Shared Leadership
and its Future Potential

- Why do, How to and then What?

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Declaration

With the signatures below we certify that this master thesis was written by Victor Johansson and Jesper Somehagen. Also guaranteeing proper use and referencing to all sources included.

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Abstract

Leaders are often called upon to make sense out of complicated situations and give direction to others, and the situations have increased in both number and complexity. A solution to this problem has been identified in sharing leadership and engaging the potential of entire organizations. Therefore the purpose of this literature review is to map and identify interesting areas about shared leadership. Investigating if shared leadership can help organisations become more efficient in a world of growing complexity. Focusing on why organisational actors should consider a shared leadership approach. Critically examine the potential outcome from shared leadership and how an organisation could move towards adopting a shared leadership approach, including steps, conditions and actions that would be required.

Literature about shared leadership and similar concepts has increased extensively, causing dissension in the area. Aiming to explore, understand and express what the literature says about shared leadership we adopted the systems view with an inductive and qualitative approach. Realising that shared leadership most commonly is practiced and studied in teams we adopted this scope and went deeper into the social process and conditions for creating shared leadership in teams.

Shared leadership was found to solve demands for increased knowledge, skill and ability among modern leaders. Preferably implemented successively by vertical leaders into cross-functional teams conducting knowledge work. Tasks to simple or time to urgent however makes shared leadership ineffective, while misaligned perceptions and purposes between team members might diminish trust and neglect shared leadership. This review then makes valuable implications for future research, suggesting deepened empirical research in the implication of shared leadership.

Keywords

Shared leadership, team, vertical leadership, performance, trust, implementation.
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1. Introduction

In this section the reader is given an introductory background overview, an explanation to why the research is needed as well as a presentation of research questions and purpose.

1.1 Background/Problem Discussion

Leadership, the art of leading, start as so many other things with leading oneself (Plöbst, 2013). Leaders, leadership and situations that require a leader can be found in almost an infinite number of combinations and variations and is often called upon to give purpose and direction to an otherwise unclear and confusing situation. As we as humans increasingly find ourselves having to deal with more and more complex situations and problems the need for effective leadership has never been greater (Pearce and Wassenaar, 2014). The level of complexity in a world made up on a multitude of varieties, combinations and shapes has started to create insurmountable demands on the individual leaders of today and tomorrow. They have to be ever more skilled, adaptive and knowledgeable in order to be able to handle the day to day operations in organisations (Bergman et al., 2010).

We believe that this pullulating degree of complexity calls for different types of leadership approaches in order to be able to stay in front of the ever-increasing mosaic-skill requirements put on today’s leaders. We further believe that this means to some extent moving away from the traditional hierarchical leadership structure in favour of a style that is not limited to any one person. Switching instead to a leadership style that utilizes the skill and potential of entire groups and organisations, by putting the most suitable leader in the leadership position for each situation. Making shared leadership a potential answer for organisations to overcome this obstacle, by allowing bigger proportions of the organisation to contribute with their expertise in team-based knowledge work instead of trough hierarchical directives (Cawthorne, 2010). Increasing interest in shared leadership is the resulting outcome from this shifting analytical viewpoint, reframing how people view leadership.

Looking at the evolution of organisational leadership in society, organisations have moved from strict formal and centralized leadership during the agricultural revolution, to be
developed through the industrial revolution and finally be more decentralized, diverse and open today. Ever since society reached a point where people had to work in groups to further develop their livelihood, there has been formal organisational leadership. The very foundation on which organisations stand was therefore build upon formal leadership, something that over time is challenged more and more as well as questioned (Spisak et al., 2015).

Shared leadership is however not the only theoretical approach developed to further the understanding of leadership (Bolden, 2011). Similar concepts like emergent, distributed and democratic leadership focuses around the idea that leadership is not the sole responsibility of one person. Leadership can take a myriad of different expressions as a dynamic and interactive activity with a more collectivistic coherent and systematic understanding (Bolden, 2011). Although similar, some noticeable differences exist in what way and how the concepts are used in existing literature (Fitzsimons et al., 2011). Nonetheless there have been some attempts to define shared leadership, one of the most cited and recognised is Pearce and Congers, (2003, pp.105) definition “the transference of the leadership function among team members in order to take advantage of member strengths”. Their definition clearly identify the importance of shared leadership as a team conditional concept. In order to avoid cross thematic ambiguity this literature review will be centred around the premises that shared leadership is conditioned on the existence of a team.

In published research papers a relatively high level of ambiguity exists in connection to shared leadership. Available information and definitions on shared leadership is still scarce but there is information available for the inquisitive. Contributory relevant information allowed to spill over on to shared leadership from overlapping subject areas that share common traits with shared leadership. We aim to, when possible, to use the existing information from overlapping subject areas to clarify and further develop the knowledge base on shared leadership.

As a result of this ambiguity, we will investigate what previous research say and suggests, when implementing shared leadership in organisations and what outcomes to expect. Shedding light onto the circumstances and conditions shared leadership is most suitable for and what limitations there is to when shared leadership could be implemented. Doing a literature review over the subject then aims at helping organisations to develop insights and
understandings towards shared leadership, offering them the possibility to make the transition from traditional to shared leadership in an informed way. At the same time looking at the whole area, trying to identify theoretical gaps for future development.

Research and interest into shared leadership has increased explosively the past few years and is still in a constant state of flux and development. The result being that the information is unmatured, crisp and up-to-date. The problem with any study trying to reflect on human behaviour is that there can be no absolute right or wrong. No exact plan that will work every time, therefore any result we present should be considered and judged on a situational context. By mapping existing research into shared leadership we will investigate, connect and transcend semi-existing barriers to related subjects in order to present a holistic view of shared leadership.

We argue for and present our findings using a funnel style, starting wide and throughout the paper becoming more narrow and specific. The broader themes are presented and clarified in the beginning of the paper eventually emanating in finer more detailed specific answers:

- Why, should shared leadership be consider as an alternative?
- How can shared leadership be implemented?
- What could be expected from shared leadership?

This means that you (the reader) can jump to sections relevant to your specific interest and use this research as a guide into shared leadership as well as an eye opener for possibilities and applications to shared leadership. It is up to the individual reader to interpret and relate the given information to their specific conditions, as the nature of any situation involving people have its own defining characteristics. Providing better understanding for shared leadership and how it relates to practitioners will help the same practitioners to avoid, seeing and thinking about shared leadership as commendable but disconnected from reality (Barnes et al., 2013).
1.2 Research Question

The research question asked in this study is the following:

What are the reasons for organisations to implement shared leadership and how can they move towards it, what could be expected from implementing shared leadership and what negative aspects should the organisation be aware of?

Clarified and subdivided into more manageable questions the research question was divided into three separate questions:

- Why, should organisations consider shared leadership?
- How, could shared leadership be implemented?
- What, possible outcomes and critique is there to shared leadership?

1.3 Purpose

The research purpose of this literature review is to map and identify interesting areas about shared leadership. Investigating if shared leadership can help organisations become more efficient in a world of growing complexity. Focusing on why organisational (actors) should consider a shared leadership approach. Critically examine the potential outcome from shared leadership and how an organisation could move towards adopting a shared leadership approach, which steps conditions and actions would be required.
2. Methodology

This section contains thorough descriptions of how the research process have looked like throughout the thesis, in addition to justifications for the methodological choices made in order to be able to effectively answer the research questions and purpose.

2.1 Methodological Introduction

Shared leadership is a quite young scientific field that has enjoyed increasing academic interest during recent years. Research has been made under different circumstances in various cultures and organisations, creating an extensive but scattered literature area. Many of these previous studies advocate shared leadership over traditional leadership, implying that the area of leadership and leadership structures in modern society might experience a shift from traditional to shared leadership. Frequently the literature is suggesting that shared leadership could be implemented with success almost everywhere, without much consideration or elaboration of the implementation process. Considering shared leadership a much more effective leadership concept that will replace traditional leadership, we saw a clear need for further investigation in the area.

Realizing that the literature is spread over multiple fields, defined as well as referred to in different ways, we identified the need for an investigating scoping review. We became inquisitive of what the existing literature actually could tell us about making the transition from traditional vertical leadership to shared lateral leadership. In addition to when the transition is favourable and what might be the expected outcome from a shift. Our contribution to shared leadership therefore became a literature review, explained by Friberg (2012) as the mapping and composing of a certain field, with focus on practical implementation.

2.2 Research Perspective

The research perspective used to understand, explain and improve our specific business area has been influenced by the adopted paradigm, methodological view and operative paradigm. Following the thoughts of Törnebohm on modern scientific paradigms, this text describes our
perception of the world and how to study it as well as our scientific ideal and ethical aspects. Starting with our perception of the world, it is a determinant and physical place where humans by their intellect act on information towards personal goals. Scientifically we therefore study how humans can affect the world around them, including other people. The ideal would then be to not only explain but to understand why people act in certain ways, how we make them act in wanted ways and what can come from certain actions (Arbnor and Bjerke, 2009).

Ethically shared leadership carries a message of equality and companionship that could bring both effectiveness and prosperity to organisations. As of our ethical deference we have made sure not to plagiarise or modify any research or statement. With inspiration from Ludwig Von Bertalanffy systems theory we strive to contribute with a guide that could be interpreted and implemented by the reader into specific situations. Charles West Churchman also inspired with his systematic approach towards economical systems, dividing them into controlling and controlled parts where purpose, variables and conditions are interesting variables (Arbnor and Bjerke, 2009).

The methodological view found most appropriate to study shared leadership was the systems view, because of its adherence to earlier mentioned paradigm. Our aim to make a comprehensive explanation and create deeper understanding was also suitable for the systems view, which sometimes is referred to as the holistic view. Meaning that our focus have not been on specific events or causalities but to bring overall clarity in the concept as a whole. Ontologically this view considers the objective reality to be made up by things that can be experienced and studied, in this case literature. Epistemologically the research is hermeneutic since interpretations are made in order to explain events and understand actions (Arbnor and Bjerke, 2009).

2.3.1 Methodological Techniques

Considering the systems view and our research purpose some partly formal instruments was adopted to our operative paradigm, engaging the research area in line with traditional methodical procedures and methodologies (Arbnor and Bjerke, 2009). Striving to explore, understand and express what the literature says about shared leadership we early decided on an inductive and qualitative approach. Consistently we implemented a theoretical sampling in
line with grounded theory according to Strauss and Corbin (2008), meaning that the sampling is responsive to derived data. To uphold a certain standard in literature reviews, Friberg (2012) say that the sampling should follow some predefined restrictions. Therefore we only use technical literature, characterised as professional and disciplinary writings by Strauss and Corbin (2008). Having a need for full access, recent publication dates and credible sources we decided to limit accepted materials to published books and scientific articles.

This research process proceeded in line with grounded theory until a sufficient theoretical saturation had been reached. Total theoretical saturation is according to Strauss and Corbin (2008) impossible, whereby authors should consider when sufficient saturation has been reached. Normally, Strauss and Corbin (2008) say that a sufficient amount of literature has been reached when the authors are able to fulfil their research purpose. This is a measurement we decided to follow but also complement with the thoughts from Boell and Cecez-Kecmanovic (2010) on the hermeneutic circle. Basicly Boell and Cecez-Kecmanovic (2010) imply that the hermeneutic circle of interpretation builds on the relation between small pieces and totality. In order to understand a small piece you must understand the big picture, and to understand the big picture you must understand its pieces.

Adding the hermeneutic circle to our research process has been a way to adapt the sampling to our systematic view. Theoretical sampling has been used continuously while the hermeneutic circle has been a way to take a step back from time to time, looking at the relevance of materials and direction of the thesis. If the purpose of the review cannot be fulfilled with the gathered material, or the pieces does not make sense in relation to the totality, we will back the research process to searching, collecting and analysing information until the study is complete.

To structure the research process and keep us aware of the holistic and systematic purpose of our methodology view, we used the guiding words of Arbnor and Bjerke (2009). The authors suggested that researchers who adopt the systems view should be aware of certain concepts and phenomena. Picking the factors relevant to shared leadership left us with varieties, adaptability, conflicts, objectives, correlations and actions, resulting in our model “Shared Leadership System Map” on the next page. Keeping these words in mind, both external
sources and our own text was continuously reviewed throughout the research process in order to fulfil our purpose (Arbnor and Bjerke, 2009).

2.3.2 Analysing of Materials

To reach a deeper understanding of shared leadership, the sources was not only pitted against each other but analysed by us as authors. The discursive chapters include a form of open coding in accordance to Strauss and Corbin (2008), as terms identified in the literature are categorized into different concepts with separate headlines. For example are terms like “efficiency”, “effectiveness” and “performance” that somehow represent the concept of outcomes from shared leadership, categorized under the headline “5.4 Outcomes from Shared Leadership”. Terms like “trust”, “openness” and “knowledge” that concern the conditions for shared leadership are instead placed under “5.2 Conditions for Shared Leadership”. The analyse is in this way initiated by letting these concepts become headlines in the theoretical discussion where different sources are pitted against each other (Strauss and Corbin, 2008).
Here is a kind of comparative analyse taking place, since the different terms labelled and categorized as different concepts are investigated in their way of affecting each other. This meaning that the headline “5.2 Conditions for Shared Leadership” discuss how terms of trust and knowledge sharing affect the conditional concept of shared leadership. A conceptual saturation is then reached when the different terms total effect on shared leadership has been established. In the analysing chapter there is instead a type of axial coding when the concepts are combined and pitted against each other. For example the concept of why shared leadership should be implemented and what outcome it brings are combined to face what conditions and critique that might stop the implementation or effect from shared leadership (Strauss and Corbin, 2008).

2.4 Methodological Approach

2.4.1 Searching Method

To start off and acquaint ourselves with the literature we first conducted a round of cursory reading into the subject shared leadership following the advice found in Mongan-Rallis (2014). After this initial round, with the goal to procure as relevant and prominent pre-eminent scholarly research concerning shared leadership, we have utilised academic databases available to us via the library at Linnaeus University; One Search, Business Source Premier, Sciencedirect, Emerald and Scopus. To supplement the initial results and secure a minimal loss of relevant published research material, the reference lists in accepted sources was thoroughly examined in search for relevant articles and books on shared leadership. Additional complementary searches were made on; Google Scholar, in all cases where Google Scholar was used the articles was accessed again via one of the databases connected to Linnaeus University mentioned above.

Because shared leadership terminology is sometimes interchangeable, closely related or have overlapping meaning with other words we have throughout the review process, besides the words shared leadership and teams, search for collective, distributed and democratic leadership. Every time these complementary search words have been used we have however been careful to make sure that they were used in a shared leadership context.
For the purpose of ensuring affinity between adhibit articles and books they were accepted only if containing information (insight) pertaining to shared leadership and teams. Describing an area closely related or overlapping with shared team leadership i.e. democratic leadership, distributed leadership etc. Our overall underlying questioning towards the material has been why shared leadership should be seen as an alternative, how it is implemented in terms of specific actions and conditions as well as what outcome and negative critique that could be expected.

After conducting a topographic overview and developing an initial understanding for shared leadership. The concept was broken down into general categories for sorting and coding the material gathered from different articles into comprehensible related section of information. The categorization creation process have throughout the research project been subjected to continuously questioning, re-evaluation and reforming, for the purpose of finding the descriptive fragmentation that best mirror our intrinsic understanding of shared leadership.

2.4.2 Structuring of Materials

Theories gathered for this thesis have been divided into three different chapters, where the first chapter review shared leadership, the second declares influence from related areas and the last chapter discuss parts of special interest. The chapter “3. Theoretical Review” set of with the headline “3.2 The Concept of Sharing Leadership” to establish a basic understanding for both us and the reader. While studying the literature the concept was traced back in history to reveal its origin and earlier usage, resulting in the headline “3.1 Historical Development of Shared Leadership”. These headlines then switched place to give the reader a more natural progression. Acknowledging that there were many concepts similar to shared leadership made “3.3 Conflicting and Similar Concepts” a necessary addition. After identifying teams as an essential part of shared leadership, the headline “3.4 Shared Leadership and Teams” was also added. These four fundamental and basic headlines make up the reviewing chapter, whereby the literature moves on to the chapter “4. Influencing Subareas”.

During the reviewing chapter we identified subareas that needed to be developed further and therefore became headlines in the forth chapter. Sharing leadership comes with a lot of social interaction which must be well functioning for the concept to work, therefore is the fourth chapter about the interaction between human beings. Starting with “4.1 Shared Leadership
“and the Social Process” as the first headline to declare interactional aspects. Further on looking at shared leaderships one and only resource, people, the need for wellbeing was investigated under “4.2 Psychological Climate”.

Finally to put shared leadership in the light of different settings it was connected to cultures and environmental factor under the headline “4.3 Cultural and Environmental Factors”. Knowing more about the shared leadership framework, the fifth chapter discuss things we considered most interesting and that deserves focus, namely the questions of why, how and what asked towards shared leadership. Under “5.1 Why Shared Leadership is Growing in Importance” it is therefore an argumentation of why shared leadership should be implemented, considering the current and future situation for organisations. Next comes “5.2 Conditions for Shared Leadership” to bring up the discussion of when it is possible and suitable to implement shared leadership. Followed by “5.3 Implementing Shared Leadership” to discuss how the implementation should be handled. To answer what shared leadership could lead to and what could be expected, the final discussion is made under the headlines “5.4 Outcomes from Shared Leadership” and “5.5 Criticism Against Shared Leadership”. Continuously adding, removing and combining different materials under different headlines, as Strauss and Corbin (2008) explain theoretical sampling in line with grounded theory, we finally got the current structure.

After this theoretical discussion we extracted paradoxes, critical statements and overall interesting thoughts from this chapter to go deeper into by conceptualizing and analysing in the sixth chapter. The reader is expected to have grasped the concept of shared leadership by the time they reach this chapter and is therefore introduced to deeper thoughts and a step by step model of the concepts implementation. First we analysed whether shared leadership actually could replace traditional leadership in “6.1 Shared Leadership for Better or Worse”. Realizing that shared leadership need support from traditional leadership, this paradox was then analysed in “6.2 Hierarchical Needs as a Shared Leadership Paradox”. Thinking critically about shared leadership we became sceptical to what the literature said about team size and created the chapter “6.3 Sharing With too Many”.

Having a practical focus we wanted to conceptualize the implementation of shared leadership in a model that demonstrates the different stages and made this under “6.4 Leading Towards
"Shared Leadership". After reaching more valuable understandings from earlier descriptions and discussions we were interested in practical cases of shared leadership, showing the reader what the concept can actually look like. This made our seventh chapter a case about one of the most famous companies with a shared leadership approach, under the headline “7.1 Is Google using Shared Leadership Ideas?”. Our conclusive thoughts about shared leadership are finally presented in the eighth chapter, under the headlines “8.1 Findings”, “8.2 Limitations of the Study” and “8.3 Implications for Further Research”.

2.4.3 Source Criticism

Since this research is based on secondary data in form of previous studies and empirical sources we have put extra consideration into source criticism. Researchers and students alike with limited resources and access, would benefit from using secondary data since it allows them to use credible sources and achieve high credibility themselves (Bryman and Bell, 2011). To secure the credibility of this review we have taken into consideration both internal and external criticism in line with Bell (2006). Meaning that external factors like the author, title and contents is trustworthy and acknowledged by other authors. After which we determinate the level of professionalism the source expedite, making sure the text have not been altered. Because of the ideological traction between shared leadership as an organisational arrangement and democracy as a political system we have been aware and looking for any advocating that might affect the literature.

2.4.4 Quality Assurances

This chapter declares our methodological considerations and procedures to ensure what Bryman and Bell (2011) refer to as the credibility and transferability of a study. To reach credibility we have critically reviewed all materials and only used reliable sources to back up our arguments. Further on following proper referencing to our sources and presenting their results with an accurate language. The strive for transferability has been made in line with Bryman and Bell (2011) “thick-descriptions”, meaning that the text describes the concept well enough for the reader to interpret in which situations the theories are applicable. Being a literature review, the subject of shared leadership is generally described to create a comprehensive understanding rather than a single deep investigation.
Presented by Bryman and Bell (2011) is also the dependability to research traditions and confirmability that no material has been altered. We ensure dependability by declaring what techniques we have used as well as our approach when it comes to searching, gathering and analysing material. Confirmability can never really be ensured according to Bryman and Bell (2011) but we have been aware of the risk and never consciously altered any material, which we have signed in the beginning of the thesis. Qualitative research should according to Bryman and Bell (2011) ensure authenticity of empirical materials, meaning that the authors have not altered any words of the respondents. Since the empirical material in this research comes from websites, the text can easily be accessed and verified by the readers who do not have to rely on us as authors.
3. Theoretical Review

*In this section we present the theoretical base for shared leadership. Beginning with the historical development followed by a description of what shared leadership is today and what it is not, including how it relates to similar concepts. This section also holds an expansion on the intrinsic connection between shared leadership and teams and how the two goes hand in hand.*

3.1 Historical Development of Shared Leadership

Up until the industrial revolution, leadership was mostly based on command and control, without much formal research into the field, either supporting or refuting other leadership styles. Jean-Baptiste Say (1803/1964, pp. 330) conducted one of the first formal leadership studies and wrote that entrepreneurs “must possess the art of superintendence and administration” and thereby took the first step towards modern leadership literature. At that time up-until the beginning of the twentieth century, leadership was studied from an autocratic perspective with focus on one person and the consequences from his/her actions. The idea that leadership is an interactive and dynamic activity that can be shared have only recently started to win notable interest, but its origin can be traced further back to Mary Parker Follett.

As a consultant in organisational theory Follet (1924) came up with “law of the situation”, saying that leadership should originate from the situation and not the individual. Years later Drucker (1954) started touching the idea of shared leadership while writing about joint work between subordinates and executives. In 1959 he then predicted a move towards team structures with equal influence and also coined the term “knowledge worker” (Drucker, 1959). After that, Bower and Seashore (1966) came close to shared leadership in their study on insurance officers, suggesting leadership could come from peers but without specifying the mutual leadership process (Pearce and Conger, 2003). The area then again fell into obscurity and it was not until Mintzberg (1989) talk about lateral leadership in form of adhocracy that the field was revitalised and moved into prominence (Avolio et al., 1996; Seers, 1996). Adhocracy organisations where described by Mintzberg (1989) as multidisciplinary teams of experts in a think-tank concept, producing innovations and custom made products to the cost
of chaos and resources. It is possible to trace shared leadership in its theoretical background
development, but empirical studies of antecedents is rare (Carson et al., 2007; Hoch, 2013).

Since the resurgent comeback and development of shared leadership, multiple studies have
been presented (Hoch, 2014). Several studies have shown that shared leadership impact
performance and outcome (Pearce and Sims, 2002; Pearce et al., 2004; Ensley et al., 2006;
Ford and Seers, 2006; Mehra et al., 2006; Avolio et al., 2003; Carson et al., 2007; Hoch et al.,
2010; Hoch, 2014). Others have focused on trust, described by Cook and Wall (1980, pp.39)
as “the extent to which one is willing to ascribe good intentions and to have confidence in the
words and actions of other people”. Drescher et al. (2014) say that shared leadership
increases trust in groups while Bergman et al. (2010), Drescher et al. (2014) and Liu et al.
(2014) rises trust as essential for shared leadership. Several other factors influencing or being
influenced by shared leadership that have gained notoriety over recent years include:

- creativity, (Bligh et al., 2006; Lee et al., 2015)
- time, (Drescher et al., 2014)
- context, (Drescher et al., 2014)
- social exchange (Muethel and Hoegl, 2013)
- team size (Nicolaides et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2014)
- knowledge skills and abilities, (Pearce, Wassenaar and Manz 2014)
- empowering, (Hoch, 2014)
- effectiveness of team (Wang, 2014)

as well as different leadership styles associated with shared leadership; directive, transaction,
transformational and empowering leadership (Pearce, Wassenaar and Manz 2014).

3.2 The Concept of Sharing Leadership

Traditional leadership theory is approached from a hierarchical perspective, focusing on the
individual leader and a top-to-bottom organisational structure (Pearce and Conger, 2003;
Small and Rentsch, 2010). Shared leadership in contrast have developed from another central
concept namely that leadership is an activity not limited to one person but enacted by several
members of a group (Drescher et al., 2014). Shared leadership is by Clarke (2012) described
as a more sophisticated and modern way of looking at effective leadership. Pointing to specifics Wellman et al. (2013) say that the exciting and special differences of particular interest with shared leadership is the serial interactive informal leadership (informal leader: person that influence others without any formal authority) process affecting group functions. Often advocated benefits with shared leadership is that the combined resources in a group can produce and yield more results and is in general capable of more things than any one single individual (Drescher et al., 2014).

Shared leadership and similar concepts challenge and question hierarchical leadership perspectives saying they focus too little on informal leadership as well as not utilizing all resources in the organisation (Pearce and Conger, 2003; Small and Rentsch, 2010). In situations where a shared leadership perspective is adopted leadership it is seen as an interactional social process (Muethel and Hoegl, 2013) without hierarchy where the leading position is interchangeable within the group and the group as a multi-versioned dynamic place of give and take (Pearce, Wassenaar and Manz, 2014). The most profound and significant differences between traditional leadership and shared leadership is the differences in vertical and lateral sources of influence (Pearce, Manz and Sims, 2009). Sharing leadership responsibilities between group members gives an interdependency that allows the most suitable person to lead and adapt the group in response to different situations and conditions. (Pearce and Conger, 2003; Small and Rentsch, 2010).

Sharing the power and influence of leadership is however not easy, it is a complex process, adapting to fluctuating conditions moving and changing between leading and following (Morgeson et al., 2010; DeRue, 2011). Members of teams with shared leadership must be able to facilitate trust, cohesion and commitment (Hoch and Kozlowski, 2014). Conditional requirements for shared leadership have given rise to questions whether shared leadership is more than a rhetorical model, Weibler and Rohn-Endres (2010) say it is, rhetoric’s can however be said to make up an essential part of shared leadership as it helps people to learn, understand and act in group joint social constructs.

There is also a big shift from perceived individual achievement towards perceived group achievements when group members are equally responsible for successes and failures (Pearce and Conger, 2003). Shared leadership theory addresses organisational contexts where
influence is equally accepted from all members of the group (Pearce, Wassenaar and Manz, 2014). The social aspects of shared leadership is then described as multi-directional collective activities, strongly related and connected to the situational context (Pearce and Conger, 2003). In contrast to traditional leadership, shared leadership theory is focused on social interactions and phenomenon’s within a group rather than just one individual leader acting as an integrator (Pearce and Conger, 2003). Followers is seen as integral parts for co-creating and influencing the way leadership is created (Pearce and Conger, 2003).

In situational contexts where shared leadership is practised, the person most suitable in form of skill, knowledge and degree of expertise should handle current environmental factors and assume a leadership role. In a situation where a group finds itself without a situational specific expert, leadership responsibility falls to the group member with highest overall leadership skills (Pearce and Conger, 2003). In essence shared leadership is the serial emergence of leaders within a group based on competence and situational context (Pearce and Conger, 2003).

3.3 Conflicting and Similar Leadership Concepts

3.3.1 Vertical Structured Leadership Styles

Shared leadership is an ongoing process of interactive influence between members of a group that lead them towards their goal, while traditional leadership is described as single leaders enacting downward influence on subordinates (Pearce, Manz and Sims, 2009). Four major ways for vertical leaders to influence followers; directive, transaction, transformation and empowering (Pearce, Wassenaar and Manz, 2014). Directive leadership is a single leader giving instructions and recommendations to keep followers task-focused (Pearce, Wassenaar and Manz, 2014). Pearce and Conger (2003) claim that this is suitable for routine jobs where the task is relatively simple and guidance towards the goal is important.

Transactional leadership is described by Pearce, Wassenaar and Manz (2014) as a style where compensation in form of money, material things or praise is given to promote desirable outcomes and certain performance. Connecting this to shared leadership Pearce and Conger (2003) suggest collegial tasks and rewards that unite and supports the creation of a “we”
feeling among group members. Transformational leadership is described by Pearce, Wassenaar and Manz (2014) as visioning inspiration and motivating followers, appealing to their intellectual side, where contributions and creations equals prestige or self-fulfilment. Going deeper Hoch, Dulebohn (2013) and Pearce, Conger (2003) add that transformational leaders should embody and articulate the vision. Explaining this Pearce and Conger (2003) say this is beneficial in innovative knowledge-work where change is the main objective, similar to shared leadership. In their paper from (2013) Hoch and Dulebohn imply that transformational leadership could act as a good starting point for developing shared leadership while Ishikawa (2012) say that it had a negative effect on shared leadership in Japan.

Empowering is about flattening the hierarchy, shorting power distances and moving influence from leaders to followers according to Pearce, Wassenaar and Manz (2014), making them responsible for personal leadership and influence. This should according to Pearce and conger (2003) be categorize as a team-shared leadership with more focus on individual work in groups than shared leadership usually include. Hoch and Dulebohn (2013) say that empowering leadership have a similar effect on performance and could transform into shared leadership in that case will vertical leaders shift to a coaching role. Both Ensley, Hmielecki, Pearce (2006) and Hoch, Dulebohn (2013) argue that even if transformational and empowering leadership normally is practiced in vertical conditions they are more effective in combination with lateral shared leadership.

Introduced by Foster and Wiseman (2014) is the distinction between multiplying and diminishing leaders in organisations. One of the crucial differences between these leadership types is according to Wiseman and Mckeown (2010) that diminishers are genius, but multipliers are genius makers. Multipliers give people cognitive space by removing think blockers like diminishing colleagues or leaders, and even their own leadership influences. Combining this with challenging tasks and full responsibility creates an intense environment where people perform their very best. In this way Wiseman and Mckeown (2010) mean that organisations can exploit the staff’s capacity to achieve higher outcomes, while stimulating their cognitive learning. Diminishing leaders control people and remove cognitive obstacles by instructing them, creating pressure to perform in a certain way which leads to anxiety and tension that reduces cognitive abilities. Multipliers have according to Foster and Wiseman (2014) shown to exploit almost twice the capacity of groups, compared to groups lead by
diminishers. Similar to shared leadership is multiplying leadership about exploiting the aggregated potential from groups of people, even if multiplying leaders seek influence from others they are still leaders, while in shared leadership peers with influencing interacts.

### 3.3.2 Lateral Structured Leadership Concepts

Concepts similar to shared leadership with a lateral influence are emergent, distributed and democratic leadership. Explaining emergent leadership as arguably similar to shared leadership Hollander (1974) and Pearce, Sims (2002) say it is a phenomenon where the leader is chosen by and from the members of a leaderless group. The difference from shared leadership is according to Pearce and Sims, 2002) the lack of a successive and serial selection of various leaders during the team's life-cycle.

Distributed leadership can according to Gronn (2002) be sorted into two main categories, numerical distributed leadership and distributed conservative action. Numerical distributed leadership is leadership spread out over two or more people in the organisation. Whereas distributed conservative leadership holds three sub-categories; “collaborative modes of engagement which arise spontaneously in the workplace..., intuitive understanding that develops as part of close working relations among colleagues..., structural relations and institutionalised arrangements which constitute attempts to regularise distributed action” (Gronn, 2002, pp.429). Depending on the situational context Spillane (2005) say shared leadership can be encompassed under distributed leadership. However working with a shared leadership approaches does not mean that a distributed leadership perspective needs to be adopted (Spillane, 2005).

Democratic leadership is similar to shared leadership on several points, but differ on a few points and on several points the difference is more a matter of degree rather than a clear cut chasms dividing the two. According to Woods (2004) democratic leadership styles gives influencing rights and possibilities for an unhindered advocacy dialogue in situational contexts where participation and truthfulness is encouraged. Democratic leadership advocates participation on some level from all members in group decisions. Democratic leadership can be focused around one or more people in the group/community, changing and adapting in response to the collective will and goals of the group (Woods, 2004).
Carlsson, Tesluk and Marrone (2007) believe that closely related concepts of self-management and autonomous teams will promote shared leadership but not guarantee its development. Same thing goes for vertical leadership, like transformational or empowering, that strives for similar effects. Pearce, Wassenaar and Manz (2014) consider all leadership to be shared, simply to different degrees and formalisations, whereas shared leadership arise when everyone is leading and being lead. In terms of trust, autonomy and self-management is shared leadership similar to many other constructions according to Carlsson, Tesluk and Marrone (2007), but they are different with their shared cognitive purpose whereas shared leadership is about sharing influence. Concerning influence Mendez and Busenbark (2015) conducted a research on shared leadership as a potential resolution to male and female equality. Male leaders normally exert more directive influence whereas female leaders have a more supportive influence, but shared leadership was expected to reduce this difference. However the research identified the same behavioural gap in shared leadership as well.

3.4 Teams and Shared Leadership

A team is a group constituted of two or more people that work in tandem interdependently towards a common goal or objective (Gupta, Huang and Niranjan, 2010). Brown and Gioia, (2002), Gronn (2002) and Pearce and Conger (2003) put forward that, shared leadership is leadership shared between different members of teams and organisational departments/units. Ensley et al. (2006) said that team performances increased for a multitude of different team constellations and varieties when shared leadership was adopted. Pearce and Sims (2002) investigated team effectiveness and shared leadership and found a positive correlation while Pearce et al. (2004) found a link to enhanced team processes. Ensley et al. (2006), Ford, Seers (2006) and Mehra et al. (2006) agree that new venture, manufacturing and sales teams will increase their performance with shared leadership. Further on has consulting teams (Hoch et al., 2010), US army platoons (Avolio et al., 2003) and students (Carson et al., 2007) shown to benefit from shared leadership. Several studies have also shown that productivity, creativity, outcome and performance in teams can be better explained with diversity and shared leadership than hierarchical and solo leadership (Ensley et al., 2006; Pearce and Sims, 2002; Hoch, 2014).
The reason for groups to transcend from traditional leadership to shared leadership is according to Day, Gronn and Salas (2006) the complex environment that calls for the evolution of more dynamic leadership performance. Ilgen et al. (2005) believe that shared team leadership enable various cognitive inputs that can be optimised and lead to better outcomes. Srivastava (2006) consider the team leader to have the strongest influence on knowledge sharing and is therefore responsible. Temporary leaders in shared leadership is also by Cole, Walter and Bruch (2008) responsible for proactive conflict management, positive role modelling, strengthen cohesion and communicating goals in the group. Shared goals and vision is also what Hülsheger, Anderson and Salgado (2009) believe is the most important thing when leadership is shared. Lee et al. (2010) call leaders who enhance knowledge sharing by opening the communication to be knowledge builders. Leaders can be either internal or external and formal or informal according to Morgeson et al. (2010). When talking about responsibilities for team performance:

- Formal internal leaders: the most common, usually recognize as project managers or team leaders.
- Formal external leaders: are assigned sponsors, coaches or advisors that does not work with the group but supervise them in some manner.
- Informal external leaders: are rather supporting the group as mentors.
- Informal internal leadership: describes shared leadership, where leaders successively spontaneously emerge over time (Morgesson et al., 2010).

It is fundamental that all members regard themselves as part of a team in order for others to perceive them as a team (Kerr and Tindale, 2004). Developing Ilgen et al. (2005) further describes organisational teams as complex, adaptive and dynamic systems made for a certain task or purpose. Zander and Butler (2010) mention complex and multifaceted problem solving along with generating creative solutions as common group objectives. Slantcheva-Durst (2014) explain that the development of good team dynamics requires facilitation of time, effort and creativity. Bell (2007) add that diversity in combination with openness, acceptance, cohesion and collectivism will increase group performance which is supported by Zander and Butler (2010) who think people with different specialties make better groups. Hülsheger, Anderson and Salgado (2009) however believe that external contacts are a necessary source
for new information and inspiration in order to promote innovation in teams.

For teams to function effectively several different fundamental characteristics must be incorporated. Different fundamental characteristics could be; direction, what is the goal (Gupta, Huang and Niranjan, 2010), personal identification and integration with personal goals (Erkutlu, 2012), team dynamics and good “situational” suitable team leadership (Gupta, Huang and Niranjan, 2010). To increase productivity in teams it is important that members in a team get support and is recognized by other team members, this often leads to more open and sharing environment (Erkutlu, 2012). Lencioni (2005) say teams must overcome dysfunctions as absence of trust, fear of conflict, lack of commitment, avoidance of accountability and disregard for result, in order to function well. First there must be a good foundation of trust according to Lencioni (2005) since most people struggle with feelings of exposure and vulnerability. Day (2007) sees a way of increasing trust by lowering the power distance and delegating responsibilities. Higher trust will make the group take more interpersonal risks which results in a psychological safe climate according to Day (2007).

Edmondson (1999) say that psychological safety in groups will allow members to openly question, discuss, seek feedback and reflect, promoting the learning process. Lencioni (2005) argue that trust enable groups to have good conflicts with engaged and passionate debates without fear of personal retaliatory conflict, however it takes time to build such a trust and it needs to be continuously maintained. Members should not keep disagreements to themselves but instead challenge and question the premises of others in the group, maintaining an accepting and inquisitive spirit in the team while consciously searching for the best solution. Enabling a conflict free zone for everyone to engage in debate, standing up and speaking their mind (Lencioni, 2005). Lee et al. (2010) and Mooradian et al. (2006) connect trust to increased communication and thereby more knowledge sharing which Lee et al. (2010) also connect to organisational learning. Hansen and Hass (2007) define knowledge sharing as task specific knowledge being shared between two or more individuals which according to DeVries et al. (2006) are affected by individual attitude and style towards communication. Developing further Gruenfeld et al. (1996) believes in interpersonal familiarity, Cummings (2004) in structural diversity, Stasser et al. (2000) in knowledge diversity and Stasser, Stewart (1992) in small team size as positive factors when it comes to knowledge sharing. Lee et al. (2010) then argues for knowledge sharing to increase both performance and effectiveness,
leading to higher chances of meeting goals and expected quality. Something that is required for clarity which in turn is necessary for the third point mentioned by Lencioni, (2005) is commitment. Clarity is necessary if teams are to avoid assumptions and ambiguity in their discussions and later on for the individual comprehension and understanding group decisions. Enabling group members to commit to group decisions even if the decision represented their original concerns or opinion (Lencioni, 2005). Commitment will then in turn help foster accountability in the team, either individual or a sense of collective team accountability (Lencioni, 2005). Accountability is stronger if the team/leader is willing to confront and deal with difficult and challenging issues (Lencioni, 2005).

In absence of trust, fear of conflict, lack of commitment, avoidance of accountability and inattention to result are addressed, the team is focused and its needs are prioritised above individual needs the team will enjoy higher productivity and efficiency levels (Lencioni, 2005). Muethel, Hoegl (2013) and Gupta, Huang, Niranjan (2010) support that shared leadership concepts have a positive impact on performance. Muethel and Hoegl (2013) however specify it to independent professional teams where members accept influence from each other’s while Gupta, Huang and Niranjan (2010) put extra focus on the risk of conflict in the subsequent leadership transition. Even if amazing results have been discovered from shared leadership in various research, Fausing et al. (2013) could not find a positive relationship between shared leadership and performance which gives reason to be sceptical.
4. Subareas Influencing Shared Leadership

This section develops, provides insights and expand further in depth, on the theoretical argumentation in and around shared leadership as a social process, the psychological climate and shared leadership as well as how cultural factors relates to shared leadership. Giving the reader a better understanding of shared leadership in daily situations.

4.1 Shared Leadership and the Social Process

Shared leadership is more of a social process than vertical (traditional) leadership, a result from the inherent openness, equivalence and dynamic nature in these groups. The social process is an important aspect of shared leadership since the interaction between members affects the group's collective output. Social exchange and active influence in groups will according to Muethel and Hoegl (2013) stimulate shared leadership and its effectiveness. This however calls for good communication, meaning good language usage and accurate use of symbols according to Sjöstrand et al. (2001) since members need to be interpreted correctly by their peers, for shared leadership to work. If individuals encourage and recognize each other in a group they inadvertently support the fundamental requirements for shared leadership (Marks et al., 2001).

The social process found in the open environment of shared leadership can be connected to what Cannon-Bowers, Salas, Converse (1993) and Erkutlu (2012) summarize and label as a team’s mental model. A mental model is the common understanding in a group of people, in the case of shared leadership it means that a team interprets and coordinates tasks the same way (Cannon-Bowers, Salas and Converse 1993). The more accurate the mental model gets Erkutlu (2012) say, the more effective the team also becomes. In McIntyre and Foti’s (2013) study they say that mental model consistency is higher in groups with shared leadership coordinated from an external leader however they also say that mental model overlap is not connected to group performance. Developing on the praise and the positive outcome of sharing mental models Hoch and Kozlowski (2014) say that other attributes and factors that share characteristics closely related to sharing mental models, is similar intellect, motivation and behaviour among members. These are all positively related to stimulating the social
process and team performance.

Offering further support in favour of shared understandings Wang et al. (2014) argues that environmental and interpersonal familiarity have a positive effect on team performance. Developing on this Hoch (2014); Ensley, Hmieleski, Pearce (2006); Zander, Butler (2010) and Bell (2007) all agree that diversity in combination with cohesion will increase group performance, stressing that social-familiarity do not mean neglected social-diversity. Drescher et al. (2014), Wang et al. (2014) and Pearce, Wassenaar (2014) say that if allowances for factoring in the dimension of time, as an affecting factor of shared leadership is made, this shows that the development of a shared mental model with group specific social processes and structure takes time to achieve. However Nicolaides et al. (2014) contradicts this by say that time and familiarity will develop roles that diminishes shared leadership in teams.

4.2 Psychological Climate

Shared leadership not only demands high levels of knowledge and leadership attributes, but also the ability to conduct open minded teamwork with different people from diverse fields (Pearce, Wassenaar and Manz, 2014). Traditional leadership avoid these demands by giving downward control to hierarchical ranked managers, following predefined qualifications and instructions in their work. Establishing a team spirit that foster a sense of wellbeing among group members is crucial for shared leadership according to Wellman (2011). Further on there has to be trust (Bergman et al., 2010; Slantcheva-Durst, 2014; Drescher et al., 2014), integrity (Hoch, 2013), respect and transparent communication (Pearce, Wassenaar and Manz, 2014).

Expanding on the same theme Carson et al. (2007) argues that teams with shared objectives and purpose will have more motivated, committed and empowered members. Teams with these characteristics Avolio et al. (1996) say have an easier time transitioning leadership responsibilities between group members. Team members will in addition to this be more accepting and supporting towards each other if they share or have similar perceptions and understandings of objectives (Sears, 1996). Failing to create an accepting interpersonal environment that supports mutual influence will extinguish the purpose of shared leadership (Muethel and Hoegl, 2013).
To get the benefits from shared leadership, Liu et al. (2014) and Slantcheva (2014) say that there has to be a psychologically safe climate. This is supported by Edmondson (1999) who argues that individuals will not openly participate in questioning, discussions and reflections, neither seek nor give feedback, if they do not feel psychologically safe. Psychological factors necessary for shared leadership are not all on the same human interactional level. To reach some attributes a team might have to establish more basic and fundamental attributes to build on. This is similar to the thoughts of Abraham Maslow (1943) and his model “hierarchy of needs” from his paper "A Theory of Human Motivation" (Kenrick et al., 2010). The model provides an example of the various steps humans move through on the path to self-actualisation. Since shared leadership builds on teams needs and not on individual needs, this model will have to be seen from a team perspective. Helping us to understand that a team will not perform its best for as long as more fundamental needs have not been fulfilled. This model is therefore relevant in the question of how to implement shared leadership in teams.

![Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs](image)

4.1 Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (Kenrick et al., 2010)
4.3 Cultural and Environmental Factors

Cultural and environmental factors both affect the behaviour and values of people and consequently influence how shared leadership will work. Economic and political freedom, civil liberties and institutional collectivism all have a positive effect on the group member’s behaviour under shared leadership conditions. High assertiveness, uncertainty avoidance, human, learning and performance-orientation also has a positive impact on shared leadership behaviour (Muethel and Hoegl, 2013). Assertive and collective orientations are also mentioned by Pearce and Wassenaar (2014) as favourable characteristics. Institutional diversity and high power distance are instead examples from Muethel and Hoegl (2013) that has a negative influence on shared leadership.

Just like with institutional similarity Pearce, Wassenaar, Manz (2014) and Drescher et al. (2014) argue that members in teams should possess skills and attributes of equal value to the group, in order to create as stimulating environment with as high valuable contributions as possible. Shared leadership team members need to acknowledge and respect other ways of thinking if a creative synergetic effect should arise (Muethel and Hoegl, 2013). At the same time there is a wish for diversity since multiple leadership is what shared leadership is all about according Bergman et al. (2010). Social diversity has been shown to positively influence group performance, productivity and creativity (Pearce, Sims, 2002; Bell, 2007; Zander, Butler, 2010). Some even claim diversity and performance to be correlated, making cross cultural teams effective (Ensley, Hmieleski, Pearce, 2006; Hoch, 2014). There is also a positive connection between knowledge sharing and structural diversity (Cummings, 2004) and knowledge diversity (Stasser et al., 2000). To summarize this are Pearce et al. (2009) saying that shared leadership groups are most effective when committing cross-functional knowledge-work, implying that members should have an equal level of institutional knowledge but coming from diverse fields and working in diverse settings.

Cultures impact different on areas making otherwise similar things stand apart this could for example be opinions or the power distances between workers and decision makers, however House (2004), Day (2007) and Pearce, Wassenaar (2014) see a positive effects from low power distances on shared leadership. It is believed to increase trust and interpersonal risk taking according to Day (2007), along with empowerment pursuant to House (2004). High power distances can make hierarchical leaders neglect shared leadership and followers to see
leadership as a privilege that only weak leaders would share, making shared leadership hard to implement in cultures with high power distance (Pearce and Wassenaar, 2014).

Surprisingly there is research presenting a non-correlation between power distance and collective leadership, applicable to shared leadership as well (Hiller, Day and Vance, 2006). Power distance and institutional diversity is however not the only environmental factors affecting shared leadership. Cultures offer different conditions for shared leadership which often has both positive and negative effects according to Ishikawa (2012), however he claim the Japanese culture to be more suitable for shared leadership than western cultures.
5. Discussion

This section hold a discussion to clarify the reviewed literatures positions around why shared leadership is growing in importance, the conditions for shared leadership, how implementation of shared leadership could look like, the possible outcomes from implementing shared leadership as well as critics against shared leadership as a leadership style.

5.1 Why Shared Leadership is Growing in Importance

Looking at the growing complexity and pressure put on leaders Pearce, Wassenaar (2014) and Pearce, Conger (2003) argues that shared leadership is a way to expand cognitive resources and accessed manpower. Leadership can then be transferred to the most appropriate person, letting the team perform tasks both fast and well. Taking this into account Bligh et al. (2006); Hoch and Kozlowski (2014) considers shared leadership to be the most effective leadership style, for handling knowledge intensive tasks as well as increased demands on individual leaders. To be able to handle even more complex situations in the future, there is a need for more flexible and varied forms of leadership (Bligh et al., 2006).

Developing more dynamic leader-follower interactions (Wellman, 2011) as well as operational conditions that fosters shared leadership will be an essential part in keeping up with modern innovation and effectiveness (Pearce and Manz, 2005). Slantcheva-Durst (2014) goes so far as to conclude that a top-down leadership approach no longer is a justifiable mean of organising human resources, instead time and effort should be put into the development of a participatory decision making structure. Having a leadership style that is organized so that it encourages organizational transparency, broader in house knowledge on shared leadership. On top of this a professional and sensible judgement for when and how shared leadership is to be enacted leads to more balanced and responsible organizational leadership (Pearce, Wassenaar and Manz, 2014).
5.2 Conditions for Shared Leadership

Functional conditions for shared leadership can be divided into;

- individual level
- group level
- organisational level
- human resource level

On an individual level the members must have knowledge, skill and ability along with openness, respect and acceptance (Pearce, Wassenaar and Manz, 2014). Supporting that the individual participation is dependent on personal skills and attributes Drescher et al. (2014) further argues that there is a need for mutual understanding of each person's expertise. Integrity is therefore regarded to be a valuable trait in order for someone to thrive in shared leadership conditions (Hoch, 2013). Muethel and Hoegl (2013) add that the group has to acknowledge the contributing parties expertise and validate their expertise in order to accept them as the best situational leader. Each individual also has to have some leadership skills according to Pearce, Wassenaar and Manz (2014) if the group is to maximize benefits from shared leadership. It is also important that each leader (group member) acknowledge others as leaders (Mehra et al., 2006).

At a group level there has to be trust, transparent communication and openness towards ideas and concepts put forward by others according to Pearce, Wassenaar and Manz (2014). Trust is by Bergman et al. (2010), Slantcheva-Durst (2014) and Drescher et al. (2014) seen as an essential part for shared leadership to work. Taking it a step further Liu et al. (2014) and Slantcheva-Durst (2014) connects trust in groups to a psychologically safe work climate. Empowering a group Slantcheva-Durst (2014) say result in creative interactions Liu et al. (2014) on the other hand say it is stimulates sharing. As an example Ford, Seers (2006); Mehra et al. (2006); Patton, Higgs (2013) and Hoch (2013) say that shared leadership suits new ventures where efficiency and innovativeness is necessary, contradictory to this Ensley, Hmieleski and Pearce (2006) believe that new ventures have an extra need for vertical leadership.
High group participation is another necessary condition according to Bergman et al. (2010), so the multiple leaders available in shared leadership teams are exploited depending on the situation. Several studies Hoch (2014) and Ensley, Hmieleski, Pearce (2006) argue that groups with diverse members will get better results, it have also been shown by Ishikawa (2012) that consensus diminishes shared leadership. Pointing out the necessary knowledge conditions Pearce and Manz (2005) conclude that the ability to resolve conflicts, communicate, hold meetings and conduct effective teamwork is necessary for creating favourable shared leadership conditions. From other researchers we get further support that good communication in general is a requirement for shared leadership and Lencioni (2002) believes that interpersonal communication builds trust which Drescher et al. (2014) connects to group functionality. In addition to this Drescher et al. (2014), Wang et al. (2014) and Pearce, Wassenaar (2014) add that continuity and time will help developing a shared mental model of social structure and process in groups, making them more efficient. New groups without an internal environment supporting shared leadership, will need some kind of coach to facilitate and develop shared leadership (Carson et al., 2007).

Organisationally there should be visionary goals in order to focus energy together with shared and prestigeless values according to Pearce, Wassenaar and Manz (2014). Supporting this Lee et al. (2015) say that teams need a shared direction and purpose Lindsay, Dayand Halpin (2011) adds that rank and protocol must be excluded (disregarded) for shared leadership to work. Addressing the need for structural support Hoch and Kozlowski (2014) in absence of hierarchical leaders and suggests a reward and punishment system, transparent information together with ground rules in order to foster the conditions needed for shared leadership. The more diverse group members are the more these systems are needed (Ensley, Hmieleski, Pearce, 2006), and Hoch (2014) say groups with shared leadership will perform better if the members are highly diverse, making international cross-functional teams well suited for shared leadership. Interesting points when it comes to diversity, is according to Nicolaides et al. (2014) and Hiller, Day, Vance (2006) that team size does not affect the functioning of shared leadership Carson et al. (2007) even say that larger groups will have more leadership resources and therefore is better at allocating leadership responsibility.

The conditional possibilities for shared leadership in online settings is according to Haiyi, Kraut and Kittur (2013) huge, as technology makes it possible for millions of people to
access the same network and be a part of an organisation. Adding to this Hoch, Kozlowski (2014) and Drescher et al. (2014) say cross-functional, knowledge based and international teams that work in virtual settings should benefit from shared leadership. Since shared leadership is not affected by the virtual setting conditions negatively unlike hierarchical leadership. Offering a contradictory assessment on situations with big projects Ensley, Hmielecki and Pearce (2006) say that outside of online tech based organisational structures, bigger projects benefits from the use of traditional vertical leadership structure as opposed to only shared leadership.

On a human resource level there has to be a group orientation encompassing 360-degree feedback possibilities, as well as group performance based compensation (Pearce, Wassenaar and Manz, 2014). The effectiveness in groups increases as a result of high social exchange between peers in the context of social leadership (Muethel and Hoegl, 2013). This is most evident in shared leadership groups that works on complex tasks that calls for interdependent work (Perry, Pearce, Sims, 1999; Pearce et al., 2009). Developing on this Hughton et al. (2014) say that the capacity and context of collaboration affect the level of shared leadership effectiveness. Evidence that even in traditionally hierarchical orientated groups of military teams could benefit from shared leadership has been found (Ramthun, 2014).

However Fausing et al. (2013) say that shared leadership does not improve teams that perform routine jobs or tasks instead it is more suitable for information processing knowledge teams with mutual and unpredictable tasks. High performing teams will in addition have more interpersonal shared behaviours (Carte, Chidambaram and Becker, 2006). Implementing shared leadership Small and Rentch (2010) believes bring out the most of people when it is implemented in long-term and self-managing teams with members of different expertise. Craig, Marnoch and Topping (2010) agree that it takes time to develop necessary relationships and dynamics in groups of shared leadership. Time could however require supporting action according to D’Innocenzo, Mathieu, Kukenberger (2014) and Pearce, Manz (2005) who say that shared leadership needs active maintenance stretched out over time. For any duration of time, Houghton et al. (2014) imply that a supportive climate will provide psychological empowerment and solidarity, increasing caring and efficiency in groups.
5.3 Implementing Shared Leadership

Starting this discussion it is important to remember that implementing any kind of shared leadership requires vertical leadership to facilitate and foster the right climate conditions (Pearce and Sims, 2002; Cox et al., 2003; Pearce et al., 2004; Carson et al., 2007). Making a choice between shared leadership and vertical leadership is further on pointless according to Carson et al. (2007) since the different styles work best in combination with each other. The first step in creating shared leadership according to Drescher et al. (2014) is to design groups with favourable conditions so there is an opportunity for shared leadership to thrive and flourish. One of the first things in creating favorable conditions for shared leadership is to form teams with high interpersonal diversity between group members in order to increase the group’s performance and outcome (Ensley, Hmieleski, Pearce, 2006; Hoch, 2014). Organisations that want to practice shared leadership should preferably start the transition by letting vertical leaders exercise transformational or empowering leadership (Hoch and Dulebohn, 2013; Kirkman et al., 2004; Kouzes and Posner, 2009).

Behavioural conduct in vertical leaders can influence and empower shared leadership according to Pearce et al. (2003) and Ishikawa (2012), external coaching is even considered essential by Carson et al. (2007). Following this an external (from the team/group) leader should start the initial process by coaching the team (Carsson et al., 2007). As well as establish and create a climate that fosters knowledge sharing, feedback and credit acknowledgement (Drescher et al., 2014). Although groups, teams that practice shared leadership is independent there can at times be a need for the continued availability of an external coach to facilitate and support a shared leadership environment in the group (Carsson et al., 2007). For the concept of shared leadership to work as it supposed to, Ensley, Hmieleski and Pearce (2006) say that the external and vertical leaders will have to gradually pass on responsibilities and control to the group. In order to decrease the level of outside interference or facilitation, groups-teams needs to have a clearly stated purpose (Slantcheva-Durst, 2014; Caron et al., 2007) and that everyone in the group is engaged in order to get the full effect of shared leadership (Bergman et al., 2010). Establishing groups with a sense of “we” is by (Wang et al., 2014; Yammarino et al., 2012) a critical part in the transference from a top down leadership, to a leadership follower interaction between peers. An essential part of integrating shared leadership into groups is therefore to build a team spirit, getting group
members to think of their individual accomplishments as the group's accomplishments (Wellman, 2011).

5.4 Outcomes from Shared Leadership

Using hierarchical channels and formal language decreases the sharing of information whereas shared leadership leads to increased knowledge sharing (Hoch and Kozlowski, 2014; Lee et al., 2015). Further Lee et al. (2015) and Hoch (2014) believes knowledge sharing stimulate higher creativity and group performance. Another factor that increases group performance is trust (Bergman et al., 2010; Drescher et al., 2014; Nicolaides et al., 2014; Pearce, 2009). Bergman et al. (2010) develops and explains that shared leadership increase acceptance among group members whereas Drescher et al. (2014) say that accepting others influence and influencing others will develop trust. Drescher et al. (2014) and Bergman et al. (2010) both state that trust generally is higher in teams with shared leadership than hierarchical.

Team performance is positively influenced by shared leadership (Carson et al., 2007; Hoch, 2013; Nicolaides et al., 2014; D’Innocenzo, Mathieu, Kukenberger, 2014) and shared leadership teams always outperform teams with top-down designated leaders (Pearce, 2009; Nicolaides et al., 2014; D’Innocenzo, Mathieu, Kukenberger, 2014). Transferring this to an innovative or entrepreneurial context, teams using shared leadership have been shown to demonstrate higher performance and innovation levels while exposed to and using shared leadership (Patton, Higgs, 2013; Hoch, 2013). Something that have been shown to be especially true for top management teams (Patton and Higgs, 2013).

Looking instead at how shared leadership affect team efficiency, shared leadership exerts a positive influence on team efficiency (Bois et al., 2010; Bergman et al., 2010; Wang et al., 2014). On the other hand Bergman et al. (2010) conclusively argues that there is a general overall positive effect from shared leadership. Developing on the same theme Pearce, Wassenaar and Manz, (2014) say shared leadership will result in a more engaged workforce as well as make the workforce more effective as a direct result of having multiple leaders available. Increased empowerment of individuals in teams, will increase effectiveness and result in better team performance (Manz, Pearce and Sims, 2009).
Looking at different published papers on shared leadership Wang et al. (2014), Liu et al. (2014), Pearce, Wassenaar, Manz (2014), Manz, Pearce, Sims (2009), Hiller, Day, Vance (2006) and Hoch (2014) all mention and argue that there is a positive relationship between shared leadership and team effectiveness. In Hoch (2014) several examples from management, consultancy, sales, US military (light infantry) and anaesthetic teams that all proven to be more effective when implementing shared leadership in comparison to traditional forms of leadership are mentioned.

In addition to increased acceptance, trust, creativity, knowledge sharing, effectiveness and overall performance there are other positive side effects of shared leadership. Small and Rentsch (2010) are saying that shared leadership will reduce the risk of corruption in top management teams. While Lambert-Olsson (2004) think it can prevents corrupt and immoral leadership actions. In addition to allowing minorities into management. Teams that use shared leadership have been shown present evidence for increased personal development and learning (Liu et al., 2014). Something that can be helpful when attacking and trying to solve problems as it gives a broader base from which to begin the search for problem solutions (Döös et al., 2005). Creating a supportive culture with a good foundation will increase team proactivity enabling teams to start solving issues before they are allowed to fully develop into problems (Erkutlu, 2012). Leading in turn to more invested and caring teams (Houghton et al., 2014).

Trying to sum up what outcomes that can be expected from shared leadership; Perry, Pearce and Sims (1999) say that successfully shared leadership can lead to better attitudes, beliefs and behaviours which can be essential for reaching team objectives.

5.5 Criticism Against Shared Leadership

Even if shared leadership is praised as a modern leadership style it is not a substitute for hierarchical leadership. There will always be a need for supervisors that open up and enables potential by encouraging and educating subordinates. Followers need support and guidelines from higher instances as well as decision makers responsible for initiating new ideas (Pearce, Wassenaar and Manz, 2014). The dynamic characteristics found in shared leadership could by Cawthorne (2010) cause some difficulties when it comes to exchanging information. Using
accurate language and symbolism correctly is important according to Sjöstrand et al. (2001) if
members are to be interpreted correctly and for shared leadership to work. In addition to bad
communication, Ramthun and Matkin (2012) say problematic conflicts and dissension are
things that groups need to overcome. Goal misalignment and misunderstandings between
member’s individual group members as well as between separates groups and the organisation
is nonetheless, an existing risk in self-managed teams (Pearce and Wassenaar, 2014). If
misalignment and misunderstandings are allowed within a group practising shared leadership
there is a risk that it leads to conflicts and disputes over the temporary leadership role (Gupta,
Huang and Niranjan, 2010). To combat these issues Ensley, Hmieleski and Pearce (2006) say
that vertical leadership is more appropriate in large-scale operations, internal organisational
changes and new ventures.

People easily fall into roles and patterns that can compromise the functionality of shared
leadership over time. To prevent this there is a need for higher authority to set up ground
rules, policies and goals, they might also be needed in internal conflicts cases. When shared
leadership is backed up by hierarchical structures time will have a positive effect on the
functionality of the group (Drescher et al., 2014). Time can have a mediating factor,
impacting and influencing performance levels in shared leadership teams, the resulting
outcome being that tenure in groups will increase positive outcomes (Wang et al., 2014;
Pearce, Wassenaar, 2014). Supporting this Wang et al. (2014) say shared leadership stretched
over time will develop positive familiarity, making groups more efficient.

Offering contradictory evidence to this, Nicolaides et al. (2014) imply that the concept and
effect of shared leadership unconditionally will decreases over time as roles are gradually
sedimented. In situations where shared leadership is practiced for longer periods of time,
under changing circumstances, facilitation and support might be needed to maintain operating
conditions (D’Innocenzo, Mathieu and Kukenberger, 2014). Groups that are experiencing
changing conditions and a variety of circumstances Craig, Marnoch and Topping, (2010) say
deteriorates shared leadership but at the same time it takes time to establish relationships and
group dynamic. Making shared leadership less efficient under short term and vulnerable in the
long term Craig, Marnoch and Topping (2010).
Looking instead at the shared leadership process and consider the demands for time, there can in situations that calls for quick action and negotiation which is the case for surgical and military teams be problematic to use shared leadership (Small and Rentsch, 2010; Drescher et al., 2014). More complex situations with higher pressure and demands that calls for speed and coordination Drescher et al. (2014) say can give rise to practical implementation problems with shared leadership. Present studies does not however offer homogenic conclusive argumentation for this Ramthun (2014) in contrast with Drescher et al. (2014) say that shared leadership is as operable as vertical leadership in critical situations. In support of this duality Shamir (2011) argue that time aspects can affect the functionality of shared leadership in teams both positively and negatively.

The open and intense environment in shared leadership teams are not for everyone according to Pearce and Wassenaar (2014) who say some people just are not receptive and open enough. Developing this Bergman et al. (2010) argue, some people may experience feelings of misplacement and frustration as well as a general sensation of uneasiness in association with shared leadership. Something that can be a problem according to Ojha (2005) mainly for those perceiving themselves as minorities trying to engage in knowledge sharing in groups. On the other hand Lambert-Olsson (2004) think shared leadership, affords an opportunity to involve minorities in management, making it a more legitimate method to engage and activate more people within groups.

The increasing demand for knowledge and expertise means that people with little or insufficient knowledge will not be able to participate or contribute to groups of operating under shared leadership conditions (Pearce and Wassenaar, 2014). Developing on this Fausing et al. (2013) explain that there is a connection between work-related information, knowledge intensity demands and performance in teams with shared leadership, meaning lower performance in manufacturing and higher in knowledge work teams.

Looking at shared leadership and performance Hmieleski, Cole and Baron (2012) found an indirect connection but believe that there is need for further research before any certainties can be presented. Barnes et al. (2013) agree and add that shared leadership will be praised, but considers it to be a naive approach for practical implementation without deeper understanding. Continuing on the same theme Carson et al. (2007) and Hoch (2013) say that
too few empirical studies have been conducted on shared leadership and its antecedents which makes for unsecure outcomes findings. Calling for more studies to be conducted to shred the perplexing ambiguity that surrounds the topic.

After having conducted their research Fausing et al. (2013) question shared leaderships overall implications, not finding any relationship between team performance and shared leadership. On the other hand Pearce, Wassenaar and Manz (2014) supports the idea of shared leadership, but acknowledge the need for a hierarchical underlying background structure. In their study from (2009) Pearce et al. suggest that shared leadership should work in conjunction with more traditional, hierarchical leadership.
6. Analysis

In this section an analysis of shared leadership is presented. The analysis is divided into four subsections “6.1 Shared Leadership for better or worse” where the idealistic nature of shared leadership is analysed. In “6.2 Hierarchical Needs as a Shared Leadership Paradox” an analysis around the seemingly dualistic way shared leadership requires both independence as well as structural support to work is conducted. In “6.3 Sharing with too many” we analyse and discuss problem of team size and the indecisive way current research both say size do not matters and that is do. In “6.4 Leading Towards Shared Leadership” in an effort to clarify how an organisation’s can move teams towards shared leadership we present a model and the various steps that needs to be undertake for an organisation to reach shared leadership.

6.1 Shared Leadership for Better or Worse

Strong optimistic words are written about shared leadership, praising it as an idealistic concept that will rescue future organisations. Bligh et al. (2006) and Hoch, Kozlowski (2014) considers it the most effective leadership style in demanding situations, while Pearce and Manz (2005) believe it increases innovation and effectiveness. Wellman (2011) argues for shared leadership as a necessary dynamic between leading and following interactions and Slantcheva-Durst (2014) promote a shared decision making structure. This will in turn lead to increased corporate responsibility according to Pearce, Wassenaar and Manz (2014). As if not enough, multiple authors find creativity, performance, trust, outcomes, learning, proactivity as well as sharing of knowledge and information to be positively influenced by shared leadership.

However, the concept of sharing leadership is not new. It is rather the term that defines this special way of sharing leadership that has been recently discovered and formulated. So why has shared leadership not been implemented in the past? Turning to the criticism of shared leadership, it can be found that both the conditional and operational factors of shared leadership are hard to provide. Trust is not only increased by shared leadership, but necessary. Trust has to be build up by acknowledgement and respect(Mehra, et al., 2003; Bergman, et al., 2010; Slantcheva-Durst, 2014; Drescher, 2014; Pearce, Wassenaar and Manz, 2014) and
sharing of information and knowledge require clear and good communication (Cawthorne, 2010; Sjöstrand et al., 2001; Pearce, Wassenaar and Manz, 2014). People's different perception and opinion might cause misalignment (Pearce and Wassenaar, 2014) and conflicts (Gupta, Huang and Niranjan, 2010) that diminishes trust, respect and finally shared leadership. In time there is risk for sedimented roles and dysfunction (Drescher, 2014; Nicolaides, 2014; Craig, Marnoch and Topping, 2010), at the same time as shared leadership needs tenure to develop according to Craig, Marnoch and Topping (2010). Other than that there is a need for knowledge and leadership abilities (Pearce and Wassenaar, 2014; Fausing et al., 2013), diverse members (Hoch, 2014), organisational support (Carson et al., 2007) as well as susceptibility towards the concept (Bergman et al., 2010). The leadership might also fail in quick or critical situations (Small, Rentsch, 2010; Drescher, 2014).

To handle these difficulties there is still a need for vertical hierarchical leadership (Pearce, Wassenaar and Manz, 2014; Ensley, Hmieleski and Pearce, 2006; Drescher, 2014) and many authors agree that further research is needed before this area and its total effect can be determined. At this point we can establish that shared leadership is a fantastic concept, increasing almost every attribute of a team, but to the cost of a rare and delicate composition that might collapse as soon as one of its components is compromised. If shared leadership is an idealistic leadership concept is impossible to answer, nevertheless is shared leadership along with similar concepts the closest thing to what people now and in history would call idealistic.

The problem is whether these concepts are feasible to implement and at least shared leadership seem to be dependent on an underlying hierarchical support. Trying to come up with an answer to the headline, shared leadership is idealistic in some situations and will probably still be so in the future. Anything close to an overall perfect leadership concept is naive to think off, but we can expect to get closer by establishing different leadership concepts perfect for different situations. We might also consider certain degrees of certain concepts as the perfect leadership. Google for example reached incredible heights by implementing a leadership model similar to shared leadership but only to a certain degree.
6.2 Hierarchical Needs as a Shared Leadership Paradox

Shared leadership an interesting concept. But how could something that is supposed to be a leadership style, where leadership is practised in an informal way? Where the role of the leader is supposed to be sequentially interchangeable between group members depending on who have the most appropriate skills to handle the situation at hand be dependent on outside support and facilitation? If so, is it then truly shared leadership? How can it be leadership sharing, if at any time an appointed structural leader can interfere and assume control of the group although with good motives?

Is this not the same thing as saying to a child that you may do as you like, as long as you behave appropriately? An adult may at any time come and interfere for no better reason that they do not condone the way things are done? Is this really trust? Can the group really take on joint responsibility and ownership of an issue if someone else is supervising the process and is ready to interfere at any point? Is it not then safe to assume that the people in the group will feel that they are not trusted and in turn reciprocate with lower levels of trust both towards the organisation and the others in the group?

How it is then, that Carson et al. (2007) say that new groups without an internal environment supporting shared leadership, will need some kind of coach to facilitate and develop shared leadership. Could it be that just like a toddler learning to walk, groups on the path towards shared leadership must be allowed to experiment and fail? Only when they do they are not alone to, instead the organisation provide an parental function that helps the team back up on their feet again giving the team alleviating support that allow them to learn faster.

Just like when a child grows it gradually gets more freedom and range of motion, Ensley, Hmieleski and Pearce (2006) say that groups practicing and developing shared leadership in the same manner gradually will take on more leadership responsibility from external and vertical leaders that have acted as facilitators for the group. Just like when a child venture out on their own might experience indirect parental influence (example: if you do this...you get this…or you do not get it). To use a reward and punishment systems can at times also be a necessary action alternative for hierarchical organisations. This could be the case when dealing with groups practising shared leadership in order to for example encourage and get them to have transparent information, establishing ground rules that foster the right conditions
needed for shared leadership Hoch and Kozlowski (2014).

As children grow, the ones that enforce rules and enact rewards and punishments changes from the parents to society. For groups using shared leadership once they have reached a mature stage they might no longer need the close firm structural support that was needed in the beginning but still the rules that was learned during the early days is needed as an underlying background structure (Pearce, Wassenaar and Manz, 2014).

As time passes and the underlying background structure, that support shared leadership changes with time and changing circumstances (Pearce, Wassenaar and Manz, 2014). To handle this additional support might be needed to support shared leadership within the group (D’Innocenzo, Mathieu and Kukenberger, 2014). The situation could be compared to someone growing old after having lived as a well-adjusted member of society on their own their entire life. However in their golden twilight of their life the person finds him or herself in a situation where they can no longer function as before on their own. Additional support from society might then be needed to continue function as an integrated part of society, supporting and facilitating their everyday life in order for it to continue in the best way possible.

Returning to the paradoxical nature of shared leadership; how can something that is so informal be connected and require structure and rules to function? Shared leadership should be considered in the same way as civilisation or freedom of speech it can only exist under the right conditions and if someone is willing to support it. Pearce et al., (2009) say shared leadership should work in conjunction with more traditional, hierarchical leadership. But do this necessarily mean that shared leadership is always better or that shared leadership in combination with other leadership forms can evolutionize move leadership effectiveness to a new level? It could be argued that the organisation and it traditional hierarchical leaders role in conjunction with shared leadership is to act as supporting forces opening up for the possibility of shared leadership.
6.3 Sharing With too Many

Considering that shared leadership teams often consist of people with diverse skills and expertise (Cummings, 2004; Stasser et al., 2000), conducting knowledge intense and complex tasks (Perry, Pearce, Sims, 1999; Pearce et al., 2009), it is surprising that team size is not more thoroughly investigated. Even more surprisingly is the fact that available research suggest that team size does not matter (Carson et al., 2007; Nicholaides et al., 2014), or that shared leadership teams benefit from increased human resources in larger groups (Hiller, Day and Vance, 2006). For potential practitioners and other interested parties this leaves a critical room of interpretation, where they have to figure out what the most beneficial team size is in their special case. Argumentatively the first thing one must be able to do before leading others, is leading oneself (Plöbst, 2013). A reasonable continuation would then be to assume that the complexity of leading increases for each additional person you lead. For example many top managers are leading more people than practically and logistically can be accommodated in an “on” site team. To be able to retain control and exert influence, top manager need the help of middle managers in order to handling each group. Taking a closer look at how the leadership situation in today’s organisations looks like, there is a clear limitation of the number of contact surfaces and relationships a leader or any person is able to handle effectively before communication and relationships suffers.

Considering this and on top of it adding the complexity of sequential leadership transference and its effects on interpersonal relationships within a group that is practising shared leadership. One is soon hit by the realisation that there must be a maximum number of people that effectively can participate and practice shared leadership. The only source supporting this is Stewart (1992) who say that smaller teams easier share internal knowledge. Arguing for a limit on how many individuals a shared leadership team can hold, there is first of all a demand for leadership skills among team members. Each individual must be able to lead the team in situations where they possess highest expertise, but team members are chosen based on their knowledge in a certain area and not their leadership abilities. Other critical factors is the need for trust (Mehra, et al., 2003; Bergman, et al., 2010; Slantcheva-Durst, 2014; Drescher, 2014; Pearce, Wassenaar and Manz, 2014)) and good communication (Cawthorne, 2010; Sjöstrand et al., 2001; Pearce, Wassenaar and Manz, 2014) between group members in shared leadership teams. Along with the risk for misalignment (Pearce and Wassenaar, 2014) or conflicts (Gupta, Huang and Niranjan, 2010).
Based on how difficult it is to meet the required levels of these factors it is reasonable to say that shared leadership teams cannot be of any size. Although it might be theoretically advantageous with bigger groups that have more human resources available, increased group size would result in practical challenges of sharing leadership. A way to overcome these challenges according to Haiyi, Kraut and Kittur (2013) is by using online virtual settings where the conditions allow much bigger groups to share the leadership. Combining virtual settings with shared leadership is also supported by Hoch, Kozlowski (2014) and Drescher et al. (2014), implying that shared leadership could be essential in the growing area of virtual work. What the optimal number of team members is, are surely different depending on the situation and need to be further investigated before answered. What can be said is that it takes at least three people to form a group of shared leadership, and that a group will start losing its beneficial synergistic effect from shared leadership when everyone’s full capacity no longer is accessible or evident to the group. Virtual settings will probably enable shared leadership in bigger groups but even here must there be a limit. Until further research has been made regarding the optimal team size in different situations, practitioners will have to make their own estimation based on the earlier mentioned factors.

6.4 Leading Towards Shared Leadership

6.4.1 Five Steps to Move the Team to Shared Leadership

Based on the literature reviewed the following five progressive steps were developed; step one Knowledge and Understanding, step two Safe Climate and Trust, step three Openness and Sharing, step four Sense of We and Motivation and step five Shared Leadership and Creativity. Interestingly the five steps could be said to have a corresponding linkage to the five steps in Maslow’s model. Like Maslow's hierarchical needs the team and organisation needs to move through the different steps in order to successfully implement shared leadership. Moving through the different steps can be problematic for some teams and it can therefore be a required necessity that an outsider of higher rank facilitate the progression process. Ensley, Hmielecki, Pearce (2006) however say the need for outside interference should diminish as the team progresses upwards through the different steps.
6.4.1.1 Step One, Knowledge and Understanding

The first thing that is needed on the road towards shared leadership is the raw material required that is people with skills, ability, knowhow and expertise included in this step is finding and combining the right mixture of people possessing the skills, abilities and expertise, forming a group that together have all the necessary tools available to tackle undertaken task (Pearce Wassenaar and Manz, 2014).

American inventor Charles Kettering said “Knowing is not understanding. There is a great difference between knowing and understanding: you can know a lot about something and not really understand it” something that holds true on both a personal and organisational levels. If an organisation is going to be able to move towards shared leadership it is crucial that the people involved in projects and teams shared or have similar perceptions and understandings of objectives (Sears, 1996) and that the people in the group adds to the groups dexterity. When people understands a phenomenon whether it is other people or a task, it increases their ability to exploit caches of knowledge from different sources this affords them the means to accomplish cognitive tasks and goals (Bittner and Leimeister, 2014).
If instead misalignment and misunderstandings are allowed to foster within a team, this can easily lead to conflicts and disputes (Gupta, Huang and Niranjan, 2010). It is therefore important that team members have and develops a good understanding for both the task and team members knowledge and expertise Drescher et al. (2014) further it is important that this is in some way acknowledged and recognised to the other members of the team (Muethel and Hoegl, 2013). Sometimes is can be difficult for the group to achieve or create sufficient understanding on their own and outside facilitation from a hierarchical can paradoxically temporarily be necessary (D’Innocenzo, Mathieu and Kukenberger, 2014). However once understanding for the task and the various team members is achieved the team can move on to the second step on their path towards shared leadership.

6.4.1.2 Step Two, Safe Climate and Trust

After having assembled a team with the right skills and ability that understand both the task and each other's roles in the team members will hopefully not feel threatened by one another. However in order to keep developing the group and moving them along on the path to shared leadership establishing an environment where team members feel that they are in a safe environmental climate is important, in order to encourage a trusting team ambiance. During this step it is important to foster a team culture that do not put blame on individual team members for mistakes or for taking out of turn, questioning or discourages critical feedback (Day, 2007; Edmondson, 1999). Going hand in hand with a safe climate throughout this step trust is both a prerequisite and an outcome of having a safe team climate, trust enables people to open up and say things more directly, simplifying and giving clarity to inter-team communication.

6.4.1.3 Step Three, Openness and Sharing

Once the team or organisation have managed to create a safe environment climate where people feels trusting towards each other they progress to the third step openness. Friedrich Nietzsche said "We often refuse to accept an idea merely because the tone of voice in which it has been expressed is unsympathetic to us". Having an open environment where people feel comfortable and is open for opinions and ideas that deviates from their own they also become more inclined to share their own thoughts and ideas with others (Pearce, Wassenaar and Manz, 2014). The importance of this cannot be understated as ‘Light is the task where many
“share the toil” (Homer) and there should be in everyone's interest that both problems and solutions are shared freely between organizational members, departments as well as within teams. Sharing information, ideas and solutions with other when done repeatedly move the team, organisation to the text step (Sense of we).

6.4.1.4 Step Four, Sense of We and Motivation

Once people within the team, organisation are sharing information freely and ideas move and are explored faster creating something bigger than one cell, one individual where “The whole is more than the sum of its parts.” (Aristotle) people will start to see themselves as we instead of I. Getting people to start to think of their individual accomplishments as the group’s accomplishments Wellman, (2011) say is very important. Getting the group to this stage would mean that people no longer makes a distinction between what them, themselves accomplishes and the team or the organisation. Having opened up and illuminated, become more transparent and generous with what kind of information that is shared between peers as well as started to identify with the group individuals is empowered and motivated by the team, organisations and the goal held by the team organisation. The more the individual is synced with other team members and the team organisation the more effective the team also becomes. Erkutlu (2012) the more synced and harmonized McIntyre and Foti’s (2013) say moves the team closer to shared leadership and higher performance. The team, organisation now moves to the final level in our five step sequential staircase model to shared leadership.

6.4.1.5 Step Five, Shared Leadership and Creativity

The final step on the five step sequential staircase model to shared leadership is where shared leadership is achieved resulting in increased creativity, innovation, effectiveness, productivity and the sequential serial emergence of leaders within the team. Interestingly for shared leadership, is that it often is self-reinforcing. Each step a team or organisation takes up towards shared leadership step five one and reaching shared leadership the last step not only enables future progression but also reinforce steps taken on a lower level. Step five for example do not only increase the effectiveness and the team’s output and performance, it also develops inter-individual and organisational knowledge- understanding- safe climate- trust- openness- sharing- sense of we- motivation as well.
7. Google Case Study

The case is included to help the reader bridge the gap between the theoretical frame and reality. In section 7, we explore how Google’s working process is structured and how it ushers teams through the Five Steps towards Shared Leadership.

7.1 Is Google using Shared Leadership Ideas?

Officially being a company since 1998 (Google, 2015), Google have grown to become one of the dominating global actors struggling to assert their position as the air traffic controllers of the information highways. Although Google started off as a search engine, the company has expanded to other areas as well and now hold business interests in a variety of different fields, although most of them pertains to the company's core business, information technology. To illustrate the rapid growth and current economic strength achieved in less than 20 years Google reported controlling assets in excess of 131 billion dollars, 2014 (US SEC). Surging growth rates and rapid expansion like the one in Google's case create rippling organisational strains putting tremendous pressure on the organisational structure and culture. So have Google managed to maintain an innovative culture promoting creative sharing employees, empowering them to be selfless and invested in their work?

Google’s informal slogan “Don't be evil”, the brainchild of the Gmail creator Paul Buchheit (Morrow, 2008), says a lot about what Google wants to be and the type of cultural climate that the company tries to foster. Google have since the start tried to maintain the open culture often found in many start-ups (Steiber, 2012; Google, 2015). Highlighting the importance that employees should feel that they are contributing, allowed to share concepts and ideas, comfortable speaking up when they have something to say and sharing a common goal and vision (Steiber, 2012; Google 2015). To find the people most suited for work at Google people are screened and evaluated before they are selected, based on their raw intellect, ability to learn new things in diverse field, their diversity as well as their leadership potential and their drive for innovation and excellence (Steiber, 2012; Google 2015). To ensure that the people selected, truly adds to the organisation's diversity, new employees have to pass before a committee made up of their future peers so human tendencies to hire people similar to themselves are kept in check (Google, 2015).
One of the first steps in setting up the conditions for shared leadership in teams or throughout an entire organisation is to assemble the right mix of people, knowledge and skills needed to solve the task at hand. This is exactly what Google tries to do, find the right people that both have the knowledge and expertise needed and asked for. The fact that Google put a lot of effort into finding and matching the right kind of people for their organisation suggest that they have an understanding and appreciation for well-functioning teams. That Google's recruitment process involves people from different departments or teams to take part in the recruiting process, ensures personal diversity as well as connecting different parts of the organisation. Helping both people and departments to get knowledge and appreciation for each other's work as integrated cogs in the Google machinery. By doing this Google can be said to have moved beyond the first to sequential steps (knowledge and understanding) on the path towards shared leadership.

Google’s workspace, cafeterias and meeting areas are designed to create an aura of safety and acceptance, making people feel comfortable at work (Google, 2015). This is mirrored in the active way Google is looking for divergent thinkers that can help Google think different and stay ahead of the pack. Google do not only want people that stand out, that are different they seek, celebrate and thrive on being different both on a personal level and on an organisational level. In order to realise this Google have adopted an accepting stance towards people that deviate from the norm in one way or another (Google, 2015). For shared leadership to thrive in organisations it is important that the organisation adopts this kind of perforating stance and create a safe work climate that enables people to trust others so that employees feels trusting enough to open up. It is important that employees do not only have trust between each other but also trusts the organisation. In Google's case one way they to supports trust between peers is by leading by example that is by entrusting time resource managements to employees throughout the organisation. Perhaps the biggest example in Google of this is the 70-20-10 initiative, meaning that people supposed to spend 70 percent of their time on core business, 20 percent on projects that is related to the core business and 10 percent on projects not related to the core business or is of special interest to the employee (Strategos, 2014). Google is also careful to assign credit people when credit is due giving employees reason to trust each other and be open with towards each other both in problematic situations and possible solutions for those problems.

Having taken the steps through knowledge-understanding-safe climate-trust Google have
enabled their employees (googlers) an openness crucially important in both teams and organisations. Being open accepting and possessing an agile mind is according to much of the literature on shared leadership important. Google themselves say that having an open mindset have afforded them the possibility to move faster, more nimble though complex situations both in work teams and as a whole. Sometimes taking them in unplanned unexpected successes (Google, 2015). More importantly having an open structure in teams and as a whole allows employees to share information and ideas between team members, different departments and over traditional hierarchical barriers. Speeding up to the pace of which information and ideas are transferred in teams and throughout the organisation. Freely sharing information and ideas, according to the literature, leads to a sense of unity or “we”.

From a shared leadership perspective establishing the “sense of we” is important as it leads to more motivated invested employees (team members). Google are on several levels trying to support and reinforce the “sense of we”. Here could the 70-20-10 resource allocation initiative, at least on an organisational level, serve as an example. By allowing employees to work on their own pet projects Google manages to connect employee personal goals to the organisational goals and consequently create a sense among employees that, what is good for Google is good for me. It is reasonable to assume that this level of commitment and dedication would also translate to work processes involving Google's core businesses and perforate into smaller teams working on specific tasks. This would also mean that because people see themselves as a unit, Google seems to support a culture where the at the time most suited person leads and suggest directions for the future, similar to what the literature say happens in situations with shared leadership. Limiting the scope of the magnifying glass and moving it closer to just teams in Google, Google themselves say that cross functional teams is at the heart of what they do (Steiber, 2012; Google, 2015), indicating that it is only by coming together as a group that tasks can be solved and that to work at Google means working in teams either supporting each other to succeed or fail as a team.

Having the type of motivated employees that have knowledge about each other's competencies, understand why that knowledge is needed, work in a safe climate that allow people to be recipients of others trust as well as trust themselves. So much so that it leads to an open and sharing culture in which people see them self as parts of something bigger (sense of we) triggering them to become invested and motivated for their work that seems to be true.
in Google's case. Creating what the literature describes as sharing leadership. Leading to a more creative and innovative organisation. Looking back at the historical development of Google, one relatively fast come to an understanding that many teams within Google have experienced high performance and output in combination with creativity and innovation. After looking at the work practices at Google in combination with the different steps found in the literature that indicates shared leadership within organisations and teams. It is then possible to draw the conclusion that Google have if not purposely but nevertheless inadvertently in large parts fulfilled the requirements for shared leadership, giving the organisation a boost in innovation and performance. Regardless of the appearance that Google is to some degree practising shared leadership it seems more than likely that in an organisation as big and widespread as Google, some blind spots and failures exists, where there is an apparent need for improvement.

Well-known former Google employee Marissa Mayer gives some critical insight to this matter. Mayer worked at Google for 13 years, she nevertheless adopted and developed a leadership style of command and control when taking over the CEO position at Yahoo. Mayer and her move from Google to Yahoo is interesting in many ways but what is most relevant in this case is that she performed well in two totally different leadership styled organisations. Mayer was able to successfully change from a sharing multiplayer organisation to an organisation with little too no signs of shared leadership, yet produce incredible results. This makes us question the value of having a complex fragile shared leadership structured organisation when goals and performance can be accomplished without this complexity. Her staff at Yahoo might not have been as happy as those at Google but when it comes to outcome and performance she gives new perspective on future leadership (Carlson, 2015).

From this we can postulate that leadership (styles) should be adjusted to fit the special conditions of each situation and that more investigation is needed before the unpredictable human being can be understood to further extent. Even if Google seems to be fairly successful implementing their own version of shared leadership it is worth to remember and reflect on the idealistic nature of shared leadership and if achieving it is even possible or desirable.
8. Conclusion

_In this section the findings from the study is presented as well as the limitations, implications and suggestions for future research._

8.1 Findings

The research purpose of this literature review project was to map and identify interesting areas about shared leadership. Investigating if shared leadership can help organisations become more efficient in a world of growing complexity. Focusing on why organisational (actors) should consider a shared leadership approach. Critically examine the potential outcome from shared leadership and how an organisation could move towards adopting a shared leadership approach, which steps conditions and actions would be required. While most of the researchers in the field is enthusiastic about shared leadership and thinks it is promising concept, research is still needed to increase the validity and reliability of the area.

We found out that leadership sometimes requires more from its leader than a single individual can provide, whereas shared leadership could increase leadership effectiveness and decrease pressure on individual leaders. By exploiting the aggregated leadership potential among a group of individuals through a successively emerging situational leadership, shared leadership becomes a creative, cross-functional and effective concept.

The findings discovered are discussed in the theoretical discussion under the headings;

- Why shared leadership is growing in importance
- Conditions for shared leadership
- Creating shared leadership
- Outcomes of shared leadership
- Criticism against Shared leadership

The following part will synthesize our findings from this study based on its purpose and research questions. Starting with the most crucial factor and fundamental component of shared leadership to work in teams, people. Each member have to be accepting and open towards leadership-follower interactions, willing to exert influence onto others, as well as
allowing influence from others onto themselves. Professional knowledge on an individual level combined with leadership abilities together with trust and diversity, enabling groups to utilize their broad collective capacity. To be able do this groups must establish and share a common purpose supported by ground rules. At times outside external supervision will be needed to provide the group with direction and general group feedback to make sure that the purpose is fulfilled in line with decided upon ground rules. The group and the organisation are then primed and ready to adopt and maintain a shared leadership organisational structure.

Optimal environmental conditions for shared leadership occur when a team face complex problems that needs to be solved in creative ways by cross-functional knowledge work teams. Implementing shared leadership then starts with the creation of favourable conditions. First among several things is the need for external support, usually in form of vertical and hierarchical leaders. Their task is to assemble a suitable group of people and establish as well as maintaining the shared leadership concept. Shared leadership is an unfamiliar and special concept that people must get used to before they can practice it effectively, which calls for successive transformation. Preferably the transition is started by formal leaders implementing a leadership structure with characteristics and traits similar to shared leadership. For example empowering, transforming or multiplying leadership. When putting together shared leadership teams the potential of individuals should be evaluated on personality, individual expertise and purpose of the group. To further support shared leadership, external vertical leaders should foster and ensure transparent communication, knowledge sharing and feedback.

The interactive influence of shared leadership showed to better handle complex and pressuring situations, also leading to more creative, efficient and effective groups compared to traditional leadership. Shared leadership also promotes knowledge sharing, learning and commitment, at the same time as preventing immoral or irresponsible actions from leaders. Adding this up, shared leadership becomes the optimal leadership when the situation allows it. The concept is close to perfect for as long as its components are in place, but it would be naive to say that it is an idealistic leadership. In some cases it is reasonable to implement parts of shared leadership to reach certain part of its outcome, as illustrated in the five step model. Shared leadership can efficiently produce creative solutions to complex problems by sharing the leadership role in cross functional knowledge work teams. Specific results from its implementation is however hard to provide as people act in inherently unpredictable ways.
Critical aspects of shared leadership which practitioners and researchers should be aware of, is: time, dependence, communication, group or individual misalignment and conflict. Stretched out over longer periods the passage time can lead to unfavourable shared leadership conditions. Simultaneously not having enough time can be an impediment to practising shared leadership particular in situations that calls for a lot of decisions to be made fast since shared leadership can be a time consuming process. The inherent vulnerability and fragile nature of shared leadership makes external support and hierarchical structure necessary and accentuates that shared leadership cannot function well independently. Paradoxically shared leadership that accentuates the notion as well as the of benefits of an informal leadership structure in teams, shared leadership seems to function best when structure and support is built in, but not practised, present but not restricting just enough to stabilise and facilitate the process when a chain in the shared leadership links falters. Too much communication with too little restriction could cause confusion while diverse interpretation might cause conflicts and misalignment within and between individuals as well as groups in the organisation.

Having people not well suited to work under shared leadership conditions exposes the organisation or group to the risk of having them opposing it. Which according to some authors they are perfectly right to do, since the increased demands from shared leadership often brings new levels of complexity to situations and making the work to demanding for them. Making the selection process for people to be included in shared leadership groups important. Actively choosing people that are open minded and accepting by having a high level of integrity along with trust and respect towards the competence of others. Counting in aspects of leadership skills, trust and communication there is also a restriction of how many individuals that can be part of a shared leadership team before it loses effect and potential capacity is going to waist. Until researchers has clarified how many team members that are optimal in different situations, practitioners will have to interpret available theory to figure out their optimal team size on their own. Teams working in virtual conditions could maintain a synergetic effect from shared leadership with more members than an onsite team, it is however reasonable to assume that there is a limit.

In the spirit of democracy and equableness, shared leadership is idealistic and will always be so. Considering the outcome of shared leadership there are critical aspects that only allow its full potential in certain situations, but in those situation it is the best possible leadership. As
an overall perfect leadership concept is not possible, we will have to adopt the best suited leadership concept for each situation, which in some cases mean a certain degree of a certain concept. Expecting more cross-functional, knowledge based and diverse team work, there is great potential for shared leadership in the future.

8.2 Limitations

The most obvious limitation of this research is the absence of empirical material and studies and the exclusive use of secondary data. This is however a conscious choice based on shared leadership to be of such character that a theoretical review makes a more valuable contribution than another empirical study. A literature review is in this way not bringing anything new to the literature but makes necessary contribution of what information that actually exists and what is needed.

Another necessary limitation in order to reach a valuable conclusion is the scope on shared team leadership. Shared leadership is only a part of the leadership area that is not restricted to one person and shared leadership itself can exist in other forms. In this way our research and conclusion is only applicable to organisational teams.

8.3 Implications and Future Research

The reason why shared leadership is a good leadership concept is obvious in theory: People possess certain potential, if that potential could be multiplied by the number of people in a group, they will reach a level of leadership attributes that a single person never could provide. What further research nevertheless needs to focus on is the practical implementation, to find out how shared leadership can seize the inherent potential of people and put it to collective use. This includes investigating what the optimal team size is in different situations and how shared leadership can contribute and help, meet the growing and changing demands of a complex future, where people were geographically separated and virtual work settings is more common.

Shared leadership and similar concepts are alike to such degree that a general and comprehensive term needs to be coined. In today's literature as well as practical business
situations the different terms cause confusion and voices have been raised in favour of international standard definition. Bearing in mind that this is an area of future growth it is good that detailed definitions separates even the most indistinguishable terms but it also calls of clarity in this early stage, allowing the area to grow into accurate, structured and understandable theories.

When it comes to implementing shared leadership there is one essential factor that will determine whether the concept will work or not, namely the people involved. The literature gives relatively clear directions to what environment and physical climate that needs to be established, how to establish it is however less described. Few sources explain how you get people to change to wanted settings and thinking while the absence of empirical examples leave detailed reactions and counteractions to be figured out. If not more detailed practical implication guidelines are produced there is a risk for the concept to be neglected or misconceived and implemented in the wrong way.

The literature praises much of the outcomes from shared leadership, but the scarce existence of shared leadership in organisations speaks its own clear language. The outcome from shared leadership in theoretical and empirical studies is often concrete, but what the outcome from real practical situations will be is often unforeseeable. As people are not predictable enough to give any guarantees, more descriptive literature about what to expect from share leadership could therefore help ease the transition towards shared leadership as well as promote the concept. A critical view on shared leadership should therefore be maintained until researcher’s reaches clarity if not consensus in regards to the ambiguity in and around shared leaderships. The majority of the literature is supporting shared leadership but nonetheless there is proof and arguments against the concept. Critique and criticism plays an important role in identifying weaknesses, such as areas where shared leadership is not suitable and what downside the democratic spirit might have.

When looking into the future one finds oneself thinking, that despite the ambiguity surrounding shared leadership, something’s can still be said on the subject that can help researchers and practitioners alike to be better prepared for what is to come. From a practitioner's perspective this would afford them the possibility to better understand what shared leadership is, so that they best can judge when it is an appropriate alternative and to
recognise the environmental conditions favourable for implementing shared leadership. From a researcher's perspective the value of knowing operational conditions, implications, and existing critic about shared leadership could be used as a foundation from which to conduct new research.
9. References


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