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LUT School of Business

Knowledge Management

Bachelor's thesis

What is left of leadership when the leader is gone?

- **in Search of Impersonal Leadership in Organizations**

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The purpose of this work is to find out whether there are elements in organizations which can be defined as leadership but which are not linked to or owned by a single individual called leader. This work is a Bachelor's thesis, written for Lappeenranta University of Technology as Bachelor's thesis.

During the last 15 to 20 years, general discussion about leadership in popular management literature has been circulating around stories of great-men, heroes, change leaders, and charismatic leaders, around examples of miracle making individuals in leader positions. Much emphasis has been given to leaders' skills, traits, conduct, and behaviors which have been translated to form the main essence of leadership, especially the core of effective and successful leadership. A general look at the content of Leadership programs in most famous management schools and universities might lead us to understand leadership as being about knowing and leading yourself, being a great communicator, creating inspiring visions and setting stretching goals, giving positive and constructive feedback, being a good listener, making decisions, being decisive but humble, and having perseverance.

Leadership is taught outside and inside organizations, by professional trainers and by experienced leaders, also by exceptional people who have done exceptional things; adventurers, around-the-world sailors, mountain climbers, fire fighters etc. By studying these exceptional people, their trait, skills and behaviors, one is expected to enhance one's understanding how to become a great leader.

Leaders do not lead in isolation. Nothing in today's organizations occurs in isolation or in stable conditions without social processes and impact of a variety of circumstances and stakeholders. If we choose to define leadership in terms which are intensely linked to the top individual, owned or being part of a leading person, then what happens when the leader moves on to another company? What is left of leadership when the leader is gone? Does a leader leave an empty place or is there something in the organization that carries leadership further?

Interest in leadership and related phenomenon has been and is a passion of the thesis writer based on over 30 years of work life experience in corporate leadership and management development. In today's business environment, differences in corporate performance and success cannot anymore be explained by differences in technology, products, and

processes; nor by competence structures as mostly everything can be copied. Could leadership be the differentiator?

All written knowledge about leadership can be copied, taught and learned. Still, not everyone becomes a great leader. Hero leaders make sometimes wonders, and drive corporations to new heights. When they leave, do the companies they have been leading collapse? No they do not. Are the successful leaders as successful in different business environments? Some hero-leaders make it further; some are unsuccessful in new contexts. What is it with leadership? Where does it actually exist, in the person or in the organization or somewhere in between? When the leader closes the door and leaves for good what happens with the accumulated knowledge of leadership? Is it possible to define impersonal, non-person, non-individual elements or components of leadership which some organizations have more of, some less of?

1.2 Purpose and research problem

The purpose of this thesis is to seek for elements that could be defined as leadership but are neither linked to the individual called leader, nor to a person as such. These elements could be defined as impersonal or non-person specific leadership factors. This work aims to give new input to defining leadership thus enhancing and deepening the way leadership can be seen, understood and developed in organizations. Previous research on this approach of leadership is rather scarce.

The research questions are:

- Is it possible to define non person linked, impersonal leadership?
If yes,
- How would the definition of impersonal, non-person related leadership be?
- Which are the basic elements of this kind of leadership?

At the same time it is intriguing to think based on the vast amounts of research done on leaders, leadership, manager, management etc. do we really know what we are talking about? Could it be that leadership research is using the same approach to problem solving as the drunken man who lost his keys on a dark night? He started looking for the keys under

the street light as that was the only place where he could see anything. Is it possible that leadership research is missing a point while focusing on leaders and persons in top positions to explain what leadership really is?

Looking at leadership development, research might actually be confusing the phenomenon of leadership development and leader development. If we are confusing those items, might it also be quite likely to confuse leaders with leadership?

- An addition to the research questions is: Are we confusing leaders with leadership?

2. Theoretical framework and structure of the research

The amount of leadership studies offered and new publications in leadership introduced has been growing enormously since the turn of the century (Hunter et al., 2007, 435). A practical test on Google on the word Leadership gives 151 million results on 0.23 seconds and on Google Scholar 2.6 million results in 0.03 seconds [Google, Google Scholar, referred 23.3.2014 at 17:36].

The focus in leadership research has varied through times. Most of the attention has been given to the role of an appointed and recognized leader and how leaders function in formal influencing processes in a top-down manner (Day et al., 2006, 212-213), or to traits and behaviors of leaders, especially charismatic ones, and studying how they impact their followers (Antelo et al. 2010, 9). The research has also had a too narrow focus on a limited set of elements, mainly studying only the leaders and leaving elements like follower and context aside (Avolio, 2007, 25). Even focus on leadership models has been very narrow during the last two decades as researchers have mainly been looking into transformational and charismatic leadership (Hernandez et al., 2011, 1176).

Not only has the focus of leadership research varied, so has also the level of analysis. Leadership has been analyzed on individual level seen as a dyadic phenomenon existing in an influencing relationship between two persons, or on team / group level and finally on organizational level. Strategic leadership studies also make a difference between leaders *in* organizations or leaders *of* organizations. "Leadership is not equivalent to office-holding or high prestige or authority or decision-making. It is not helpful to identify leadership with whatever is done by people in high places." (Selznick, 1984, 24, in Boal & Hooijberg 2001,

524). In the same way it is possible to make a difference between leaders *of* teams and leadership that develops *within* a team (Day et al., 2006, 212, italics added by writer).

In this work the focus is on the different ways and categories how leadership has been defined. The purpose is to search for elements that might clarify what is left of leadership in an organization when the leader individual is gone; whether there are elements which could be defined as non-personal or impersonal; and where does leadership exist in organizations if it is not personified.

2.1 Theoretical framework

In this thesis managers and/or management is not mentioned or dealt with separately but included in leaders and leadership if not situation or particular approach otherwise require. Upper echelon theory suggests that companies are reflections of the values and cognitive thoughts of the top management (Boal & Hooijberg, 2001, 519). Thus also leaders and leadership is seen as one of the key assets of the organization helping the firm to succeed in reaching its goals, gaining competitive advantage on the market and being able to adjust and show resilience in the ever changing situations and demands of the market.

Based on seeing leadership as asset this research is building on the theories of Resource Based View of the firm (RBV), Knowledge-Based View of the firm (KBV), and the framework of Dynamic Capabilities (DC).

2.2 Resource Based View of the Firm

References regarding the Resource Based View of the firm (RBV) are in origin pointing to the work of Edith Penrose in 1950's. RBV sees the company's internal resources as the base for competitive advantages. A firm's resources comprise of physical capital resources, human capital resources and organizational capital resources where in human capital resources even insights of individual employees are included, no matter managers or employees. (Barney, 1991, 101.)

In order to form a competitive advantage for the company resources need to be valuable, rare, and imperfectly imitable and there cannot be any substitutes for them. In addition some of the hardest imitable resources might be path-dependent meaning the company specific

resources have developed along the company's growth history and thus cannot be acquired by any other company. A firm needs to control the resources from which its competitive advantage derives. Managerial skills and organizational processes as well as routines are included in these resources. (Barney et al., 2001, 625.)

RBV sees companies as gatherings of resources formed by firm-specific assets. These specific assets need to be protected from competitors copying them as they have a key role in company performance and in creation of competitive advantage. In her original work Edith Penrose identifies among other elements managerial skills in a firm as source of success. (Pöyhönen, 2004, 74-75, Van den Bosch & van Wijk, 2001, 159.) Penrose also identified the dual role of management: on one hand management manages resources and on the other hand management has to be seen as a resource (Van den Bosch & van Wijk, 2001, 159).

2.3 Knowledge Based View of the Firm

Some researchers see the Knowledge Based View as a natural development from the Resource Based View. The Knowledge Based View regards knowledge as the most valuable of all company assets; meaning that knowledge is created, produced, stored, developed, and shared inside the company and thus also needs to be protected inside the company in order to form a competitive (López, 2005, 663).

KBV of the firm sees companies mainly as storages for knowledge resources and different capabilities which are the base for differences in performance between companies (Pöyhönen, 2004, 77). Knowledge as such can be identified as something linked to individuals or institutionalized inside company processes (Wright et al. 2001, 714). Learning is at the center of knowledge-based thinking as new knowledge is created during the learning process where existing resources are combined in new ways. Organizational routines are facilitating collective learning in a company mirroring the organizational memory which again guides the behavior of individuals and groups in the company. (Eisenhardt & Santos, 2000, 5-6.)

Referring to both RBV and KBV, Espedal (2005, 136-137) defines core employees with "valuable and unique capabilities and skills" as the main source of competitive advantage. He's conclusion is that people in management positions can be defined as forming part of the company's core competence, management thus forming a valuable asset for the company.

2.4 Dynamic Capabilities

As Pöyhönen (2004, 84) puts it “Dynamic capabilities approach focuses on understanding the sources and processes leading to competitive advantage during conditions of rapid change”. Dynamic capabilities are not mainly to be found on balance sheets but include elements such as managerial processes. (ibid, 85)

Dynamic capabilities are the systematic ability to foresee changes coming and adjust to them. Through dynamic capabilities it is possible to define how companies succeed in retaining their competitive advantage over a longer period of time; especially over a time period marked by numerous changes. They comprise of processes, both organizational level and managerial level processes that are company specific and hard to copy. This way they link to the company performance outcome and create a sustainable competitive advantage. (Eriksson, 2014, 66.)

Dynamic capabilities can be said to form a subgroup of the firm’s capabilities “... allowing the creation of new products and processes, permitting the company to respond to changing external conditions (López, 2005, 662)”. They are also defined as “.. the firm’s ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competencies to address rapidly changing environment (Teece et al. in Ellonen et al., 2009, 753)”.

2.5 Definition and level of research

In spite of all leadership research done during the years there still is not just one single definition on leadership which all researchers could agree upon. Instead there are numerous definitions each looking at the phenomenon from a slightly different angle. Some definitions are quite exact and narrowed down to concrete actions; like leadership seen as “the behavior of an individual...directing the activities of a group towards a shared goal” (Hemphill & Coons cited in Yukl, 2010, 21). Other definitions have more vague and wide scope, like when leadership is seen as “the ability to step outside the culture ... to start evolutionary change processes that are more adaptive” (Schein cited in Yukl, 2010, 21).

In this research leadership definitions are studied in all their variety in purpose to understand elements the definitions consist of. Definitions focusing only on traits, personality features, behavior, leaders’ actions or other elements which are purely person related are bundled

together in one person-linked leadership elements group. The main point of interest lays in definitions stating 'leadership is.. or can be seen as..' or similar formulations. Leader is understood as person having a specific relation or position in relation to others, both appointed and unauthorized.

Leadership studies vary in research levels from individual dyadic relationship studies via team/group level of interest to organizational level and still to meso-level. In this paper no specific notice is given to the level of study. Level of study is noted only as opening, deepening or in any other way shedding more light to understand the core elements of leadership.

2.6 Limitations

In this work leadership is seen as a positive force, happening in a particular organizational context, enabling members of an organization to reach their goals and utilize their capacity. This work is not concerned with self-leadership. Neither is disruptive or any negative form of leadership handled. Managers and leaders as individuals are seen as one group and the words are used as synonyms. Management as separate from leadership is an aspect not dealt with in this work. Leader as such is not the focus of this study, neither any form of actions or behaviors shown by the leader such as leadership efficiency or leader efficiency.

Leadership is studied as a phenomenon not linked to one person only, meaning that elements such as skills, traits, behavioral aspect, charisma, heroism or effectiveness are not the focus of deeper analysis.

The elements and definitions of leadership are studied in organizational context regarding only business or commercial environment thus excluding institutions and governmental organizations such as health care, hospitals, schools, military and equivalent, as well as voluntary and nonprofit organizations.

2.7 Reflections on current leadership research

The interest for leadership and leadership studies has been growing during the last decades and it continues. One proof of the increased academic interest is the number of new

publications, and scientific journals that have emerged into the market as well as older established publications that have redirected their content to focus on leadership (Mumford, 2011, 1).

All leadership research has been strongly colored by American leader ideals and leadership culture as most of the research is done in America. Bryman (2004, 749) refers to earlier studies noting that some 98 percent of all empirical evidence is quite distinctly American. In Bryman's own study of 66 qualitative articles on leadership 61 percent were based on US participants or material.

There is much research regarding leader performance and understanding what is important for successful outcomes on personal level, team level and organizational level. The complexity of business environment and organizational structures has created a need to look at leadership from a variety of different angles thus also creating a need to find new ways of categorizing leadership. As the last decades have been characterized by constant change much of the leadership research focus has been on change leadership and on what happens in crisis situations. (Mumford, 2011.)

The scope of leadership studies has included new phenomenon that have emerged as a result of development and trends in society such as virtual working, social movements, globalization, multi-cultural teams and knowledge work. Globalization of companies has created a need for leaders who have cultural competence when leading in a virtual world supported by technology over geographical distances and over time zones. The increased number of women in leading position has given ground for growing interest in gender issues in leadership. Knowledge work has made a difference in leadership in making the intellectual base for leading available for everyone in an organization thus enabling basically any person to become a leader. (Mumford, 2011, Yukl, 2010.)

Gardner et al. (2010, 936-937) made a review on all articles published in *The Leadership Quarterly* during years 2000 to 2009. The largest specific category of leadership theories was that of Neo-Charismatic approach to leadership. Second most popular category was named multi-level approach where leadership was viewed on several levels, not only as a dyadic phenomenon. Behavioral theories were also a big category including theories on Shared and Participative leadership. On the opposite side traditional approaches to studying leadership decreased among the articles; among these approaches such as trait theories, contingency theories, and power and influence perspectives.

There are also some critical voices. Some point out the fact that leaders are not working alone and not having a divine impact in the influencing relationship but work mostly in teams where responsibilities of leadership might be shared. Thus shared or distributed or collective leadership has been gaining interest. (Mumford, 2011.) Another criticism to current leadership studies points out the fact that main part of research done is based on self-report surveys or questionnaires where either managers evaluate their own behavior or the managers' closest reports evaluate how well their bosses are expressing leadership behaviors (Hunter et al., 2007, 435-436).

Change in business environment has become a constant and emphasis on corporate efficiency, flexibility; agility, and resilience has grown tremendously. The focus in research on effective change leadership has grown as a consequence. The long lasting interest on transformational leadership is no more enough but has turned into deeper analysis in areas of servant, spiritual (Fry in Hernandez et al. 2011, 1174), ethical (Brown & Trevino, 2006) and authentic leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). More emphasis has also been given to the level of analysis in leadership studies. The scope has been opened up from only regarding the dyadic relationship between the leader and the follower to comprising also group and organizational level perspectives (Yukl, 2010, 350).

Leadership is not an area of simple explanations. The growing demands for effectiveness in more and more complex business environments translate to demands on leader performance which again impacts the research interests. This has led to a growing complexity even in finding core explanations for leadership efficiency. "Conceptual confusion is increasing and theory testing made more difficult when theories include many different types of constructs (i.e., leader traits, skills, values, and behaviors; follower values, perceptions, and needs; dyadic, group-level, and organizational explanatory processes; and several different outcome criteria) (Yukl, 2010, 350)."

In spite of years of studies and research there still is no shared way of understanding leadership. All attempts of trying to find an overarching definition for leadership or its elements or efficiency seem to have resulted in very little. The question is whether it at all is possible or even useful to find such definitions that would cover leadership in all contexts and organizations. Further criticism comes up with the question whether leadership actually exists in more than language use. The current research and methodology in use produce leadership on its own by letting 'leaders' answer questionnaires about their leadership, not asking them to think if leadership is an appropriate term or even more – think critically about leadership. (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003a, 359 – 364.)

3. Methodology

This research is conducted using concept analysis together with literature review as research method. Concept analysis is not widely used in business studies. It is a non-empiric research method but can favorably be used as basis for further empirical studies. In short, concept analysis is used to understand "what kind of meanings are related to the concept in hand, how the concept differs in terms of content in comparison to its related concepts and thereby, what features can be determined to be critical characteristics of the concept" (Puusa, 2008, 36).

3.1 Concept analysis

In concept analysis there are eight phases, the first one being (1) naming or choosing of a concept. Then, (2) targets for the analysis are set, (3) different interpretations of the concept are studied, (4) main features are identified and critical features named, (5) models or examples are created, (6) related concepts are studied, (7) prerequisite and consequences are described; and finally (8) empirical elements are named. This description of the method shows the parts as sequential, following each other but in reality the parts in the process are overlapping. (Puusa, 2008, 36.)

Concept analysis is done using existing research results being thus a desk study where previously created definitions and concepts are the base for re-analyzes. The target concept for analyses should be chosen with regard to the researcher's personal interest and relevance to related research. In this research at hand, (1) the concept to be analyzed is named 'impersonal or non-person embedded leadership'. The requirements of personal interest of the researcher and relevance to related research are fulfilled. The phenomenon to be studied, 'impersonal leadership' is fairly new, and closely related to previous leadership research. (2) The target for the analysis is to get a result which either enables the delivery of a definition on impersonal leadership or states that this phenomenon does not exist.

A successful concept analysis requires a literature review which is large and wide in scope. Only through wide scope related concepts can be identified and analyzed as well as boundary areas researched. The thorough literature review helps define the critical elements

of the research target concept and make the boundaries clearer considering linked phenomenon. (Puusa, 2008, 39-40.)

3.2 Literature review

The amount of literature written on leadership is immeasurable. To have a workable selection, the material for this study was in the beginning limited on one hand to two academically respected books giving extensive descriptions on leadership theories and research trends over years, Yukl (2010) and Northouse (2010). On the other hand, articles were chosen using Elsevier database. Criteria was narrowed to journal articles with peer-comments, written in English, with full text available written between 1.1.2001 and 31.12.2010.

There were great challenges in defining search words in order to get any kind of workable results out of database searches. First search runs on Elsevier gave results many of which were found in *The Leadership Quarterly*, an academic publication dedicated to leadership research. The decision was made out of practical concerns to concentrate only on articles in *The Leadership Quarterly* and here on those written during the last decade (2001-2011). Using research articles only from one academic journal has its limiting impact on the results and on the conclusions that can be drawn. Using articles from several sources might have led to another kind of result.

The Leadership Quarterly volumes 12 (2001) to 22 (2011) contain a total of 504 articles on a variety of leadership aspects. A data base search with direct words 'impersonal leadership' gave a result of 39 articles which were searched through by reading the abstract and searching inside the article for the word 'impersonal'. Only one article was accepted for further study; Jermier & Kerr (1997) classic on Substitutes for Leadership.

All the 504 articles were studied on title level and where any link to non-person fixed leadership could be found the abstract was read, totaling to 168 articles. Further skimming resulted in 38 being studied more thoroughly. After this, the snow-boll method was taken to use. Whenever there was any kind of interesting reference it was followed even though it passed the set limitations regarding time frame, origin or scope, even targeted research audiences outside business were included.

During the literature review focus was on how leadership is defined in the articles and books, how leadership is defined by different leadership theories and what are the elements based on which the definitions are build. In this work the ground laying categorizing of leadership and identification of explanatory elements is mainly based on three overarching studies on leadership namely those of Yukl (2010), Northouse (2010), and Hernandez et al. (2011). In their research for developing a new comprehensive model to explain leadership, Hernandez et al. (2011) have categorized all major significant leadership theories from the last 100 years. Peter Northouse (2010) and Yukl (2010) are two researchers who in a similar way have reviewed and categorized leadership research and theories.

In the following part further explanations are searched for in the article material selected from Leadership Quarterly and other similar publications during the earlier given time period. The following chapter aims to shed light on the different ways how approaches to defining leadership can be categorized.

4. Categorizing: Approaches to Define Leadership

Definitions on leadership are as many as there are those who have tried to define it. During the last 60 years more than 60 different classification systems for leadership have been created (Northouse, 2010, 2). A majority of all leadership studies are focusing on the leader; leader's personality, experience, and actions/behavior. Most theories have a simple approach focusing on what a leader does to a subordinate. (Runsten, 2010, 3.) Most leadership studies originate from The United States, forming a view mainly representing males and white people. Leadership is studied to two thirds with numbers and statistics using quantitative methods, qualitative leadership research just starting to gain ground. (Bryman, 2004, 743.)

Until now, leadership has been defined in rather general terms. In addition research is strongly biased in favor of leadership existing. There is an overall harmonized view of leadership being of great importance and leadership is thus used to explain a variety of complex situations. Already in mid 80's Meindl (sited in Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003a, 363) argues that leadership is made look very romantic and given a role that is larger than life, in this way also creating a hero culture around leaders.

Seeing leadership in a wider perspective, including a richer variety of elements will help future researchers to address issues like whether leaders are born or made; how culturally bound or universal elements forming leadership effectiveness are; how the stability or criticality of context impacts emergence of different forms of leadership and what actually lies behind the effectiveness of certain leadership style (Avolio, 2007, 25).

4.1 Leadership categorized by focus on Leader

Leadership seen and categorized through the leader person can generally be based on 1) what the person is, 2) what the person has or 3) what the person does. Or, leadership can be seen as Person, Result, Position or Process: 'Who' one is, 'What' one achieves, 'Where' in the hierarchy one sits or 'How' one acts (Runsten, 2010, 3).

1) What the person is approach defines leadership as a specific role (Yukl, 2010, 21), or position. In this approach the question is about having power and authority. In vertical individualistic cultures a person's position is important and defines per se who the leader is (Scandura & Dorfman, 2004, 296).

2) What the person has approach deals with traits, personality, skills, motives and values. The basic assumption is that some are born with special qualities that suit being leader better than others. Early studies, the Traits theory and Leadership skills theory, were relatively simple, listing traits and skills (i.e. Stogdill 1948, 1974) whereas studies in the 1970's and 1980's deepened the issue of personality by looking into motivational base (i.e. Boyatzis, 1982, McClelland, 1975), and competences (i.e. Boyatzis, 1982). Creation of personality taxonomies as Big Five (Hogan, Curphy & Hogan, 1994) deepened the approach and added the possibility of assessment. Interest in traits approach has lately gained renewed interest especially as focus has been on finding a base and clarity in what produces effective leadership. (Yukl, 2010.)

3) What the leader does approach covers research about behaviors linked to effective managers. In late 1950's there were some major studies on leader behavior. Ohio State Leadership Studies gave as result that considerate leaders have usually more satisfied subordinates. The Michigan Leadership Study identified three effective leader behaviors: task-orientation, relation-orientation and participative leadership. (Yukl, 2010, 105-108.)

A further development on task or relation oriented leader behavior is the Managerial Grid by Blake and Mouton from 1964. One more category of leader behavior is one comprising behaviors linked with change and innovation. (Yukl, 2010)

4.1.1 Leader Traits

Trait theories define leadership through personality features that separate leaders from non-leaders. These are the oldest leadership definitions dating back to the 19th century and the Great Man –theories. These theories concentrate solely on the person Leader and his qualities. Though traits were a popular way of seeing leadership Stogdill announced in 1948 that "... leadership is not a matter of passive status, or of the mere possession of some combination of traits." (in Hernandez et al, 2011, 1169). A neo-trait approach emerged in 1991 as Kirkpatrick and Locke came up that traits can be seen as prerequisites for leadership. Further research has come to the conclusion that traits alone are not enough to explain or predict leadership or leadership effectiveness. (see Hernandez et al, 2011, 1169)

Trait theories are still popular and very much alive in 2000s. The popularity is possibly based on trait theories of leadership suiting our images of leaders being special people. These theories have also the longest and possibly deepest academic research history behind them, a hundred years. (Northouse, 2010, 25.)

Leadership theories based on Traits are fully leader-centric theories. On one hand they explain how and where leadership is 'born': in a group or dyad context where an individual has qualities the others do not have and based on the qualities assumes the role of the leader in the eyes of the others. On the other hand, trait theories focus on explaining personality related elements that influence leadership effectiveness.

4.1.2 Leader Skills

The first historical article launching a skills based view on leadership was published in 1955 as a result of the research of Robert Katz. The skills based view lifts leadership away from the "born-with" realm to the "can be learned" sphere. In his model on Skills of an Effective Administrator, meaning a leader, Katz stated that a leader needs three different kinds of skills; technical, human and conceptual. Skills as such are the requirement for a leader to be

able to accomplish anything. (Northouse, 2010, 37.) Later around the millennium shift research on leadership skills has had a new boom of interest.

Based on research made in late 1990s, Mumford together with a group of researchers published in 2000 a skill-based model of leadership. This model links together the leader's capability, knowledge and skills with the leader's performance outcomes. This model makes leadership available for everyone who is able to learn. On the other hand the model does not so much look into what creates leadership but more to the sources of effectiveness of leadership. Constructed of elements such as individual attributes and competencies leading to leadership outcomes added with career experiences and environmental influences, the model gives a description of leadership and a map for a leader to develop personal skills. (Northouse, 2010, 39-52.) Recently additional research has brought new skills to the list for successful leaders, such as emotional intelligence, social intelligence, systems thinking and ability to learn. (compare Yukl, 2010, 65-68)

Even though leadership approaches are dependent on the situation, organizations today use commonly simplified universal competence models for leaders where competence demands do not vary by level or function. Academic research has produced a great number of models and frameworks that assume a strict set of behaviors which then are universally applied to different situations and organizations. It might not even be possible to create a model of leadership that would reflect today's very complex environment where managers need to cope. (Conger 2004, 138.)

Skills based theories on leadership are leader-centric, not actually explaining the origin for leadership. These theories are more focusing on the effectiveness of leaders. The uniqueness of this approach is that it sees leadership as something learnable and teachable, educationally transferable, thus making leadership attainable for everyone.

4.1.3 Leader Behaviors or Styles

Research on how effective leaders behave lifts leadership away from the leader's personality and skills. It widens the view to include leader's behavior with different followers in different kinds of contexts. Most of the researchers agree on two types of general behavioral approaches: task oriented behaviors and people or relationship oriented behaviors.

During the blooming days of behavioral theorists there were four significant studies done. The Ohio State University study resulted in the division of leadership behaviors in elements

of consideration and initiating structure. Concurrently The University of Michigan studies came up with elements of focus on employees on one hand and production on the other. Harvard Business School study stated that it might be beneficial to separate between the tasks oriented leadership roles and the relational leadership roles. Already in 1966 researchers Bowers and Seashore suggested while looking into leadership behaviors that there are leadership tasks which can be done even by others that the person in the leadership position, thus referring to what now is known as peer leadership. (Northouse, 2010, 66-67, Yukl, 2010, 105-108.)

Among contemporary theories, ethical, spiritual and authentic leadership focus mainly on leader's behavior. In ethical leadership the focus is solely on the leader, leader showing high moral standards, values and attitudes through behavior. Spiritual elements such as honesty, integrity and humility are seen as having an impact on leadership effectiveness. According to the Spiritual leadership theory leaders create a compelling vision to enhance the meaningfulness of followers' contributions. Authentic leadership emphasizes leaders' need to self-understanding, knowing one's values and acting as a positive role model. (Yukl, 2010.)

During 1980's transactional and transformational as well as charismatic theories of leadership gained ground. Transactional leadership has its roots in Vroom's expectancy theory of motivation. Transactional leadership is a leader-centric theory, emphasizing leader efficiency through certain behaviors which are directed towards understanding followers' needs and supporting followers in getting their needs fulfilled as they complete the required tasks. (Hernandez et al., 2011, 1172.)

Already in late 1970's transactional leadership is seen as focusing on the exchange happening between a leader and a follower where followers' actions are seen mainly being based on rationality. Transformational leadership is seen to emphasize emotions and values; followers' feelings of trust and respect towards the leaders as well as leaders ability to inspire and influence the motivation of followers. Both theories explain leadership effectiveness through leadership behaviors which inspire and motivate followers voluntarily to thrive for more and deliver more than officially required of them. (see Yukl, 2010, Northouse 2010, 170-171)

Leadership traits and behavior are in a central role in Charismatic leadership, a theory also originating from late 1970's. Both transformational and charismatic leadership have been studied widely and the theories have been developed, deepened and made more shifting in details. In 2001 a study result was published in the Leadership Quarterly regarding the

content of articles published in the paper. The writers stated that one third of the research was about transformational or charismatic leadership. (Northouse, 2010, 169.)

Leadership in both transformational and charismatic theories is not only explained through certain leadership traits, personality and/or behaviors. Based on the vast interest later on, research and development of the theories combine more elements to explain leadership; emotions, cognitions, influencing process, motivational factors, situational factors, crisis situations, mediating processes and visions, among other nuances. (Yukl, 2010, 289, Hernandez et al., 2011, 1173.)

As mentioned earlier, transformational and charismatic leadership theories have yielded massive interest and produced countless new research documents resulting in new theories. Some of these new theories can be criticized for being superficial, trying to add new angles by using new terminology but actually reflecting themes that can be found in earlier theories of leadership and motivation. (Yukl, 2010, 289.)

Behavioral theories concentrate mainly on behaviors that differentiate effective leaders from ineffective ones. The thinking in theory creation seems mainly to be focusing on behaviors needed for successful, efficient leadership. The focus is not on defining leadership as a particular behavior or how leadership is created through behavior. Leadership existence is in a way taken for granted. The early style theories bring followers onto the same map with leaders as styles and behaviors are seen as either task or people oriented and as both orientations are deemed to be equally important in becoming successful.

In spite of all variations in themes inside transformational and charismatic theory building, these theories are still mainly leaders-centric focusing on leader-efficiency.

4.2 Leadership categorized by Situational aspects

Situational elements were brought into the scope of research to enable more detailed clarifications on leadership effectiveness. As with the behaviors, also situational elements can be seen more as explaining the effectiveness, the impact or result, of leadership than to actually define leadership itself.

Most known situational leadership theories are Fiedler's contingency theory, House's path-goal theory, which is a continuation on Vroom's expectancy theory and Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory. Fiedler's contingency theory states that not all

leadership behaviors or styles are equally effective but the impact depends on the environment, leadership effectiveness being a result of the interaction between leadership style and the situation. Vroom's theory focuses on motivation saying that it is more likely for people to act in a way which they believe will bring rewards. Building upon this House created the path-goal theory which links the leaders' effectiveness to the demands of the context where the employee is working and to the attributes of the employee's personality. House also points out that the degree to which the tasks of a person are structured and clear has significance for leadership. Clear and detailed structure of tasks can replace certain kind of leadership style or make leader unnecessary. Finally, Hersey and Blanchard present a practical model regarding leaders' effectiveness combining leader's behavior and followers' maturity thus defining four different leadership styles. (Yukl, 2010, 165-173, Northouse, 2010, 88-89, 111, 124-125, Hernandez et al., 2011, 1170.)

Situational leadership theories broaden the view on leadership in two ways: partly by bringing followers more into the scope by considering their maturity, readiness and level of commitment, and partly by emphasizing the context, the actual situation where leadership takes place. Situational leadership theories bring in the element of reciprocity in leadership process: it is not only the leader influencing the situation at hand, but also the situation influencing the leader. Still, the focus remains mainly on the leader.

4.2.1 Contextual Leadership Theory

Contextual leadership theory is in a way related to the previously mentioned situational leadership theories. Contextual leadership theory defines leaderships as "...socially constructed in and from a context where patterns over time must be considered and where history matters. Leadership is not only the incremental influence of a boss towards subordinates, but most important it is the collective incremental influence of leaders in and around the system.", or in other words "... 'leadership' is an emerging social construction embedded in a unique organization ..." (Osborn et al., 2002, 798, 832).

The difference to situational leadership lies in that leadership is seen as being "...embedded within the environment, structure and technology of organizations (Osborn et al., 2002, 798)." Thus the contextual leadership theory sees leaders as inseparable from the context where leadership is actualized meaning also that when the context changes also the leadership changes.

Osborn et al. (2002, 805) conclude about leadership that it is a social construction with positive connotation linked to culture varying across time and companies. "Leadership is there ... because we collectively want to see it...Its precise definition is embedded in time, in a place and in the collective minds of the observers."

Already in 1974, Stogdill presents a contextualized view of leadership defining leadership as "... a relation that exists between persons in a social situation, and that persons who are leaders in one situation may not necessarily be leaders in other situations" (Stogdill cited in Avolio, 2007, 27). More than 30 years later the complexity in the definition of leadership has grown shown here in the following quote by Grint; "Leadership is always a complex process of translation from theory to practice and never simply a unilinear act of transmission" (Grint, 2007, 233).

Even though the contextual leadership theory sees leadership embedded in the context and not only in leaders, it still keeps the focus on the leaders. Followers are not discussed as an 'embedded' element in the social construction of leadership.

4.3 Leadership categorized by focus on Followers

Review on the accumulated research of transformational leadership theory concludes that most leadership research considers followers as passive or non-existing elements in the leadership process, although the research also indicates that followers' decision to follow a leader may be an active process (Avolio, 2007, 26).

A different approach to explaining leadership was gained through social exchange theory. Jacobs in 1970 stated that leadership cannot be explained without regarding followers as proactive partners in the relationship. His work was utilized by leader-member exchange (LMX) theorists who see the locus of leadership moved away from the leader, and leader linked traits and behaviors. According to LMX theorists, leadership emerges in the unique relationship between a leader and a follower, and cannot be credited only by one or the other. (Hernandez et al., 2011, 1171, Northouse, 2010, 147.)

Two significant researchers and their teams, Lord and Meindl, move the locus of leadership to followers. Lord introduces implicit leadership theory stating that followers have latent unconscious ideas about leaders, how leaders look and act. When followers see a person looking and acting according to these implied ideas, then that person is perceived as a

leader and the leadership relationship is established. Meindl et al. created the romance theory of leadership which sees leadership purely as a creation by followers which is used when followers try to make sense of complex organizational phenomena. Leader is the explanation needed when things in an organization go either very well (leaders as heroes) or very badly (leaders as scapegoats). (Hernandez et al., 2011, 1172.)

According to Meindl's theory, leadership is created by followers in their effort of trying to understand and make sense of important but confusing organizational events. In this process leadership becomes a convenient way of explaining causality. "By attributing power and causality to leaders, organization members achieve a sense of understanding and control over their environment" (Shamir et al., 2007, XV). Meindl states that actually "...leaders are irrelevant and interchangeable, and leader behavior and leader traits should be taken out of the explanation of leadership" (in *ibid.* XVI).

In follower-centric theory there is the traditional role division between followers and leaders though the origin of leadership as such is placed on followers. This distinction is questioned in theories where followers are seen as leaders; theories as shared and distributed leadership. Concept of self-managing work teams does not consider leadership as a role but "... a function or an activity that can be shared among members of a group or organization. (Shamir et al., 2007, XVII)". This viewpoint makes everyone in the organization a leader in a proper situation. According to a stronger version of the theory, self-managed teams as such can function without a leader when team processes function as substitutes for a leader person. Here team processes include norms for behavior, performance and morale (*ibid.* XVII).

Leadership as follower driven process can also be defined with theories of social identity. The formation and acceptance of a leader is based on the level of similarity with ideals, values, norms, and even appearance inside the group (Runsten, 2010, 6).

However, there are elements which create pressure from bottom upwards in organizations to take a new look at defining leadership. Knowledge work for example has brought with it a change in work force quality and a change in employees' desires. Knowledge workers are highly educated bringing more knowledge to the organization. At the same time they also want to make a meaningful impact on the success and performance of the organization. This creates a bottom-up pressure to leadership which no more can be seen as a one-man top-down show. (Pearce, 2004.)

Followers are seen as co-leaders being engaged in leadership in the Shared leadership theory. This approach sees leadership more as a function or an activity than a role; the whole idea of making a division between leaders and followers being questioned from the start. When leadership is defined as a process born in a social relationship it consequently means that leader and follower are equally important in giving input to the creation, formation and nature of leadership content. Leadership is actually generated in the interaction itself (Runsten, 2010, 6). Shared Leadership can also be defined “as a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both” (Pearce & Conger in Contractor et al., 2012, 994).

Follower Centric Leadership approach partially brings followers onto the same platform with leaders in creating and acting leadership, and partially brings forward elements that can be seen as substitutes for leaders and leadership behavior. As previously referred to Shamir, functioning team processes can make a leader person not needed.

4.4 Leadership categorized by multiple actors

4.4.1 Team leadership

Studying groups and group leadership has long tradition going back to 1920's and 1930's. The focus has shifted almost every decade bringing a new theme in academic research focus; group dynamics, T-groups, role of team leaders, developing teams and leadership efficiency, organizational teams, virtual teams and leadership; to name a few. As in leadership research in general so also here the main interest seems to be on effectivity; effective team leadership, effective team processes, defining the tasks and qualities of an efficient team leader. (Northouse, 2010.)

A different way of seeing leadership is to consider it as an outcome, result of team processes and the outcome can be defined as resource regarding the teams' further success. “It is possible for leadership to be an outcome of the interrelationships of team members, rather than solely an individual input to the team” (Day et al., 2004, 858-859).

The most often seen way of regarding leadership is to see it as input mostly by individual contributors. In team leadership the focus of identification is not on the individual but on the collective group, the shared we. This makes it possible for leadership to emerge as an

outcome of different interaction processes while working towards shared goals. “When leadership is viewed as a property of whole systems, as opposed to solely the property of individuals, effectiveness in leadership becomes more a product of those connections or relationships among the parts than the result of any one part of that system” (O’Connor & Quinn 2004 in Day et al., 2004, 860).

4.4.2 Collective leadership

The concept of collective leadership is a radical departure from traditional views of leadership. The epicenter of collective leadership is not the role of a formal leader, but the interaction of team members to lead the team by sharing in leadership responsibilities. Possessing leader traits, skills, and behaviors is still important to collective leadership; indeed they are helpful and allow one to easily think like a leader and be an active participant in creating leadership. Collective leadership, however, is not a characteristic of a person, but involves the relational *process* of an entire team, group, or organization. As a process, collective leadership presumes that leadership can be embedded in the dynamics of a social system, and need not be constrained to acts of a heroic or charismatic individual. (Hiller et al., 2006, 388).

The concept of Shared and/or Distributed Leadership views sharing of decision power (leadership power) as something inevitable, not given or decided to one leader. The Shared or Distributed theory sees that “... the actions of any individual leader are less important than the collective leadership provided by many members of the organization, including both formal and informal leaders.” (Day et al., 2004 in Yukl, 2010, 503) One of the most often cited definitions on Shared leadership sees it as “a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both” (Pearce & Conger 2003, in Hernandez et al., 2011, 1176).

4.4.3 Cross-cultural Leadership

The Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) initiative by House et al. in 2002 shows that culture has a strong impact on how people see leadership.

Good and bad leadership as well as leadership effectiveness are culture based thus differing from country to country. For example, elements which in a Western culture describe effective leadership like delegation, involvement of employees, listening and inspiring are not acceptable as signs of effectiveness in Asian cultures. Vice a versa, the most usual and accepted leadership style in China is based on paternalistic leadership theory, which combines control, absolute obedience from followers and concern for the followers' general wellbeing. Paternalistic leadership is not fulfilling the requirement for leadership effectiveness in Western culture. (see Hernandez et al. 2011, 1175)

The cultural aspects brought to leadership research are mainly linked to the efficiency of the leader and leader behavior in influencing processes and interaction in teams.

4.4.4 Strategic leadership

Strategic leadership was brought into the focus of leadership discussions in 1980s. The upper echelons theory made clear that top managers' and CEO's cognitions and values determine how they process and select information, how they interpret it and make decisions based on the processing. As the people at the top of organizations have the most influence on organizational outcomes and strategic choices, strategic leadership researches have considered it possible to predict outcomes by examining the behaviors, values and personality of those at the top (Crossan et al., 2008).

There is also a distinct difference between 'supervisory leadership' and 'strategic leadership' where the first one is mainly about leadership in organizations and the latter one concerns leadership of organizations. There is a variety of tasks linked to strategic leadership all from decision making, resource allocation, and goal formulation to selection of key executives. (Crossan et al., 2008, 571).

According to Hernandez et al. (2011) strategic leadership has been seen mainly through the theories of transformational and charismatic leadership. Both of these theories focus on the emotional elements in leadership emphasizing the importance of successful leaders creating emotional bonds with their followers as these bonds lead to positive outcomes in form of increased employee satisfaction and increased productivity. In transformational leadership especially, a compelling vision is seen as an element to create emotional bonds to followers. Hernandez et al. consider it surprising that the research focus in strategic leadership has

been mainly on rational elements like information processing and selective perception, not so much on emotional responses of followers.

4.4.5 Contemporary or Emerging Leadership concepts

In the contemporary research, mainly done during the last two decades from early 1990' onwards, the complexity of leadership has been given strong emphasis. The leader-centric focus remains as well as the focus on efficiency of leadership in the studies. New theory is described through new terminology: managerial leadership, leaderment, leaderful organizations, open leadership to name a few.

The theory of leadership complexity combines cognitive and behavioral complexity to situational variables especially in studies of *managerial leadership* (italics by writer). Further studies added even elements of social complexity to leadership thus creating a leaderplex model to actually predict the effectiveness of a leader. Social identity model of leadership effectiveness opens up a new approach on leadership. Even though behavior is the key element in this theory, leadership is lifted from individual level to the collective level; and defined as the degree to which a person fits with the identity of the group as a whole. (Hernandez et al., 2011, 1173.)

Complex leadership has also been seen as a result of social networks. The social network theory moves explaining leadership creation away from individual traits or behaviors to a collective level where leadership emerges in relationships connecting individuals. The network theory places leadership not in anything that is located in an individual but in the actual relationship connecting the individuals, in the connection, in relations between actors (Balkundi and Kilduff, 2006, 420). It is "... only through a full understanding of the social networks and one's role within them that leadership can arise" (Hernandez et al., 2011, 1173).

A more comprehensive view on leadership is presented in a model based on two dimensions; the loci of leadership and the mechanism of leadership transfer and how these two dimensions work together. The model thus builds on two questions: "Where does leadership come from?" and "How is leadership transmitted?" The model contains five different loci or sources of leadership; leader, followers, context, collectives and leader-follower dyads. These are the sources for leadership creation or places where leadership emergences. There are also four mechanisms for how leadership is transmitted, namely

Traits as being someone, Behaviors as doing something, Cognitions as way of thinking and Affect as way of feeling. By utilizing the two questions linked to the five loci and four mechanisms of leadership the researchers propose a new more complex and integrative system for conceptualization of leadership. (Hernandez et al. 2011.)

All new theory development regarding defining leadership combines a more complex base of elements linked to leaders and followers and their dyadic relationship, the environment or situation and also elements attached to larger groups and acting on several levels combining teams and networks. Interesting in this line of theory is the search for placing the explanations of what leadership is as phenomenon and where leadership is created away from persons and the direct link to 'leaders' and 'followers' adding the multiplicity of contextual and collective elements. Leadership is not any more seen as something that is or what is done but as *emerging* in and through different combinations of different elements, still involving people but not only remaining in people.

4.4.6 Relational Leadership theory

Uhl-Bien (2006, 655) identifies "... relational leadership as a social influence process through which emergent coordination (i.e., evolving social order) and change (e.g., new values, attitudes, approaches, behaviors, and ideologies) are constructed and produced." In her definition leadership is not just something linked to organizational hierarchy and positions but occurs all over an organization in dynamic relations. The main differentiator to previous research is seeing leadership as "*made*" in the process, thus as outcome.

Another leadership definition supporting the relational view is stating leadership as "not what leaders do but what leaders and collaborators do together. ... If leadership is what the relationship is, then both collaborators and leaders are all doing leadership. There is no such thing as followership." (Rost cited in Uhl-Bien, 2006, 660-661.)

The unit of leadership in this theory is *relationships*, not individuals (italics by original writer). Relational perspective views leadership as "social reality, emergent and inseparable from context – an iterative and messy social process that is shaped by interactions with others." This relational approach recognizes leadership where ever it occurs in organizations. (Uhl-Bien, 2006, 662-664.)

Leadership is not a personal dominance or interpersonal influence but "... rather a process of relational dialogue in which organizational members engage and interact to construct knowledge systems" [Drath (2001) in Uhl-Bien, 2006, 663]. Or leadership can be seen as "a social act, a construction of a ship as a collective vehicle to help take us where we as a group, organization or society desire to go" [Murrell (1997) in *ibid.*]

4.5 Additional models to categorize leadership

In the most traditional categorization leadership is linked to an official position in an organization thus being assigned to someone. The opposite, emergent leadership, happens not through appointment but through the reactions of others in an organization. It can also be seen as a power relationship when power is defined as "the capacity or potential to influence (Northouse, 2010, 7)". Power can be based for example on position, personality or expertise.

Shamir et al. (2007, XVIII) see leadership existing only "... when an individual ... exerts disproportionate non-coercive influence on others, that is, his or her influence on the group or organization is greater than that of the other members. ... There is no leadership without leaders and followers because without leaders and followers a leadership relationship does not exist."

The process nature of leadership is emphasized in stating that "Most definitions of leadership reflect the assumption that it involves a process whereby intentional influence is exerted over other people to guide, structure, and facilitate activities and relationships in a group or organization" (Yukl, 2010, 21). A quote from earlier work states "... that leadership is a shared social process, involving a group of people rather than a single individual standing out as being superior to the rest" (Yukl 1989 in Alvesson, 1996, 469).

Leadership can also be seen as a process where leaders and followers work together focusing on making real change happen while managers and subordinates "join forces to sell goods and services" (Rost 1991 in Northouse, 2004, 8-9).

Leadership definitions can be based on four different approaches; seeing leadership as Person: who the leader is, or as Results: what the leader has created or reached, or as Position: where in the organization the person is or finally as Process: how the leader gets things done. If leadership is seen as Person, then the simplest definition is "Leadership is to have followers". If Results are the base then the definition might be "Leadership is getting others voluntarily to act and walk the extra mile". Position as base for the leadership

definition creates more variation. Position refers mainly to business life and organizational structures where positions are defined in vertical hierarchies. In modern network organizations horizontal leadership is based on shared knowledge base, expertise and peers influencing each other. Here leadership is seen as something conducted even by middle and lower level managers, even supervisors, in areas where context and adaptability to change so require. Sveningsson & Alvesson (2010, 38).

Distributed leadership does not see leadership positioned only at one place at a time but sees leadership in a more collective way where the position can be held by many simultaneously. Leadership is a social process about interpersonal influencing in a specific situation directed through communication towards reaching one or several specific targets (Andersen 2000 in Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2010, 40).

Citing Kort it might be said that "it is cooperative intentional joint plural actions that are candidates for establishing leadership proper". The leadership is in the nature of participation in these plural actions; and it is the participation that determines leadership. (Kort, 2008, 422-423).

Yukl (2010) presents also another way to categorize leadership based on levels of conceptualization. Leadership can be approached as an intra-individual process focusing on the leader individual herself or on self-leadership theories. The next level would be to see leadership as a dyadic process where the focus is on the relationship between the leader and another individual, a follower who most often would be a subordinate. Leadership as a group process focuses on the influence the leader has on the collective processes which determine the level of team performance, and group effectiveness. The final level to categorize leadership is to see it as an organizational process where the focus is on strategic leadership; on issues dealing with organizational survival and adaptation, financial decision making and resourcing.

Leadership defined through traits and behaviors and similar items can be called one-dimensional. It can also be seen as institutional capacity and strategic asset or as multilevel activity by organizational members. The capability of leadership at organizational level is a combination of organizational structures and leadership processes in the organizational system. This capability is embedded in the organization and develops during the organizations life circle being dynamic to its nature. (Kivipõld & Vadi, 2010, 119).

As the world and organizations are growing more complex and leadership research concurrently getting wider and deeper, there are more and more approaches and theories

combining multiple levels. These theories can bring light and pass the narrow explanations of single level approaches. In practice these theories are demanding to apply. As a summary: “Conceptual confusion is increased and theory testing made more difficult when theories include many different types of constructions (i.e., leader traits, skills, values and behaviors; follower values, perceptions, and needs; dyadic, group-level, and organizational explanatory processes; and several different outcome criteria)” (Yukl, 2010, 350).

In the next chapter we will look at shared elements in the defining of leadership.

5. Defining Leadership

As stated in the limitations of this thesis, leadership is here studied as a positive force occurring in business environment. The purpose is to look for elements by which leadership could be defined, but which are not linked to an individual’s personality, or possessed by or located in one single person.

While studying different ways to categorize leadership it became clear that leadership is mostly approached by looking at efficiency, either of the individual or the process: what do effective leaders really do, what kind of elements, behaviors, skills, and attitudes, enhance leaders’ efficiency in influencing and engaging processes while targeting a shared goal. Leadership has basically been seen as an activity associated with the individual called leader and leaving followers mostly in roles of passive objectives with no will and no impact in the “leadership doing”.

Before situational leadership theory starts gaining ground in 1970’s leadership researchers seem to have had a universal ambition to identify the most efficient way to lead people, based on personal elements of the leader individual and regardless of the context. Even though situational leadership theory does not revolutionize the approach to leadership it opens the arena for other explanations than the leader person to determine what leadership consists of; elements like followers’ maturity in independent task performance as well as interpersonal relationship between leader and follower. (Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2010, 25-26).

By dividing leadership into leadership and management, what leaders do and what managers do, Bennis & Nanus (1985 in Sveningsson & Alvesson 2010, 31) create a model

giving birth to leadership as phenomenon and the leader as person to be something else than only a manager doing the right things.

Approaching leadership not just as a formal position or predefined qualities of a leader person opens up for more variation, particularly if leadership is linked to routines and relationships in a work organization. Alvesson (1996, 469) points out how leadership research itself can efficiently be limiting the way how leadership is defined as so many questionnaires are actually asking leaders to define what leadership is.

Leadership is not conducted by the leader in a vacuum but includes both followers as active subjects, not passive objects, and a context or a situation. Leadership research until lately has been marginalizing both followers and context mainly to be able to create theories that universally suit definitions of effective leadership. If one sees leadership as a form of social interaction then context becomes the sociocultural scene where leadership interactions are played. (Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2010, 10-11.)

Northouse (2004, 3-4) concludes leadership to be a phenomenon that includes the components of being a process, occurring within a group context, involving influence, and goal attainment. Later on the discussion has turned on seeing leaders and followers both as part of the same process.

Based on the different approaches to leadership, ways of categorizing it and ways of defining it, in summary it can be said that leadership is seen as a positive force affecting people's emotions, not only their reason. Leadership is seen as having a purpose in enhancing performance outcomes in companies and one of its most vital elements in achieving this is influencing. These elements need also to be found in the research objective for this thesis, impersonal leadership: influencing, process, group environment, purpose or goal.

Next chapter will go more detailed into the actual definitions of leadership, take a review on the criticism and collect elements that have been identified as able to substitute leadership in organizations.

6. Leadership definitions

Leadership has been defined from various angles, and approaches, and the number of definitions is almost uncountable. Most definitions are made quite general, written in a way that makes it possible only by changing one word to use the rest of the definition on

leadership to become a definition on something totally different, like strategy, culture, organizational structure or social identity. (Alvesson, 1996, 459.)

Compiling leadership definitions formulated between the 1920's and the 1990's resulted in 221 definitions "saying basically the same thing – leadership is about one person getting other people to do something. Where the definitions differ is in how leaders motivate their followers and who has a say in the goals of the group or organization." (Ciulla cited in Kort, 2008, 409.)

Following is a collection of examples of definitions on leadership in the categories discussed in chapter 4:

Definition	Sources
Leadership is a role or a position.	Yukl, 2010, 21
Leadership is to have followers.	Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2010, 38
It is not clear that leadership is a specialized activity.	Emiliani, 2008, 26
To an extent, Leadership is like beauty; it's hard to define, but you know it when you see it ... at bottom, becoming a leader is synonymous with becoming yourself.	Bennis 1989 in Emiliani, 2008, 33
Leadership is influence, nothing more, nothing less.	Maxwell 1998, in Emiliani, 2008, 34
The only definition of a leader is someone who has followers.	Drucker in Emiliani, 2008, 34
Leadership is a function of knowing yourself, having a vision that is well communicated, building trust among colleagues, and taking effective actions to realize your own leadership potential.	Bennis 2003 in Emiliani, 2008, 34
Leadership is behavior, in a group context, that results in the willing compliance (denoting positive influence) of the members.	Washbush, 2005, 1079
Leadership is the behavior of an individual...directing the activities of a group towards a shared goal	Hemphill and Coons sited in Yukl, 2010, 21
Leadership is socially constructed in and from a context where patterns over time must be considered and where history matters. Leadership is not only the incremental influence of a boss towards subordinates, but most important it is the collective incremental influence of leaders in and around a system.	Osborn et al. 2002, 798
Leadership is a social construction with positive connotation linked to culture varying across time and companies. Leadership is there because we collectively want to see it. .. Its precise definition is embedded in time, in a place and in the collective minds of observers.	Osborn et al., 2002, 805
Ledarskap är en situationsorienterad social process i vilken interpersonellt inflytande är central.	Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2010, 40
Leadership is a relation that exists between persons in a social situation.	Stogdill in Avolio, 2007, 26
Leadership is realized in the process where one or more individuals succeed in attempting to frame and define the reality of others.	Smircich & Morgan 1982, 258
Leadership is basically doing what the leader wants done.	Gronn, 2002, 424
Leadership, like other social phenomena, is socially constructed through interaction emerging as a result of the constructions and actions of both leaders and led.	Smircich & Morgan, 1982, 258

Leadership is not simply a process of acting or behaving, or a process of manipulating rewards. It is a process of power-based reality construction and needs to be understood in these terms	Smircich and Morgan, 1982, 270
Leadership is a process. Leadership emerges in the interaction between a leaders and a follower.	Runsten, 2010, 7
It is only through a full understanding of the social networks and one's role within them that leadership can arise.	Hernandez et al., 2011. 1173
Shared Leadership is "... a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both"	Pearce & Cagner in Hernandez et al., 2011, 1176
Leadership, the exercise of interpersonal influence (Yukl, 2009) is a complex, multi-faceted, form of performance – leadership does not exist unless something happens.	Mumford, 2011, 1
Collective leadership is not a characteristic of a person, but involves the relational process of an entire team, group, or organization ... can be embedded in the dynamics of a social system	Hiller et al., 2006, 388
Leadership is a process involving both mutual and collaborative relationships.	Antelo et al., 2010, 10
Leadership is argued to be a social and relational influence process that occurs within a social system	several in Kempster and Parry, 2011, 107
Leadership is a focused system of interacting inputs, process, outputs and feedback wherein individuals and/or groups influence and/or act on behalf of specific individuals or groups of individuals to achieve shared goals and commonly desired performance outcomes, within a specific performance system and environment.	Lynham and Chermack, 2006, 75
Leadership happens as an outcome of team processes; it is drawn from the team as a function of working on and accomplishing shared work.	Day et al., 2004, 861
Leadership is "the ability to step outside the culture ... to start evolutionary change processes that are more adaptive"	Schein cited in Yukl, 2010, 21
Leadership is a function or an activity that can be shared among members of a group or organization. ... Teams can function without a leader when team processes function as substitutes for a leader person.	Shamir et al., 2007, XVII
Leadership being defined as a social relationship gives that leadership is created or emerges in the interaction between leaders and followers	Grint, 2000, Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995 etc. in Shamir et al. 2007, XIX

Table 1: Leadership definitions

Summarizing the definitions leadership can be seen as person related role, function or behavior or its definition can be based on a process or social construction view. Defining leadership by the process/social construction view gives two different approaches: 1) leadership is a social construction or a social process (see Osborn et al., 2002, 805; Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2010, 40; Pearce & Cagner in Hernandez et al., 2011, 1176); or 2) leadership emerges in the social construction process (Smircich & Morgan, 1982, 258; Grint, 2000, Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995, etc. in Shamir et al. 2007, XIX, Runsten 2010, 7). The later definition, leadership as emerging in a process, gives more emphasis on the activity through which leadership is created. Leadership is not there from start, it is born or created in the social process; or then not. The research question remains; where is leadership actually?

6.1 Criticism towards ways to define Leadership

Not all of the leadership research has been unconditionally positive to either leadership existing as phenomenon or how leadership research has been conducted. It is in a way understandable that most of the research articles studied in this thesis have a positive approach to leadership as most of them are from the same source; The Leadership Quarterly. Still, not all of the articles start with the absolute notion that leadership as phenomenon exists. Or, as Emiliani (2008, 26) says "... it is not clear that leadership is a specialized activity".

The actual search after the essence of leadership might be questioned; it might actually be leading to false conclusions. Sveningsson & Alvesson (2010, 42) cite Harter (2006) by saying "...the search for the essence of leadership, the leadership itself, is misleading. *There is no such thing as leadership* (Italics by thesis writer). It is most important to ask oneself *if, when, where, and how leadership is.*" (Thesis writer's translation) Already in 2003 Sveningsson & Alvesson mentioned the question "... is there really leadership? (ibid. pp. 362)". They asked whether leadership really exists beyond language use or should it be seen as interpretative symbol.

Traditionally definitions on leadership are placing a strong emphasis on the individual leader, leader efficiency and thus on individual traits, skills, and behaviors. This is a simplified approach and easy way to use leadership as an explanation for success and/or failure of organizations. Leaders are not acting in isolation in big companies and they do not have the kind of ability to influence the results. (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2010.)

Looking at the leadership research of last decades its topics are mostly concerned with elements linked to successful and efficient leaders. Instead of talking about leadership research actually much of the research is leader research; looking at what makes a leader and more definitely, what makes an efficient leader. (compare Crevani et al. 2010, 77)

Crevani et al. (2010, 78-79) express opposite thinking when they state that leadership research has been criticized for trying to make practical sense of the theoretical phenomenon 'leadership' by linking it in concrete ways to an individual. This means seeing leadership as "a powerful societal discourse brought into all such (*leadership, writer's note*) processes, practices and interactions" and based on this wishing to study leadership as "interactions and practices rather than as the competences and actions of individual managers".

Most of the research seems to accept leadership as a fact. In examining 1000 citations on Leadership made during 13 years not one was found questioning the concept (Washbush, 2005, 1084). There is a risk that the whole leadership research suffers of circularity; meaning that leadership as phenomenon is clarified with terminology that again is clarified by leadership, e.g. leadership is something that leaders are doing, and leaders are those individuals engaged in leadership (Kort, 2008, 411).

Osborn et al. (2002) place the ambiguity of leadership and related research on three aspects. First, in spite all research leadership and its elements are still badly defined. As leadership is socially constructed, analytical research with measurements is a challenge. Second, leadership is regarded as something very positive. They cite Meidl et al.'s romance of leadership theory in stating that "Leadership is there in part because we collectively want to see it (ibid. pg. 805)". Third, leadership is nothing anyone can act out by itself, but emerges and takes form in the interaction between people. They state that "Leadership is a subjectively identifiable pattern of influence attempts that stem actually from many intentions (ibid. pg. 805)."

The methods used in leadership research have also been criticized. Leadership research has been mainly dominated by self-administered questionnaire, meaning leaders answering questions about leadership. There is a time period before change of century when 64 percent of all leadership studies used questionnaires (Bryman, 2004, 731, 743).

On the other hand there is also support for the intriguing though that it might not even be practically possible or helpful or in any way supporting the creation of new thinking or ideas to find a common definition of leadership (Alvesson, 1996, 458).

Finally, we come back to the main criticism towards research that takes it for granted that leadership exists and then continues to build further on this assumption. Leadership is discussed and emphasized in big scale in media, in public debates, in organizations, and by leadership researchers but the discourse does not proof anything, nothing else than that the topic is very popular. "... it is difficult to say anything of the possible existence of leadership in the great majority of organizations and management situations (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003a, 377)." As there are so many definitions of leadership and the common core is very small "... then almost any instance of acting can be seen as leadership as well as not leadership, depending on the definition (ibid. pg. 378)." Actually what the empirical interview material points to is the disappearance of leadership. The characteristics dissolve as they are not carried through even on as a discourse. (ibid. pp. 379)

6.2 Substitutes for leadership

Leadership substitutes theory by Kerr & Jermier (1978) looks at elements linked to followers on one side and task characteristics on the other side stating that these can substitute leadership making a leader person unnecessary. They place the locus of leadership mainly on followers and the context; on follower attributes like need for independence and capability and on contextual elements like task structure. Their point is that these elements function together in a process of letting leadership behaviors emerge without having a single leader individual involved in the process. (Yukl, 2010, 176-177.)

Employees' experience, competence and professional orientation decrease their need for hierarchical leaders to get direction and motivation. When tasks and roles are structured and well defined providing both immediate feedback and satisfaction, leaders are not needed for encouragement. When the organizational rules and procedures are clear, leaders are neither needed for direction. Also a work group can act as replacement for leadership when there is good cohesion in the group and members feel supported. (Kerr & Jermier, 1978.)

The Substitutes for leadership theory has been heavily criticized but still the model has been found interesting and has led to further recommendations for studying. Other possible elements that could diminish or fully take away the need for formal leaders have been brought up. One such element is shared organizational values; when people in the same organization share values there is less need for leader guidance. Similar to Kerr and Jermier's definition of professional orientation is the capability of the employees. When employees can set their own targets, measure performance results against them and influence their own rewards the leader's presence is not necessary. (Podsakoff et al., 1997, 120-123.)

Job enrichment policies have been identified as substitute for transformational leadership especially when employees already are highly commitment to their organizations (Porter et al., 2006, 567). Management information systems can act in the same way empowering middle managers to make better decisions based on better information (Starke et al., 2011, 31, 46). There is also an interesting relationship between an employee's high core self-evaluation and need for motivational leadership actions. When an employee has a high core self-evaluation there is actually no need for motivational actions by a leader. (Nübolt et al., 2013, 39.)

A recent study on managerial leadership shows that competent people prefer working in leadership free conditions. Interviews with highly qualified employees on their need for managerial leadership gave as result that managerial leadership was perceived as unwelcome, except in unexceptional circumstances. It was considered suitable for those who are "... not on top of things and stand in opposition to trust and competence. ..., managers eager to practice leadership are sometimes experienced as frustrating." Researchers found managers who acted based on inspiration gained from management literature creating frustration and their efforts were not working. (Blom & Alvesson, 2013, 5.)

Table 2 summarizes the substitutes mentioned above.

Leadership substitute	Source
Subordinates' skills, competence, professional orientation	Kerr & Jermier, 1978, Podsakoff et al., 1997, 120-123
Clarity of roles, rules and procedures	Kerr & Jermier, 1978
Good work group cohesion	Kerr & Jermier, 1978
Shared organizational values	Podsakoff et al., 1997, 120-123
Job enrichment policies	Porter et al., 2006, 567
Management information systems	Starke et al., 2011, 31, 46
Employee's high core self-evaluation	Nübolt et al., 2013, 39

Table 2: Leadership substitutes

Kerr & Jermier (1978, 20) identified in their research both substitutes and neutralizers for leadership behaviors. Neutralizers are elements either neutralizing the leaders' impact on the followers or paralyze or destroy it. Further research on leadership substitutes discusses the role of substitutes on different organizational and managerial levels. On a lower managerial level some substitutes like employee's competence can make some parts of leadership actions unnecessary or unwanted. What might be the situation on a supervisory level might not be the same on the CEO level. Even new types of substitutes could emerge as a result of technological and knowledge development. (Dionne et al., 2005, 184-185.)

What is worth noticing is that Vision is not lifted up as substitute for leadership. It is described as "... a critical component of outstanding leadership" and of being a powerful tool for influencing (Strange & Mumford, 2005, 121-122). If leadership is accepted to be "all about

influencing” (Maxwell, 1998 in Emiliani, 2008, 34), and vision is a tool to influence, could not a powerful vision be a substitute for leadership?

Before entering discussion on the impersonal elements; next chapter brings some clarity to parallel terminology.

7. Terminology

Viewing the article base for this work some terms close to leadership have been brought up and need some clarification. These terms are leadership capacity, leadership climate and managerial leadership.

Leadership capacity is in its definition close to the previously mentioned definitions where leadership is seen as a process, interaction in social situations. By definition Leadership capability is built in a team as team members interact while working together intentionally with the purpose of reaching shared goals. This leadership capacity is a team resource also holding within the creation of collective team identity. (Day et al., 2004, 859-860.)

How different individual leaders in one and the same organization use similar kind of behaviors in interactions with their subordinates is described in the concept of Leadership Climate. Specially linked to transformational behavior “ ... a Transformational Leadership (TFL) climate emerges when employees throughout the organization perceive their direct leaders engaging in the behaviors associated with TFL” (Menges et al., 2011, 893). Thus leadership climate can be categorized as an outcome of individual leaders’ behavior.

Hunt et al. (2009, 503-504) have an organization linked way of defining managerial leadership as they see it as talking about the leadership just below top management, leaders between top executives and middle managers. Blom & Alvesson (2013, 1) go along in the same line by defined it as “...leadership exercised by people holding a managerial (appointed or elected, but formally superior) position, targeting formal subordinates.”

7.1 Leaders or Leadership – ambiguity of terminology

In an effort of trying to define what really is meant by leadership there is a risk for confusion regarding how words leader and leadership are handled. When leadership is defined in the

realm of what a leader is, has or does the definitions risk in getting into a loop. For example: “Leaders are particularly effective if they engage in ... leadership behaviors...” (Menges et al., 2011, 893). So leaders are those engaged in leadership behaviors. On the other hand, leadership behaviors are what define a leader. Circularity is a major challenge in defining leadership.

The terminology becomes also confusing when words are used for a phenomenon in a seemingly different way without actual evident change in the object; as starting to use the phrase ‘top leadership team’ while still pointing to a management team or upper levels of management in a company. Like in “... consensus within the top leadership team (O’Reilly et al., 2010, 104-106)” the reader is left in uncertainty how does the top leadership team actually differ from top management team or a group of top managers.

Often the term ‘leader’ is used when pointing to a single individual and ‘leadership’ when the focus is on the collective actions of leaders in a defined organization or in general. In these cases leadership seems to be what leaders are doing or delivering as a group. Osborn et al. (2002, 798) state that leadership is the collective influence of leaders in and around the system whereas Kort (2008, 424) considers taking of a formal position of leadership indicating only that one is expected to act or has responsibilities to act in the ways that leaders do.

Kivipõld & Vadi (2010, 118) lift leadership on a higher level seeing it containing both individual and organizational levels as they define organizational leadership being the sum of the leadership capability existing in both individual and organizational levels. In this manner; the level of study varying between individual, group, organizational and meso levels adds to challenges in clarity of definitions.

One point in the terminology to note is that leaders are engaged in leadership actions and leaders show leadership behaviors. If we accept the definition of leadership as a socially constructed process emphasizing mutuality between leaders and followers in creation of it, there seems to be a major unbalance in the focus on what leaders and managers are doing in this creation process compared to attention given to followers engaged in leadership. Even though followership was raised as in statements like “... the essence of leadership is followership...” and “... followers are integral part to the leadership process...” the focus remained heavily on leaders (Collinson, 2006, 179).

A coarse generalization would be to say that leaders are seen as engaged in leadership, followers in followership and managers in management. Still, all are simultaneously engaged

in interaction in realization of shared goals. How should we actually need to name the core activity or phenomenon whether it is an input or outcome of these three interactional processes or behaviors? If leaders are doing leadership, followers followership why are not managers doing managership? Or leaders leaderment and followers followment? This is naturally only semantics but through semantics we create meaning by either clarifying or confusing.

8. Impersonal leadership elements

Earlier at the end of chapter 5 page 34 in this work was stated that the elements needed to be found in defining impersonal leadership are influencing, process, group environment, and purpose or goal. To create a reference on elements of impersonal kind in a phenomenon mostly linked to personal level, Mika Vanhala's dissertation on Impersonal Trust within the Organization was studied. Looking at how impersonal trust is described in literature, it is seen as a dimension of organizational trust, linked to how employees feel about the top management, the quality of their decisions and the possibilities of the organization as such to succeed. This kind of impersonal trust is built partly in roles, rules, and structured relations, but also in formal, socially produced structures. It relies on systems and the organization's reputation. Impersonal trust in the literature is based on vision, strategy and decision making processes, roles and management processes shown by the top management. (Vanhala, 2011, 31-36.)

8.1 Impersonal leadership – does it exist?

The challenge of defining impersonal elements in leadership is linked to how current research approaches level of analysis and based on the level the definitions of leadership. If leadership is studied on person level as an element linked to an individual, no impersonal elements can be defined. Studying leadership on group level as an influencing process happening in a given context, between individuals in a group for a shared purpose, some elements of impersonal nature might be defined. Or if the informed views of Washbush (2005) are accepted then "There is no such thing as leadership". Shown even in this thesis there is currently no single way of defining what leadership is. The definitions and ways of looking at leadership are as many as the researchers. As Yukl (2010) states the confusion

gets deeper the more elements that are brought into the focus; or as Washbush (2005, 1078) says "... if everything is leadership, then logically nothing is leadership."

Based on the chosen approach and level of investigation some impersonal elements of leadership might be identified. When leadership is defined in the realms of being a process, socially constructed, including influencing and shared target or purpose, then vision, task related competence and role clarity in shared working environment could be identified as elements of impersonal leadership.

Regarding competence and role clarity Kerr & Jermier have seen them as substitutes for leadership. Referring to the previously mentioned study by Alvesson & Sveningsson (2003b) regarding what kind of managerial leadership competent knowledgeable employees' prefer, leader individuals as such could be made redundant by the high level of task related competence, high self-esteem and role clarity of the employees. Thus the collective competence level including high self-esteem together with role clarity might inspire and motivate employees in their tasks and performance in a similar manner as a person in leader position but in this case as an embodiment of impersonal leadership.

Vision has earlier also been defined as a vital part of leadership (see pp. 41). Alan Bryman (2004) made a large study on the usage of qualitative methods in leadership research. He collected 66 different research articles with key findings and what kind of leadership style and leader behavior is emphasized. One individual item that stands out of the result is the mentioning of vision which is highlighted in 10 out of 66 cases. Success with visioning can add to motivation, increased cooperation and group cohesion as well as crystallize target and focusing (Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2010, 35).

Visions are mainly created as combination of two elements: one cognitive and one emotional. The cognitive element helps to focus on targets and results; and helps select information collected and used. The affective element links persons' values to company values creating commitment and motivation. (Boal & Hooijberg, 2001, 527.)

8.2 Substitutes or impersonal leadership

Whether or not, impersonal leadership exists and can be defined, is a matter of which is the definition in use on leadership. If the applied definition sees leadership as what leaders do, or

states that there are no leaders without followers, then the basic view is much person related and impersonal elements hard to identify.

Leadership needs to be seen at least as a group level phenomenon, available to all in an organization. Leadership definitions are many and some even somewhat contradictory which has a bearing on all further research, and defining a suitable research angle. The theory on leadership substitutes can in a way be seen as a trial to identify a level of elements in leadership that would be more robust or more stable than those linked to individual persons' qualities, skills or behaviors.

It can be challenges whether all the leadership substitutes could be seen as impersonal leadership elements. Table 3 compares leadership substitutes as listed in chapter 6.2. on page 40 with impersonal leadership elements 'inspiring' and 'goal/purpose oriented'.

Leadership substitute	Capacity to Inspire	Goal orientation
Subordinates' skills, competence, professional orientation	x	X
Clarity of roles, rules and procedures	x	X
Good work group cohesion	x	X
Shared organizational values	x	X
Job enrichment policies	x	
Management information systems		X
Employee's high core self-evaluation	x	X

Table 3: Impersonal elements in leadership substitutes

Employees' skills, competence and professional orientation give motivation and direction (inspiration and goal orientation, writer's note); structured roles, rules and procedures create satisfaction and give feedback (inspiration and goal orientation, writer's note); as well as good work group cohesion, shared values, and high self-esteem. (see Starke et al., 2011, 29-30, Kerr & Jermier, 1978) Whether job enrichment policies can be defined as adding to

goal achievement is questionable, but they can add to inspiring in delivering performance. Managerial decision systems again can be questioned on their ability to increase inspirational atmosphere but they increase goal achievement through better informed decisions. (compare with Starke et al., 2011, 31, 46)

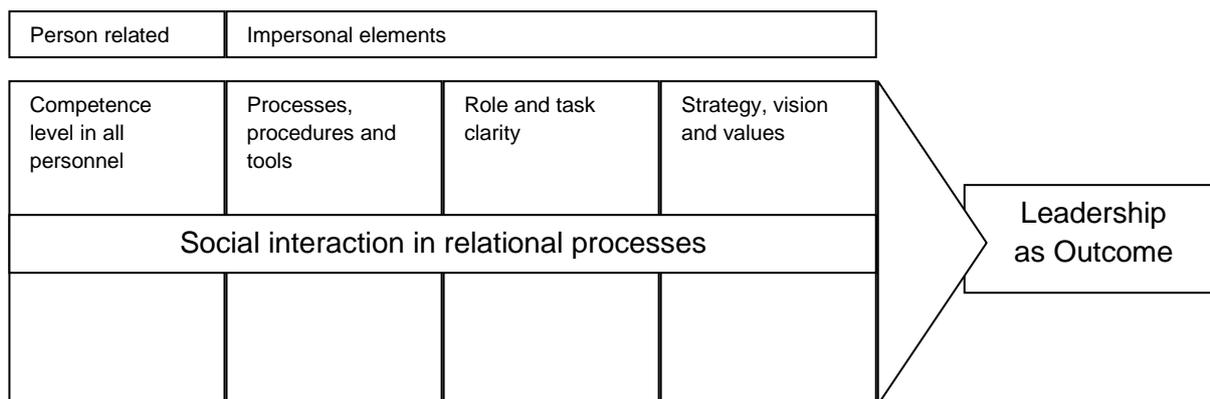
Whether impersonal leadership elements and leadership substitutes are one and the same phenomenon would need more research, as well as considering what the relationship between leadership substitutes as neutralizers and impersonal elements of leadership as such is. Impersonal leadership elements could also be seen as complements to person linked leadership, an approach which also would need more researching.

8.3. Result

There is quite little earlier research done in the area of identifying impersonal leadership in organizations. More research would be needed to conclude firmly the existence of impersonal leadership and the elements of it. One finding in this thesis is to take another approach to leadership definition as a total concept and see leadership as an outcome; an outcome of the combination of person linked and non person linked elements.

Leadership when not being person related is described as an influencing process, as existing in a process, or emerging or generated in such. (Osborn et al. 2007, Avolio 2007, Hernandez et al., 2011, Northouse 2010, Runsten 2010, Balkundi & Kilduff 2006, Uhl-Bien 2006) Actually, Uhl-Bien (2006, 655) and Day et al. (2004, 858-859) talk about leadership as an outcome of team processes.

As a result of this bachelor's thesis I suggest that leadership is defined as the outcome of person linked and impersonal elements merged in social interaction in relational processes in a company; person linked elements referring to the competence level of all personnel in an organization, and impersonal elements comprised of effectiveness of processes, procedures and tools, clarity of roles and tasks, and clarity of strategy, vision and shared values. A third element in this leadership as outcome definition is the internal efficiency of social interaction in relational processes.



Picture 1. Leadership as outcome definition

High competence level is linked to decreased need for managerial guidance, and increased levels of instinct motivation, engagement and goal achievement. Well defined processes, procedures, roles and tasks increase motivation, engagement and goal achievement and strategy, vision and values give direction, support decision making and add to engagement and commitment. The efficiency of social interaction in relational processes is the ignition force that starts the process of merging the person linked and impersonal elements and leadership emerges as outcome. Using this way of definition means that leadership does not exist on person level as person linked phenomena alone are not enough. Leadership is here seen as solely organization level phenomenon.

Leadership as organizational level outcome gives also clarity to terminology. A leader and a follower are seen as roles in an organization. Based on the general competence level of all persons in an organization, linked to the clarity of strategy, vision and values and the clarity of other roles and tasks through social interaction processes certain individuals are appointed to or mandated for the leader role. In that process, as one person accepts the role of a leader simultaneously others accept the role of a follower. Whether the leader role is occupied by one person or a pair or is a circulating among personnel depends on the context and the organizational setting.

Seeing leadership as an outcome of person linked and impersonal elements merged in social interaction in relational processes means also that leader and leadership are two distinctly separate terms and should not be mixed. Leaders do not show leadership behaviors, they show leader behaviors. Leader effectiveness is a separate phenomenon compared to leadership effectiveness. Thus also discussing development, leader development should be

understood as a totally different topic than leadership development. When focusing on leader development the key issues are linked to enhancing the capabilities and competence of an individual in a leader role, whereas focusing on leadership development the key issues are emphasizing how to enhance the full interlinked capacity of processes, procedures, rules, roles, task clarity, strategy awareness, vision compellingness, shared values and competence level of every individual in the organization, not only of those in a leader role.

What is left of leadership when the leader is gone is the question in the title of this work. The answer is; it is all there – left in the organization. Only the leader is gone.

9. Conclusions

The aim of this thesis was to find out whether it is possible to define non person linked, impersonal leadership and if yes, how the definition of impersonal, non-person related leadership would be and which the basic elements of this kind of leadership are. An additional question was whether we are confusing leaders with leadership.

As a conclusion leadership has been defined to be the outcome of person related and impersonal elements of the organization merged in social interaction in relational processes. The impersonal elements have been identified in three different categories: 1) processes, procedures and tools, 2) clarity of roles and tasks and 3) strategy, vision and values. The social interaction in relational processes is the ignition force to merge the elements together in a process where leadership is the outcome. Thus leadership is seen as an organization level outcome and leader as a pure role. The person linked and impersonal elements are equally important in creation of excellent leadership. The competence level of all persons in an organization is having an impact in leadership creation; and leader and follower are seen as roles, especially as persons in managerial positions in organizations act as both leaders and followers depending on the structure.

The relevance of the conclusions is mainly in the organizational development area, as leader development is seen as totally different kind of activity as leadership development. There are many limitations to the conclusions. The research articles are mainly gathered from one single source, the Leadership Quarterly. Also the amount of articles is limited. There is a need to look deeper into the relation between leadership substitutes and impersonal leadership elements. All together the need for further research in this area is significant.

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Attachment 1: Definitions on Leadership

Leadership is:

- about getting others voluntarily to will to do (deliver) rather than feeling forced to do (Merton, 1969, Zaleznik 1977 in Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2010, 39)
- a process that can occur everywhere in organizations and even be initiated by anyone who can influence others (Goleman et al. 2002, Gronn 2003 in Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2010, 40)
- a process, not a position (Hughes et al. 2006 In Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2010, 40)
- a situation based social process in which interpersonal influencing is central (Andersen 2000, Barker 2001 in Sveningsson & Alvesson 2010, 40 translation by writer)
- non existing. There is no such thing as leadership. (Harter 2006 in Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2010, 42)
- a social and relational phenomenon which gets its formation in the interaction between people. It is a result of how people together produce the characteristics of leadership relations like influencing, authority and responsibility (Uhl-Bien, 2006 in Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2010, 47)
- "...handlar ledarskap ... inte minst om att utöva inflytande på hur synen på verkligheten byggs upp, utifrån en viss världsbild. Det handlar om att påverka innebörder, tolkningar och värderingar. För att förstå ledarskapsbegreppet krävs en nyanserad uttolkning av relationer och kontext i samspel med överordnad och underordnad (Ladkin 2010) in Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2010, 113
- not a trait or behavior of an individual leader but a phenomenon generated in the interaction among people acting in context (Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012, 1043)

Attachment 2: Bryman (2004) research result on defining leadership

Managing meaning: focus on leader's vision	Pettigrew 1979; Smircich 1983, Smircich and Morgan 1982; Feyerherm 1994
Being Charismatic: being visionary, enthusiastic and creating mutual trust	Roberts 1985, Roberts and Bradley 1988; Gaines 1993; Weed 1993; Shamir et al 1994; Den Hartog and Verburg 1997; Beyer and Browning 1999; Mumford and Van Doorn 2001
Using symbols; being a symbolic actor or using metaphors as act of leadership	Tierney 1987; Tierney 1989; Dana and Pitts 1993; Rusaw 1996; Card 1997
Being Directive or Participative depending on the situation	Bryman et al 1988; Coleman 1996; Greene et al. 2000;
Occurring throughout the organization and not in terms of hierarchical positions (in leaderless organizations)	Vanderslice 1988
Use of power / influence over others or behavior as motivating others (Implicit leadership)	Birnbaum 1990
Servant behavior (servant leadership) enabling for others	Graham 1991; Dillon 2001;
Expression of organizational culture, and a way to promote the company's integration	Alvesson 1992
Something accomplished discursively in the process of interaction	Knights and Willmott 1992
Budgets used as symbols in leadership	Neumann 1992
Strong sense of mission, empowerment and listening to others for ideas	Dyck 1994

Way of impacting through strategic alliances	Selsky and Smith 1994
Direction (lack of L => lack of direction)	Bogotch et al. 1995
Social construction which is created through leaders' and others' cognitions and actions	Bresnen 1995
Installing a vision	Neumann 1995
Creating a sense of urgency	Brooks 1996
Instrumental leader behavior including creating trust, empowering others, good communication, leading by example, showing consideration	Bryman, Stephens & A Campo 1996; Datnow and Castellano 2001
Contextual	Bryman, Gillingwater & McGuinness 1996
Transactional or transformational behavior	Bryman, Gillingwater & McGuinness 1996; Mumford and Van Doorn 2001
Occurring based on how the experiences of followers are when encountering a leader person	Gabriel 1997; Spaulding 1997; Välikangas and Okumura 1997; Renshon 1998
Being Democratic and supportive	Kekäle 1999
Social influencing process	Parry 1999
Skills (set of current and future individual skills)	Starck, Warner & Kotarba 1999; Weinberg and McDermott 2002
Visionary leadership emphasis on shared values	Jones 2000;
Being Vision-Based, collateral (not concentrated) and process-based	Alexander, Comfort, Weiner & Bogue 2001
Being Collective, acting collectively	Dennis et al. 2001; Denis, Langlay, & Cazale 1996; Denis, Langley, & Pineault

	2000;
As Behavior (like trust building)	Scribner et al. 1999; Youngs and King 2002; Vangen and Huxham 2003
Confusion between contradicting roles and expectations (from micromgmt to vision and strategy)	Alvesson and Sveningsson 2003a; Alvesson and Sveningsson 2003b,
Substitutes for leadership	
Leadership couple	Gronn 1999

Table adjusted after Bryman, 2004, 732-743.

Attachment 3: Topic areas in 50 most cited articles in Leadership Quarterly during 2000-2009

Nr	Topic area in title of cited article	nr of articles
1	Charismatic leadership	10
2	Transformational and transactional leadership	6
3	Authentic leader / leadership	6
4	Context and leadership	5
5	Emotions and leadership	3
6	Relationship-based approach to leadership	2
7	Complexity and leadership	2
8	Leadership behaviors	2
9	Leadership, self and identity	1
10	Leadership and levels of analysis	1
11	Team leadership	1
12	Leading creative people	1
13	Spiritual leadership	1
14	Leader-member exchange	1
15	Ethical leadership	1
16	Female leadership	1
17	Path-goal theory of leadership	1
18	Distributed leadership	1
19	Leadership skills	1
20	Strategic leadership	1
21	Leader influence	1
22	Origins of vision	1

Gardner et al., 2010, 932-933