in the decision-making (Connolly, 2005).

It follows from the foregoing and it can be seen in table 5.2 that only positive direct relationships have been found between family control and the degree to which the coordinator shares process-information with both families and professionals. Moreover, the meta-analysis has found causal mechanisms operating between family control on the one hand and rules prescribing that and how information must be shared by the coordinator on the other, that substantiate the likelihood of a positive relationship between the two mentioned variables. Because, as can be seen in table 5.2, there were throughout the meta-analysis no instances in which the sharing of process-information by the coordinator with families and professionals had any negative effects, on family control or in general, it seems that rules prescribing that and how information must be shared enhances family control. Thus, hypothesis 1d2, that information rules for coordinators stipulating that and how they must share process-information with other participants enhance family control, can be accepted.

5.5. Schematic overview of findings

As has become clear in chapter 3, hypotheses in this thesis are tested based on two types of relationships between explanatory variables relating to the role of the coordinator and family control. These two types of relationships are 'direct relationships' and 'causal mechanisms'. In this chapter, the findings from the meta-analysis on these types of relationships between explanatory variables relating to the rules-in-use and family control were discussed. This section presents a schematic overview of the findings from the meta-analysis on these relationships.

Study no.	H1a1		H1a2		H1b		H1c		H1d1		H1d2	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
1.			Yes	Yes								
2.			Yes									
3.												
4.									Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5.					No				Yes	Yes		
6.			Yes	Yes								
7.			Yes									
8.			Yes	Yes					Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
9.			Yes/ No									
10.											Yes	Yes
11.			Yes/ No								Yes	Yes
12.												
13.												
14.			Yes	Yes								
15.				Yes								
16.												
17.			Yes	Yes								
18.												
19.												
20.			Yes	Yes					Yes		Yes	Yes

Table 5.2: an overview of the findings of the meta-analysis in terms of direct relationships (A) and causal mechanisms (B) operating between the rules-in-use and family control.

<u>Symbols:</u>

A: In this study, direct relationships between the relevant variables operate in the hypothesized direction [6]
B: In this study, causal mechanisms between the relevant variables are found, substantiating the hypothesized relationship.
Yes: direct relationships or causal mechanisms between the relevant variables operate in the hypothesized direction.
No: direct relationships between the relevant variables operate in the opposite direction as hypothesized.
Yes/No: direct relationships between the relevant variables are found to operate in both the hypothesized- and opposite directions.

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[6] 'Relevant variables' here constitute the variables that are the subject of the hypothesis that is mentioned at the top of each column in the table.

5.6. The rules-in-use: a conclusion

In this chapter, the findings from the meta-analysis have been presented on the relationship between the rules-in-use relating to the role of the coordinator on the one hand, and family control on the other. In terms of the authority rules, no information has been found regarding hypothesis 1a1 that rights and authorizations of the coordinator to act according to own insights enhances family control. Hypothesis 1a2, that obligations of the coordinator restricting his discretion enhance family control, had to be rejected regardless of the finding that most obligations of the coordinator actually enhanced family control. In any case, it has been found that obligations restricting the discretion of the coordinator are more conducive to family control than rights and authorizations. Therefore, it has been concluded that the idea of 'empower to empower', empowering the coordinator to empower the families, seems in terms of the authority rules not very sensible. In terms of the scope rules, it was in the theoretical framework hypothesized that scope rules that make final FGC outcomes binding and consequential enhance family control. However, although little information on the effect of scope rules on family control could be derived from the meta-analysis, the only information that was found suggested the opposite effect. In terms of the aggregation rules, it has been hypothesized that aggregation rules widening the veto- power of the coordinator enhances family control. However, no information has been found on the effect of such aggregation rules on family control. Finally, the information rules consist of two aspects, (1) prescribing which information is available to participants and (2) prescribing how participants are required to provide other actors with information. In terms of first aspect, specifically focusing on the access of the coordinator to family-information, it appears from the meta-analysis that information rules granting access to family-information to the coordinator enhance family control. In terms of the second aspect, it has been found that the more coordinators are required to share process-information with both families and professionals, the more this results in family control.

To conclude this chapter, an overview will be presented of the results of the hypotheses-test. Recalling the decision-rules provided in chapter 3, the following is required to accept hypotheses:
- (1) (A) A direct relationship between the explanatory variable and family control, operating in the hypothesized direction.
- (2) (B) Causal mechanisms operating between the explanatory variable and family control, substantiating the relationship at (A).
- (3) No direct relationships may be found between the explanatory variable and family control that indicate an effect opposite to the hypothesized effect.

Hypothesis	(A) (Only) confirming direct relationships?	(B) If 'yes' at (A), causal mechanisms substantiating the relationships at (A)?	Result of hypothesis test
1a1	No information	-	No information
1a2	No	-	Rejected
1b	No	-	Rejected
1c	No information	-	No information
1d1	Yes	Yes	Accepted
1d2	Yes	Yes	Accepted

Table 5.3: an overview of the hypotheses-test of the rules-in-use.

6. Family control and attributes of the physical world: skills and financial resources

In the IAD framework of Ostrom, 'attributes of the physical world' constitute existing conditions influencing the outcome that are 'given' and that cannot directly be influenced by the actors or action in the action arena (Polski and Ostrom, 1999, p. 9). In the theoretical framework, it has been mentioned that in relation to family group conferencing, many attributes of the physical world are present. However, two types of such attributes relevant to the role of the coordinator in FGC are suggested in the literature to be of considerable influence on the conferences itself and on their outcomes. These two types of attributes of the physical world are (1) skills and competences of the coordinator, and (2) financial resources available to him. In the theoretical framework, four hypotheses (hypotheses 2a, 2b, 2c and 3) have been presented in relation to skills and financial resources. In this chapter, these hypotheses will be tested. Indeed, here, the findings from the meta-analysis on the relationship between 'skills and competences' and 'financial resources' of the coordinator on the one hand and family control on the other will be presented. First, the skills and competences of the coordinator will be discussed in their relation to family control. After that, it will be seen how financial resources are found to impact upon family control. At the end of this chapter, a schematic overview of the findings of the meta-analysis will be provided, as well as a conclusion and a table summarizing the results of the hypotheses-test.

6.1. Skills and competences

In the theoretical framework, the general explanatory variable of 'skills and competences' has been operationalized to fit the specific field of family group conferencing. As seen, this operationalization resulted in three explanatory variables specific to the role of the coordinator in FGC, consisting of (1) 'general facilitating skills derived from training', (2) 'skills derived from experience', and (3) cultural competence of coordinators. All three specific explanatory variables are in this thesis hypothesized to be enhancing family control. In this section, these hypotheses are tested. Indeed, here, the findings from the meta-analysis will be presented on how the three specific explanatory variables influence family control in FGC.

6.1.1. General facilitating skills derived from training

Because training of coordinators is expected to increase the general facilitating skills of coordinators, it is expected that general facilitating skills of coordinators derived from training enhance family control. This constitutes hypothesis 2a. Throughout the literature sample, 6 FGC models were studied that specifically used 'trained' coordinators (Connolly, 2005; 2006; Darlington et al., 2012; Sheets et al., 2009; Sieppert et al., 2000; Sundell et al., 2002). However, as can be seen in table 6.1, the meta-analysis has produced no information on direct relationships operating between the skills acquired from training of coordinators and family control. Because of this, nothing can be said regarding hypothesis 2a that the coordinator's general facilitating skills derived from training enhance family control. Indeed, more research is required on the effect of skills of coordinators derived from training on family control.

6.1.2. Skills derived from experience

In terms of the amount of experience that coordinators have in relation to family group conferencing, only the studies of Connolly provide some information on this (Connolly, 2005; 2006). In one study of Connolly in New Zealand, 13 coordinators were interviewed who had at least 10 years of experience with FGC (Connolly, 2005). In this study it was found that as coordinators convened more conferences, confidence in family group conferencing in general and in their management of it grew (Connolly, 2005). Coordinators reported that 'experience with FGC increased their understanding of the aims and purpose of FGC and their own responsibilities within it' (Connolly, 2005, p. 7). Also, Connolly found that the more experienced coordinators became, the more direct and directive they became towards families (Connolly, 2005; 2006). For example, one coordinator stated: 'so initially I tried to be more balanced with everyone…But now in my own practice I'm far more directive; I will say to a father "don't give me that rubbish", or "get with the programme buddy—you know it's not about you it's about your kid and your violence toward your child"' (Connolly, 2005, p. 7). However, it is not mentioned how this directness and directiveness resulting from experience impacts on family control, but it can be imagined that coordinators being too directive might actually decrease family control. Moreover, apart from becoming more direct, it has also been found in the study of Connolly that the more experienced coordinators became, the more they developed styles in practice that enhanced efficiency of conferencing (Connolly, 2005). Examples of efficiency-increasing measures that coordinators adopted due to their experience are that some coordinators became more thorough in preparation, while others reported to hold meetings in government offices or provide professional assistance during private family time (Connolly, 2005). Although these efficiency-increasing measures have not been assessed in their relation with family control, some of these measures seem likely to be conducive to family control (such as a more thorough preparation), while other measures might in some cases occupy a tension with family control.

As can be seen in table 6.1, no direct relationships have been found in the meta-analysis between skills of coordinators derived from experience on the one hand and family control on the other. Although the research of Connolly has indicated some aspects of skills derived from experience that could be indirectly related to family control, it has not been studied whether these aspects positively or negatively affected family control. It follows from this that nothing can be said regarding hypothesis 2b, that skills of coordinators derived from experience enhance family control. Therefore, more research on the relationship between skills of coordinators derived from experience on the one hand and family control on the other is desirable.

6.1.3. Cultural competence

In the theoretical framework, it has been hypothesized (hypothesis 2c) that 'cultural competence' of coordinators enhances family control. As shown, cultural competence includes the degree to which coordinators can act independent despite own cultural assumptions, values and biases, the degree to which they understand and show respect of cultural values and the degree to which they take these cultural values into account in the conference (Umbreit and Zehr, 1996). In 4 FGC models studied throughout the literature sample, it was specifically mentioned that participants felt coordinators behaved in a culturally competent manner or that they felt coordinators were 'skilled in working cross-culturally' (Berzin et al., 2007; Darlington et al., 2012; O'Shaughnessy et al., 2010; Waites et al., 2004). As can be seen in table 6.1, the meta-analysis has found some direct relationships and causal mechanisms operating between the degree to which coordinators are culturally competent and family control.

In the study of Waites et al., families reported that the 'cultural sensitivity' of coordinators 'provided families the opportunity to express their own opinions and their own values' (Waites et al., 2004, p.

296). In the study of O'Shaughnessy et al in the United Kingdom, it was found that the fact that coordinators had cross-cultural skills such as understanding of cultural backgrounds and histories, racism and discrimination, enhanced participation in decision-making of families from minority communities (O'Shaughnessy et al., 2010). As follows from table 6.1, no negative direct relationships between cultural competence of the coordinator and family control have been found throughout the meta-analysis. Next to the positive direct relationships found between the coordinator's cultural competence and family control, causal mechanisms have been found in the meta-analysis that substantiate the likelihood of positive relationships between the two variables. In the study of Pennell and Burford in the United Kingdom, it has been found that cultural competence of the coordinator promotes family unity and member safety (Pennell and Burford, 2000). Especially family unity can be expected to enhance family control. Moreover, in the Australian study of Darlington et al., families reported that the sensitivity of coordinators to the family's cultural background was fundamental to the degree to which families felt respected during the conference (Darlington et al., 2012, p. 335). In the study of Pennell in the United States, moreover, it was found that, feeling respected in general is positively related to family control (Pennell, 2004). It follows from the foregoing that the meta-analysis has found direct relationships between cultural competence of the coordinator and family control that were all positive. Moreover, causal mechanisms have been found that substantiate the likelihood of a positive relationship between the coordinator's cultural competence and family control. Because of this, hypothesis 2c, that cultural competence of coordinators enhances family control, can be accepted.

In terms of the relationship between the cultural competence of the coordinator and family control, one more issue has emerged from the meta-analysis that deserves attention here. In one FGC model studied throughout the meta-analysis, coordinators were required to reflect the race and culture of the family and share the same first language (Sundell et al., 2002). In the study of Waites et al., it was also found that cultural minorities preferred to have a FGC coordinator that is from the same community and has the same language as the family (Waites et al., 2004). Although this study found that such a coordinator from the same community would ensure participation of the family, the study of O'Shaughnessy et al found that having a coordinator from the same community as the family can also have drawbacks (O'Shaughnessy et al., 2010; Waites et al., 2004). In the FGC model studied by O'Shaughnessy in the United Kingdom, one of the coordinators had lived and worked in her community for a long time and consequently was often in a situation in which she knew a family that had been referred for a FGC (O'Shaughnessy et al., 2010, p. 2046). It can be imagined that such a situation could impede family control. However, further research is required to see how the requirement of coordinators to reflect the culture and share the same first language as families actually relates to family control. For now, it suffices to know that the meta-analysis of this thesis found a positive relationship between cultural competence of the coordinator and family control. Indeed, as O'Shaughnessy et al have rightly emphasized, there is no guarantee that anyone will be culturally competent simply due to their ethnic minority status (O'Shaughnessy et al., 2010).

6.2. Financial resources

In the literature on social work and family group conferencing, it is widely suggested that availability of financial resources influences the degree of empowerment and family control, because the realization of plans requires financial means (Connolly, 2006; Hasenfeld, 1987; Love, 2000; Merkel-Holguin, 2004). However, although this is often suggested, nowhere throughout the literature sample of the meta-analysis has the effect of financial resources on family control been empirically assessed. In the study of Connolly in New Zealand, it was found that there has been a reduction in availability of funding since family group conferencing was introduced in that country (Connolly, 2005). In relation to the decreased availability of financial resources, coordinators interviewed in the study of Connolly

argued that the lack of funding to facilitate implementation of the plans drafted by the families 'threatened to undermine the FGC as a family strengthening process' (Connolly, 2005, p. 9). This carefully suggests a direct positive relationship between financial resources available to the coordinator and family control. However, the evidence for this is fairly weak. Moreover, as follows from table 6.1, the meta-analysis has not found any causal mechanisms throughout the meta-analysis operating between the availability of financial resources of the coordinator on the one hand and family control on the other. Therefore, the meta-analysis has not produced enough information to accept or reject hypothesis 3 that the access of the coordinator to financial enhances family control. Indeed, research is required to provide information on the relationship between access to financial resources of the coordinator and family control.

6.3. Schematic overview of findings

As mentioned, hypotheses in this thesis are tested based on two types of relationships between explanatory variables relating to the role of the coordinator and family control. These two types of relationships are 'direct relationships' and 'causal mechanisms'. In this chapter, the findings from the meta-analysis on these types of relationships between the coordinator's 'skills' and 'financial resources' and family control were discussed. This section presents a schematic overview of the findings from the meta-analysis on these relationships.

Article no.	H2a		H2b		H2c		H3	
	Direct	CM	Direct	CM	Direct	CM	Direct	CM
1.								
2.								
3.								
4.							Yes	
5.								
6.								
7.					Yes	Yes		
8.								
9.								
10.								
11.								
12.								
13.					Yes			
14.					Yes	Yes		
15.					Yes	Yes		
16.								
17.								
18.								
19.								
20.					Yes			

Table 6.1: an overview of the findings of the meta-analysis in terms of direct relationships (A) and causal mechanisms (B) between 'skills' and 'financial resources' on the one hand and family control on the other.

Symbols:
A: In this study, direct relationships between the relevant variables operate in the hypothesized direction
B: In this study, causal mechanisms between the relevant variables are found, substantiating the hypothesized relationship.
Yes: direct relationships or causal mechanisms between the relevant variables operate in the hypothesized direction.
No: direct relationships between the relevant variables operate in the opposite direction as hypothesized.
Yes/No: direct relationships between the relevant variables are found to operate in both the hypothesized- and opposite directions.

6.4. Attributes of the physical world and family control: a conclusion

In this chapter, the hypotheses have been tested in terms of the relationship between skills of the coordinator and financial resources available to him on the one hand and family control on the other. First, no information has been found based on which hypothesis 2a, that the coordinator's general facilitating skills derived from training enhance family control, could be accepted or rejected. Similarly, based on the knowledge derived from the meta-analysis, nothing could be said regarding hypothesis 2b that skills of coordinators derived from experience enhance family control. In terms of the third type of 'skills', cultural competence of the coordinator, it has been found that cultural competence of the coordinator indeed enhances family control. Thus, hypothesis 2c has been accepted. In terms of the second category of attributes of the physical world, financial resources, not enough information has been found in the meta-analysis to make any statements regarding hypothesis 3 that the access of the coordinator to financial resources enhances family control. Then, it follows evidently from this chapter that more research is necessary to provide knowledge on the relationship between skills and access to financial resources of the coordinator on the one hand and family control on the other. Although the hypotheses of skills and financial resources together indicate the expectation that empowering the coordinator could in turn empower families in FGC, the idea of 'empower to empower', not enough information on skills and financial resources has been produced by the meta-analysis to comment on this idea.

To conclude this chapter, an overview will now be presented of the results of the tested hypotheses relating to the attributes of the physical world. Derived from tables 6.1, table 6.2 presents an overview of the test of the hypotheses relating to skills and financial resources of coordinators.

Hypothesis	(A) (Only) confirming direct relationships?	(B) If 'yes' at (A), causal mechanisms substantiating the relationships at (A)?	Result of hypothesis test
2a	No information	-	No information
2b	No information	-	No information
2c	Yes	Yes	Accepted
3	Yes	No information	No information

Table 6.2: an overview of the hypotheses-test of the attributes of the physical world.

7. Family control and cultural attributes: paternalism and professional autonomy

In the IAD framework of Ostrom, 'attributes of the community' consist of norms, preferences and values of participants and constitute the 'cultural context' of the governance situation (Polski and Ostrom, 1999, p. 14). Derived from role theory, and in relation to family group conferencing, 'attributes of the community' in this thesis consist of role perceptions and expectations of participants in FGC. Specifically, this thesis focuses on two role perceptions of that are argued to exist in social work, namely paternalism and professional autonomy. In relation to FGC, paternalism consists of a mindset and behavior that indicate a reluctance of professionals and coordinators to cede decision-making power to families, often due to a lack of trust in the ability of families and the FGC process to achieve safe outcomes for children involved. In terms of this role perception of paternalism, hypothesis 4 has been formulated that paternalism of coordinators impedes family control. The other role perception of coordinators that will be discussed here, professional autonomy, relates in FGC to the relationship between coordinators, their 'own organization', and families. Here, professional autonomy consists of the more practical role perception of the degree to which coordinators feel free from- or resist being guided by bureaucratic and legalistic pressures of the own organization in order to provide families with family control. In terms of this, hypothesis 5 has been formulated that the mindset of coordinators of feeling free from- and resisting being guided by bureaucratic and legalistic pressures of the own organization enhances family control. In this chapter, the aforementioned hypotheses (H4 and H5) will be tested. Indeed, here, the findings from the meta-analysis on the relationship between 'paternalism and 'professional autonomy' of the coordinator on the one hand and family control on the other will be presented. First, the coordinator's role perception of paternalism will be discussed in its relation to family control. After that, it will be seen how the role perception of professional autonomy of the coordinator is found to impact upon family control. At the end of this chapter, a schematic overview of the findings of the meta-analysis will be provided, as well as a conclusion and a table summarizing the results of the hypotheses-test.

7.1. Paternalism

7.1.1. Paternalism in family group conferencing

As mentioned, the mindset of paternalism constitutes a role perception in social work, stemming from the time that social workers were the 'directors' of clients' situations and that empowerment was not emphasized in welfare states. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, although paternalism of professionals in social work is at odds with the philosophy of FGC, it has been widely argued throughout the academic literature that professionals involved in FGC still have paternalistic mindsets and consequently retain influence in decision-making (Levine, 2000; Merkel-Holguin, 2004; Nixon et al., 2001; Robertson, 1996). In FGC, a paternalistic mindset of professionals consists of a lack of trust in the families and the FGC process to arrive at decisions that guarantee the safety of the children in question, resulting in paternalistic behavior of influencing the decision-making in a way that is thought to be 'good for the family'. In this thesis, both a paternalistic mentality and paternalistic behavior that indicates such a mentality are seen as 'evidence' of paternalism of the actors involved. In the meta-analysis, evidence was found that professionals sometimes indeed occupy a paternalistic mindset. For example, both in FGC models in the studies of Holland et al in the United Kingdom and of Connolly in New Zealand, professionals sometimes influenced decision-making in FGC due to a lack of trust in the capacity of families to solve their own problems (Connolly et al., 2005; Holland et al., 2005).

7.1.2. Paternalism of coordinators

That professionals thus indeed retain influence in decision-making power due to a paternalistic mindset means that coordinators must, in order to facilitate family control, restrain the paternalism of professionals. Here, the role perception of coordinators themselves in terms of paternalism is important. The role perception of the coordinator in terms of paternalism determines whether the coordinator 'guards' family control and restrains paternalism of professionals, or whether he is himself paternalistic. In this thesis, coordinators are judged to have a paternalistic mindset when they perceive themselves as 'directors' of families' situations, when they do not trust families and the FGC process in their ability to achieve safe outcomes for the children involved, and/or when indications of this mentality can be drawn from the behavior of coordinators. In the theoretical framework, the hypothesis has been formulated (hypothesis 4) that a paternalistic mindset of the coordinator impedes family control. In this section, this hypothesis will be tested.

First of all, it must be noted that the variable of paternalism including a paternalistic mindset and paternalistic behavior constitutes a variable of degree: coordinators can be very paternalistic, but coordinators can also be minimally paternalistic. On the minimally paternalistic end, as already mentioned in section 5.4.2., it is argued that there is a fine line between coordinators sharing process-information with participants and actually structuring and influencing the decision-making process (Connolly, 2005; Holland et al., 2005). It can be questioned whether 'structuring the decision-making process' through for example setting the agenda, giving tasks for private family time and helping to formulate plans actually constitutes paternalistic behavior of the coordinator. In the study of Holland et al, it was found that such 'structuring measures' sometimes evolved into 'providing possible outcomes in areas in which decisions needed to be made' (Holland et al., 2005, p. 67). Then, because 'structuring measures' might indicate a lack of trust in families to come up with decent plans on their own and because there is a thin line between this and influencing the decision-making of the family, these structuring measures are in this thesis seen as minimally paternalistic behaviors of coordinators.

Throughout the literature sample of the meta-analysis, it was specifically mentioned in 5 of the 20 studies that some coordinators in the FGC models studied had a paternalistic mindset or occasionally behaved in a paternalistic manner (Connolly 2005; 2006; Darlington et al., 2012; Holland et al., 2005; Ney et al., 2013). In the study of Connolly in 2005, some coordinators behaved 'reasonably directive' and involved themselves in private family time (Connolly, 2005, p.11). Indeed, some of these coordinators stated to be 'very strong on care and protection' (Connolly, 2005, p. 12; Connolly, 2006, p. 354). This indicates some degree of paternalism of these coordinators, since it seems that they perceive their roles more as 'directors' of families' situations rather than 'guards' of family control. However, other coordinators in the study of Connolly did explicitly not have a paternalistic mindset, saying that 'it is important to let family members participate in decision-making and not to endorse pre-decided outcomes of social workers' (Connolly, 2006, p. 353). In one conference in the Australian FGC model studied by Darlington et al., it was said at the beginning of the conference that there were to be 'no negotiations' with the family (Darlington et al., 2012, p. 33). This is an extreme instance of paternalism of the coordinator. In the FGC model studied by Holland et al., it was observed that coordinators sometimes structured decision-making through providing charts, agendas and sometimes even 'possible outcomes in areas in which decisions needed to be made' (Holland et al., 2005, p. 67). As shown, this belongs to the minimally paternalistic behaviors of coordinators. Finally, in the Canadian study of Ney et al., coordinators were more focused on risk-aversion than on family control (Ney et al., 2013). For example, in one conference analyzed, desperation of a mother to get her children back was immediately diagnosed as an 'anger problem', judged to be a risk for her children. As a result, the mother could not get her children back before this 'problem' was solved (Ney et al., 2013). In another conference analyzed in this study, the coordinator pressured parents into signing papers relinquishing the custody of their children (Ney et al., 2013). This, unsurprisingly, also constitutes an extreme form of paternalism.

Throughout the meta-analysis, evidence is found that indicates a direct negative relationship between paternalism of coordinators and family control, just as hypothesized. In the Australian study of Darlington et al., it was unsurprisingly found that when coordinators did not want to 'negotiate' with families in terms of outcomes of the conference, this impeded family control (Darlington et al., 2012). The causal mechanism indicated for this in the study of Darlington et al is that this attitude of the coordinator made family members feel they lack the opportunity for 'voicing their opinions and concerns' (Darlington et al., 2012, p. 333). However, the situation in which the coordinator does not want to 'negotiate' with families in FGC is an extreme case of paternalism, actually self-evidently impeding family control. Similarly and also unsurprisingly, in the extreme cases of paternalism documented in the Canadian study of Ney et al., families reported a lack of influence in decision-making due to this paternalism (Ney et al., 2013). More generally, another study has also found a direct relationship between paternalism of the coordinator and family control. In the quantitative study of Pennell in the United States, it was found that it is conducive to family control when professionals and coordinators give information while refraining from dictating solutions (Pennell, 2004, p. 130).

Apart from these direct relationships indicating a negative effect of paternalism of the coordinator on family control, some evidence is found in the meta-analysis that suggests a positive direct relationship between paternalism and family control. However, these indications only see a positive effect of paternalism of the coordinator on family control when the degree of paternalism is very modest. In the study of Holland et al., coordinators engaged in the minimally paternalistic 'structuring measures' of setting the agenda, structuring private family time, helping to formulate plans and telling how the drafting of the plan should progress (Holland et al., 2005, p. 67). The study of Holland et al in the United Kingdom was not at all critical of such minimally paternalistic behaviors (Holland et al., 2005, p. 67). In this study, it was found that structuring measures of setting the agenda and telling how the drafting of a plan should progress can actually enhance family control (Holland et al., 2005). According to one family member, 'the coordinator gave information on how she felt the meeting should progress, which I think set us in the right line, cause if we hadn't had that sort of direction I think it would have just been one big free for all' (Holland et al., 2005, p. 67). This finding, suggesting that minimally paternalistic measures of coordinators thus can enhance family's grip on decision-making, indicates a direct positive relationship between minimally paternalistic measures and family control. In the study of Holland and Rivett in the United Kingdom it was also found that 'families with a history of conflicted looked to the coordinator to help negotiate the parameters of the meeting' (Holland and Rivett, 2008, p. 28). Here, minimally paternalistic behavior of coordinators might increase intra-familial democracy. Throughout the meta-analysis, other indications have also been found that suggest that a bit of paternalism of coordinators might be better than no paternalism of coordinators at all. In the study of Connolly, it was found that professionals sometimes overestimate the capacity of the family to decide plans to solve their own problems (Connolly, 2005, p. 9). Then, coordinators are arguably required to provide directions in order to allow families to gain control over the decision-making process. These directions, constituting minimally paternalistic measures, then are likely to increase family control.

Although it might seem from table 7.1 that a paternalistic mindset and paternalistic behavior of the coordinator might be just as conducive to family control as that it impedes family control, this is not the case. Indeed, as mentioned, paternalism of coordinators is a matter of degree. In this section, it has been shown that a strong degree of paternalism of the coordinator impedes family control because it hampers the 'voice' of family members. Thus, direct relationships with causal mechanisms have been found, operating between paternalism of the coordinator and family control, that support the hypothesis that paternalism of coordinators impedes family control. However, the meta-analysis has also found direct relationships operating between the two variables, suggesting that a minimal amount of paternalism of the coordinator can actually be conducive to family control. These indications suggest that a bit of a paternalistic mindset and paternalistic behavior of the coordinator might be better for family control than no paternalism of the coordinator at all. Therefore, hypothesis 4 that a paternalistic mindset of the coordinator impedes family control, must be rejected.

7.2. Professional autonomy of coordinators

The second role perception that has been held to exist in social work and that will be discussed here is professional autonomy. Professional autonomy in this thesis refers to the relationship of the coordinator with his 'own organization'. Although professional autonomy also has a 'structural' component in terms of rules and regulations the 'own organization' subjects the coordinator to, this section will focus on the 'cultural' aspect of professional autonomy. This cultural aspect constitutes the degree to which coordinators feel free from- or resist being guided by bureaucratic and legalistic pressures of their own organizations. Indeed, it is held in the academic literature that FGC must increasingly meet regulations and objectives of (governmental) organizations often employing coordinators, such as avoiding litigation, reaching a quick outcome, restricting costs, and eliminating risks (Family Rights Group, 2002; Nixon et al., 2001). Because it is expected that these bureaucratic and legalistic pressures in FGC impede family control, hypothesis 5 has been formulated that the coordinator's mindset and behavior of professional autonomy in relation to the own organization enhances family control. Here, again, both a mentality of professional autonomy and behavior that indicates such a mentality are seen as 'evidence' of professional autonomy of coordinators.

7.2.1. Bureaucratic pressures

First of all, the assertion that FGC is subject to bureaucratic pressures from social work organizations has been confirmed in the findings from the meta-analysis. In the study of Brown in the United Kingdom, governmental 'Councils' that often employ coordinators were interviewed and asked what their primary reasons were to set up a FGC project (Brown, 2003). It was found that 10% of these Councils had the aim of keeping children out of public care, which is cost-effective for Councils (Brown, 2003). Indeed, this indicates that these Councils use FGC as a vehicle for cost-reduction, and makes it likely that coordinators are pressured by these Councils to enter the conference with the pre-decided aim to keep children out of public care.

7.2.2. Professional autonomy of coordinators

In only 3 of the 20 studies in the meta-analysis, information was provided on the mindset or behavior of coordinators in terms of professional autonomy. In the study of Connolly in New Zealand, some coordinators expressed a high degree of professional autonomy (Connolly, 2006). One focus group of coordinators expressed 'that it is easy to get captured by the department [the governmental organization employing these coordinators]', but that 'it's important that we're not; we've got to make sure the families do get to participate properly in the decision-making, not to just go and endorse decisions that have been made by supervisors prior to the conference' (Connolly, 2006, p. 353). However, nowhere throughout this study was the effect of this mindset of professional autonomy studied in its relation to family control. Regardless, the meta-analysis did find evidence for direct relationships and causal mechanisms operating between professional autonomy of coordinators and family control. First of all, coordinators in the study of Waites et al gave families as much time as necessary to deliberate and felt thus not restrained by pressures of expediency 'from above' (Waites et al., 2004). That families had all the time they needed to deliberate on a plan was perceived by these families to increase their family control, as family members stated that this enabled families to include the opinion of every member (Waites et al., 2004, p. 297). Secondly, in the study of Sundell et al in Sweden and the United Kingdom, it was found that social workers, because they were held accountable for child welfare by their 'own organization', were reluctant to give decision-making power to families (Sundell et al., 2002). Then, although this is not studied, it might be the case that this also applies for coordinators. Indeed, in several FGC models studied throughout the literature sample,

coordinators are also held responsible for child welfare by their own organization (Berzin et al., 2007; Connolly, 2005; 2006; Holland and O'Neill, 2006; Holland et al., 2005; Pennell and Burford, 2000; Sieppert et al., 2000). These findings suggest that a lack of professional autonomy experienced by coordinators can impede family control.

Thus, direct relationships with causal mechanisms have been found in the meta-analysis that suggest a positive effect of professional autonomy of the coordinator on family control. Because throughout the meta-analysis no direct relationships were found that suggest a negative relationship between a mindset and behavior of professional autonomy of the coordinator and family control, hypothesis 5 can be accepted. However, only 2 of the 20 studies in the meta-analysis included indications that professional autonomy of the coordinator enhances family control, and these indications together still constitute weak evidence to confirm that a positive relationship actually exists between the two variables. Therefore, more research on the relationship between professional autonomy of the coordinator and family control is required. For example, it could be imagined that too much professional autonomous behavior of coordinators resulting in too little pressure on families to come up with a plan might negatively affect family control. However, no information has been found on this in the literature sample, and based on the information that was present in the meta-analysis, hypothesis 5 could be accepted.

7.3. Schematic overview of findings

Again, hypotheses in this thesis are tested based on findings in terms of 'direct relationships' and 'causal mechanisms' between explanatory variables relating to the role of the coordinator and family control. This chapter discussed the findings from the meta-analysis on these types of relationships between the coordinator's mindsets in terms of 'paternalism' and 'professional autonomy' on the one hand and family control on the other. This section presents a schematic overview of the findings from the meta-analysis on these relationships.

Article no.	H4		H5	
	Direct	CM	Direct	CM
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.	**Yes**	**Yes**		
5.				
6.				
7.	**No**			
8.				
9.				
10.	**Yes**	**Yes**		
11.	**Yes**	**Yes**		
12.	**No**			
13.				
14.	**No**			
15.				
16.				
17.				
18.			**Yes**	**Yes**
19.				
20.			**Yes**	**Yes**

Table 7.1: an overview of the findings of the meta-analysis in terms of direct relationships (A) and causal mechanisms (B) between 'paternalism' and 'professional autonomy' on the one hand and family control on the other.

Symbols:
A: In this study, direct relationships between the relevant variables operate in the hypothesized direction
B: In this study, causal mechanisms between the relevant variables are found, substantiating the hypothesized relationship.
Yes: direct relationships or causal mechanisms between the relevant variables operate in the hypothesized direction.
No: direct relationships between the relevant variables operate in the opposite direction as hypothesized.
Yes/No: direct relationships between the relevant variables are found to operate in both the hypothesized- and opposite directions.

7.4. Paternalism, professional autonomy and family control: a conclusion

In this chapter, two hypotheses have been tested in terms of the relationship between role perceptions of the coordinator on the one hand and family control on the other. First, hypothesis 4, that paternalism of the coordinator impedes family control, has been tested. Although direct negative relationships with causal mechanisms have been found to operate between paternalism of the coordinator and family control, the meta-analysis also found direct positive relationships between (a small degree of) paternalism of the coordinator and family control. With regard to paternalism of the coordinator, it was found that a large degree of paternalism impeded family control, but that a minimal degree of paternalistic behavior of the coordinator was more conducive to family control than no paternalistic behavior of the coordinator at all. Therefore, hypothesis 4 was rejected. Subsequently, hypothesis 5, that the mindset of coordinators of feeling free from- and resisting being guided by bureaucratic and legalistic pressures of the own organization enhances family control, has been tested. Here, the meta-analysis only found a positive direct relationship with causal mechanism operating between professional autonomy of the coordinator and family control. No indications of a negative relationship between the variables was found. Therefore, based on the information available from the meta-analysis, hypothesis 5 could be accepted.

To conclude this chapter, an overview will now be presented of the results of the tested hypotheses relating to paternalism and professional autonomy. Derived from table 7.1, table 7.2 presents an overview of the test of hypothesis 4 and 5.

Hypothesis	(A) (Only) confirming direct relationships?	(B) If 'yes' at (A), causal mechanisms substantiating the relationships at (A)?	Result of hypothesis test
4	No	-	Rejected
5	Yes	Yes	Accepted

Table 7.2: an overview of the test of hypotheses 4 and 5.

8. Conclusion and discussion

In the chapters 5, 6, and 7, the findings from the meta-analysis have been presented on the relationships between the explanatory variables of the role of the coordinator in FGC and family control. This chapter will, based on these findings, provide an answer to the research question of how structural and cultural aspects of the role of coordinators in FGC affect family control. Moreover, apart from answering the research question, this chapter will discuss the meaning of the findings of this thesis on a higher level of abstraction. Here, it will be discussed what the implications of the findings from the meta-analysis are for policy and practice of FGC. Also, limitations of this thesis will be discussed, and it will be assessed what the implications of these limitations are for the outcomes of this thesis and for further research. First of all, an answer to the research question will be provided based on the findings from the meta-analysis. After that, broader implications of the findings are discussed and recommendations for policy and practice are provided. Thirdly, limitations of this thesis will be elaborated upon. Following from these limitations, suggestions for further research will be made. Finally, this thesis will be concluded with a consideration of the value of this thesis.

8.1. Answering the research question

This thesis has focused on the research question of how, attested by a meta-analysis of relevant literature issued since 2000, structural and cultural aspects of the role of coordinators in family group conferencing affect the degree to which families can exercise control over their own situation. In this section, this research question will be answered based on the findings that emerged from the meta-analysis.

First, it must be noted that in terms of 5 of the 12 aspects of the role of the coordinator that were focused on, no information was found on how these aspects impacted on family control. This was the situation for the following aspects of the role of the coordinator: authority rules in terms of rights and authorizations of the coordinator to act according to own insights, aggregation rules widening the veto power of the coordinator, skills derived from training, skills derived from experience, and access to financial resources. In terms of the remaining aspects of the role of the coordinator, the meta-analysis has produced knowledge on how these aspects affect family control.

8.1.1. Family control and structural aspects of the role of the coordinator

In terms of structural aspects of the role of the coordinator, 4 obligations of the coordinator were found in the meta-analysis to enhance family control. Following from the research conducted in this thesis, it seems that it enhances family control in FGC when the coordinator is obliged to invite children into the FGC, to allow participants to have an advocate or support worker, to let families determine conference-characteristics, and to invite members of the extended family and social network into the conference. Moreover, it seems that obliging coordinators to provide the families in FGC with private family time does not systematically enhance family control, but that a discretion to do so would be even less conducive to family control. This is because it seems that private family time often increases family control, but that there are also instances in which family members do not want to be left alone because they fear that certain family members will dominate decision-making, which would decrease family control. Nevertheless, it seems that obligations of the coordinator aimed at increasing family control generally indeed reach this goal. Thus, this thesis found more evidence that obligations of the coordinator restricting his discretion enhance family control than that rights and authorizations of the

coordinator to act according to own insights enhance family control. While rights and authorizations to act according to own insights give the coordinator discretion or freedom to decide, obligations restrict this discretion. It seems thus, based on the findings from this thesis, that restricting the discretion of coordinators is more conducive to family control than providing coordinators discretion through rights and authorizations.

In terms of another structural aspect of the role of the coordinator, scope rules, it follows from the meta-analysis that scope rules obliging coordinators to make final FGC outcomes binding and consequential impede family control. This is because it seems that a consequential final FGC outcome can pressure families into drafting plans they would not have preferred themselves if the final outcome was not consequential. In terms of another set of structural rules of the coordinator, the information rules, it seems that it is conducive to family control when the coordinator has access to (sensitive) information about values, preferences and problems of families, and when the coordinator shares process-information with participants at or before the beginning of the conference. Process-information consists of the philosophies and rules of the FGC model used as well as information on the boundaries of the decisions to be made. The last structural aspect of the role of the coordinator on which the meta-analysis produced findings does not consist of structural rules but rather constitutes a structural competence of coordinators. Following from the meta-analysis, it seems that it is conducive to family control when the coordinator is 'culturally competent', meaning that he shows respect for cultural values of participants in the family group conference.

8.1.2. Family control and cultural aspects of the role of the coordinator

In terms of cultural aspects of the role of the coordinator in FGC, it was found that it is not conducive to family control when the coordinator behaves very paternalistically. However, in some situations, for example when families are in conflict or when they need some guidance to find a direction to start deliberating on, a bit of paternalistic behavior of the coordinator might enhance family control. Thus, it is found that sometimes it is better for family control if the coordinator behaves a little bit paternalistic than when he does not behave paternalistic at all. In terms of the cultural role perception of professional autonomy, it seems that the degree to which coordinators feel free from- or resist being guided by bureaucratic and legalistic pressures of the own organization, such as risk-aversion and time management, enhances family control.

8.2. Recommendations and implications for policy and practice

The goal of this research has been to identify what information can be extracted from the existing studies on FGC about the effect of the role of the coordinator on family control. This goal can be divided into two sub-goals. First, it is aimed to provide knowledge on the relationship between the role of the coordinator and family control, and second, it is aimed to explore what knowledge on this relationship already 'exists' in the literature and to identify which aspects require more research. In terms of the first sub-goal, it has been argued in the introduction of this thesis that the knowledge gained by this thesis on the relationship between the role of the coordinator and family control can inform FGC implementers and practitioners. In this section, it will be discussed what the implications of the findings of the research conducted in this thesis are for policy and practice of FGC and what recommendations can be made. This section will start with discussing the broader implications of the findings of this thesis for policy and practice. After that, recommendations for FGC policymakers and practitioners will be provided, based on the findings from the meta-analysis.

8.2.1. Broader implications of the findings

In the foregoing paragraph, an answer has been provided to the research question of how structural and cultural aspects of the role of coordinators in FGC affect family control. In this section, broader implications of these findings are being discussed. First, it will be discussed what the findings resulting from the research conducted in this thesis imply in terms of the structural and cultural influence of the 'own organization' on coordinators in FGC. After that, it will be shown that, based on the findings of the meta-analysis, two paradoxes can be identified that are relevant to policy and practice of FGC.

8.2.1.1. Structural and cultural influence of the 'own organization' on coordinators

An important question for policy and practice is whether the 'own organizations' of coordinators should have a strong (structural and cultural) influence on coordinators in FGC, or whether it is better to let coordinators free in conducting family group conferences according to their own insights. Here, structural influence consists of influence that the state or the own organization exercises on coordinators in terms of their structural role aspects, being the rules-in-use and the attributes of the physical world. Then, cultural influence consists of influence that the state or the own organization exercises through shaping cultural role perceptions and expectations. Indeed, the question is here whether coordinators should be granted a high or low degree of structural and cultural discretion.

As follows from the foregoing section, it appears from the findings in terms of the authority rules and the information rules that it is often conducive to family control when the 'own organization' structurally influences the coordinator by subjecting him to obligations aimed at enhancing family control and restricting the discretion of the coordinator. On the other hand, it also follows from the meta-analysis that it is, in terms of some aspects, also conducive for family control if the own organization can give coordinators some freedom or discretion to conduct conferences according to own insights. This is especially true in terms of cultural influence of the state or the own organization on coordinators. Indeed, it is conducive to family control when coordinators feel free from- or resist being guided by bureaucratic and legalistic pressures of their own (governmental) organizations. It seems thus that in general, it is conducive to family control when the 'own organization' of the coordinator structurally influences the coordinator by subjecting him to obligations aimed at enhancing family control and restricting the discretion of the coordinator, and when this organization refrains from culturally influencing him in a legalistic or bureaucratic way.

8.2.1.2. Two paradoxes relevant to policy and practice of FGC

As shown in the foregoing section, obligations of the coordinator that are aimed at providing families in FGC with family control mostly indeed have a positive effect on family control. However, in terms of private family time, it was found in the meta-analysis that family members sometimes do not want to have private family time because such private time would decrease intra-familial democracy. In such cases, private family time could actually decrease family control. Then, it can be argued that an obligation to provide private family time takes the focus on family control too far, which in turn hampers family control. This situation of 'overdoing' the focus on family control has also been encountered in relation to paternalism. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, it is widely believed throughout the academic literature that a paternalistic mindset and paternalistic behavior impede family control. Throughout the meta-analysis, it was found that the capacity of families to decide upon their own situation is sometimes overestimated. In such situations, a moderate degree of paternalistic behavior of coordinators can enhance family control. Thus, this section has identified two situations in which 'empowerment' is to such an extent *imposed* on families that it actually does not empower them anymore. This constitutes a paradox: some policies and practices relating to the role

of the coordinator impose family control on families in such a way that these policies and practices actually decrease family control.

An implication of the findings of the meta-analysis is, based on the foregoing, that the focus on family control must be balanced. On the one hand, many policies and practices that aim to foster family control and to restrain control of professionals or coordinators are conducive to achieving family control. On the other hand, policies and practices that focus too strongly on family control might actually impede family control. Indeed, the capacity of families to determine their own situation must not be left out of sight. In situations where families are not capable to determine their situation, some influence of coordinators and professionals in the decision-making process might eventually increase family control. It follows from the foregoing that, while the philosophy of empowerment and family control behind FGC on the one hand and decision-making power of coordinators on the other hand may at first hand seem to be contradictory, they actually are complementary. This, again, constitutes a paradox.

8.2.2. Recommendations for FGC policy and practice

As has become clear in the foregoing section, it is an important task of policymakers and coordinators to find a balanced focus on family control as well as a balance between influencing decision-making and letting families totally free in deciding upon their own situation. In order to achieve this, it is important for policymakers and coordinators not to overestimate the capacity of families to control their own situation. Based on this, it can be recommended to FGC policymakers and practitioners not to overestimate the capacity of families to decide upon their own situation. This constitutes the first recommendation. Indeed, in this section, recommendations for FGC policy and practice will be provided, based on the findings of the meta-analysis.

In terms of authority rules, the meta-analysis found more evidence that obligations of the coordinator restricting his discretion enhance family control than that rights and authorizations of the coordinator to act according to own insights enhance family control. While rights and authorizations to act according to own insights give the coordinator discretion (freedom to decide), obligations restrict this discretion. That the meta-analysis found more evidence that obligations enhance family control than that rights and authorizations enhance family control, it is recommendable to rather restrict the discretion of coordinators through obligations than to provide coordinators with discretion through rights and authorizations.

In the meta-analysis, it was found that it was not systematically conducive to family control to oblige the coordinator to provide private family time. In two studies, it was found that family members did not want to be left alone to deliberate (Holland and O'Neill, 2006; Holland et al., 2005). However, although the meta-analysis found that private family time does not *systematically* enhance family control, it does suggest that private family time *often* enhances family control. Indeed, it has been suggested that an obligation to include private family time might be too strong of a measure to ensure family control. However, because private family time in most cases enhances family control, a 'conditioned obligation' might be a good solution to ensure family control. Such a conditioned obligation would oblige coordinators to provide private family time except when there is strong resistance to this or when there are other characteristics making private time undesirable. When there would be any knowledge on the circumstances under which families do or do not appreciate private family time, this could be incorporated into the conditioned obligation. Further, a conditioned obligation can only be effective under the condition that, when no private family time is provided, the coordinator and professionals still let families decide upon their own situation. In some FGC models studied in the literature sample, coordinators occasionally 'checked in' into the private family time to

see whether everything was understood and whether a calm environment existed (Connolly, 2006; Rauktis et al., 2011). However, no indications existed in these studies on how this affected family control. Thus, although the workings of a conditioned obligation to provide private family time must be researched in their relation to family control, such a conditioned obligation seems, based on the findings of this study, a promising measure to enhance family control.

Also in terms of the rules-in-use, the meta-analysis found information that suggests that scope rules making final outcomes of FGC binding and consequential negatively impacts on family control. Indeed, it emerged from the study of Connolly in New Zealand that families felt 'coerced' into acceding to the position of the social worker because agreement had to be reached in the conference in order to prevent a court-hearing (Connolly, 2006). Although, as will be seen, more research must be done on the effect of scope rules on family control, based on the meta-analysis it seems advisable to FGC implementers and practitioners to limit the degree to which final FGC outcomes are binding and consequential in order to enhance family control.

In terms of the final set of rules-in-use, the meta-analysis found that information rules granting access to family-information to the coordinator enhance family control. Therefore, it can be recommended for policymakers to establish rules guaranteeing this information-access. Moreover, for participants in FGC it is recommended to provide the coordinator with as much family-information as possible. Secondly, the meta-analysis found that information rules for coordinators stipulating that and how they must share process-information with other participants enhance family control. Because of this, policymakers are recommended to establish such information rules. Examples of information rules that seem to enhance family control are: rules obliging the coordinator to clearly state the boundaries of plans drafted by families, rules that oblige coordinators to inform participants about their rights and about how the conference is supposed to work, rules that oblige the coordinator to tell families in the beginning that the families will be the first speakers during the conference.

Apart from the rules-in-use, the meta-analysis found that the coordinator's skills in terms of cultural competence enhance family control. Therefore, it is recommended for FGC implementers and practitioners to invest in the skills of coordinators in terms of cultural competence.

In terms of cultural aspects of the role of the coordinator, the meta-analysis found that a strong degree of paternalism of the coordinator hampers family control, but that a minimal amount of paternalism of the coordinator can actually enhance family control. Indeed, it is suggested that a bit of a paternalistic mindset and paternalistic behavior of the coordinator might be better for family control than no paternalism of the coordinator at all. It was found in the meta-analysis that a bit of a paternalistic mindset can be conducive to family control in situations where families are in conflict and/ or need some guidance to find a direction to start deliberating on. Based on these findings, it can be recommended to coordinators to provide such paternalistic guidance when this is requested, and not to resist it. Moreover, based on the findings from the meta-analysis, it seems recommendable to coordinators to refrain from behaving very paternalistically. In terms of the second cultural aspect of the role of coordinators focused on, professional autonomy, it was found that professional autonomy of coordinators in relation to the own organization enhances family control. In this thesis, professional autonomy has been defined as the degree to which coordinators feel free from- or resist being guided by bureaucratic and legalistic pressures of their own organizations. Examples of such pressures are pressures to avoid litigation, reaching a quick outcome, restricting costs, and eliminating risks. Based on the findings from the meta-analysis, it can be recommended to governmental organizations or other organizations employing coordinators to restrict their bureaucratic and legalistic pressures on the coordinator. Moreover, to the coordinator it can be recommended to resist bureaucratic and legalistic pressures of their 'own organizations'. Table 8.1 presents an overview of the recommendations provided in this section.

Actors	Recommendation
FGC policymakers	Rather restrict the discretion of coordinators through obligations than providing them with discretion through rights and authorizations
FGC policymakers	Give coordinators, instead of an obligation, a 'conditioned' obligation to provide family control
FGC policymakers	Establish information rules guaranteeing access of the coordinator to family-information
FGC participants	Provide the coordinator with as much family-information as possible
FGC policymakers	Establish information rules obliging the coordinator to share process-information with other FGC participants
FGC policymakers and practitioners	Invest in the skills of coordinators in terms of cultural competence
FGC coordinators	Provide minimally paternalistic guidance when this is requested, for example in situations where families are in conflict and/ or need some guidance to find a direction to start deliberating on
FGC coordinators	Refrain from behaving very paternalistically
Organizations employing FGC coordinators	Restrict bureaucratic and legalistic pressures on the coordinator
FGC coordinators	Resist bureaucratic and legalistic pressures of the 'own organization'

Table 8.1: an overview of the recommendations provided in this section and the actors to which these recommendations are addressed.

8.3. Limitations

In the foregoing sections, the findings from the meta-analysis on the relationship between structural and cultural aspects of the role of the coordinator on the one hand and family control have been discussed, as well as the broader implications of these findings for policy and practice. Moreover, recommendations for policy and practice have been provided. Although this thesis has thus certainly provided important insights on the effect of structural and cultural aspects of the role of the coordinator on family control that can be used in practice, nothing has yet been said regarding limitations of this thesis. In this section, these limitations will be discussed.

The first limitation of this thesis that is to be discussed here relates to the methodological concept of 'internal validity'. Internal validity focuses on the question whether the relationships found between the variables in this research are indeed causal or whether they are affected by other variables (Indiana University, 2015). Inherent to the form of the meta-analysis conducted in this thesis, many different studies with each its own context formed the data of the meta-analysis. Therefore, relationships found between variables can be influenced by the context (for example country) of the particular FGC model in which a relationship was found to exist. Also related to internal validity is that, because this thesis uses findings from other studies, the thesis is for its quality of data dependent on the internal validity of these other studies.

A limitation that is related to the foregoing limitation concerns the 'interaction hypothesis'. Because this is a theoretical limitation and has already been mentioned in the theoretical framework, only a reminder of this limitation will be provided here. In the theoretical framework, it is held that outcomes and behaviors of actors result from *a combination* of cultural values and preferences of actors on the one hand and structural opportunities to act on those values and preferences on the other (Need,

2010, p. 13). This constitutes the 'interaction hypothesis'. However, although 'structural' and 'cultural' aspects are thus interdependent and only together result in behavior and outcomes, this thesis has assessed cultural and structural aspects of the role of the coordinator only assessed in their bivariate relationship with family control. This makes that the findings of this thesis in terms of explanatory variables being conducive to family control, only apply *under the condition* that other cultural or structural aspects correspond with these variables in such a way that they together are conducive to family control.

Apart from the foregoing limitations, this thesis also has a limitation in terms of reliability. Reliability of a research focuses on the degree to which research findings would be stable and consistent if the research would be done by multiple different researchers (Decorte and Zaitch, 2011, p. 131). Inherent to the form of the meta-analysis conducted in this thesis of integrating research findings from the researchers' own interpretation into a broader analysis, findings are dependent on the researchers' interpretation. However, in order to improve reliability, the researcher has conducted a form of triangulation with her supervisor by discussing how both the researcher and her supervisor interpret certain research findings. Regardless, because this has not been done repeatedly, the eventual outcomes of the meta-analysis are strongly dependent on the researchers' interpretation and thus score not very high on reliability.

Another limitation is related to external validity. External validity concerns the question whether the research findings are generalizable (Rothwell, 2005, p. 82). The research findings of this thesis, such as the results of the test of the hypotheses, cannot be generalized because these findings are based on the literature sample of this thesis. As mentioned, these findings can be influenced by the contexts of the studies in the literature sample. Moreover, nowhere throughout the literature sample were aspects of the role of the coordinator and their effect on family control subject of a complete research. Therefore, on many relationships between aspects of the role of the coordinator and family control has only partial and incomplete information emerged from the meta-analysis. Consequently, it could be the case that, when empirical research would be done purely focusing on the relationship between the aspects of the role of the coordinator and family control, findings would emerge that contradict the findings of this thesis.

Apart from these limitations, there is one more limitation that deserves consideration here. As mentioned in chapter 3, some studies in the literature sample use the same data. This is the case for the studies of Connolly (2005, 2006), and for Holland et al. (2005), Holland and O'Neill (2006) and Holland and Rivett (2008). Because each of these studies has a different focus and uses the data for answering a different research question, it has been chosen to allow the inclusion of studies using the same data. Regardless, it does weaken the strength of the evidence for certain findings of this thesis. Because of this and because of the other limitations of this thesis, the findings of this thesis as well as the recommendations provided must be adopted with caution. It is clear that more research is necessary to substantiate the relationships found between aspects of the role of the coordinator and family control. In the following section, it will be discussed which of these relationships require (most) further research. In the final section of this thesis it will be considered what, despite the limitations discussed in this section, this thesis contributes.

8.4. Existing knowledge and required knowledge

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the main goal of this research can be divided into two sub-goals. In relation to the first sub-goal, providing knowledge on the relationship between the role of the coordinator and family control, implications of this research have already been discussed. In this section, the implications of the research in terms of the second sub-goal will be discussed. This second

sub-goal consists of exploring what knowledge on the relationship between the role of the coordinator and family control already 'exists' in the literature and identifying which aspects require more research.

In this research, it has been assessed how certain aspects of the role of the coordinator are related to family control. Then, based on the relationships found between these aspects and family control, hypotheses were tested. As can be seen in tables 5.3, 6.2 and 7.2, the research conducted in this thesis has found information on 7 of the 12 relationships between aspects of the role of the coordinator and family control. In tables 5.3, 6.2 and 7.2, overviewing the results of the hypotheses-test in this thesis, it can be easily seen which explanatory variables on the role of the coordinator must be most urgently researched in terms of their relationship with family control. Indeed, it follows that not enough information emerged from the literature sample in order to test the hypotheses on the relationships between the following aspects of the role of the coordinator and family control: authority rules in terms of rights and authorizations of the coordinator to act according to own insights, aggregation rules widening the veto power of the coordinator, skills derived from training, skills derived from experience, and access to financial resources. Thus, in order to acquire more complete information on the effect of the role of the coordinator on family control, research is most urgently required on the relationships between the aforementioned aspects of the role of the coordinator and family control.

Although it has thus become clear which aspects of the role of the coordinator in their relation to family control require research most urgently, this does not mean that the relationships found between aspects of the role of the coordinator and family control do not require more research. Indeed, as shown earlier in this chapter, there are some limitations of this research that make that more research is necessary to substantiate the relationships found between aspects of the role of the coordinator and family control. First of all, the limitation that the relationships between aspects of the role of the coordinator and family control can be dependent on contextual variables of the FGC models in which these relationships were found, makes that more research is necessary to identify the contexts in which these relationships occur. Secondly, there is the limitation that relationships found between explanatory variables and family control are based on relatively incomplete evidence. For example, in terms of authority rules, not all possible obligations of coordinators have been researched in the meta-analysis, and consequently it is possible that in some cases a discretion of the coordinator is more conducive to family control than an obligation. Because of this limitation, more research is required to substantiate the relationships found in this research between aspects of the role of the coordinator and family control.

Apart from the foregoing, there are some more aspects relating to subject of this thesis that require more knowledge than this thesis was able to provide. First of all, related to the recommendations for policy and practice provided in this chapter, it must be researched how these recommendations can best be implemented. For example, it has been argued that a 'conditioned obligation' to provide private family time might be conducive to family control. However, this would require knowledge on the circumstances under which private family time would impede family control. Moreover, this would also require research on the rules specifying the roles and behavior of coordinators when no private family time is provided. Apart from the fact that research is required on the implementation of recommendations, more research is also necessary on another aspect of the research subject. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, family control is a matter of degree, ranging from 'feeling listened to', to 'having a voice' to actually influencing decision-making. In the meta-analysis, it was not possible to identify which aspects of the role of the coordinator influenced family control to which degree. The gap between 'feeling listened to' and 'feeling influential' was throughout the literature sample only referred to in relation to general outcomes and never in relation to specific aspects of the role of the coordinator. Therefore, more research is required to acquire knowledge on the effect of aspects of the role of the coordinator on the *degree* of family control. Finally, one more aspect of the research subject requiring more knowledge than this thesis could provide deserves consideration here.

Throughout the meta-analysis, it was researched how separate cultural and structural aspects of the role of the coordinator, separately from each other, impact on family control. In the theoretical framework, it has been emphasized that structural and cultural variables in reality are dependent on each other in terms of the outcomes of processes. Although this thesis has chosen to study the effects of structural and cultural variables on family control bivariately, more research is required on how the interaction between structural and cultural aspects of the role of the coordinator impacts on family control.

8.5. The value of the thesis

In this chapter, implications of the findings and recommendations for policy and practice as well as for further research are discussed. Moreover, the limitations of this thesis have been elaborated upon. In this final section, the general value of the thesis will shortly be considered. In this thesis, existing empirical studies on FGC were analyzed in order to explore what knowledge already exists on the effect of the role of the coordinator on family control. Through the research conducted in this thesis, knowledge was gathered on the effect of several aspects of the role of the coordinator on family control. Because the effect of the role of the coordinator on family control has not yet constituted the subject of a specific research, this thesis provides the first integrated account of knowledge on this effect. Based on the knowledge derived from the meta-analysis, recommendations and implications for FGC policy and practice could be provided. Although the findings based on which the recommendations are based are often incomplete, these recommendations can be cautiously applied in FGC practice. Indeed, until further research has substantiated or modified the knowledge derived from this thesis on the effect of the role of the coordinator on family control, these recommendations are the best guidance in terms of increasing family control through the role of the coordinator. In terms of the broader implications of the findings in this thesis, it has been warned that too strong of a focus on family control can actually impede family control, and that in some situations a small degree of coercive power of coordinators might be conducive to family control. These implications challenge existing assumptions and beliefs about FGC and incorporation of these implications into FGC policy and practice can positively influence FGC.

Although the findings of this thesis have considerable limitations, a beginning has been made in acquiring knowledge on the effect of the role of the coordinator on family control. This beginning might convince scholars of the importance of researching this effect of the role of the coordinator on family control and might consequently inspire them to delve deeper into the subject. Indeed, further research on the subject is urgently necessary, and this thesis has precisely shown which aspects of the subject deserve further research. This thesis can function as a basis from which further research can depart: further research can then substantiate or refute the findings of this thesis. Eventually, an elaborate body of research on the effect of the role of the coordinator on family control in FGC could function as the basis for evidence-based practice of FGC.

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