



<http://www.diva-portal.org>

Preprint

This is the submitted version of a paper published in *Project Management Journal*.

Citation for the original published paper (version of record):

Packendorff, J., Crevani, L., Lindgren, M. (2014)

Project leadership in becoming: A process study of an organizational change project.

*Project Management Journal*, 45(3)

Access to the published version may require subscription.

N.B. When citing this work, cite the original published paper.

Permanent link to this version:

<http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:kth:diva-142000>

# **Project leadership in becoming: A process study of an organizational change project**

**Johann Packendorff, Lucia Crevani, & Monica Lindgren**

Version originally submitted for evaluation by the editors of *Project Management Journal*, published by the Project Management Institute and Wiley Periodicals, Inc. A later version of this paper will be published in the *Project Management Journal* during 2014.

## **0. Abstract**

Drawing on current research in general leadership research we suggest process ontology as relevant and rewarding for project leadership studies. We argue that project leadership can be studied as the ongoing social production of direction through construction of actors' space of action, involving continuous construction and reconstruction of (1) past project activities and events, (2) positions and areas of responsibility, (3) discarded, ongoing and future issues, and (4) intensity, rhythm and pace. By an ethnographic case study of an organizational change project, we show how space of action and hence the project direction is in constant flux and becoming.

## **1. Introduction**

In this paper we develop and apply a process ontology to the study of project leadership. We thus contribute to the emerging stream of process-oriented studies within project research (cf. Vaagaasar & Andersen, 2007; Koskinen, 2012; Sergi, 2012) by outlining an analytical framework for empirical inquiry, and to relational and post-heroic project leadership research (cf. Cicmil et al, 2006; Segercrantz, 2009; Lindgren & Packendorff, 2009; 2011) by revealing and detailing the processual character of project leadership. Our research draws upon recent developments in general leadership research, in which attention is being

refocused from individual leaders and their characteristics to leadership processes and practices (cf. Knights & Willmott, 1992, Dachler & Hosking, 1995, Crevani *et al*, 2010, Denis *et al*, 2010, Larsson & Lundholm, 2010, Raelin, 2011; Denis *et al*, 2012). Such a view presupposes that leadership is emerging in social interaction, and that traditional leader–follower distinctions should be problematized. What these contributions have in common is the effort to bring the “-ship” back into leadership studies (Grint, 2005), thus paying attention to the interactional and social aspects of the phenomenon.

The basic reason behind the dominating view that ‘leadership’ is to be found in the qualities and the doings of individual leaders is the modernist notion of stable, distinct material entities as the building blocks of reality and hence the objects of scholarly inquiry. Such an ‘ontology of being’ (Chia, 1995) leads us to search for concreteness in any abstract phenomenon—a search that may well result in “misplaced concreteness” in Whitehead’s terms—i.e., that we end up having “mistaken our abstractions for concrete realities” (Whitehead, 1985, p. 69, as cited in Chia, 1995). Hence, when we perform research on organizations, individuals, technologies—or indeed projects—we forget that these are categories that are applied and reapplied to the world in order to make it ordered, not autonomous entities themselves (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Hernes, 2008; Koskinen, 2012). They exist only as reified abstractions (Hodgson & Cicmil, 2007) produced in order to make sense of a fluid and dense world—and can therefore be discussed, challenged and rejected. The same goes for the abstract notion of ‘leadership.’

Process organization studies in general take the fluidity, interrelatedness and complexity of life and work into consideration. Some of them employ what we may call a *process perspective*, basically anchored in an *ontology of being*, by which the world is still seen as consisting of stable, enduring entities that have qualities that change over time (Langley *et al*, 2013; Lorino & Mourey, 2013). In leadership studies, this would imply studies of how leaders develop and learn over time—of how leader–follower interaction patterns change over the course of a project. The limitation of the process perspective is that it still tends to maintain the ‘misplaced concreteness’ of leadership into individual leaders, and that alternative notions of the phenomenon are mobilized out of the picture. In this paper we will instead depart from a *process ontology*, i.e., that

...the world itself is viewed fundamentally as made up of processes rather than things. In this view, entities (such as organizations and structures) are no more than temporary instantiations of ongoing processes, continually in a state of becoming. (Langley et al, 2013: 5)

Scholarly inquiry into leadership work in project settings usually reflects the developments in general leadership research. Most of this research builds on well-established theoretical schools of leadership studies such as situational, transformative, authentic and charismatic leadership, applying them to projects and project-based settings in order to construct theoretical links between leader characteristics and project outcomes (see, for example, the extensive overviews in Turner & Müller, 2005, 2006). Accordingly, current research tend to reproduce traditional leader-centric notions of individualism, heroism, masculinism, specific competencies and unitary command—without reflecting upon the ensuing image of project leadership as exercised by a strong, single, heroic, omnipotent project manager, surrounded by followers not taking part in the management of the project (Lindgren & Packendorff, 2009, 2011). By making the abstract phenomenon of ‘project leadership’ concrete through such personae (cf. Wood, 2005), important aspects of project leadership work are ignored or even defined as irrelevant. Instead of studying and theorizing over how leadership is practiced in everyday work, researchers become preoccupied with the traits, styles, actions and competences of the individuals who have been formally assigned project manager responsibilities. Moreover, the dynamics and fluidity of project leadership work over time is usually overlooked in favor of approaches focusing on snapshot images of project managers’ abilities and competencies, or limiting their empirical inquiry to formally defined project boundaries in time and space.

In this paper we thus suggest that a process ontology as applied to project leadership studies can enable project research to arrive at new insights into leadership work in project-based settings. While some extant contributions indeed suggest and employ process views as beneficial to our understanding of projects and project management (cf. Cicmil *et al*, 2006; Linehan & Kavanagh, 2006; Vaagaasar & Andersen, 2007; Söderlund et al, 2008; Maaninen-Olsson & Müllern, 2009; Blomquist *et al*, 2010; Koskinen, 2012; Sergi, 2012), process ontology is new to project leadership studies. Departing from a growing strand of process

studies in general leadership research, we will in this paper develop a theoretical and methodological framework for process ontology studies of project leadership work, and identify possible theoretical consequences of such a framework.

The paper is organized as follows. Initially we discuss the theoretical implications of a process ontology as applied to project leadership, outlining an analytical framework in which the on-going construction of action space and project direction is seen as involving constructions of project path, positions, issues and rhythm. We then apply the framework to a process study of an organizational change project in which a U.S. management control regulation is implemented in the Swedish subsidiary of a multinational chemical firm. In the ensuing discussion, we reveal how leadership work in projects does not only involve several inter-acting individuals, but that the strategic and tactic situation of the project is continuously re-framed (cf. also Kaplan & Orlikowski, 2013), and that project leadership work tend to focus not only on plans but also on continuous redefinitions of individual responsibilities and current action priorities. Project participants thus continuously reconstruct the space of action —what is possible and not possible to do—and hence the direction that the project process takes.

## **2. Towards process studies of project leadership work**

### 2.1 Inquiring into project leadership work: Towards process studies

Most general definitions of leadership define the phenomenon in terms of processes and of a social, rather than an individual, matter. The following quotation is an example of the conceptualization of leadership in terms of processes of social influence, which is at the base of most leadership studies:

Leadership may be considered as the process (act) of influencing the activities of an organized group in its efforts toward goal setting and goal achievement. (Stodgill, 1950, p. 3 as quoted in Parry & Bryman, 2006, p. 447)

As previously discussed, when moving from definitions to actual empirical studies, scholars often focus their inquiry on individual leaders. The field of leadership studies has traditionally been leader-centered, i.e., focused on the individual leader and his/her traits, abilities and actions. This was part of the modernist agenda of management sciences during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, where the best leaders were to be identified and chosen out from their suitability and formal merits rather than from pre-modern bases such as kinship or charisma. The problem was still to determine what constituted a suitable leader, and this question gave rise to a series of different theoretical schools (cf. the overview in Parry & Bryman, 2006). Frustration with such a lack of attention to the processual nature of the phenomenon and with the narrow study of leadership as an individual matter has lead scholars to try to more thoroughly articulate leadership work in terms of processes. For example, Barker holds that leadership work is a continuous social process (Barker, 2001) and that studying it as a series of finite events is a habitual error based on the automatic assumption of causal relationships. In his words:

Leadership has much more to do with action based upon perceptions of emerging structure in systems where order is periodically breaking down and reforming than it does with the imposition of structure and control relative to an a priori configuration.  
(p. 489)

Thus, change, complexity and chaos are not seen as obstacles but as the force behind evolution and renewal. Leadership work is conceptualized as “a process of unfolding” (Barker, 2001: 490), in which “each individual element can be seen to permeate and melt into one another without dissolving into independent parts” (Wood, 2005, p. 1103), thus stressing the interrelatedness of the world. Hence, the essence of leadership is not to be found in a social actor, but it is “a relation of almost imperceptible directions, movement and orientations, having neither beginning nor end” (p. 1115).

Several recent streams of general leadership research explicitly or implicitly adopt a process perspective (Kelly, 2013). One such stream of contributions has been gathered under the label “relational leadership” (Uhl-Bien, 2006)—joining a number of perspectives or models having a common interest in leadership as a social process of relating instead of focusing primarily on leadership effectiveness. Moreover, the idea of leadership as practice has also

informed empirical studies that contribute to processual understandings taking various approaches, such as: conceptualizing leadership as socially constituted and as a negotiation process regarding interpretative schemes (Knights & Willmott, 1992); closely examining micro-level activities and their effects (Denis et al., 2010); highlighting the time dimension when accomplishing work (Holmberg & Tyrstrup, 2010); trying to perform leadership development programs promoting leaderful practice (Raelin, 2010) or taking into consideration everyday actions as leadership and seeing individuals as “fields of relationships” (Carroll *et al.*, 2008), and; analyzing leadership as stretched over leaders, followers and the material and symbolic artifacts in the situation (Spillane et al., 2004).

Hence, leadership studies have gradually shown increased interest in ideas of processes, practices and performances. Scholars have shown how it is possible and mostly relevant to study leadership work as on-going process that is constructed by several people in interaction as they perform more or less mundane and repetitive everyday tasks. However, most studies rely on an ontology of being in which leadership is still seen as the result of intentional action and the notion of process mainly signifies a longitudinal research ambition (Langley *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, in this paper we aim to add to these studies by assuming a process ontology in which actors and reified projects are granted no primacy and in which the central focus is the interactions going on at work and what they achieve.

Studying processes often means paying attention to the actual practices and to how work is performed (cf. Barley & Kunda, 2001). This means researching leadership work as a “lived” experience rather than a “reported” experience in interviews (Alvesson, 1996; Samra-Fredericks, 2003), which also allows for paying attention to the context in which the phenomenon takes place (and which the phenomenon reconstructs) and to potential contradictions and ambiguities. Ethnography-inspired approaches are thus suitable for such endeavors. Ethnography may be defined as a “written representation of a culture (or selected aspects of a culture)” (Van Maanen, 1988, p. 1) or as a method for studying people in their “natural” context and exploring the nature of a social phenomena over time/space (Samra-Fredericks, 2003; Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994). The focus on instances of work draws, therefore, from the ethnomethodologically informed perspective in ethnography (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994), which focuses on everyday accomplishments that sustain

social life, although the extended observations of workdays in organizations adds an interpretative dimension (Vine et al., 2008). This rather common approach in the study of organizations is rarely used when studying leadership, given the rather scant interest in studying practices in this field (Larsson & Lundholm, 2010).

## 2.2 Studying project leadership work with a process ontology

The process ontology implies a number of repositionings in the empirical study of project leadership work (cf. Lindgren & Packendorff, 2009). First, project leadership work should be studied as consisting of activities emerging in the social interaction of the project team, acknowledging the leadership work done also by other team members and opening up empirical inquiry to a multitude of potentially differing views of the same processes (Crevani *et al.*, 2010). Second, leadership work should be studied in terms of the everyday activities that constitute project leadership (Cicmil *et al.*, 2006; Blomquist *et al.*, 2010; Sergi, 2012). It implies acknowledging mundane, collective and ambiguous aspects of leadership, instead of the current preoccupation with heroic actions and linear relationships between intentions, interventions and performance. Third, the focus should be on interaction processes as such rather than on what the formal organizational unit in which they unfold might be (Blomquist *et al.*, 2010). This implies an ontological and epistemological view of projects as constantly 'becoming' through social interaction, where scripts, standards and formal organizational boundaries are treated as aspects of organizing rather than as given entities and facts (Crevani, 2011; Koskinen, 2012; Sergi, 2012).

A further reconsideration concerns what the empirical circumstances might be that could form the basis of a developed understanding of project leadership from a process perspective. If we are to study leadership in terms of processes, practices and social interactions—instead of in terms of individuals, competencies and reified organizational units—what will be the focus of our empirical fieldwork? Gronn (2002) proposes the study of “concertive actions” such as spontaneous collaboration patterns, intuitive understandings that emerge between colleagues, and institutional arrangements supporting self-managed teams and other formal practices. Drath et al. (2008) claim the need for an “integrative ontology” of leadership, in which the three basic concrete entities of traditional leadership research (leaders, followers and shared goals) need to be replaced by an alternative “DAC



ontology” where empirical inquiry is focused on the outcomes of leadership—Direction, Alignment and Commitment. Crevani et al. (2010) and Lindgren et al. (2011) appreciate both these suggestions—remarking, however, that notions of “outcomes” are problematic given that leadership is analyzed in terms of interactions and processes. According to this critique, the DAC ontology tend to focus on converging processes of leadership, thus emphasizing the common and the collective while ignoring the potentially diverging arguments, interpretations and decisions of all involved parties. As noted by Kelly (2013), the quest for new ontological understandings of leadership is often in fact a quest for ideological reinforcements of the phenomenon as basically positive, necessary, productive and researchable.

In this paper we thus use the concept of *direction* as a core feature of leadership processes (construction of direction in the ongoing organizing processes, Crevani, 2011), which is produced through an ongoing construction of *space of action* (i.e., construction of possibilities, potentials, opportunities and limitations with respect to individual and collective action within the local-cultural organizational context, cf. Holmer-Nadesan, 1996). Given the fluidity of leadership work conceptualized through the lenses of a process ontology, there may be a number of aspects to be taken into consideration in order to study how project direction is continuously being produced as action-spacing takes form. Direction should not be considered as a linear feature of organizing, but rather as an organic shaping of how organizing processes are taking form and towards what result such shaping is heading. Thus, direction is accomplished by retrospectively stabilizing the meaning of what has happened, as the sensemaking literature maintains (cf. Weick, 1995; Maitlis, 2005; Kaplan & Orlikowski, 2013), and by recursively shaping the premises on which to continue to act (Gergen, 2010; Crevani, 2011; Koskinen, 2012). This also implies that “a project” should be studied as an aspect of a process rather than as an entity, while remaining highly aware that actors in the empirical setting may well treat it as a reified item that can be separated from the everyday stream of events and thus managed and controlled in a rational manner (Sergi, 2012).

In this paper, we study the continuous evolvment of direction and space of action in project leadership work through four inter-related analytical dimensions: the ongoing construction

of (i) project path, (ii) positions, (ii) issues, and (iv) rhythm. Direction is linked to sustaining the potential for ongoing collective action within certain intersubjective notions of space of action, which can be more specifically understood through analyzing project leadership work in terms of how actors construct temporal paths, their organizational interrelations “inside” and “across” understood project boundaries, their interpretation of action implications of current issues and the temporal rhythm by which the understood specifics of the project reappears in their daily work. Such collective action may be more or less intentional, and that may therefore be understood as based in a retrospective process of interactional construction of the “project path”—i.e. the more or less shared notions of how the project has evolved, its achievements, its current and provisional status, and the current interpretation of its main task (Vaagaasar & Andersen, 2007; Koskinen, 2012; Kaplan & Orlikowski, 2013).

What is also being continuously produced are notions of “positions” and “issues” that may be considered important aspects of the construction of the project and its direction (Crevani, 2011; Lindgren & Packendorff, 2011). By “issues” we mean temporarily stabilized meanings relating to decision processes, past and future events, strategic goals, and various other ongoing or planned projects—some of them inscribed in project plans, some emerging and disappearing in other ways. Most issues are intimately connected to each other and are combined and recombined with each other in the continuous organization of project processes. The construction of issues is closely linked to the construction of positions, i.e., the evolving understandings of who has what formal and informal role, who is to do what, who is responsible for what, and who should make certain decisions.

Processes are also enacted with/through a certain *rhythm* (Lefebvre, 2004), which is an important dimension of the analysis of processes of becoming. Rhythm is not necessarily about identical repetition in time; rather, it allows for “beginning again,” for returning to earlier or similar notions of a project differently. In the analysis of project leadership work, constructions of rhythm involve not only the formal plans and deadlines of the project and the organizational setting (Dille & Söderlund, 2011), but also varying senses of urgency or relief as the process proceeds and issues emerge and disappear.

---

Insert Figure 1 about here

---

The identified analytical dimensions are intended to be applicable to the study of project leadership work in all sorts of projects. Although the case study in this paper is clearly focused on a typical organizational change project, usually characterized by a higher degree of organizational embeddedness and workflow ambiguity than other project types (Blomquist & Packendorff, 1998), it is at the same time also a showcase of all sorts of projects – as understood by practitioners as time-limited, reified, manageable sequences of action (Cicmil *et al*, 2009). While our study is thus located in an organizational change setting, the proposed theoretical framework and analysis applies to all episodes constructed as ‘projects’.

### **3. A process ethnography: Leadership work in the SOX 404 project**

This case study presents a project process in a national subsidiary (ChemCorp Sweden) that was struggling to redesign its systems of internal control in accordance with instructions received from the board of directors of the multinational chemical manufacturer ChemCorp. In 2002 the U.S. Congress passed the “Sarbanes Oxley Act” (SOX), which was the governmental reaction to recent corporate accounting scandals (e.g., Enron and WorldCom). The main focus of the debate was SOX section 404, which forced US-registered companies to ensure that they sustained a sufficient system of internal control. When ChemCorp management understood that the company would have to comply with the Sarbanes-Oxley Act they initiated what was to be known as the “SOX 404 Project.”

The project was led by a steering committee and a project management team at the ChemCorp headquarters. The project management team provided direction to the 15 local business-unit projects (of which ChemCorp Sweden was involved in one). Most of the work took place at the local level, involved operative and administrative staff supported by ChemCorp’s external auditing firm and monitored by the internal audit department. In short, the local work implied creating and documenting secure control systems for all sorts of transactions and data processing in the daily operations. The business units had to ensure

that 70% of their business was assessed and adhere to a general schedule expressed in a series of milestones with deadlines.

The empirical basis of the study is the observations, interviews and readings carried out by a research assistant over a four-month period in 2005 at ChemCorp Sweden, and the findings are presented here as excerpts from an underlying “thick description.” The researcher worked full-time at the headquarters of ChemCorp Sweden and participated in meetings as well as in the day-to-day operations relating to the SOX 404 Project. He documented his data through daily field notes, transcripts of formal and formal interviews, and the collection of emails and documents related to the implementation of the project. The project process was then ‘bracketed’ into seven distinct points in time, each referred to as a “Now,” in which the research team could trace significant reconstructions in one or more of the four analytical dimensions. It should be noted that this is an analytical distinction to illustrate the reshaping over time of space of action by condensing eight months of project work into seven points in time. In practice, the reshaping of space of action is a continuous achievement, not a number of somewhat discrete stages as in our analysis (Lorino & Mourey, 2013). The list of participants in Table 1 includes the most frequently named persons.

---

Insert Table 1 about here

---

### *3.1 Space of action in Now 1 (May–June, project initiation)*

The core actors in ChemCorp Sweden started their work in May 2005, on the basis of their experience from the previous year when a “dry run” was carried out by the Accounting Manager and the Financial Manager. They thus understood the basic aims and methodologies of the work ahead of them, but feared that mistakes could be repeated. The Financial Manager clearly expressed these concerns in analyzing the project path during the past year:

We conducted this project in several steps, beginning as early as 2004. That year, Year I, was designated the “Local Focal Point.” The Accounting Manager and I had to do the work ourselves, so we were on our own. The project managers, were not really sure what they wanted to accomplish ... the premises kept changing, and the project ended up as “a whole lot of nothing,” while we ended up not doing things in the manner in which we were supposed to. Also, this year everything is uncertain. It is very hard to predict where it is all going to end. (Financial Manager, Interview 2)

The project team was created and the “cycle owners”—the managers responsible for various administrative processes such as “Orders to cash,” “IT controls” and “Local pensions”—were assigned their various business-cycle responsibilities. A schedule was created on the basis of instructions from the headquarters, including three major phases:

- The design phase (document processes, document key risks/controls, establish action plans) was to be finished by September 23, 2005.
- The test-phase (establish test plans, perform tests) was to be finished by October 10, 2005.
- The project end, including the closing of the action plans and “sign-off” was to be no later than December 15, 2005.

At this stage, the project was thus formally created and team responsibilities identified. No major work was still taking place, and most project participants continued with their day-to-day work. If the project was indeed discussed, it was usually in terms of how it could be satisfactorily delivered with as little effort as possible. The space of action in the project process was thus narrow in the sense that the project’s pre-history was unattractive, and that most actors did not know or did not care about the project.

---

Insert Table 2 about here

---

### *3.2 Space of action in Now 2 (mid-August, start of the design phase)*

It was not until after the 2005 summer holidays (mid-August) that the SOX 404 project workload increased at ChemCorp Sweden. Although the project had been discussed since June in various informal forums, no cycle owner had actually begun the actual work connected to the design phase, which was to be finished in about one month (September 23). Each cycle owner faced a series of detailed investigations and mappings of all administrative processes and controls within their business cycle. At a first glimpse the work connected to the design phase may not have seemed impossible to accomplish, but it soon appeared that creating narratives on activities performed in different locations and by different people was most time-consuming. In addition, the various risks inherent in each process were to be identified and assessed. As the cycle owners also had regular managerial responsibilities, they soon experienced growing time pressures in their daily work. The L&P Manager, the only cycle owner besides the LF Point who had started on the work, voiced his discomfort with the narrowed space of action experienced:

If there was time for this type of projects you might wonder what the staff were doing at other times of the year. (L&P Manager, Observation, August 18).

To push the project forward, the LF Point announced a meeting around September 9 stressing that cycle owners would have to have made some progress on the work by then. As the days progressed, cycle owners became more and more irritated, reflecting over how the project had to be squeezed in between their regular tasks, thus reducing their ability to carry out their regular work:

From the morning to the evening, my most important task is to develop the business and the organization. I do this as effectively and involving as few other people as possible, and this implies that when something like this comes, it collides with my regular activities. It is something that demands time and must be done in evenings and on Sundays. (S&M Director, Interview 1)

At this “Now” the project participants had become surprised about the workload, constructing the development as a sharp increase in deadline pressures and significant changes in work content. Beyond stress and complaints, this also led to conflicts between departments as actors tried to redistribute the workload of upcoming central issues such as

base-lining and allocation of task responsibilities to others. The project leader responded to this by insisting upon the given time schedule and creating a general project meeting to increase the pace of implementation. At this stage, the space of action for the project process widened through the increased participation by core actors and the intense focus on unresolved issues. While the project was now “present” in everyone’s daily work, the project leader felt a need to make people focus even more on the project by further widening the action space.

### *3.3 Space of action in Now 3 (mid-September, changes in the project plan)*

On September 14, it was finally time for the long-awaited project meeting of all of the ChemCorp Sweden cycle owners and some other managers who were also involved. It was now evident to everyone that the company would have to implement several changes to the existing processes and activities in order to comply with the SOX requirements. Several changes were discussed, but the major ones concerned invoices, credit invoices, handling of price lists, customer credit limits and customer ordering.

The day after the meeting, the S&M Director intervened in the project and created a new and more detailed project schedule specifying dates for when the different business cycles should be finished and also who was responsible for performing each and every walk-through. When he made a series of phone calls to all of the managers involved no-one objected to the new schedule which entailed postponements of all major milestones:

- *October 5*: Deadline for completing the assessment of the design. Sign-off on design should be possible.
- *November 15*: Preliminary deadline for completing test plans.
- *December 31*: Action plans (with high risks finalized)
- *January 31 (2006)*: Assessment of operating effectiveness finalized.

Besides pushing all the dates forward, the requirements concerning the testing seemed unclear and the managerial team gradually separated into two groups: one advocating an ambitious implementation of all project activities and the other resisting the project with

reference to ambiguities and lack of motivation. Rumors said that people in other Chemcorp subsidiaries abroad were also troubled with the project. An email from a colleague in Germany confirmed this:

I think we all know about the workload connected to SOX. All departments here are working only with SOX; all reasonable activities have been stopped. We are in the middle of the process and there are still so many things that are not clear, and as soon as you have taken one step you get new information about how it should have been done. ... Never have I seen so many demoralized people. The quietest managers are getting very impatient. ... I think it is time that we all cooperate to channel the remaining work in this project. Someone has to stop this insanity (I don't mean the fact that we have to do it, but the way we are doing it). (Manager at a German unit, in an email of September 15, 2005)

The LF point also reflected over the design phase in terms of position and issue confusion:

New things are constantly arising. They send an example, but later perhaps some project group in Holland figures out a new way to do it, and the new way is never properly communicated. (LF point, Int. 03)

In this "Now" the space of action of the project process has been significantly widened as most actors have begun to understand the full workload required. At this stage parallel processes are under way to narrow down the space of action by constructing the project as ambiguous and meaningless. Consequently, the project is now clearer to everybody, but is also increasingly a contested matter.

#### *3.4 Space of action in Now 4 (October, initiating action plan work)*

In the first weeks of October the SOX 404 project was tacitly put on hold. Several operative duties had been set aside in the previous month and managers wanted to catch up. Still, the project team had arrived at an explicit consensus that the organization would deliver on all



promises made to the head office, and that the project had to be constructed as an improvement opportunity:

It is of course my responsibility to see this as being as positive and constructive as possible. ... It will probably be confirmed, that the reviews we performed have helped us identify problems and malfunctioning procedures that must now be assessed. (S&M Manager, Interview 1)

The action plans formulated during the design phase appeared very general and more orientated towards what to accomplish rather than how to do it. More than 60 risks inherent in the control system required some degree of analysis and assessment, but there was still no coordination or communication between managers clarifying how the action plans were to be carried out. The managers also had difficulty persuading the organization to implement the changes identified in the risk assessments, particularly as different departments tried to preserve their own space of action by transferring responsibilities elsewhere:

Today the sales representatives had a conference, and they were also forced to listen to a presentation regarding the SOX 404 project, and the eventual changes it may signify. There was some debate particularly over the question of how they communicate prices to the order department. They would not agree to send every change (in product prices) in written form; they considered this to be work that should be done by the order department. They were all polite, but it was clear they would oppose changes that would entail more administrative work for them. Their flexibility is very important to them. (Observation, October 26)

In order to handle these emerging problems, the LF Point called all managers to a meeting to clarify responsibilities and identify future project milestones. The meeting was scheduled for November 8–9, implying that most managers again excluded the project from their immediate action plans and focused instead on their regular work tasks. While there was still much discussion and reflection concerning the project, the space of action for the project was being rapidly narrowed down. Cycle owners and other managers were instead eager to distance themselves, explaining that the project had become back-breaking and emphasizing the positional clashes between SOX and the local corporate culture:

Most people are not very happy about this. It does not fit the Swedish mentality. ... We don't feel we need this. We don't need to be controlled because we already work this way. We don't feel we need the extra controls. ... Of course it might mean that we need to improve some routines, but this is 'control of control'—a bit like Orwell's *1984*. (Warehouse Manager, Interview 8)

### *3.5 Space of action in Now 5 (November, from action plans to action)*

A project meeting to structure the action plans and coordinate the efforts was held as planned on November 9. On the day before, the LF Point and the SOX assistant had produced a draft suggesting a few possible solutions. Even though a few action plans (involving only one person or department) had indeed been implemented, the major action plans remained unattended to. The meeting was fraught with tension and debate erupted over how positions were constructed and what issues needed attention:

The different action plans were discussed. The Financial Manager emphasized that the organization could no longer continue to postpone important changes. He declared that this was a matter of attitude—bad attitude—and that the problems identified were important regardless of SOX. After this, the different action plans were discussed in detail, but the discussion revolved around why it had been so hard to implement the suggested solutions. The Warehouse Manager was clearly disturbed and could not see any practical reason for documenting various things only to satisfy SOX. ... When the S&M Director arrived it was agreed that the company would probably have to hire a new person to perform certain sensitive tasks, separated from other employees. (Observation, November 9)

The meeting was not considered a breakthrough by the project leader, who created neither enthusiasm nor creative solutions. Although several things were discussed and some solutions approved, the meeting did not result in any increased or improved communication between managers regarding the project. The final result was that some things were to be looked over and others investigated—the test plans that were to be delivered by November 15 had now been tacitly removed from the agenda. Again, the project's action space was

widened and narrowed at the same time, through the simultaneous resolution of some matters and recruitment of additional personnel, all while several actors kept a skeptical distance to the project, preferring to focus instead on operative issues.

### *3.6 Space of action in Now 6 (November, internal audit)*

While the “action plan meeting” of November 9 was a disappointment, many other things called for the immediate attention of the project team. It was now clear that the internal auditors were to investigate the work done during the design phase and that they were to arrive on November 16. Once this date had been communicated to everybody on the team, a period of hectic and intense work ensued. The auditors finally arrived on November 21. They had intended to stay for one week. In addition to performing an audit of the SOX 404 design phase, they had also planned to investigate some other operations connected to the sales department. Their arrival significantly speeded up the rhythm of the project and temporarily forced all cycle owners to focus all their time on SOX-related issues, but the general sense of ambiguity in the project remained.

Two ladies arrive after lunch. The Financial Manager and LF Point sat down with them and the auditors declared they would need a few hours with each cycle owner to go through the work done on the different business cycles. They also announced they would write a report commenting on the work done, but it was not certain how this report was to be organized. Probably, they would not be overly critical as they had just failed three other units, and their managers had now asked them to try to help, instead of just failing. Actually the auditors did not seem sure about what they were here to do. (Observation, November 21)

At a final meeting on November 28, the auditors left a preliminary report on identified errors in ChemCorp Sweden’s compliance with SOX 404. There were over 100 errors, mostly relating to inappropriate formulations and terminologies. The auditors also noted that several action plans had still not been implemented, particularly those related to the still undefined concept of “baselining.” The local managers promised to get this done, and project activities again slowed down as the auditors moved on to other units abroad. At this

stage, the space of action for the project process had thus been significantly widened and several core matters in the project plan had received attention. However, a process of narrowing the space of action followed soon afterwards, as the team realized they would escape serious criticism.

### *3.7 Space of action in Now 7 (December, audit report and Christmas preparations)*

In mid-December most managers started to prioritize the work tasks that had to be performed before the upcoming Christmas holidays. Based on the preliminary audit report, the project team decided to postpone the issues of baselining and accountability until the next year. December 12 was identified as a delivery date for some of the action plans related to the warehouse operations, but due to some unfortunate breakdowns in the business system server none of these deliveries were made. The warehouse managers were openly skeptical to the suggested changes: they could still not see the point of documenting and filing information that had already been entered into the business system.

A draft of the final internal audit report arrived on December 16. The details of this report were made confidential, but in general the auditors seemed most positive about the compliance attitude of ChemCorp Sweden and the widespread understanding of the need to improve. During a telephone interview one of the internal auditors remarked on the now rather limited space of action in the Swedish subsidiary:

Much of the things we discovered were very simple errors. People have not understood how to use the GRMT while others have misinterpreted the risks, or have not assigned the proper control ... perhaps some further guidance could have been provided. If you give people free hands you must follow up, regularly, that people are on the right track. Business unit management at the headquarters understood how to do this, but facilitating communication [between them and the national subsidiaries] is here a key issue. In general: you must educate people and then follow up that they have understood. (Internal Auditor, Interview 10)

The SOX 404 project was now several months late and nobody knew exactly when it could be expected to end. Space of action had now been narrowed down even more as core actors refocused on operative issues and upcoming holidays instead, and constructed most upcoming issues so they would be handled at some distance in distance. In a final interview, the head of ChemCorp Sweden tried to present the project path as cumbersome and confusing but eventually both necessary and beneficial:

Normal operations run every day, and we are here to reach certain goals. It has been very hard for anyone to see how this will help the organization reach these goals. ... However, in a few years we will probably be able to look back on this and say: "Some good came of this project: now we do things this way and it works pretty well." (S&M Manager, Interview 3)

#### **4. Project leadership work: The becoming of space of action and project direction**

Having developed and applied the framework to the ChemCorp SOX 404 project case, in this next section we will turn to the consequences of using it in empirical research. Based on the case study reported above, we will first discuss how space of action and project direction are co-constructed throughout a project process. This will be followed by a discussion of the theoretical consequences.

Space of action in the project process is constructed in interaction. It is continuously reconstructed as the project proceeds and influences the direction of the further performance of the project. At each moment, the space of action that is constructed contains the premises of coming actions and talks but does not determine them completely. What is meaningful, what is urgent, what is possible, what is engaging —is a matter that changes as time passes and as project paths, positions, issues and rhythm change. Instead of analyzing how people move from one defined stage to another in a linear process, our framework enables us to analyze how they construct and reconstruct the evolving preconditions of action throughout the project. The different spaces of action in the SOX 404 project and their consequences for the direction of the project process are summarized in Table 3.

---

Insert Table 3 about here

---

In each of these analytically identified spaces, we can identify certain versions of how the project path has unfolded so far through reconstruction of the project path. We can also see positions taking shape in certain ways, we see issues channeling attention, and emotions evolving, emerging, and disappearing, and we feel the rhythm of the project accelerating or slowing down. At each point, not only the “future” is renegotiated, but also the past and its meaning, the actors (their duties and identities) and the frequency and intensity with which the project “affects” and “requires the attention of” the people involved. Therefore, rather than talking of “before,” “now” and “after,” we talk of several “nows,” each of which contains the consequences of all the previous “nows” and the premises of the coming “now” (Sergi, 2012). What takes place in, say, “now 3” will leave traces in the construction of “now 4,” but not in a deterministic way—what takes form in “now 3” offers the premises of “now 4” but these can be enacted in several different ways.

This means that the courses of action that are constructed as legitimate and meaningful change as the project progresses and its space of action reshaped. For example, one major aspect of this in the SOX 404 project are the changes in this project from “too unclear instruction” (implying a limited action space that is widened as further instructions and detailed time plans are created) to “too much control” (narrowing the action space as core actors begin to create a distance to the project) and then on to “this is not our culture” (making sense of the distancing by means of cultural rather than hierarchical dimensions). Moreover, as issues emerge, positions might need to be reshaped and boundaries become contested, giving rise to modified/strengthened issues, as in the case of baselining and allocation of accountability. Depending on the direction such structuring takes, different actions will become possible at different times. Moreover, some themes reappear in modified terms, as for example the construction of the headquarter as an “evil” initiator of the project: they are too rigid, they are not Swedish, they use a different ERP system and they try to “sabotage” the local subsidiary—the positioning is reinforced while the meaning changes. These developments are not unidirectional: they do not reflect the typical trajectory of project tasks from being isolated and specified to becoming embedded and

ambiguous (Vaagaasar & Andersen, 2007); rather, they are recursive and may well return to similar interpretations again depending on what happens.

What is thus interesting to analyze is the relationship between the reconstruction of space of action and the shaping of the project's direction. In the SOX 404 project, episodes in which the space of action narrowed were also episodes in which actors reflected and discussed the project in a "strategic" manner—aligning it to corporate strategy, reformulating its origin and *raison d'être*, maintaining the pace, accepting differing and sometimes conflicting interpretations of current positions and issues. When project leadership work was concerned with such general matters, the project was reified as a strategic issue (Blomquist & Packendorff, 1998) that served long-term purposes. In contrast to this, episodes where space of action widened usually coincided with intense work within the bounds of current urgencies—taking care of specific deliverables, making provisional decisions, meeting specific deadlines, strictly following guidelines and rules (Kaplan & Orlikowski, 2013). Widening spaces of action seem to be linked to reification of the project in terms of schedules and immediate task lists, thus focusing leadership work on fire-fighting and other urgencies. While episodes of widening are often followed by episodes of narrowing, this is by no means a matter of the swings of a pendulum—the reconstructed paths, positions, issues and rhythms behind each such change all contain both the accumulated preceding developments as well as new interpretations and expectations for the future.

Finally, it is also interesting to observe the rhythm of the project—how often and how strongly the project is enacted by and on the people. As the rhythm changes, so does the "reality" of the project change and consequently the intensity of the issues. The project is, in other words, not "present" or "recurring" to the same extent during the whole period, and this has consequences for how actions and interactions develop, which in turn makes the project more or less existing and reified.

Our analysis of the SOX 404 project does not lead to the conclusion that every project will go through these specific phases. Rather, our analysis shows that, in order to work with projects and leadership in projects, a sensitivity to and knowledge of how space of action is constantly changing and being reshaped is needed. It is in these relational achievements that

the direction of the project takes form. The project manager alone cannot influence what kind of space of action is going to be constructed in the project. Rather, the project manager and the other team members need to understand what they are relationally constructing and how. The space of action for leadership work in a project is not only constructed in terms of time and resource conflicts with other projects and operative work, it also involves converging and/or diverging notions of legitimacy, power, professionalism and culture. A process ontology thus does not only imply a deeper understanding of recursiveness and issue handling in project processes, but also a widened understanding of the various aspects of leadership work that are simultaneously under construction as space of action and direction unfolds. In the SOX 404 project, issues related to the legitimacy of the project and its initiators had significant impact on the project process, as well as how the project came to be constructed as a case of disrespect for local culture and professional traditions.

## **5. Implications of the study**

In this paper, we draw on current research in the general field of leadership studies to suggest that process perspectives are relevant and rewarding for inquiry into project leadership work. Departing from a process ontology (Langley et al, 2013) we argue that project leadership work can be studied as series of social activities and events in which actors, projects and organizational contexts are all in constant and mutually interacting flux, rather than as traits, styles and competences of individual project managers.

From such a perspective, project leadership is seen as the ongoing social production of direction in the project through construction and reconstruction of actors' perceived space of action. We suggest an analytical framework in which this ongoing "action-spacing" involves processes of continuous construction and reconstruction of (1) past project activities and events, (2) positions and areas of responsibility related to the project, (3) discarded, ongoing and future issues to be dealt with in the project, and (4) rhythm and pace. Drawing on our case study of the SOX 404 Project, we show how the space of action and hence the direction of the project is in constant flux and coming into being, as actors incorporate all new developments in the understanding of the current situation. Accordingly,



this way of analyzing project processes provides an alternative way of understanding project leadership beyond institutionalized Project Management notions of unitary command, linearity, formal planning and entitative notions of projects.

Theoretically, we add to strands of project research exploring the consequences of process perspectives by applying a process ontology to project leadership work. Identifying four analytical dimensions that are helpful to our understanding of leadership work over time, as space of action is shaped and reshaped, leads us to conceptualize the project as developing in an organic fashion rather than along a linear sequence—each “now” is not deterministically connected to the previous one or to the following one, but rather the different “nows” contain each other. We can thus see how such leadership work influences what courses of action become relevant and meaningful over time, and that it involves continuous construction and reconstruction of not only temporal and spatial conditions but also more or less divergent notions of legitimacy, power, professionalism and culture.

Practically, our analysis points to the necessity for concepts that enable us to understand what is going on and how direction is being produced when working in projects. While project models may offer a useful tool for conceptualizing the project over time in a linear fashion, they need to be supplemented by other “tools” that the practitioner can use in order to understand how project work unfolds in practice, and in order to articulate such an understanding (Vaagaasar & Andersen, 2007). Once articulated, it is possible to discuss the current situation and try to influence its development, in a manner similar to emergent ‘agile’ approaches to project management (Hodgson & Briand, 2013). As discussed, such intentional intervention does not necessarily achieve its purpose but should rather be considered as part of a process necessarily including a number of reiterations between reflection on leadership work, action and talk, consequences in terms of direction, reflection on leadership work, and so on. The role of the project manager and project team members in this process is to help each other reflect, and to attend to what is being achieved, on the interactions in which one is participating (Grint & Jackson, 2010).

## References

- Alvesson, M. (1996). Leadership studies: from procedure and abstraction to reflexivity and situation. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 7(4), 455–485.
- Atkinson, P. and Hammersley, M. (1994). Ethnography and participant observation. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 248–261). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Barker, R. A. (2001). The nature of leadership. *Human Relations*, 54(4), 469–494.
- Barley, S. R. and Kunda, G. (2001). Bringing work back in. *Organization Science*, 12(1), 76–95.
- Blomquist, T., Hällgren, M., Nilsson, A. and Söderholm, A. (2010). Project-as-practice: in search of project management research that matters. *Project Management Journal*, 41(1), 5–16.
- Blomquist, T. and Packendorff, J. (1998). Learning from renewal projects: Content, context and embeddedness. In R. A. Lundin and C. Midler (eds.) *Projects as Arenas for Renewal and Learning Processes*. Norwell: Kluwer, 37–46.
- Carroll, B., Levy, L. and Richmond, D. (2008). Leadership as practice: Challenging the competency paradigm. *Leadership*, 4, 363.
- Chia, R. (1995). From modern to postmodern organizational analysis. *Organization Studies*, 16(4), 579–604.
- Cicmil, S., Williams, T., Thomas, J. and Hodgson, D. (2006) Rethinking project management: researching the actuality of projects. *International Journal of Project Management*, 24(8), 675–86.
- Crevani, L. (2011). *Clearing for action: Leadership as a relational phenomenon*. Stockholm: KTH Royal Institute of Technology.
- Crevani, L., Lindgren, M. and Packendorff, J. (2007) Shared leadership: A post-heroic perspective on leadership as a social construction. *International Journal of Leadership*

*Studies*, 3(1), 40–67.

Crevani, L., Lindgren, M. and Packendorff, J. (2010). Leadership, not leaders: On the study of leadership as practices and interactions. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 26(1), 77–86.

Dachler, H. P. and Hosking, D. M. (1995). The primacy of relations in socially constructing organizational realities. In D.-M. Hosking, H. P. Dachler & K. J. Gergen (Eds.), *Management and Organization: Relational alternatives to individualism*. Aldershot: Avebury.

Denis, J.-L., Langley, A. and Rouleau, L. (2010). The practice of leadership in the messy world of organizations. *Leadership*, 6(1), 67–88.

Denis, J.-L., Langley, A. and Sergi, V. (2012). Leadership in the plural. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 6(1), 211–283.

Dille, T. and Söderlund, J. (2011) Managing inter-institutional projects: The significance of isochronism, timing norms and temporal misfits. *International Journal of Project Management*, 29(4), 480–490.

Drath, W. H., McCauley, C. D., Palus, C. J., Van Velsor, E., O'Connor, P. M. G. and McGuire, J. B. (2008). Direction, alignment, commitment: Toward a more integrative ontology of leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 19, 635–653.

Gergen, K.J. (2010). Co-constitution, causality, and confluence: Organizing in a world without entities. In T. Hernes and S. Maitlis (eds.) *Process, sensemaking and organizing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1–26.

Grint, K. (2005). *Leadership: Limits and possibilities*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Grint, K. and Jackson, B. (2010). Toward "socially constructive" social constructions of leadership. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 24(2), 348–355.

Gronn, P. (2002) Distributed leadership as a unit of analysis. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 13,

423–51.

Hernes, T. (2008). *Understanding organization as process: Theory for a tangled world*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Hernes, T. and Maitlis, S. Eds. (2010). *Process, Sensemaking, & Organizing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hodgson, D. and Briand, L. (2013). Controlling the uncontrollable: ‘Agile’ teams and illusions of autonomy in creative work. *Work, Employment and Society*, 27(2), 308–325.

Hodgson, D. and Cicmil, S. (2007). The politics of standards in modern management: Making ‘the project’ a reality. *Journal of Management Studies*, 44, 431–50.

Holmberg, I. and Tyrstrup, M. (2010). Well then—what now? An everyday approach to managerial leadership. *Leadership*, 6(4), 353–372.

Holmer-Nadesan, M. (1996). Organizational identity and space of action. *Organization Studies*, 17(1), 49–81.

Kaplan, S. and Orlikowski, W. J. (2013) Temporal work in strategy making. *Organization Science*, 24(4), 965–995.

Kelly, S. (2013) Towards a negative ontology of leadership. *Human Relations* (forthcoming).

Knights, D. and Willmott, H. (1992) Conceptualizing leadership processes: A study of senior managers in a financial services company. *Journal of Management Studies*, 29(6), 761–782.

Koskinen, K. U. (2012) Organisational learning in project-based companies: A process thinking approach. *Project Management Journal*, 43(3), 40–49.

Langley, A., Smallman, C., Tsoukas, H. and Van de Ven, A. (2013) Process studies of change in organization and management: Unveiling temporality, activity and flow. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56(1), 1–13.

- Larsson, M. and Lundholm, S. E. (2010). Leadership as work-embedded influence: A micro-discursive analysis of an everyday interaction in a bank. *Leadership*, 6(2), 159–184.
- Lefebvre, H. (1992/2004). *Rhythmanalysis: Space, time and everyday life*. London: Continuum.
- Lindgren, M. and Packendorff, J. (2009) Project leadership revisited: Towards distributed leadership perspectives in project research. *International Journal of Project Organisation and Management*, 1(3), 285–308.
- Lindgren, M. and Packendorff, J. (2011) Issues, responsibilities and identities: A distributed leadership perspective on biotechnology R&D management. *Creativity and Innovation Management*, 20(3), 157–170.
- Lindgren, M., Packendorff, J. and Tham, H. (2011) Relational dysfunctionality: Leadership interactions in a Sarbanes-Oxley Act implementation project. *European Journal of International Management*, 5(1), 13–29.
- Linehan, C. and Kavanagh, D. (2006), “From project ontologies to communities of virtue,” in Hodgson, D. and Cicmil, S. (Eds), *Making Project Critical*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, pp. 51–67.
- Lorino, P. and Mourey, D. (2013) The experience of time in the inter-organizing inquiry: A present thickened by dialog and situations. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 29(1), 48-62.
- Maaninen-Olsson, E. and Müllern, T. (2009). A contextual understanding of projects: The importance of space and time. *Scandinavian Journal of Management* 25(3), 327–339.
- Maitlis, S. (2005). The social processes of organizational sensemaking. *Academy of Management Journal*, 48(1), 21–49.
- Parry, K.W. and Bryman, A. (2006). Leadership in organizations. In S.R. Clegg, C. Hardy, T.B. Lawrence and W.R. Nord (eds.) *The Sage handbook of organization studies*. London: Sage.

- Raelin, J. (2011). From leadership-as-practice to leaderful practice. *Leadership*, 7(2), 195–211.
- Samra–Fredericks, D. (2003). Strategizing as lived experience and strategists' everyday efforts to shape strategic direction. *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(1), 141–174.
- Sergi, V. (2012) Bounded becoming: insights from understanding projects in situation. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, 5(3), 345–363.
- Spillane, J. P., Halverson, R., & Diamond, J. B. (2004). Towards a theory of leadership practice: A distributed perspective. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 36(1), 3–34.
- Söderlund, J., Vaagaasar, A. and Andersen, E. (2008) Relating, reflecting and routinizing: developing project competence in cooperation with others. *International Journal of Project Management*, 26(5), 517–26.
- Tsoukas, H. and Chia, R. (2002). On organizational becoming: Rethinking organizational change. *Organization Science*, 13(5), 567–582.
- Turner, R. and Müller, R. (2005) The project manager's leadership style as a success factor on projects: A literature review. *Project Management Journal*, 36, 49–61.
- Turner, R. and Müller, R. (2006) *Choosing appropriate project managers: Matching their leadership style to type of project*. Newton Square: Project Management Institute.
- Uhl-Bien, M. (2006). Relational leadership theory: Exploring the social processes of leadership and organizing. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 17, 654–676.
- Vaagaasar, A. L. and Andersen, E. S. (2007) On task involvement in renewal projects. *International Journal of Project Management*, 25(4), 346–355.
- Van Maanen, J. (1988). *Tales of the field: On writing ethnography*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Vine, B., Holmes, J., Marra, M., Pfeifer, D. and Jackson, B. (2008). Exploring co-leadership talk through interactional sociolinguistics. *Leadership*, 4(3), 339–360.

Weick, K.E. (1995). *Sensemaking in organizations*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Wood, M. (2005). The fallacy of misplaced leadership. *Journal of Management Studies*, 42(6), 1101–1121.

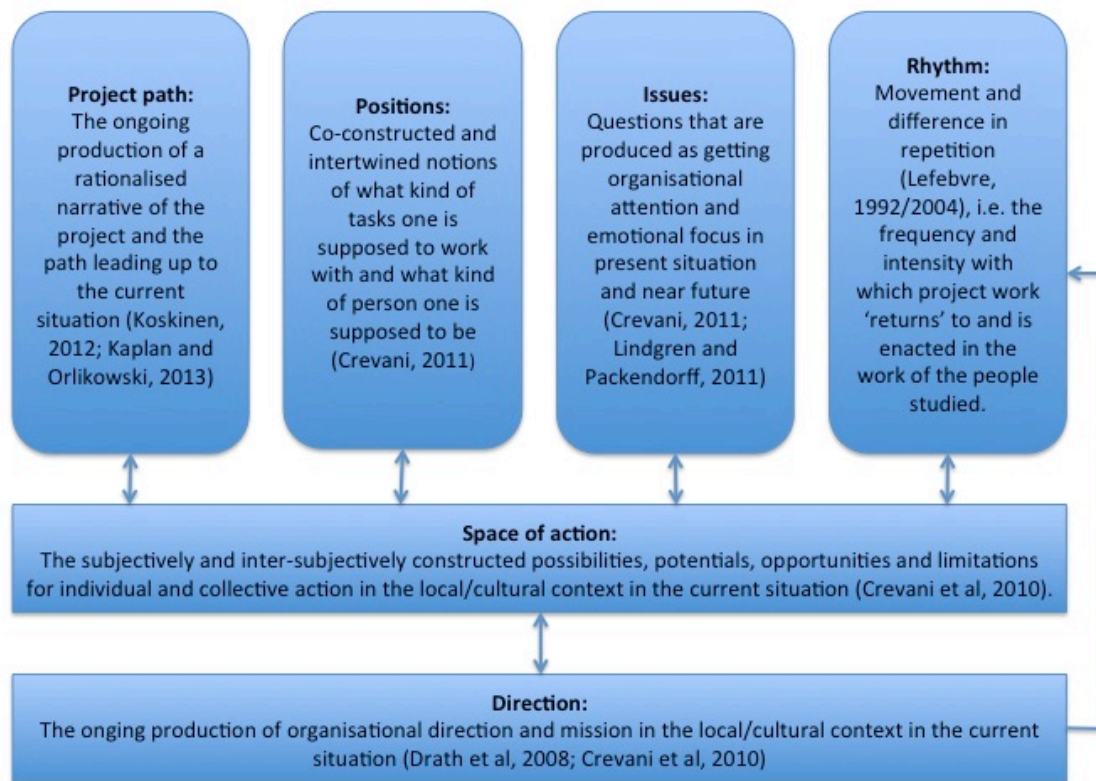


Figure 1: Analytical dimensions in the study of project leadership work and its relation to the construction of space of action and organizational direction



<b>Position</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Accounting manager/LF Point/SOX 404 project leader	Second ranking manager in the financial department. She is also Local Focal Point (LF Point) and thus project leader with responsibility for practical implementation.
Financial manager	Head of the financial department, also Nordic Controller for several ChemCorp subsidiaries in the Nordic countries.
Human Resources Manager	HR manager, also working part time for business unit management.
IT Manager	Head of the IT department which is running their own SOX 404 project. Also involved in the general SOX 404 project as his department runs the internal enterprise business system.
IT SOX contact person	The SOX contact person in the IT department
Logistic and Planning (L&P) Manager	Head of logistics and responsible for the K-town warehouse unit.
Sales and Marketing (S&M) Director	Formal head of ChemCorp Sweden, also Nordic coordinator of other Nordic sales divisions.
Sales Manager	Manager not involved in the SOX 404 project as the S&M Director handles all SOX-related activities in the sales department
Warehouse manager	Second-ranked manager in K-town and responsible for the day to day activities in the warehouse and customer service department.
SOX-Assistant	The observer/research assistant. Assists the LF Point on a temporary basis as a part of an ongoing research project.

Table 1. Respondents referred to in the empirical material.