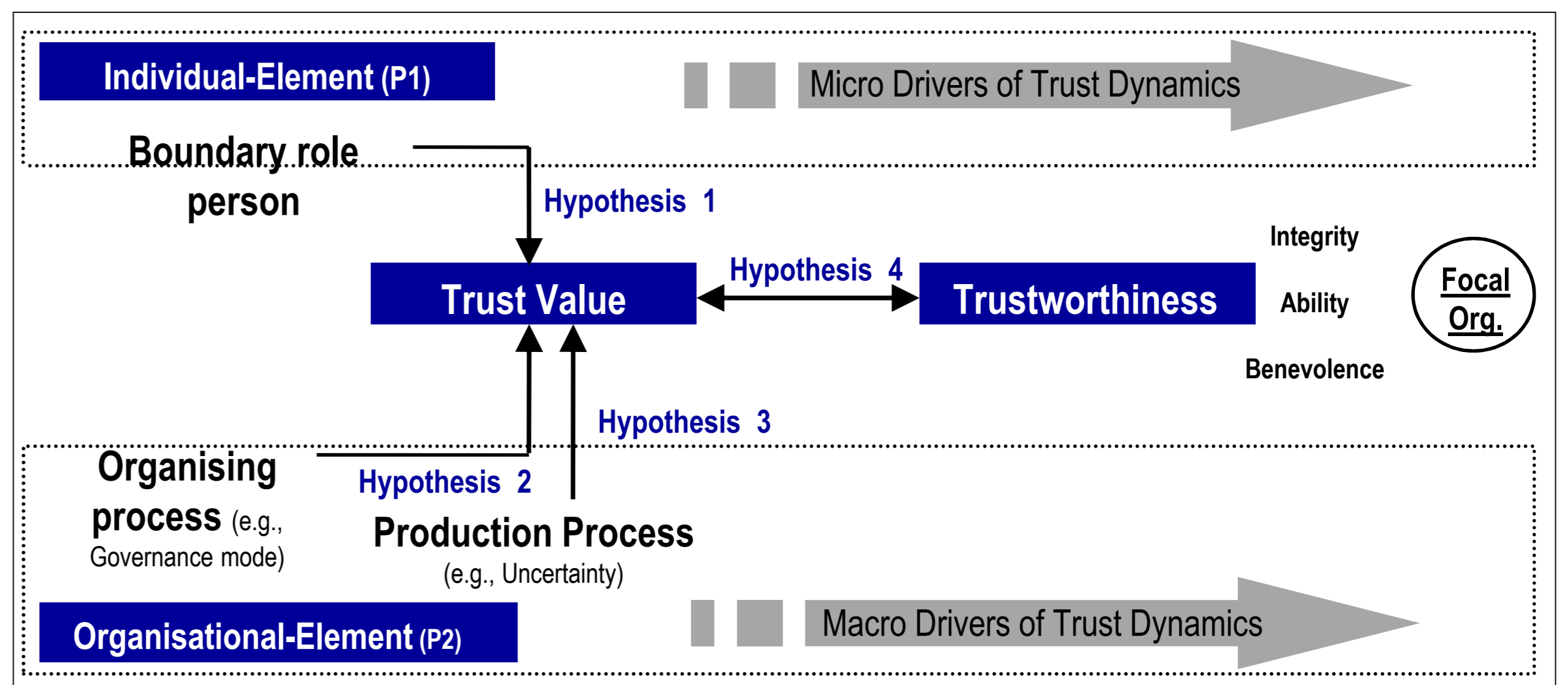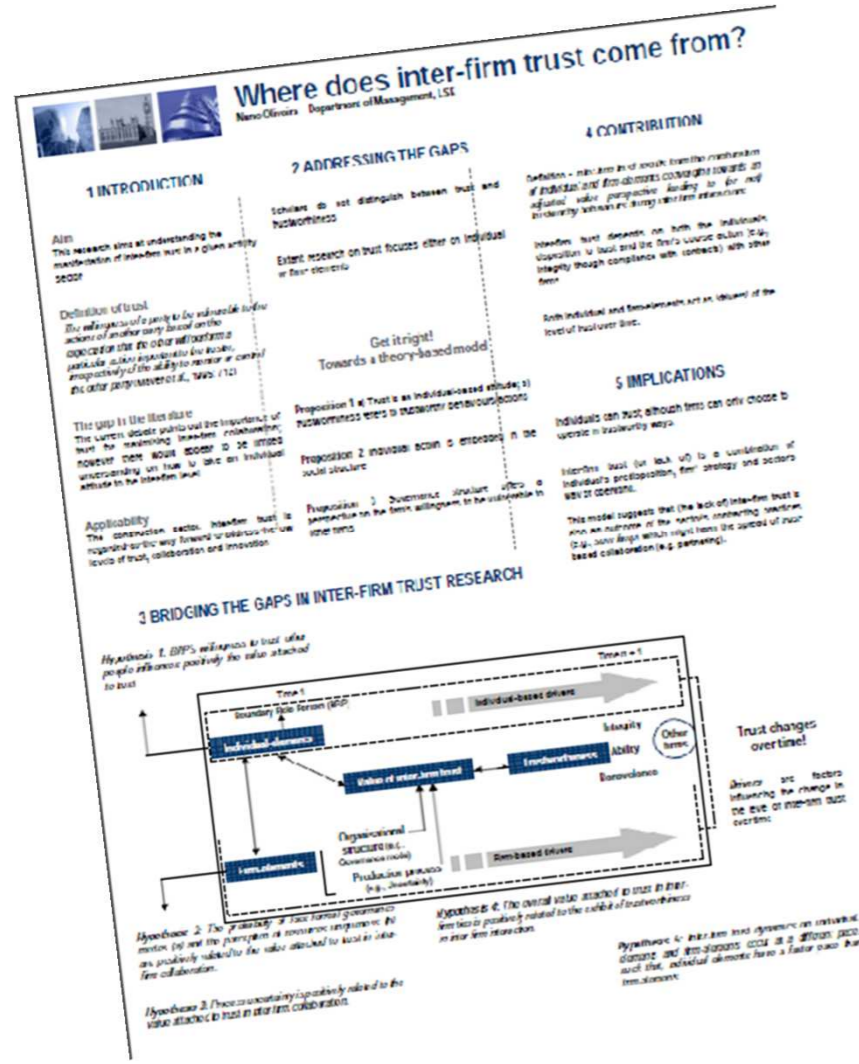# Where does inter-organisational trust come from? - An empirical analysis

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## 1. Last Year's Poster





Individual-Element (P1) — Micro Drivers of Trust Dynamics

Boundary role person — Hypothesis 1

Trust Value — Hypothesis 4 — Trustworthiness

Integrity
Ability
Benevolence

Focal Org.

Hypothesis 2 — Hypothesis 3

Organising process (e.g., Governance mode)

Production Process (e.g., Uncertainty)

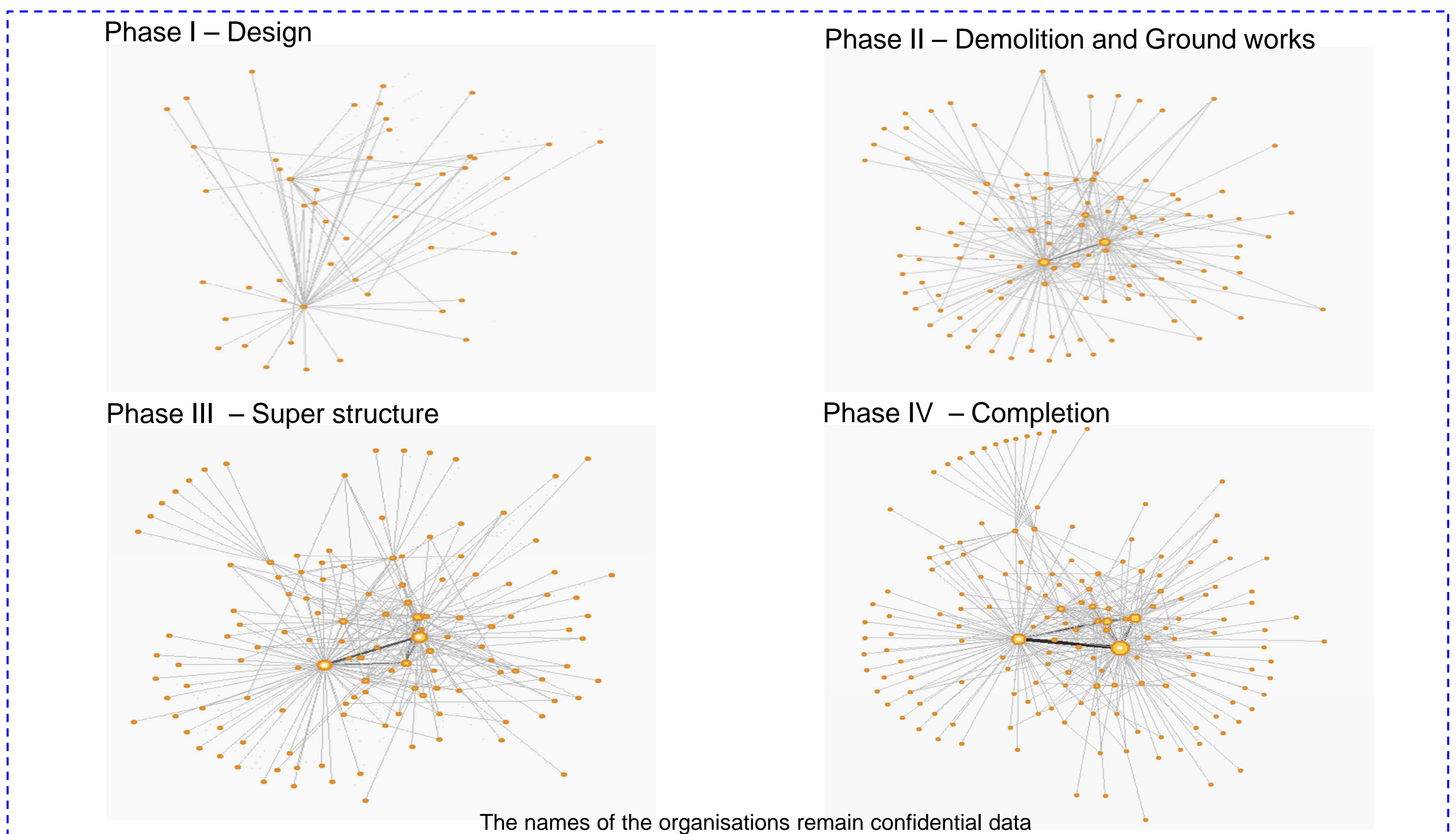Organisational-Element (P2) — Macro Drivers of Trust Dynamics

A research journey: In last year's poster, I developed a definition of 'inter-organisational trust' which I use, here, to explore empirically the foundations of inter-organisational networks (IO-N) trust. In comparison to last year's poster, I found that 'inter-organisational trust' is also strongly intertwined with the IO-N configuration and its evolution.

## 2. Method & Findings

Literature gap: Extant research has extensively reported the importance of trust for organisation' sustainability and performance (Gulati, 1995: Searle, *et al.,* 2011): although we still have little understanding on how inter-organisational trust develops (or contracts) over time. Thus, this research aims to address this gap in the literature.

Method: Longitudinal inductive case study. I develop a novel approach to gather data on IO-N from meeting minutes and reports for 163 UK-based organisations collaborating in a building project over a 3-year period. I use social network analysis techniques (Wasserman & Faust 1994) to unveil both the form and dynamics of the 'muddle of relationships' among organisations (see Latham's Report, 1994).

Phase I – Design



Phase II – Demolition and Ground works



Phase III – Super structure



Phase IV – Completion



The names of the organisations remain confidential data

## 3. Discussion & Practical Implications

+ Organisation-level elements are pivotal to foster trust, as network evolution is substantially shaped by firm' strategy and variables of the production process as opposed to individual predispositions exclusively

+ Trust among central organisations experiences great change throughout the IO-N evolution mainly during swifts between production phases.

+ As for managerial and policy implications, individual behavioural change can foster trust in the short-term; although a long-term approach to trust has to focus on firms' contracting strategies among organisations. I think, this research is relevant to the debate that is going on to improve performance in the UK's building industry; for example, to meet environmental sustainability targets.