Strategic Project in Municipality Strategizing: A Dynamic Fit Perspective

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2016
Title of thesis: Strategic Project in Municipality Strategizing: A Dynamic Fit Perspective

Abstract: As private sector practices are taken to the public sector, also project management principles are applied during development processes in municipalities. This thesis aims to understand and generate knowledge about the fit of a strategic project in municipality strategizing by utilizing a case study design and adopting a grounded theory approach.

The retrospective case study consists of 23 rather unstructured interviews which are triangulated with secondary data comprising the case organization’s internal strategy documents, meeting minutes, organization’s promotional material, archival data and newspaper articles.

The findings show that there are good and bad aspects related to the independency of a strategic project and the consequent actions of people. The independency allows for new ways to work and combine knowledge, as well as flexibility in resources. However, due to secrecy, problems of inclusion revolve around a strategic project. Moreover, the independency of the strategic project is in interplay with top management interests, which ultimately influence the fit of a strategic project in municipality strategizing.

To improve the aforementioned fit, managers should promote transparency around a strategic project as well as aim to find ways to better include people either through physical participation or informational work. Overall, the fit of a strategic project in municipality strategizing is a dynamic social phenomenon since it concerns the people, their actions, interactions and interests that change specifically during a long process.

Keywords: Strategic project, Strategy-as-Practice, Projects-as-Practice, Process, Dynamic fit, Pluralistic, Municipality
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1 INTRODUCTION

Due to urbanization more and more people tend to move into cities, specifically to metropolitan areas where sparsely populated areas turn into densely populated ones. Yet, the city dwellers require services and good transport connections. Consequently, there is a need for strategic municipal area development.

The area development in a municipality is a process, which implies long-term perspective, based on the general relation of process and change (see for example Van de Ven and Poole, 2005), and the notion that municipalities may create visions reaching far ahead into the future (see for example Kornberger and Clegg, 2011). Consequently, process approach to city development has been adopted by researchers (see for example Ng, Wong and Wong, 2013). Although process as well as its definition have been studied rather extensively in organizational research, no single definition for process exists (see for example Van de Ven, 1992; Chia, Langley and Van de Ven, 2004; Langley, 2007). One of the least understood definitions views process as dynamic withholding the idea of change (Van de Ven, 1992; Langley, 2007).

The dynamic view withholding movement, events, activity, change and temporal evolution (Langley, 2007), which can be studied through the actions of people. Strategy-as-Practice research stream on strategy, looks at the actions and interactions of people on multiple levels either inside or outside an organization or both (see for example Kornberger and Clegg, 2011; Balogun, Best and Lê, 2015). Moreover, Strategy-as-Practice also accounts for the context in which the actions are taken.

Municipality as a context is pluralistic, since it comprises several actors with different interests (Cuccurullo and Lega, 2013) both inside and outside the municipality organization. Thus, when a private sector practice, such as project management, is taken to the public sector, the fit of the practice is interesting to look at since contextual traits such as the values and interests of people may be overlooked (Lozeau, Langley and Denis, 2002).

Fit, is an old concept which has been present in both organizational and strategic management research for a long time (for an early study on fit see for example Miles and Snow, 1984). In the recent studies, the fit has been also applied to project management (Cooke-Davies, Crawford and Lechler, 2009; Mullaly and Thomas, 2009). Despite the traditional view on fit as a static concept, it can also be seen as a dynamic
one, which means that it involves considering practices and action in certain moments during a process (Mullaly and Thomas, 2009; Nissen, 2014).

The red thread of my thesis is to study the fit of a strategic project in municipality strategizing\(^1\) through a case study. The case concerns the Finnish municipality \(^2\) of Vantaa where a separate project organization from the line organization was created in the field of Land use and Environment. The purpose of the project organization was to advance the strategic development of Kivistö area, previously known as Marja-Vantaa, and henceforth interchangeably referred to in the present thesis as Kivistö or Marja-Vantaa. Kivistö is an area which due to the opening of Ring Rail Line in summer 2015 (Finnish Transport Agency, 2015), can be seen to have converted from a somewhat peripheral part to an urban and well-connected part of the Helsinki metropolitan area. The study adopted an inductive grounded theory approach which consisted of collecting primary data through interviews. The data obtained in the interviews was triangulated with secondary data, namely both the organization’s internal and external documents attained on the case as well as with relevant previous research brought forward in chapter two.

The present thesis forms a part of an ongoing research project on strategy work in Finnish municipalities. As a part of this research project, a research contract with the municipality to collect data was established. However, the municipality did not provide funding or direct guidance for the present thesis, which increased the possibilities of conducting an objective research.

1.1. **Research problem and statement of purpose**

Langley (2007) sees that there is a lack of process research on strategic organizations - the kind that views a phenomenon dynamically for example in terms of activity, events, change and temporal evolution. Following the aforementioned call, the present thesis set out to study the process of an area development through the everyday actions of people, as presented in the Strategy-as-Practice approach to strategy and Projects-as-Practice approach to projects. During the analysis process of this grounded theory-based thesis, the fit of the strategic project in municipality strategizing arose as the

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\(^1\) Refer to page 5 for a definition of strategizing.

\(^2\) In the present thesis both terms ‘municipality’ and ‘city’ are utilized interchangeably, since the case municipality Vantaa refers to itself as a city.
central research problem, since the actions and interests of people were seen to influence the fit both positively and negatively.

As a case study, the strategizing concerned with Vantaa, with a special focus on the development of the Kivistö area, is interesting since in addition to being a notable undertaking for the municipality, it is closely related to one of the most noteworthy projects, namely Ring Rail Line project, executed in the Finnish metropolitan region. Moreover, there are also managerial and societal implications related to the project. The possible managerial implications noted in the present thesis entail the recommended actions taken by the managers mainly in the municipality organization. The societal impacts of the strategic development of Kivistö are manifold, including not only the implications on the current residents but also on the new residents and new businesses which provide employment and services not only for the residents of Kivistö or the nearby areas, but also, for example, to commuters passing the area by train. Additionally, from a personal perspective understanding how the process has evolved in the municipality is of interest to me due to having grown up living in Vantaa. Therefore, I had some previous knowledge about the topic although I did not know about the existence of a project organization prior to commencing writing the present thesis.

In addition to studying an interesting phenomenon, the present thesis has an objective of contributing to the research in the relevant topic areas which could benefit both practitioners and the academia. Firstly, despite the existing research on fit, some of which acknowledges it as a dynamic phenomenon, examining fit from a grounded theory perspective through what people do gives it a solid rooting in empirical findings instead of treating it as a predefined concept. Secondly, by looking at the actions of people related to a strategic project, the study adds to the growing fields of Strategy-as-Practice and Projects-as-Practice. Further, the thesis will also intend to provide the organization studied in the empirical part of my thesis as well as its stakeholders, with more in-depth information about the actions, interactions, interests and perceptions of people in and around a strategic project, so as to possibly inform the managers on how to improve their actions and practices during a strategic project in the future.

To this end, the aim of this thesis is to understand and generate knowledge about the fit of a strategic project in municipality strategizing by utilizing a case study design and adopting an inductive grounded theory approach.
Thus, my thesis seeks an answer to the following research questions:

1. How does a strategic project fit in municipality strategizing?
   
   1.1. How is a strategic project created in a municipality?
   
   1.2. How do the actions, interactions and interests of people during the project’s existence influence the fit?

2. How can the fit of a strategic project in municipality strategizing be improved?

1.2. **Scope and Delimitations**

Due to the in-depth nature of a case study and time restrictions, the empirical part is limited to examining the phenomenon only in one municipality and also only in one cultural setting of a country, situated in the metropolitan area of Finland. Studying the phenomenon only in one municipality clearly delimits the possibilities to generalize the findings of the study, since the studied phenomenon can be different in different contexts, for example in that of a small and a large municipality as well as in different cultural contexts.

Although the study utilizes material published at the time the phenomenon took place as triangulation material, the study relies heavily on the retrospective accounts of the phenomenon given by the informants. Therefore, the present thesis limits to studying the phenomenon mainly retrospectively and thus cannot be considered as a longitudinal study.

A long process such as an area development includes many different stakeholders in different phases and therefore it would be impossible to include all of them. Consequently, the primary data collection addressed the municipality organization's internal stakeholders as well as those external stakeholders who had been in contact with the project organization or knew about the strategic project created in the organization.

Since the purpose of the thesis is to study the fit of the strategic project in municipality strategizing, the area development from a pure city planning perspective, which looks only at the zoning plans, is amended by looking into the actions, interactions and perceptions of people in and around the project. The texts in the zoning plans have been utilized to withdraw events and actions so as to depict the process.
Although the financial aspect of a strategic project concerning area development is important as it requires large investment and long planning, the detailed study of financial matters is excluded due to the qualitative approach applied in the present thesis. Any financial aspects related to the issue studied, are briefly mentioned, but they do not serve as a base to evaluate the fit of a strategic project in municipality strategizing. In-depth studying of environmental effects of city planning is also excluded from the scope of this thesis.

1.3. Key definitions

**Fit:** There are several definitions for fit, some of which consider it as a static state between for example the company strategy and environment. The definition of fit applied in the present thesis considers fit as a dynamic concept which develops over time and thus incorporates change (Mullaly and Thomas, 2009). More precisely, the fit is thought of as a process (see definition of process) in terms of actions, interactions and related perceptions of people, which are reflected against the prevailing context (see definitions of strategy, strategizing and project).

**Strategy and Strategizing:** There are several different definitions for strategy; the one adopted in the present thesis is aligned with the definition adopted in Strategy-as-Practice perspective. Thus, “...strategy is conceptualized as a situated, socially accomplished activity, while strategizing comprises those actions, interactions and negotiations of multiple actors and the situated practices that they draw upon in accomplishing that activity.” (Jarzabkowski, Balogun and Seidl, 2007, pp.7-8).

**Strategy-as-Practice:** A perspective on strategy which emphasizes that strategy is not only something possessed by the organization, but also actions of multiple actors on different levels in the organization (Paroutis, Heracleous and Angwin, 2013).

**Strategist:** An actor who either intentionally or unintentionally shapes the strategy of an organization (Jarzabkowski, Balogun and Seidl, 2007, pp.11-12). In the present thesis, the strategist is specifically utilized to refer to one specific actor brought forward in the findings.

**Pluralistic context:** A situation in which multiple different stakeholders in or around an organization have different interests and views which they are entitled to promote (Cuccurullo and Lega, 2013, p.611).
**Process:** There are multiple different views on process and consequently also many definitions for the concept. The definition adopted in the present thesis is derived and combined from Van de Ven (1992) and Langley (2007) on process thinking. Therefore, a process is a dynamic phenomenon comprising change in activity and events.

**Project:** Project is a socially accomplished activity comprising actions of people which can be considered as processes (Hällgren and Söderholm, 2011 cited in Hällgren and Lindahl, 2012, p.338).

### 1.4. Structure of the thesis

The thesis begins with an introductory chapter which brings forward the topic, states the research problem, aim and the specific research questions as well as frames the scope and gives the delimitations of the study. Additionally, the introductory chapter provides the key definitions utilized throughout the thesis.

The introductory chapter is followed by chapter two, which sheds light on the relevant previous research comprising sections on Strategizing as social interaction, Projects-as-Practice, Process view on strategizing, Municipality as a context and Dynamic fit. The contents of these sections are considered to be relevant for the knowledge and theory building in chapters five and six, where previous research and theories are reflected against the empirical findings. The theoretical review was compiled prior, during and after the empirical data collection and it was only fully developed alongside the analysis process.

After the theoretical framework, chapter three introduces the methodology of the present thesis, gives justifications for each method selected and provides an evaluation of the success of the research. Additionally, the chapter provides the reader with relevant information about the case which is essential to know in order to understand the context and to interpret the findings.

Chapter four presents the whole development process, which consists of pre-project, project and post-project phase, by depicting it on a timeline. The purpose of the timeline is to be purely descriptive and to ease the understanding of how the development process of the area chronologically evolved without accounting for the perceptions of individuals. Therefore, chapter four is recommended to be read before moving to chapter five.
Chapter five comprises the findings, which are presented as a process. The findings are paralleled with previous research and quotes from the interviews are embedded. The findings rely mainly on the accounts of the interviewees about the process, including for instance their perceptions and unofficial events, which thereby distinguish it from chapter four.

Drawing on the findings, chapter six brings forward discussion about the dynamic fit of the strategic project in municipality strategizing. Further, possible differences to other strategic projects are brought forward and the findings are related to previous research. Finally, suggestions for further research are given.

Chapter seven concludes the thesis.

Appendices at the end of the thesis include an interview guide of which both English and Finnish version are provided.
2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter includes an overview of the relevant previous research on the studied phenomenon, which consists of research on strategizing as social interaction, Projects-as-Practice, process view on strategizing, research on municipality as a context and dynamic fit. Additionally, a conceptual framework of the thesis, which brings together each part in the theoretical framework, is presented at the end of the chapter.

2.1. Strategizing as social interaction

Strategic management as a field of research is complex which is due to the several different disciplines from which strategy can be studied, such as economics, sociology and psychology (Bowman, Singh and Thomas, 2002). Moreover, as a central part of strategic management, there are two common issues of dispute related to strategy, first on the relation of intention and action and second on the setter or creator of strategy (Tsoukas and Knudsen, 2002). Consequently, different perspectives on strategy have arisen. However, as delving into the different perspectives is not in the scope of the thesis, they are not further elaborated.

One of the aforementioned perspectives which is relevant to the present thesis, is Strategy-as-Practice, which views strategy to be more than something possessed by an organization and thereby considers actions of multiple actors on different levels in the organization as an important part of strategy (Paroutis, Heracleous and Angwin, 2013). More specifically, Strategy-as-Practice studies are interested in the human action and interaction in relation to strategy, consisting of both the formation and realization, not only on the managerial level but also on the micro level of an organization (Johnson et al., 2007, p.7; Balogun, Best and Lê, 2015, p.1288). Despite examining actions even on the micro level of an organization, Strategy-as-Practice also accounts for the context in which the actions are enacted or decisions are taken (Cuccurullo and Lega, 2013; Paroutis, Heracleous and Angwin, 2013, p.10). Since Strategy-as-Practice adopts a lens which examines the micro level actions of people, it provides managers with better insight on what truly occurs in their organizations (Johnson et al., 2007, p.12).

Strategy-as-Practice consists of studying three main dimensions which are practitioners, practices and praxis (Paroutis and Pettigrew, 2007; Paroutis, Heracleous and Angwin, 2013). Practitioners are the actors who comprise all the individuals who are able to influence the strategy, including either strategy formation or
implementation or both, or who want to influence it (Whittington, 2006; Vaara and Whittington, 2012). Moreover, Jarzabkowski, Balogun and Seidl (2007, pp.11-12) refer to practitioners when bringing forward the term ‘strategist’ who influences the strategy either intentionally or unintentionally. As already noted in chapter one, ‘strategist’ in the present thesis is utilized to refer to one specific individual or actor while ‘practitioner’ is utilized to account for all the actors.

“Practices are what people engage with” (Johnson et al., 2007, p.26), which means that they account for the practices which are embedded in the organizational or the institutional contexts in which people act. Some practices are the same in different organizations but there are also routines specific to an organization, which can be recognized from the repetitive and recognizable patterns of separate but yet interdependent actions performed by several actors (Feldman and Pentland, 2003; Johnson et al., 2007, p.26). In more detail, these practices withhold specific ways of doing things which is accompanied with certain type of behavior or a certain tool. Moreover, practices can be norms or accepted behavior related to a specific activity in the organization (Johnson et al., 2007, p.26). For example, Lechner and Müller-Stewens (2000), although not specifically referring to Strategy-as-Practice studies, note that context specific values and norms along with pressure of action and appropriate reaction influence the selection of strategic issues in organizations.

Praxis is closely related to both practitioners and practices, since praxis concerns the actual activity performed by the practitioners, the manner in which the practices are enacted (Whittington, 2006; Jarzabkowski et al., 2015, p.3). More specifically, praxis accounts for the actions taken by specific actors in specific times and places in and around structures and systems in a specific context (Feldman and Pentland, 2003; Johnson et al., 2007, p.27). Since praxis withholds the idea of a specific actor in a specific time and place, namely in a specific situation, it distinguishes itself from the practices. Due to the specificity of a situation, praxis, unlike practices, provides possibilities for completely new behavior to arise as well as to combine new and old behavior (Johnson et al., 2007, p.27). Thus, praxis, namely strategizing, is guided by the feelings and values of the practitioners in a specific situation and in a specific context.

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3 Refer to ‘Key definitions’ for a definition of a strategist and see more about the utilization of strategist in the findings chapter.
Due to possibilities to separate the aforementioned dimensions and the opportunities to build on multiple methodological and theoretical bases as well as to study different contexts, Strategy-as-Practice has become a broad research stream despite its young age, as Rouleau (2013) also argues. To bring clarity to the field, categorizations and divisions have been presented, which divide the studies for example based on the aforementioned dimensions of practitioners, practices and praxis (see more in Vaara and Whittington, 2012) and based on the inherent meaning of practices (see more in Rouleau, 2013).

Although the practitioners, practices and praxis are sometimes examined separately, it is important to look at them together as they are interlinked (Whittington, 2006; Vaara and Whittington, 2012; Jarzabkowski et al., 2015). Thus, Strategy-as-Practice which combines the three dimensions, looks at the practitioners, their activities and the practices or skills they utilize during the activity. The practitioners, who can present different professions, can be internal to the organization such as managers and professionals representing different levels of the organization or external such as consultants (Vaara and Whittington, 2012; Rouleau, 2013). Moreover, as Vaara and Whittington (2012) note, Strategy-as-Practice accounts for the consequences of strategizing which can be for example political.

Since examining practitioners, practices and praxis together is the purpose of the present thesis, relevant studies regarding the case which represent the dimensions of practitioners, practices and praxis are brought forward. The following studies were identified as relevant during the research process since they shed light on similar actions and interactions of people as those found in the empirical part of the present thesis.

Regarding the practitioners, a study about frontline workers conducted by Balogun, Best and Lê (2015) brings forward the importance of people acting on the micro level to the realization of strategy. They show how frontline workers of a museum are able to engage customers in the strategy process. In fact, an important notion from their study is that skilled practitioners, who possess context-specific knowledge important to customers, are able to interact with customers in an appropriate manner and consequently easily engage them in the creation of strategy. The appropriate manner

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4 See more about the research process in the methodology chapter.
withholds for example accounting for the specific norms of the customers and the context.

Further, a study about a committee conducted by Hoon (2007), focuses on the interactions between senior and middle managers in public administration. The findings show that the interactions in and around the committee, give possibilities to align the thinking of different management levels. Moreover, an important argument brought forward by Hoon (2007), which I find represents the inherent idea of Strategy-as-Practice, is that all the members of an organization are strategizing.

Concerning the practice and praxis, Kornberger and Clegg (2011), who have studied the strategizing in the administration of the City of Sydney with regard to a strategy project from a performative perspective, show that there are many even contradicting interests between the strategists in the city. Therefore, the strategizing disregards or silences some voices. Moreover, the findings of the research project also implicate that the manner in which strategizing is arranged in the city may not provide the best arenas for citizens to participate in strategizing or planning.

Somewhat similar to the findings of Kornberger and Clegg (2011), Mantere and Vaara (2008) in their practice-based study of discourses have identified discourses which promote or impede participation in strategy at many different organizations, one of them being a municipality organization. On the one hand, they found for example that discourses which promote participation include collective efforts in which openness and dialogue are in central role. On the other hand, discourses which impede participation revolve around secrecy and thus open strategy only for certain people. The aspects which impede participation are important to look at, since as Mantere and Vaara (2008) also bring forward, excluding some organizational members from organizational strategizing can lead to disregarding important knowledge.

In addition to the aforementioned research, for example studies conducted by Denis, Langley and Rouleau (2007) and Cuccurullo and Lega (2013) have focused on examining the context in their Strategy-as-Practice studies. These studies, although they represent strategizing as social interaction due to being Strategy-as-Practice based studies, are reviewed more in detail in another section dedicated to describing municipality as a context.


2.2. **Projects-as-Practice**

Alike strategic management, its subfield strategic project management or project management can be studied from the viewpoint of social sciences accounting for sociology, organization theory and psychology. However, the more traditional approach to study project management has been that of engineering or mathematics (Söderlund, 2004).

The traditional viewpoint to project management, as argued for example by Cicmil and Hodgson (2006, p.14 cited in Blomquist et al., 2010, p.5), concentrates on three main aspects, which form “an iron triangle”, namely time, cost and performance (Kerzner, 2013, p.5). The aforementioned triangle is managed during a project. Moreover, project management, specifically from the engineering perspective, can be seen to consist of different phases that are the project start, the project control and the project close-down process (Lundin and Midler, 1998). In fact, Lundin and Midler (1998) emphasize that the whole of project management can be viewed as a process comprising different processes embedded in it. Kerzner (2013) on the other hand, drawing from PMBOK's Guide, states project management to comprise five processes: project initiation, project planning, project execution, project monitoring and control as well as project closure.

Due to the need to understand projects as social phenomena rather than techniques, tools and the like, a complementary social approach to projects, referred to as Projects-as-Practice, has arisen. Projects-as-Practice takes into account the daily activities of individuals forming part of the project, such as the activities of project manager but also those of administrative staff and other ordinary staff who interact with the project. The focus of the approach is on the real-life actions of individuals such as planning and performing the actions. Moreover, the relation to other simultaneous actions and context is accounted for (Blomquist et al., 2010; Häggren and Lindahl, 2012). The simultaneous actions will be further examined in the next section concerning process view on strategizing.

In fact, the Projects-as-Practice approach, which looks at the actions of different individuals in and around a project, bases on the Strategy-as-Practice research. Thus, the three different dimensions inherent to the Projects-as-Practice perspective, comprise practitioner, practices and praxis (Blomquist et al., 2010). As the three dimensions are already well-elaborated in the previous section, they will not be extensively elaborated in the present section. However, concerning the praxis, an
important addition to the definition presented in the previous section, which concerns specifically projects, is made. The notion that each project, despite common characteristics to other projects, is unique (Blomquist et al., 2010) means that the situated and context-specific actions of practitioners are inevitably present despite the fact that practices exist in an organization.

Engwall (2003) presents contingencies which influence the project, mainly the dynamics inside the project. These contingencies include “parallel courses of events evolving in the context”, “institutionalized norms”, “values and routines of the context”, “pre-project politics”, “experiences from the past”, “technical content of the project mission” and “ideas about the post-project future”. Besides influencing the dynamics inside the project, I find that the aforementioned contingencies also influence the actions around the project, which is also of interest in the present thesis.

The cultural aspect, which withholds the aforementioned norms, values and routines, to projects is noteworthy. For example, Kerzner (2013, p.7) who can be seen to draw and build upon the traditional viewpoint of project management, states that a project should not change the culture of the corporation. In other words, the project and the surrounding organization should share the same culture. However, the project members are brought together to aim for a certain goal and in this case, as Grattan (2011) brings forward, a specific culture which guides the behavior and practices of people, is created. As noted by Gray (2001, p.105), the organizational culture defines the accepted behavior. Yet, the culture of an organization is difficult to truly observe by outsiders (Morgan, 1997, p.51). As can be withdrawn from Gray (2001), culture is also connected to climate in an organization. Yet, the connection is not easily explained. However, in an organization, the climate entails individual’s perceptions.

In addition to culture, also secrecy and its consequences influence the actions of people in and around a project, since secrecy often revolves around a project, specifically if the project concerns product development or innovations (Lundin and Midler, 1998, p.15). The aforementioned, as I note, applies specifically to private sector companies in which the secrecy around business ideas according to the old line of thought, in which innovations are not commonly developed in an industry, entails a leadership position for the company. However, as Sovacool and Cooper (2013 cited in Van de Graaf and Sovacool, 2014, p.18) bring forward, secrecy also revolves around megaprojects in the public side. When unique projects are kept secret, the outsiders of the project are not able to see what occurs, namely the actions of the practitioners in the project.
Moreover, at times the outsiders are not even expected to see inside the project (Lundin and Söderholm, 1998, p.15). The secrecy can bring problems of inclusion, as already brought forward in the previous section when the study of Mantere and Vaara (2008) was examined.

Feldman and Khademian (2007) have studied inclusion by examining the creation of communities of participation specifically by examining the role of a public manager in it. Although their study is not a Strategy-as-Practice based study, important points can be drawn from the study. It shows that informational and relational work are important to gathering the views and interests of people from different backgrounds, for instance professional or experiential. Informational and relational work, which consist for example of gathering and communicating as well sharing experiences, respectively, are constant actions which need to be taken so as to have inclusion and consequently make people feel that their perspectives are respected. Yet, complete inclusion, despite being an important goal, is difficult since there are always boundaries to the amount of people it is possible to include.

2.3. Process view on strategizing

The development of an area with regard to strategizing, namely all the actions and interactions of people, is a process. Process has been defined in several different forms in previous research. Van de Ven (1992) brings forward three different definitions and thus possibilities for studying strategy process. In the first definition, inputs and outputs are studied to explain the influence of one on the other, namely that of independent variable on dependent variable. However, the studies conducted according to the first definition are criticized for not shedding light on the order of events which occur between the inputs and outputs in the process. In the second definition, which is stated to be the most utilized one, process consists of different concepts of individual or organizational action. The concepts are fixed entities whose attributes can be measured on numerical scales. The second definition is stated to be able to show ‘if a change occurred’ but not ‘how change occurred’. In the third perspective, which is mentioned to be the least understood, process is looked at as a sequence of events, activities and stages which withhold the aspect of change over time (Van de Ven, 1992). The change can concern for example development, growth or the finalization of a thing (Langley et al., 2013), which I note can be for example of an organization. Thus, by looking at the
historical sequential development, the third perspective offers answers to how the change occurred (Van de Ven, 1992).

Langley (2007, p.273), who criticizes the variance studies for not accounting for what happens between the beginning and an end in a process, asides with the aforementioned third definition of process, as she sees process as a dynamic phenomenon which comprises of movement, events, change and temporal evolution. She states, while drawing from Sirower’s study conducted in 1997, that the variance studies can overlook for example resources, political negotiations, organizational cultures and their destruction as well as activity systems. Langley (2007) sees Strategy-as-Practice to apply well to the dynamic definition of process, since it comprises actions of people. In similar vein, the Projects-as-Practice applies well to the third definition of process.

Although the third perspective is promoted, it also has its shortcomings as noted also by Van de Ven (1992), since it overlooks the change in an organization, specifically between its different units, and considers process stages to neatly follow each other. To better capture the complexities of a process, Van de Ven (1992) draws from psychologists Van den Daele (1969; 1974 cited in Van de Ven, 1992, p.172) and Flavell (1972 cited in Van de Ven, 1992, p.172) who suggest examining processes of change in activities, namely progression. The progression can withhold either unitary or multiple progressions. The unitary progression is presented in figure 1. The letters “U”, “V” and “W”, as stated by Van de Ven (1992, p.172) “represent different patterns, stages, or phases of activities or behaviors”.

![Figure 1](image)

**Figure 1** Unitary progression as presented by Van de Ven (1992, p.172)

However, I find that the unitary progression model of a process alone is not sufficient to describe the complexities of a process with regard to the different actions and interactions which occur during a development process in a municipality. Also Langley
(1999, p.694) notes that the process model describing only a singular progression has been questioned by scholars and instead ‘parallel tracks’ are taken into examination. In fact, among the multiple progressions, is a progression which Van de Ven (1992) who draws from Van den Daele (1969; 1974 cited in Van de Ven, 1992, pp.172-173) and Flavell (1972 cited in Van de Ven, 1992, pp.172-173) presents as a ‘parallel’ progression. The aforementioned parallel progression is presented in figure 2. Similarly to the unitary progression, the letters in the multiple progressions model illustrate different patterns, stages, or phases of activities or behaviors. However, I note that there is the difference that the activities and behaviors and the like, develop simultaneously in the multiple progressions model. Connecting to Strategy-as-Practice and Projects-as-Practice view brought forward in the first section and second section of the theoretical framework, the progressions can represent actions taken by all the strategy practitioners, namely all the individuals in and around a project organization. Since the actions are related to practices and praxis, the progressions also withhold for example the interests and values of the individuals. Moreover, the context in which the actions are taken or put another way, in which the parallel progressions evolve, is accounted for.

![Figure 2](image)

Figure 2  A parallel progression as presented by Van de Ven (1992, p.173).

Moreover, in unitary and multiple progressions, also cumulative and conjunctive progressions can be accounted for. The cumulative progression model entails that for example future events and activities draw and build upon past events and activities. The conjunctive progression model withholds the idea that the different progressions in a multiple progression, such as in the previously presented parallel progression, influence each other. However, the influence does not need to be continuous but it can
be temporary. As the influence may be temporary, it can be difficult to observe (Van de Ven, 1992).

In addition to describing the definition of a process, a theory of a process which aids to understand the inherent meaning of how and why a process develops over time needs to be clarified (Van de Ven, 1992). Van de Ven (1992), who draws from a previous study by Van de Ven and Poole (1991 cited in Van de Ven, 1992, pp.174-181), presents four theoretical approaches for studying a strategy process, which are life cycle, teleology, dialectic and evolution process theory. The relevant approach for the present thesis is the dialectic process theory and thus the three other theoretical approaches will not be further elaborated (see more about the three other approaches in Van de Ven, 1992, pp.177-181).

The dialectic process theory is relevant for the present thesis since it sees an entity or an organization to exist in a pluralistic world where multiple conflicting goals are present inside and outside the organization. Power is central to the dialectic approach since it explains the moments of stability and change. On the one hand, stability prevails when the conflicting goals, which relating to the Strategy-as-Practice can be those of practitioners, are accommodated. Change on the other hand takes place, when there is no longer a balance between the conflicting goals, or more specifically, between the different interests and values that the practitioners promote. Political ‘battles’ of power can also occur. Consequently, the current state, for example of an organization, can change (Van de Ven, 1992). A municipality is a pluralistic context as will be discussed further in the next section.

Regarding the events which occur during the process, a specific event can entail the beginning of an action for people (Gersick, 1994). Connecting to Strategy-as-Practice, the event or momentum could imply for example a strategic decision which has implications on the strategizing. For example, if the momentum is accompanied with pressure and consequently the strategic decision is taken under pressure, people from different parts of the organization are easily excluded (Papadakis, Lioukas and Chambers, 1998). This, as will be seen in the findings and discussions sections of the present thesis, can be considered as an example of multiple progressions in which conjunctive progression can be observed.

With respect to progressions, Siggelkow (2002, p.151) presents linear progressions in his study about a mutual fund provider Vanguard. These linear progressions or
developmental processes are centered around core elements found in the organization. A simplified version of the progressions is presented in figure 3, in which a certain number represents an element. Siggelkow notes that there is interaction between the elements which contribute to different organizational configurations and ultimately on fit. Although Siggelkow does not account for the actions and interactions, I find that to describe a process, it is important to look at the actions of people related to the core elements. Examining the actions of people related to the core elements is also aligned with the Strategy-as-Practice, Projects-as-Practice and Van de Ven’s (1992) third definition of process brought forward earlier in the present section. This study will be brought forward again in the section concerning dynamic fit.

![Figure 3](image)

**Figure 3**  A simplified version of Siggelkow's (2002, p.151) progressions

Burgelman (1983) has studied the process of new ventures in a diversified major firm. What can be drawn from his study regarding the Strategy-as-Practice view presented earlier, are the actions of people on various levels of the organization during the process. Further, he brings forward that the strategic activities occur simultaneously and sequentially. Moreover, he notes the implications of context on the activities during the process.
Overall, to describe the change in a strategy process, as brought forward by Van de Ven (1992), or in the case of the present thesis, to describe the change in the strategizing, there should be a storyline that brings forward the sequence of events. In the present thesis, the factual storyline is presented as a timeline in chapter four. The storyline, which comprises the actions, interactions and interests of people as an overall process withholding multiple progressions around core elements, is presented in chapter five.

2.4. Municipality as a context

As brought forward in the section concerning strategy as social interaction, the context is important to Strategy-as-Practice perspective, since as for example Cuccurullo and Lega (2013) note, the context aids to better understand the strategic decisions taken. Similarly, from the Projects-as-Practice perspective, the context of project has been recognized as important in the previous research in order to describe and understand the conditions in and around a project (Hällgren and Lindahl, 2012).

Municipalities can be described to be pluralistic contexts since they are representations of divided power, different interests and multiple and conflicting goals both in and around the municipality organization (Jarzabkowski and Fenton, 2006; Denis, Langley and Rouleau, 2007; Cuccurullo and Lega, 2013). However, as Denis, Langley and Rouleau (2007) note, all organizations are pluralistic but to different degrees. Yet, I see municipalities as highly pluralistic due to their role. For example, municipalities as public organizations have a service provider role (Jarzabkowski and Fenton, 2006, p.634), which brings into the fore not only the interests and goals in the municipality organization but also those of the people outside the organization, specifically the people residing in the municipality. Moreover, the actions and decisions in a municipality are under the public eye and scrutiny, in whose conduct media has a central role (Crawford and Helm, 2009, p.73).

In addition and in relation to the pluralism, the planning in public organizations is characterized by politicking, which in the municipality organization’s case is not only limited to that of politicians but concerns all the people advancing their personal interests, such as managers and public servants. Therefore, the decisions in public sector organizations do not always follow from rational planning (Lozeau, Langley and Denis, 2002; Arnaboldi, Azzone and Savoldelli, 2004, p.217). In fact, as already brought forward when examining the strategizing in the City of Sydney (Kornberger and Clegg, 2011), some interests can be emphasized over others.
An important aspect of pluralistic organizations with regard to the decisions taken, is resource allocation (Cuccurullo and Lega, 2013). The importance of the resource allocation is heightened if the resources are limited. Consequently, projects compete for resources in pluralistic organizations such as municipalities (Parker, Parsons and Isharyanto, 2015).

Since there is divided power and interests over the decisions, problems of participation or inclusion in planning and strategizing can arise in pluralistic contexts. As previously brought forward in the section concerning strategizing as social interaction when the study of Mantere and Vaara (2008) was examined, secrecy can restrict the participation in strategic activities. Moreover, as was seen in the section Projects-as-Practice, secrecy is also connected to projects. Despite the good aspects that the inclusion can bring, the wider inclusion of people in a pluralistic context, as Cuccurullo and Lega (2013, p.624) argue based on their findings, results in unmanageable discussions.

In fact, strategizing in a pluralistic context such as municipality, and in the case of the present thesis in and around a strategic project, is challenging due to the various actors who are entitled to promote their different values, interests and goals. The different values, interests and goals further make the strategizing in a municipality emotionally complicated since it touches upon motivational aspects of individuals and groups (Cuccurullo and Lega, 2013, p.611). In essence, as can be withdrawn from Knights and Morgan (1991), inclusion in strategizing provides the people with a sense of well-being.

Moreover, communicating and coordinating the different values, interests and goals is difficult in a pluralistic context (Cuccurullo and Lega, 2013, p.611). The different interests, values and goals are closely related to practices, since as can be withdrawn from the section concerning Strategy as social interaction, which revolves around the ideas of Strategy-as-Practice perspective, practices can be norms or accepted behavior. Consequently, the problems of communication and coordination also fall on the practices and inevitably on the practitioners who perform them and on the praxis they have in specific situations.

Denis, Langley and Rouleau (2007) present three theoretical frames for understanding the strategizing in pluralistic contexts: Actor-Network Theory, Conventionalist Theory and the social practice perspective, which they refer to as translation process, accommodation process and social practice, respectively. Without delving into each theoretical frame as it is not in the scope of the present thesis, important aspects can be
drawn from each frame. Also Denis, Langley and Rouleau (2007), suggest that each frame can partly contribute to the understanding of strategizing in pluralistic contexts and that they can be examined as a whole. Thus, strategizing in a pluralistic context, such as a municipality, should be looked at as an ongoing process where the needs and values of different actors inside and outside the organization need to be understood through the practices and routines. Moreover, there can be moments when the interests are aligned in a way that specific undertakings, such as projects can be advanced.

Indeed, with regard to a strategic project in a municipality, the interests should be aligned since the supportive context is recognized as important (Parker, Parsons and Isharyanto, 2015). According to Parker, Parsons and Isharyanto (2015) supportive context is created by possessing the adequate management capabilities, which further contribute to project success. Connecting to Denis, Langley and Rouleau (2007), the adequate management capabilities in a pluralistic context would mean understanding the interests and needs of different actors inside and outside the organization, with specific regard to their practices and routines.

With respect to the actors inside the organization, the interests of the top management should be considered, since the importance of the top management support for a project is emphasized (Arnaboldi, Azzone and Savoldelli, 2004; Brown and Botha, 2005; Crawford and Helm, 2009). In a municipality, the top management support comprises both the managers and the politicians. The top management interests can be discussed and aligned in committees, such as the one studied by Hoon (2007), which was presented in the section concerning Strategizing as social interaction.

The understanding of the interests of the actors outside the organization, is related to new public management thinking, which has arisen in the public sector (Crawford and Helm, 2009, p.75). Alongside new public management, public value management (Crawford and Helm, 2009) has brought forward the importance of considering a whole network of different stakeholders and their participation in decision-making. As the purpose of the present thesis is not to delve deep into new public management as such, it will not be further elaborated here. However, let it be mentioned, as noted for example by Crawford and Helm (2009, p.75), that the trend in public management is shifting toward a larger involvement of community members, which in a municipality’s case means involving the citizens in the strategizing.
2.5. Dynamic fit

The concept of fit is old and it has been present in both organizational research and strategic management research for a long time. Originally, it can be seen to have arisen in the contingency studies, as brought forward for example by Mullaly and Thomas (2009) and Nissen (2014). Due to being an old concept, different perspectives on fit have been formed.

The first division in perspectives concerns internal and external fit. According to Siggelkow (2001), the former revolves around examining the coherence of activities in a firm and the latter concerns the coherence of the firm in relation to its environment. Siggelkow (2001, p.839) gives an advice to distinguish between internal fit and external fit. However, I find that when examining the fit of a strategic project into municipality strategizing through actions, the simultaneous examination of both the internal and external is present due to the interest of considering the actions of people on many levels in an organization and inside and outside of project organization. The organization outside of the project organization can be thought of as the environment of the project. In fact, as Ensign (2001) notes, the two perspectives are at times examined together.

In addition to the internal and external fit perspectives, also a division between static and dynamic fit is found in the fit research (Mullaly and Thomas, 2009; Nissen, 2014). As brought forward for example by Nissen (2014), most of the early research on fit, which bases on the contingency approach, sees fit as a static concept. However, for example Miles and Snow (1984), who bring forward the idea of fit between organization’s strategy, structure and management processes and whose paper can be considered an early work on fit, recognize fit to be both a process and a state. I see that the process view on fit reflects the dynamic fit perspective, which recognizes there to be change both inside organizations and in their environment. Thus, the dynamic view on fit applies well to the changing organizational conditions (Nissen, 2014). In fact, the dynamic view, as argued by Zajac, Kraatz and Bresser (2000), needs to incorporate strategic change, or regarding the present thesis, change in the strategizing, namely in the actions of people in and around the project.

Nissen (2014) who studies the concept of fit from organization design perspective, notes there to be two orientations to the dynamic fit, which are equilibrating orientations and fluxing orientations. Although the present thesis is more interested in
strategizing, namely the actions of people, than on organization design, the connection to organization design or structure cannot be completely overlooked due to studying the fit of a structure, namely project organization. Thus, an important idea which is considered relevant for the present thesis, is withdrawn. The fluxing orientation recognizes activity on many levels in the organization, the possibility and even the responsibility of managers to influence the fit during the process.

Nissen (2014, p.34) also presents examples of fluxing approaches to dynamic organization design, yet as they are not very relevant for the present thesis, they will not be further elaborated. Meanwhile, examples of relevant studies, which touch upon projects, process view and the pluralistic or public context of a municipality, are presented next. These studies, although they are not conducted from Strategy-as-Practice or Projects-as-Practice perspectives, bring forward aspects of action related to the case presented in the thesis.

From the project perspective, Mullaly and Thomas (2009) who in their study discuss their previous study conducted in 2008 concentrating on value of project management, bring forward that fit is a dynamic concept, which means that it involves considering practices in a certain moment. However, connecting to the process view on strategizing, there are multiple moments during a process. Also Mullaly and Thomas (2009) can be interpreted to recognize the fit as a process since they recognize the influence of past actions on the fit of project management. Additionally, one can draw that the context of the organization as well as the culture and the values present in the organization and around the project organization contribute to the fit of project management. The consideration of practices relates to the Strategy-as-Practice view brought forward before. More broadly, the fit as a dynamic concept connects to process, by looking at actions of people, be they either practices or praxis, in various moments during a longer period of time.

Cooke-Davies, Crawford and Lechler (2009) have studied the fit between an organization’s strategy and the implementation of project management system through four case studies. Although their study does not apply Strategy-as-Practice or Projects-as-Practice approach as such, but is merely a managerial approach as it concentrates on the implementation of project management systems, it provides an important point on fit from a strategic perspective. It shows that commonly taken decisions at different levels of an organization result in project management systems which fit the strategic requirements or values of an organization. However, I find there to be a shortcoming
on truly describing the different levels of an organization, at least following the thinking of Strategy-as-Practice and Projects-as-Practice, since only senior managers, project managers and customers were interviewed for the study.

Siggelkow (2002), as already brought forward in the section concerning process view, has identified core elements in an organization and consequently studied the configurations and fit. Siggelkow identified seven core elements which are “mutual structure”, “focus on conservatively managed funds”, “low cost”, “candid communication”, “focus on long-term performance”, “direct distribution” and “high-quality service”. The study of Siggelkow shows that the misfit, which in this case is of internal kind, is due to the contradiction between a new and an old element. While good aspects can be drawn from Siggelkow’s study, it does not describe a process as dynamically as a study from a Strategy-as-Practice perspective does. Therefore, although the study represents a process as progressions, I find it to offer mainly a static view on fit as relations of elements rather than actions and interactions of people related to these elements.

With regard to the specific traits of a pluralistic setting, Lozeau, Langley and Denis (2002) have studied the consequences of misfit between managerial techniques, namely strategic planning and quality management, normally associated with the private sector and the values and power structure of a public hospital at various sites. They found that usually the misfit results in changing the technique rather than changing the organization. However, they also found that in two outlier cases the organizational dynamics somewhat changed the organization. An outlier case, they refer to as the ‘customization’, shows that the organizational dynamics could be altered when there was a leader with clear hierarchical authority. Moreover, the department in question was an autonomous unit in its larger organizational context and thus there was no need to have complex professional relationships with the other departments in the organization.

As can be withdrawn from Lozeau, Langley and Denis (2002), managerial techniques from the private sector are taken to public organizations without considering the specific social actions and interactions of people in the context. The aforementioned withholds for example overlooking the power relations, values and interests. Thus, the techniques can be incompatible with the practices present in the public sector organization. I find the aforementioned to connect to Strategy-as-Practice and Projects-as-Practice, since they focus on examining the actions and interactions of people on
many levels of the organization as well as inside and outside a specific organization also accounting for the implications of context. Moreover, as actions, interactions and interests are not static in an organization, a process perspective, such as the one presented by Langley (2007) is needed to study the fit. Consequently, examining the fit as a dynamic processual phenomenon through actions and interactions of people, their interests and values with consideration of the context, is of interest in the present thesis.

2.6. Conceptual framework

The theoretical framework, as can be seen in figure 4, comprises five different sections which each contribute to the understanding of the fit of a strategic project in municipality strategizing. The first section, Strategizing as social interaction, relies on the Strategy-as-Practice theory which sees the human action in relation to strategy on various levels of organization as important. In similar vein, Projects-as-Practice perspective, which comprises the second part of the theoretical review, considers the actions of people in and around a project as important to describing projects as social constructions rather than merely manageable terms or phases from a more traditional engineering perspective. Thirdly, the process view on strategizing brings forward that a process, which can be viewed as simultaneous parallel progressions, comprises of events, movement and change. The fourth section, municipality as a context, relies heavily on theories of pluralistic context bringing forward multiple interests, values and goals which constitute the strategizing in a municipality. Lastly, the fifth section, dynamic fit looks fit as a process comprising actions, interactions and perceptions of individuals in the context.
Figure 4 Conceptual framework of the thesis
3 METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodology of the thesis, namely the research strategy and design, selection of the case and the subjects, data collection and handling as well as data analysis and theory building. Justifications, which derive from previous research and theory, for the selection of each method are given. Additionally, trustworthiness and authenticity of the research are evaluated and the case is presented.

3.1 Research strategy and design

The present thesis utilizes a qualitative research strategy, whose purpose in general is to allow a researcher to study the issue and collect the data at the site in which the issue occurs for the participants (see for example Creswell, 2014). Qualitative research strategy was chosen because it aids to understand the phenomenon through the eyes of those being studied (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Moreover, the qualitative approach which examines a process takes the context into consideration (Langley, 1999). Therefore, the qualitative approach serves the aim of the thesis to understand fit, namely the fit of a strategic project in municipality strategizing. More specifically, the aim is to understand the fit as a process specifically through actions, interactions and the related interests of individuals.

Further, among the many different research designs of qualitative research, primarily a grounded theory approach is taken, since it best applies to the purpose of creating knowledge on a phenomenon which has not been extensively studied (Creswell, 2014). In addition to the grounded theory approach, the study utilizes a single case study design. Case study design is applicable to the present thesis due to the aim of seeking an in-depth understanding of the studied social phenomenon (Bryman and Bell, 2011; Yin, 2014). To ensure the aforementioned in-depth approach in the thesis, I utilize triangulation method (see for example Eisenhardt, 1989). The primary data gathered in the interviews is triangulated with secondary data and existing theory as well as with the ideas which have arisen in the discussions with my supervisor.

The knowledge is inductively built to a theory from the primary data gathered through interviews. Somewhat in contradiction to the most traditional view on grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990), I acquainted myself as a researcher with previous research, which aided me in crafting the interview guide with some important ideas drawn from previous research and theories. The aforementioned also served as a triangulation
method further on the in the research (Eisenhardt, 1989). Additionally, familiarizing myself with some previous research facilitated guiding the interviews. Yet, to avoid being preconceived by the previous research and to minimize the consequent occurrence of bias in my findings (Eisenhardt, 1989), I acknowledged my stance arising from the previous research as well as the possible preconceptions I might have when conducting the interviews. Moreover, during the analysis I was asking how and why questions so as to not limit myself to the thoughts presented in the previous research and theories5 I studied prior to the interviews (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

In fact, as a researcher, during the interviews, I positioned myself as a master’s degree student who had some previous knowledge on the topic due to having studied some previous research, newspaper articles and having lived in the city. However, I did not provide the interviewees with my knowledge in the beginning of the interview so as to allow for the creation of a free narrative from their perspective. I believe that providing the interviewees with my knowledge in the very beginning of the interview might have directed the free narrative from the interviewees’ perspective which was planned to be the starting point for each interview. Consequently, it could have hindered the possibilities of finding new aspects to the studied phenomenon. Further on in the interviews, I did not render myself as unknowledgeable, if I had to probe for information or improve its flow. However, if the flow of the information was good, I allowed the interviewee to speak rather freely in order for new insights to arise.

I believe that the interview location somewhat affected my role as a researcher in a few interviews, since not all the interviews were conducted at the organization’s premises, but in more casual settings chosen by the interviewees. Therefore, in a few interviews, although my initial positioning was always the same in every interview, in these few occasions, the interview changed to a somewhat more informal and conversation-kind. Although in addition to the planned themes, also more informal topics were discussed in the aforementioned interviews, I find that the more informal settings than that of the organization’s premises, opened new avenues for probing more in-depth information on the studied phenomenon.

5 See section 3.5. for an account of the theory I had studied prior to the analysis process.
3.2. Selection of the case and the subjects

In qualitative research, the selection of research location and subjects is purposeful (see for example Creswell, 2014). The reasoning for the selection of the research location in the present thesis is the believed insights it can give on the phenomenon as well as accessibility. A research contract as a part of a larger research project was established, which allowed the present thesis to benefit from the access to a large array of material and consequently to better understand the phenomenon. Following the purposeful sampling methodology, firstly, the interviewees were selected based on the knowledge the individuals were known or expected to possess on the phenomenon studied due to their positions or background. Secondly, after interviewing the persons previously rendered as knowledgeable, snowball sampling was utilized to find the next interviewees based on the recommendations of the already interviewed individuals. Also emergent sampling was utilized, since a few names also arose from outside the interviews (Patton, 2002).

Interviewees, whose names arose, but who were felt to have been geographically or organization wise very distanced from the project organization, and thus of the phenomenon, were disregarded. The decision was taken based on the observation during the interviews that the further away one moved from the project organization, the less the accounts of the interviewees were concerned with the project when discussing the development of the area. Consequently, adding subjects was finalized at the moment when it was perceived that no new information on the events or about the actions related to the project emerged, but the topics of the interviews began to be more and more distanced from the project.

Altogether 23 persons were interviewed who include persons, who during the data collection period and also during the existence of the project organization, were both internal and external to the organization and represented different roles, organizational levels and functions. However, due to time restrictions it was not possible to interview a few persons and a few persons did not agree for an interview, since they felt that they do not recall the events well enough. Yet, I believe the other interviewees and the secondary material informed me about the roles and actions of the persons who were not interviewed.
3.3. The Case

The case city, Vantaa, is a growing city with approximately 210,800 inhabitants located in the Helsinki metropolitan area. The city covers an area of 240.34 square kilometers (Vantaa, 2013; Vantaa, 2015b).

The city of Vantaa employs 11,000 people (Vantaa, 2014). The city organization, as can be withdrawn from the city’s organizational chart presented figure 5, is divided into five fields which are Mayor’s field, Group and Citizens’ services field, Educational field, Social and Healthcare field and Land use, Construction and Environment field. Each field has one or two vice mayors. The decisions in the fields are taken to the boards of each field (Vantaan kaupunki, 2014). The City Council has the highest decision power in the city. In 2013-2016, the City Council comprises 67 members who represent eight different political parties (Vantaa, 2016a).

The central field regarding the case, is the field of Land use and Environment, since in addition to being responsible for the sustainable development and maintenance of the municipality's built and natural environment, it guides and aids the other organs in the city (Vantaa, 2010). During 2009, the specific aim in the field was to renew the management practices and find efficient manners of operation so as to be able to offer services even with limited resources (Vantaan kaupunki, 2008, p.134).

The development and planning of areas is performed in the City planning unit (see figure 8 in chapter 4). At the moment the planning and drafting of detailed plans is divided into four detailed plan units: Western Vantaa, Kivistö, Central Vantaa and Eastern Vantaa (Vantaa, 2016b).

The city's strategy, which is drafted every four years, follows a balanced strategy model, which means that it is cooperatively decided upon between the politicians and the managers who are public servants. The ideas for the strategy are drawn from the different fields or the boards. The City Council is the organ which gives the final approval for the strategy.

The shape of the municipality area, which can be thought of as a butterfly, has implications on the planning and strategizing in the municipality. Specifically the

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6 During the existence of the project organization, the field was called “Land use and Environment field” which is utilized interchangeably with “Land use, Construction and Environment field” in the present thesis.
continuous division of political interests between the eastern and the western parts of the municipality was described to be notable by the interviewees.

The Vantaa city organization is characterized by operating with low human and financial resources. Moreover, the culture of the city organization in general is described to be cooperative since the different fields are included in the drafting of plans already at an early stage before finishing the plans. However, there are contradicting opinions on the culture of openness in discussions in the city organization, specifically concerning difficult issues.

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Figure 5  City’s organizational chart

7 Adapted from organizational chart (Vantaa, 2015?c) published in Finnish.
There are a few central concepts related to the case which comprise the following:

**Marja-Vantaa project** was a project organization created in the field of Land use and Environment in 2007 to plan and develop the area of Marja-Vantaa. The amount of the employees in the project organization varied, since only three to four members had permanent contracts and the others had temporary contracts. For example, in 2009, the project consisted of 8-9 persons (Vantaan kaupunki, 2008, p.187). In 2012, the project organization consisted of 12 employees and one substitute. The project members were mainly architects or engineers. At times, the project utilized planning resources, namely human resources from the larger municipality organization.

**Kivistö**, formerly known as **Marja-Vantaa**, is an area in western Vantaa. Kivistö in the present thesis is considered as the area comprising Vehkala, Petas, Keimola and Kivistö, which was shown in the component master plan in 2006 and which the Marja-Vantaa project organization developed. In 2008, the population of Kivistö was approximately 2000 inhabitants (Vantaa, 2008) and by 2030-2040 it is estimated to be at 30,000 (Varpanen, 2014 cited in Jokiniemi, 2014). Prior to the construction of the Ring Rail Line, Kivistö was a referred to as a small village with alike identity. Marja-Vantaa was referred to as a spearhead project regarding the construction of apartment and office buildings in the municipality’s strategy during the existence of the Marja-Vantaa project.

**Ring Rail Line** is a rail line which connects the before somewhat remote areas of Vantaa to its western and eastern parts and also to the Helsinki Centre. Kivistö is one of the stations on the Ring Rail Line, which went into operation in summer 2015 (Finnish Transport Agency, 2015). The planning of Ring Rail Line (Kehärata in Finnish) began in 2009 (Finnish Transport Agency, 2015) with the name Marja Line (Marja-rata in Finnish). Upon the completion of the Ring Rail Line, Vantaa hosted the annual Finnish Housing Fair (Vantaa, 2014, p.3; Finnish Transport Agency, 2015; Suomen Asuntomessut, 2015?a; Suomen Asuntomessut, 2015?b), which attracted visitors to the residential area of Kivistö. The construction of the fair area began in spring 2014 (Vantaa, 2015?b).

**Marja-Vantaa Committee**, was an unofficial committee which consisted of political decision makers and public servants who participated in the meetings. Among the public servants, a few project members participated in the meetings. Also other professionals were invited to occasionally attend the meetings. Marja-Vantaa
Committee usually gathered once a month unless a meeting was cancelled due to not having issues to discuss. The amount of participants in the meetings was usually around thirty people. The plans done in the Marja-Vantaa project were presented in the meetings in order to gain pre-acceptance for the plans before taking them to the official decision making bodies. Marja-Vantaa Committee operated from 2009 until 2012 which was one municipal election period.

**Marja-Verkko** is a co-operative local network comprising the city, the local associations, the church and companies in the Kivistö area. The aim of Marja-Verkko is to enhance discussion between the aforementioned parties by organizing monthly meetings. Additionally, Marja-Verkko organizes a variety of events (Kaupunki-innovaatiot, 2011?; Marja-Verkko, 2015?) Marja-Verkko was founded in 2007.

In addition to the aforementioned important concepts regarding the case, the interviewees utilized vocabulary concerning urban planning which may need clarification. Clarifications for the utilized concepts and the specific meanings they entail for the interviewees consist of the following:

**A master plan** is an area plan made for the whole city. A master plan is not as precise as a component master plan or a detailed plan. In Vantaa, two master plans were drafted during the planning of Kivistö in 1992 and 2007.

**A component master plan** is more precise area plan made for the exact area of Kivistö, based on which the detailed plan is drafted. Some aspects in the master plan were specified more or changed in the component master plan. In Vantaa’s case, the political decisions were said to be have been taken specifically during the drafting of the component master plan, which was done in 2006, and thus the plan entailed the objectives regarding the development of the area. The component master plan was approved by the City Council in 2006 and it came into force in 2008 (Vantaa, 2016?c).

**A detailed plan** is the most precise and final area plan in which the use for each area or subarea of an area, in the case, different parts of the Kivistö area are described in detail. Detailed plans were drafted during the project phase and they continued to be drafted after the finalization of the project.
3.4. Data collection and handling

The data collection consists mainly of primary data, which was collected by conducting interviews. Alongside the primary data collection, also secondary data, which consists of organization’s internal strategy documents, meeting minutes, organization’s promotional material about the area, archival data and newspaper articles, was collected from organization’s internal and external sources. All the data was collected in between April and October 2015. The different types of research data which I collected is presented in table 1. Additionally, the purpose for each piece of data collected is described.

The interviews were mainly conducted in the premises of the studied organization. However, some interviews were conducted at other locations chosen by the researcher or the interviewee. The interview type can be best described to fall in between semi-structured and unstructured interviews, since both types contain good traits to study the phenomenon in the present thesis. On the one hand, the good aspect drawn from the unstructured interview was the possibility for the interviewee to rather freely give his or her own account of the phenomenon, and thus allow for a creation of a narrative. On the other hand, I see that the adoption of a hint of a structure from the semi-structured interview method, namely the possibility to ask questions, allowed me as a researcher to control for the narrative to stay on the studied phenomenon. Moreover, unlike in an unstructured interview, due to providing some structure, the traits of semi-structured interview allowed the interview time to be spent efficiently (Bernard, 2013).

The length of the interviews was planned to be approximately an hour. However, the actual length of the interviews varied from 10 to 70 minutes with the median length being 42 minutes. A few interviews were short which was at times due to the setting in which the interviews took place, such as an office where the interview could be interrupted by work issues.

All the interviews with the 23 interviewees were recorded. The permission for the recording of an interview was asked in the beginning of each interview. Requesting permission in the beginning of the interview possibly aided in being granted the permission, since creating trust face-to-face is easier than over the phone or by email. Moreover, all the interviewees were informed about the general objectives of the study in the beginning of the interview. However, as the present study was conducted as a part of a larger project, some of the respondents were already aware of the general aims
of the study prior to the interview. Additionally, all the interviewees were told about the
anonymization of the interviews.

As the interviews were conducted following a method in between unstructured and
semi-structured interview method, the interview guide utilized (see appendix 1 for an
English version and appendix 2 for a Finnish version) contained certain broad themes
or questions, but the main focus was on acquiring an in-depth free narrative from the
interviewee’s perspective. Either the English or the Finnish version of the interview
guide was utilized depending on the language of the interview. Due to the snowball
sampling method applied in the present thesis and consequently the fact of not
knowing which would be the language preferences of the interviewees as the study
developed, I had prepared to utilize either Finnish or English during the interviews
before conducting any interview.

Although the interviews were unstructured, the interviewees were always firstly asked
to describe the process freely from their perspective. Following the interviewee’s free
account, the themes presented in the interview guide (see appendix 1 and 2) were
discussed in a mixed order and by utilizing different forms of questions. Thus, the
questions presented in the interview guide serve only to give an example for the reader
since the questions were not stated literally in the interviews. The interviews moved
back and forth between the themes and at times even new themes, which were
connected to the previous ones, arose.

As aforementioned, the first piece of secondary data is organization’s internal strategy
documents, which comprise the different strategies created for the city, the different
zoning documents published by the city and other documents of strategic importance to
the interviewees. The aforementioned organization’s internal documents provide the
organization’s official perspective and therefore serve to confirm or disconfirm the
events in the narrative of the interviewees. Moreover, the internal strategy documents
serve to understand the strategic position of the area in the organization.

The second piece of the triangulation data, the meeting minutes, consists of the
meetings held by Marja-Vantaa Committee, the City Council and the City Board. The
purpose of the meetings minutes was to gain insight on the matters discussed and the
decisions taken at the different decision bodies and thus provide insights on the
political interests.
The third array of secondary data, organization’s promotional material about the area, consist of different brochures obtained from the interviewees, the organizational premises or online. The promotional material was utilized to obtain an understanding of the context and strategic position of the area in the organization. Due to the inherent nature of promotional material, which is to make something look as good as possible, the possible bias related to the marketing purpose is taken into consideration.

The fourth piece of secondary material, archival data, consists of a previous study attained from the municipality’s archives but which is also available from an external source, namely on the internet. The previous study aims to serve as a confirmation for the interviewee’s narrative about the process and therefore confirm the events depicted on the timeline. The possible author’s bias in the previous study is recognized.

The fifth part of the triangulation data, the newspaper articles, include articles from the largest newspaper in the municipality as well as from the country’s largest newspaper. The newspaper articles give the organization’s external perspective. However, as the perspective presented in the newspapers is always that of a journalist who might aim to increase the interest towards a specific news article, the possible bias in the newspaper articles is acknowledged. Yet, since the newspaper articles I utilized are from the largest newspaper in the municipality and in the country, I feel that they can be considered to be rather reliable as they do not represent yellow journalism.

Nineteen of the twenty-three interviews were transcribed by an external company, which did not in any other form participate in the study, and four were transcribed by me. The transcriptions of the recordings were done verbatim, to allow for the option to utilize quotes from the interviewees in the present thesis and to facilitate the data analysis pertinent to grounded theory approach. During the first nineteen interviews, I utilized a recorder and took notes by hand as a backup. During the last four interviews, I utilized two recording devices and took notes by hand as a backup. The notes written by hand were typed into a word file after the interviews. I also made two backup copies of each interview recording and the related notes, which were firstly saved on a laptop as well as on an external hard drive, and later to a password-protected cloud service to avoid any data loss. I created an excel list of the internal and external documents I collected.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of data collected</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviews</strong></td>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 23 interviews comprising 129 pages of interview transcriptions</td>
<td>to inductively build knowledge about the phenomenon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization’s internal strategy documents</strong></td>
<td>to triangulate with the interview data, to have the organization’s “official” narrative of the process and to understand the strategic position of the area in the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- different strategy documents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- different zoning documents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- other documents of strategic value for the interviewees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meeting minutes</strong></td>
<td>to triangulate with the interview data, to provide the decision bodies’ political view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Marja-Vantaa Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- City Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- City Board</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization’s promotional material about the area</strong></td>
<td>to triangulate with the interview data, to gain an understanding of the context and strategic position of the area in the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- brochures given by the interviewees or acquired by the author</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Archival data</strong></td>
<td>to triangulate with the interview data so as to confirm the events of the process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- previous studies made about the municipality found from the organization’s archives or external sources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Newspaper articles</strong></td>
<td>to triangulate with the interview data, to give an external account of the phenomenon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- municipality’s and country’s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5. Data analysis and theory building

Firstly, a timeline, on which the main events of the process were depicted (see chapter four), was built in order to clearly describe how the process evolved. The purpose of the timeline is to serve as a purely descriptive and easy chronological presentation for the reader and not be an analytical account of the phases or events as such. Moreover, the timeline does not present multiple parallel processes or progressions during the process such as the ones related to the categories in the findings chapter. The crafting of the timeline began already during the data collection period by selecting the main events described by the subject from the field notes.

After building the timeline, the actual data analysis followed a process of coding which is inherent to grounded theory approach. The coding comprised of three phases, namely open coding, axial coding and selective coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1990), which is presented in figure 6. However, I took a creative leap (Langley, 1999) during the selective coding which will be explained in detail along with the description of the selective coding phase. Figure 6 only presents the phases in the coding process along with a few examples of the meanings and categories. The full category tables, which present all the meanings, concepts and categories for each sub-core category are presented in figures 9,10,11,14 and 15 in the findings chapter. All the material analyzed and utilized on the timeline and in the findings consists of interviews and triangulation material.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open coding</th>
<th>Axial coding</th>
<th>Selective coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meaning</strong></td>
<td><strong>Concept</strong></td>
<td><strong>Category</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;And then another was that, in Vantaa there was a will, it was seen that Vantaa can grow and there was a positive attitude towards it and the jackpot was exactly here in Kivistö.&quot; [Outsider 2]</td>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>Internal expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;...there was the financial interest involved in Kivistö.&quot; [Outsider 3]</td>
<td>Investment</td>
<td>City's financial interests</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 6  The data analysis coding process*

8 The meaning of sub-core category is explained in the paragraph concerning selective coding in the present chapter.
In open coding, the English or Finnish interview transcriptions were closely examined and read through multiple times to find appropriate concepts for a meaning which was brought forward for example by a sentence or a paragraph. After having the concepts, similar concepts were grouped together to form categories, which were then given an appropriate name (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The grouping of the concepts is not shown in the figure 6 or figures 9,10,11,14 and 15 since the figures only present selected quotes utilized in the findings section. The analysis on English text was done in English. In the case of Finnish text, the analysis was done as a mix, which means that the thought process began in Finnish as the text was in Finnish but as there was interplay with the theoretical framework, the concepts often appeared in English. Thus, the quotes from the interviews were translated into English during the analysis, which I believe decreased the possible loss of meanings caused by researcher's non-native English speaker background, and aided to capture the inherent meaning of the interviewees during the translation due to the close examination and consequent immersion in the data.

Following the open coding, in axial coding, I made connections between the categories and consequently arranged the categories in new ways. For example, with respect to the coding presented in figure 14 presented in the findings chapter, I made connections between the categories of culture, inclusion and resources. I had done subcategorizing already during the open coding phase but in axial coding I was more carefully examining the properties of each category. Although the different phases in the coding could be considered to be consecutive, I moved in between the phases, specifically those of open and axial coding. Between the steps of axial coding and selective coding, I began to think about the story line (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

Further, in selective coding, I took the previously stated creative leap, which drawing from Langley (1999, p.708) can be done in order to make sense of the collected data in the best possible manner. Instead of arriving to what Strauss and Corbin (1990) refer to as ‘core category’ I arrived to sub-core category, namely expectations, common interest and amounting ambitiousness as well as independency of project organization and top management interests presented in figures 9,10,11,14 and 15 in chapter five, respectively. However, otherwise I followed the instructions brought forward by Strauss and Corbin (1990) for core category by connecting what I named as sub-core category to the categories derived from axial coding.
Lastly, after having the sub-categories I connected them and arrived to my core categories, which as stated by Strauss and Corbin (1990, p.121) present the phenomenon under study. The first three sub-core categories which I connected are expectations, common interest and amounting ambitiousness. The aforementioned three sub-core categories formed the core category ‘Development to a strategic project’, which is presented in the findings chapter as a headline. ‘Development to a strategic project’ had been crafted as a research question already during the beginning of the thesis process and thus did not derive purely from theory. The sub-core categories independency of the project organization and top management interests formed the core category ‘Interplay of independency and interests during the project phase’, which is presented in the findings chapter as such and in the discussion chapter is recognized and discussed as a phenomenon of fit. Although according to Strauss and Corbin (1990), having two core categories would mean having two phenomena, I see that I am describing only one. As mentioned by Strauss and Corbin (1990, p.166), it is important to consider the historical conditions of the phenomenon. Moreover, Langley (1999, p.703) notes the link between actions in subsequent periods in process research. Therefore, the development to the strategic project can be considered to present the pre-conditions to the phenomenon of the fit of the strategic project in the municipality strategizing and function as kind of an additional category and not as a second and separate phenomenon. The implications of the pre-conditions are examined in the discussion chapter.

After having the core categories, I wrote the storyline, which I had already given thought to earlier, as process in which I embedded the main events partly drawing them from the timeline which I had crafted already in the beginning of the data analysis process (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). However, it was not possible to provide the exact moment for all the events or evolvement since some of them rely only on the perceptions of people (Langley, 1999, p.693). In fact, the core category ‘development to a strategic project’ presented in chapter five, consists of expectations, common interests and amounting ambitiousness which cannot be given an exact moment in time. Merely, they developed as kind of sub-processes or progressions⁹ and served as drivers for action which can be thought of as the main process. Similarly, in the core category ‘interplay of independency and interests’, sub-processes or progressions were identified, namely around actions around the elements of culture, inclusion and resources. Overall, as Kornberger and Clegg (2011, p.41) note in their research, the

⁹ See the section ‘Process view on strategizing’ in chapter 2.
creation of the storyline in the present thesis was a subjective process which was inevitably affected by my epistemic preferences.

As I was writing the storyline, I selected the most representative quotes which I found to best describe the actions, interactions and perceptions of people so as to describe the phenomenon in the best possible manner. At times I selected several quotes to present contrasting views or to show the views of both the insiders and outsiders\footnote{Refer to the end of this section for a detailed description of the division of the interviewees to insiders and outsiders.} for the reader. In fact, the aim by presenting multiple quotes was to capture the richness of actions and perspectives of several individuals as in the nature of Strategy-as-Practice and Projects-as-Practice. Consequently, the text in the findings chapter as brought forward by Hälgren and Lindahl (2012, p.337) is a deep description of what people actually do and think and therefore the text is long.

Although there was an interplay with previous research during the analysis process, the categories presented in figure 6 and in figures 9,10,11,14 and 15 are not directly drawn from any theoretical source as such, but they are central elements found in the data, since in grounded theory the categories are crafted based on empirical data (Langley, 1999, p.707). I followed this logic so as not to be locked in previously made categorizations and to concentrate on my empirical data rather than imposing previous categories on it. However, I utilized previous research to find inspiration for concepts and words. Moreover, the implications of previous research on my categories cannot be completely neglected, since I had studied previous research prior to the analysis process. Therefore, I find it to be important to shed light on the previous research I had studied before the analysis process. Prior to the analysis process, I had studied some previous research related to Strategy-as-Practice, Pluralistic contexts, Project management and Process view on strategizing. Despite having studied the aforementioned previous research, the theoretical review of the present thesis was only fully developed alongside the analysis process. Theories concerning Projects-as-Practice and Fit arose during the analysis process.

In fact, I did not initially plan to study the concept of fit as such and thus it was not presupposed in my thesis so as to set variables prior to the analysis. Fit arose as a central and interesting theme to discuss from the findings as I began to notice that there were aspects in the actions, interactions, interests and perceptions of people during the process which enhanced or undermined the fit. Moreover, the change in the
actions and perceptions of people drew me to the concept of dynamic fit. Further, the different views about the project’s finalization, specifically the view that the project had been brought to an abrupt end from some informants’ perspective, inspired me to discuss fit. In fact, although my interviews were rather unstructured, I believe the themes, namely enhancing and undermining factors during the development and conflicts, in my interview guide resulted in finding aspects to the phenomenon which could be discussed as fit.

I validated my categories by paralleling the related actions, interactions and perceptions of people with previous research in the findings chapter (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Moreover, in the discussion chapter I continued to parallel my thoughts with previous research. In the discussion chapter, the previous research also included research on the concept of fit. I finished validating my findings against previous research when I felt that it did not make any new contributions to the theory I was creating in the discussion chapter (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 545).

During the analysis process, the interviewees were divided into insiders and outsiders based on how I perceived the interviewees had been able to participate in the daily work of the project by their own decision. The resulting division mainly followed that of project members and non-project members. Altogether, four of the interviewees were identified as insiders and nineteen were identified as outsiders. Additionally, one interviewee, who arose as important to the phenomenon, was referred to as a strategist in the text and in the quotes, term which was inspired by Strategy-as-Practice theory. The other interviewees were not identified separately, since the anonymization placed a constrain on the identification of people by their professions or by the position they held. However, I felt there was no considerable need to identify all the interviewees by their profession or their position. Yet, possibly some aspects of the phenomenon related to the backgrounds of the actors and the actual positions held by the actors could have been better explained to the reader if it had been possible to shed light on the aforementioned details.

Overall, the analysis process and the consequent theory building in the discussion chapter were iterative, which means that I compared theory and data in order to anchor the new knowledge in the previous research and theories. Moreover, I also moved inside the frames of the thesis process as I was also specifying my research questions during the examination of the empirical data (Eisenhardt, 1989). The research questions with which I began the study with were the following:
How does a development process evolve through social interaction into a strategic project in a municipality?

What kind of factors enhance and what kind of factors undermine the change to a strategic project in a municipality?

When commencing the research, I was not aware that the project had come to an end. After a process of specification during the research process, I arrived at the research questions presented in the introduction chapter.

3.6. Trustworthiness and authenticity

Since reliability and validity, criteria to evaluate the success of a quantitative research, do not directly apply to a qualitative study, other terms to assess qualitative research have been suggested (see for example Bryman and Bell, 2011). Trustworthiness and authenticity are appropriate concepts to evaluate the success of a qualitative research project. Trustworthiness consists of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Therefore, the success of this study is evaluated utilizing the aforementioned terms.

Credibility entails that among the many possible interpretations of the phenomenon, the researcher has arrived to one that presents itself acceptable also to others. Some actions have been taken to improve the credibility of the thesis. The first one is the use of triangulation. My interpretation of the events and the consequent description of the process depicted on the timeline were compared to that of a previous research project which describes the events in the case municipality from a chronological perspective. Regarding the actual interpretation of the phenomenon, by studying a somewhat large amount of subjects and by utilizing triangulation material from both the organization’s internal and external sources, the aim has been to arrive at an acceptable interpretation of the phenomenon (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

Transferability refers to the possibility of applying the findings to another context (Bryman and Bell, 2011). By making detailed descriptions of the studied phenomenon, setting, events and data analysis, I have aimed to improve the transferability of the findings to other similar contexts (Guba and Lincoln, 1985 cited in Bryman and Bell, 2011, p. 398). Yet, the context I studied was unique since the scale of the project was large. Therefore, I do not argue that all the findings can be straight-forwardly applied to
all other strategic projects undertaken in municipalities, but merely to projects with similar characteristics undertaken in similar settings. Moreover, the fit of a strategic project in municipality strategizing is a social phenomenon comprising the actions of individuals with their specific interests. Consequently, differences between the actions and interests in different municipalities may exist.

Dependability holds the idea that complete records are kept and available for evaluation (Bryman and Bell, 2011). To this end, I have previously carefully described the steps of the research process, including the data handling and conservation. Moreover, the interview transcriptions have been archived by my supervisor who has access to them and is thus able to evaluate them.

Confirmability means that although the researcher cannot act in a completely objective manner, she has ‘acted in a good faith’ (Bryman and Bell, 2011). As a researcher, I have acknowledged that I might have assumptions about the case due to my background as well having studied some literature prior to the data collection. By acknowledging the existence of the aforementioned assumptions and by describing them in the present thesis, I trust I have been able to minimize the effect of personal assumptions on the research or the findings.

Authenticity is concerned with the wider political impact of the study and withholds fairness, ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity and tactical authenticity. Fairness, regards the equal representation of the phenomenon in the social setting. As mentioned before, the interviews were conducted on different levels and functions of the organization as well as with external parties. Also triangulation method was utilized. Ontological authenticity revolves around whether the research contributed to the organizational members and other stakeholders’ knowledge about their social setting to gain better understanding of it. Educative authenticity refers to whether the research aided the members to understand each other. Regarding both ontological and educational authenticity, I know the research at least revoked the interviewees’ old memories of actions taken and also brought extra-organizational knowledge into the organization. Moreover, interest towards the findings of the present research arose among the interviewees. Regarding, catalytic and tactical authenticity, which brings forward the question, if changes in actions were taken owing to the research, I believe only time will tell but discussions to change or tackle issues did arise already during the interviews. Additionally, I hope the organization will benefit from the findings of the study (Bryman and Bell, 2011).
4 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESS

In this chapter the development process is described on a timeline which has different phases and events. The main phases are presented on top of the timeline. Each phase consists of events, the most important of which are depicted on the timeline. The events will be described more in detail under each subchapter dedicated to a certain phase. The purpose of this chapter is to present a descriptive factual timeline based on the factual classification of events and phases as perceived by the author from all the research material. Opposed to the findings chapter, the present chapter does not account for the perceptions of individuals.

4.1. **Timeline of the whole process**

In terms of the strategic project, the development process of the area presented in figure 7, can be divided into three phases which are the pre-project phase, the project phase and the post-project phase. The first ideas of Kivistö or Marja-Vantaa arose in the late 80’s, after which there was a separate project organization operating in the municipality organization during five years. The development and planning of the area is still ongoing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Pre-project phase</th>
<th>The Project phase</th>
<th>The Post-project phase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>late 1980s - 2006</td>
<td>2007 - 2012</td>
<td>late 2012 - present</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **First ideas of the area**
- **The area appears in the master plan**
- **Marja-Vantaa project began operating**
- **Funding and construction of Ring Rail Line is confirmed**
- **Marja-Vantaa project is finalized**
- **Ring Rail Line is finished, first inhabitants move to the area**
- **Future plans for services in the area**

*Figure 7  Timeline of the process*
4.2. The pre-project phase / Late 1980’s – 2006

The Marja-Vantaa area was seen as important, since it provided an opportunity for the city to grow and create income. The pre-project phase was long since it can be seen to have begun in the late eighties when the first ideas of Marja-Vantaa were born and to have finished when the Marja-Vantaa project began operating in 2007. The pre-project phase was a period of awaiting, mainly that of a decision from the state, of whether a crucial and later-to-be a parallel project to that of Marja-Vantaa project, namely Ring Rail Line project, would be granted financing from the state or not.

In 1990, a draft of the master plan was accepted for Vantaa. In 1991, the municipality and the area’s development company Marja-Vantaa Oy\footnote{Marja-Vantaa Oy operated between 1989-2007.} arranged a Nordic competition for ideas concerning the development of Marja-Vantaa. In February 1992, the results were published; no winner was selected but five different ideas were given a prize and another five were awarded with an honorary award. The jury consisted of the president of the City Council, mayor, vice mayor, director of the master plan and four other members from the municipality organization, two members of the Finnish Association of Architects, a professor, an architect and other private persons involved in the development. The area was shown in the master plan of 1992 in which preliminary ideas of the Ring Rail Line were also presented. In September 1992, the City Council decided that a separate component master plan will be created for Marja-Vantaa. Consequently, a draft of the component master plan for Marja-Vantaa was created in 1995.

Between 1995 and 2005, thorough plans and investigations, which concerned the area’s land use, the planned rail line, existing and future services, traffic, nature, history and culture, were conducted. The component master plan for Marja-Vantaa was created in 2006 and accepted by the City Council the same year. Nearly during the whole phase, from the 90s until the 2000s, the city either made agreements or acquired lands in the Marja-Vantaa area from the landowners.

4.3. The project phase / 2007 – 2012

In 2007, there were discussions about the funding of the Ring Rail Line between the city and the state and at least a few members in the upper echelons of the city organization knew that the idea of the funding moved forward in the Ministry of
Finance. In 2008, the decision to build and finance the Ring Rail Line was officially confirmed by the state. A new vice mayor, who was very enthusiastic about the development of the area and had previously occupied different posts in the municipality, was appointed and started in his post in the beginning of 2007. During the same year Marja-Vantaa project organization was created in the field of Land use and Environment by the vice mayor of the field at the time. The project phase was described as a period of planning, of specifically hectic kind, in the project organization. The project members were mainly moved to the project from other parts of the municipality organization. Additionally, there were also people with temporary contracts due to which the amount of the project members varied during the project phase, which can be seen in the case description.

Organization wise the project was placed directly under the control of the vice mayor from the field of Land use and Environment as can be seen in figure 8, which meant that the project manager reported and responded directly to the vice mayor. Moreover, the normal structures of presenting the area plans were modified, since the plans were not presented in front of the board by the director of City planning, but by individual employees of the project. Additionally, the project had its own budget. The own budget allowed a somewhat easier budgeting process for the project than that of other areas. For instance, the financing was not dependent on the municipality’s budget, since the project was financed from the fund. When the project began operating, the project members were placed in an open-plan office with the planners of the Ring Rail Line project. Location wise the project organization was separated from the planners of the other areas, since the City planning was located across the street from the open-plan office.

Along with the project organization, other new structures related to it were founded. In March 2007, the City Council decided to found a Marja-Vantaa fund, whose aim was to provide funding for the detailed plan and other activities related to the Marja-Vantaa. Also the salaries and other expenses related to the personnel of the project were covered by the fund. In addition to the own fund, also an own committee, namely Marja-Vantaa Committee, was appointed to ease the political acceptance of the planning made in the project. The committee operated from 2009 until 2012. Moreover, a steering group for the planning of the area was created to comment on the big decisions taken in the project. The steering group comprised leaders of the different departments in the field of Land use and Environment. Also work groups, with
different themes such as services, living, work, traffic, recreation and culture, were created under the project organization. The workgroups were cross-functional since they combined know-how from different functionalities.

In 2007, a citizen, who had seen the city grow and had had prior contact with the municipality organization, approached the organization. Consequently, Marja-Verkko was created and it began to operate closely with the project organization. In addition to other meetings arranged around the year, a tradition of a yearly community celebration, in which the city planners, members of the Marja-Verkko and the citizens could interact, was created.

In the beginning of the project phase, the vision for the future strategy was drafted in a small workgroup formed by the project members and people from the line organization. Between October 2007 and January 2008, a new international architectural competition was arranged by the project organization to plan the centre of the Marja-Vantaa area. The jury consisted of sixteen members of whom five were members of the project organization and the remaining were representatives of the City Council and City Board, notable landowners in the area, other members of the municipality organization and a member from the Finnish Association of Architects. In the second architectural competition a winner was elected in March 2008. Based on the winning idea, further planning, in which, for example, the idea of the Marja-Vantaa centre was connected to the other parts of Marja-Vantaa, was made in the project organization.

During the project phase, there were changes in leadership in the municipality. Firstly, a mayor who had started in 2003 retired in 2011. Consequently, a new mayor for the city and vice mayor for the field of Land use and Environment were appointed in autumn 2011. Also a new director for the City planning took the post in August 2012.
4.4. The post-project phase / late 2012 – present

The project organization, as it was organized from the beginning of the 2007, came to its end in late 2012. The end of the project organization meant change for the employees who had previously worked in the project, since they moved into the different line organizations. The planning of the greater Kivistö area continued in the Kivistö detailed plan unit in which detailed plans are still made for the area. The name of the area was changed from Marja-Vantaa to Kivistö in 2012 by the vice mayor.

As the project organization came to its end, the work groups and other supportive structures also experienced change. Firstly, the work groups which had operated under the project organization ended. However, there have been intentions to continue the operation of one of the workgroups. Also the Marja-Vantaa Committee ceased to exist. The Marja-Vantaa fund was turned into a reserve providing funding not only for the development of Marja-Vantaa but also to other areas.

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12 Adapted and combined of two organizational charts (Vantaa, 2010 and Vantaa, 2015?) published in Finnish.
In 2012 the construction of buildings began in the area. In 2015 the Ring Rail Line opened, the first inhabitants moved to the area and the housing fair was arranged in the area. Marja-Verkko arranged a big event in September 2015 to welcome the new inhabitants in cooperation with the city. Services are still planned in the area, for example, the detailed plan for the shopping centre was made and taken for acceptance in June 2015.
5 FINDINGS

In this chapter the findings are presented alongside previous research. Representative quotes from the interviews are embedded in italics. The words in brackets in the quotes represent omitted words or anonymized identification information.13

5.1. Development to a strategic project

The idea and the will to develop the Kivistö area had existed in the municipality organization for a long time and there had been discussions both inside the organization and between the municipality and external stakeholders during the pre-project phase. However, a separate project organization from the line organization arose as a new initiative in the field of Land use and Environment only at the end of the pre-project phase.14

During the development to a strategic project certain motivational “drivers” guided and triggered the action and interaction of individuals and thus lead to creation of a strategic project in the municipality organization. The drivers are expectations, common interest and amounting ambitiousness. These drivers are presented in figures 9-11 as sub-core categories that derive from the coding process15 conducted during the analysis of the data.

13 Refer to chapter three for more information on methodology.
14 See chapter four for descriptive timeline presenting the phases of the process.
15 See more about the coding process in chapter three.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Axial coding</th>
<th>Selective coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;And then another was that, in Vantaa there was a will, it was seen that Vantaa can grow and there was a positive attitude towards it and then the jackpot was exactly here in Kivistö.&quot; [Outsider 2]</td>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>Internal expectations</td>
<td>Internal expectations</td>
<td>City's financial interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;...there was the financial interest involved in Kivistö.&quot; [Outsider 3]</td>
<td>Investment</td>
<td>City's financial interests</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;And I don’t know how well we could have justified the rail project for the state if we had not had the concrete vision under way, about what we will have here, as a part of this agreement made with the state that we have this many apartments.&quot; [Insider 2]</td>
<td>Agreement with the state</td>
<td>External expectations</td>
<td>Extern...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;As it was seen as an urgent case, so it was taken [apart] as an own piece which was done faster.&quot; [Outsider 8]</td>
<td>Perceived urgency</td>
<td>Urgency</td>
<td>Urgency</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Figure 9  The sub-core category “Expectations”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open coding</th>
<th>Axial coding</th>
<th>Selective coding</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meaning</strong></td>
<td><strong>Concept</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Yes, it is a common will and a need, the matter was kind of taken forward on many fronts. And there was, was not that kind of juxtapositioning among the public servants. The development of the Kivistö area was seen as important for Vantaa.&quot; [Insider 1]</td>
<td>Common will and need</td>
<td>Common interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;It was separated from the City planning, actually I was against it. In my opinion, you should not have done it like that, but to keep it with City planning. But [the strategist] thought the opposite, and [the strategist] of course did what was in [the strategist's] power.&quot; [Outsider 3]</td>
<td>Strategist's use of power</td>
<td>Conflicts of interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The fact how this has been done, so the creation of the project came a bit surprisingly, you named it and for planning, zoning, you put a very own organization there.&quot; [Outsider 6]</td>
<td>Project a surprise</td>
<td>Secrecy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;...during the creation of the project there were discussions and all but, and I heard the kind of corridor discussions, that people did not like it and possibly were a little jealous of the project...&quot; [Insider 2]</td>
<td>Corridor discussions</td>
<td>Hidden dissatisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;When the project was set up and [it was] decided how it worked, everyone came along.&quot; [Insider 2]</td>
<td>Everyone along</td>
<td>Engagement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 10** The sub-core category “Common Interest”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open coding</th>
<th>Axial coding</th>
<th>Selective coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meaning</strong></td>
<td><strong>Concept</strong></td>
<td><strong>Category</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;We do very little architectural competition, they have their very own role, they are quite expensive, they are called SAFA-competitions. SAFA is the association of architects and it kind of fosters the kind of competition procedures in which the quality has an important role...&quot; [Outsider 5]</td>
<td>Architectural competition</td>
<td>Special focus on quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Well, then there were several phases, you kind of tried to initiate [the development]. It did not really succeed. And then when I started [in my position], I initiated it by deciding to create this kind of Marja-Vantaa project.&quot; [Insider 2]</td>
<td>Strategist’s ambitiousness</td>
<td>Ambitiousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;It is a question of leadership and of course the [fact] that, in a municipality, there are many kinds of undertakings and people see different things as important, and this just was important for me.&quot; [Insider 2]</td>
<td>Strategist’s personal interest and leadership</td>
<td>Personal interests</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 11** The sub-core category “Amounting Ambitiousness”
5.1.1. **Expectations**

Organizational agendas turn into strategic issues when managers place their attention on matters which are expected to bring the best outcome for a corporation (Lechner and Müller-Stewens, 2000, p.8). Kivistö area was one of the last large areas which could be developed in the city and therefore its development was seen to bring growth by attracting new inhabitants who would bring the city income in taxes. Thus, expectations revolved around the initiation and execution of the development, specifically in the upper echelons of the city organization, during the pre-project phase.

“And then another was that, in Vantaa there was a will, it was seen that Vantaa can grow and there was a positive attitude towards it and then the jackpot was exactly here in Kivistö.” [ Outsider 2]

More specifically, the city had made notable investments for example in the land purchases in the area already before the creation of the project organization. Consequently, there were expectations to have a return on the investment. Additionally, the area was seen to produce income for the city in the future.

“...there was the financial interest involved in Kivistö.” [ Outsider 3]

There were also expectations from outside the municipality organization, since housing was needed in the greater metropolitan area in which the municipality is situated. Discussions between the cities in the metropolitan area and the state had taken place and the development of the Kivistö area was the city’s response to the commonly recognized need and planned action to provide housing in the area. As the development of the Kivistö area was greatly dependent on the construction of the Ring Rail Line which would require participation from the state, the city negotiated with the state about the financing. Thus, the state had its own expectations with regard to the development of the area.

“And I don’t know how well we could have justified the rail project for the state if we had not had the concrete vision under way, about what we will have here, as a part of this agreement made with the state that we have this many apartments.” [ Insider 2]

Perceived pressure of action and reaction (Lechner and Müller-Stewens, 2000, p.8) guide both the managers and other stakeholder’s actions. In 2006, a year before the project organization was created, an own component master plan was created for the area.

“As it was seen as an urgent case, so it was taken [apart] as an own piece which was done faster.” [ Outsider 8]
In 2007, the Marja-Vantaa project organization was created and it was expected to function as a parallel organization to the Ring Rail Line project organization. The role of the Marja-Vantaa project members was expected to be notable also in the work of the Ring Rail Line project organization.

5.1.2. Common interest

In addition to expectations, decisions are made based on a consensus achieved in the management (Lechner and Müller-Stevens, 2000, pp.10-11). In the municipality, there was a common interest created during the long pre-project phase on multiple levels of the organization towards developing the area, including politicians, management and other public servants.

"Yes, it is a common will and a need, the matter was kind of taken forward on many fronts. And there was, was not that kind of juxtapositioning among the public servants. The development of the Kivistö area was seen as important for Vantaa." [Insider 1]

"There has been political unison. Actually between everyone, the City Council and all public servants." [Outsider 3]

However, although there was a common interest concerning the development of the area, not everyone in the organization shared the view of creating a separate project organization. The idea of an independent project organization, which would not follow the normal hierarchical structures, was driven forward in the municipality by a powerful strategist. The administration surrounding the project were not happy with the plans to separate the project from the normal organization. Constricted decisions processes, as described by Cray et al. (1988), are mainly driven by one powerful individual and include limited negotiation.

"It was separated from the City planning, actually I was against it. In my opinion, you should not have done it like that, but to keep it with City planning. But [the strategist] thought the opposite, and [the strategist] of course did what was in [the strategist's] power." [Outsider 3]

Moreover, if a strategic decision is taken under pressure, people from different parts of the organization are easily excluded (Papadakis, Lioukas and Chambers, 1998) and the part of the organization with important resources or resource allocation power has a central role (Bower, 1970 cited in Lechner and Müller-Stewens, 2000, p.13). The field of Land use and Environment was strategically central in the development of the area since it resource-wise traditionally commences the planning process in the municipality. From the interviewed outsiders’ point of view, both in the field of Land use and Environment as well as in the other fields, the creation of the project came as a
surprise which had been surrounded by secrecy. Megaprojects, which include many stakeholders, are described to often move forward in secrecy (Sovacool and Cooper, 2013 cited in Van de Graaf and Sovacool, 2014, p.18).

“The fact how this has been done, so the creation of the project came a bit surprisingly, you named it and for planning, zoning, you put a very own organization there.” [Outsider 6]

As the creation of the project was a surprise, more differing views among the organizational members about the separate project organization arose. The differing views were somewhat known but they were not officially discussed or openly conflicted but created hidden corridor discussions.

“...during the creation of the project there were discussions and all but, and I heard the kind of corridor discussions, that people did not like it and possibly were a little jealous of the project...” [Insider 2]

Despite the differing opinions about the creation of the project and specifically its separation from the normal organization, the project was seen as a possibility to advance the common interest. People who bring forward initiatives and are perceived as being powerful and trustworthy are able to create consensus around their ideas in the organization (Blomquist and Packendorff, 1998, p.40).

“When the project was set up and [it was] decided how it worked, everyone came along.” [Insider 2]

5.1.3. Amounting ambitiousness

Along with pressure of action and appropriate reaction, prevailing values and norms contribute to the selection of strategic issues (Lechner and Müller-Stewens, 2000). In addition to expectations and common interest, since the area was the last large area in the municipality which could be developed, quality in the development was an aim. The aim for quality was coupled with the quest for finding innovations for example in ecological solutions. A specific architectural competition16 about the development of the area had been held before the creation of the project organization.

“We do very little architectural competition, they have their very own role, they are quite expensive, they are called SAFA-competitions. SAFA is the association of architects and it kind of fosters the kind of competition procedures in which the quality has an important role...” [Outsider 5]

However, the result of the first architectural competition was inconclusive, which is an inherent trait of a pluralistic context (Cuccurullo and Lega, 2011). Due to the

16 For a more detailed description of the competition see pre-project phase in chapter four.
inconclusiveness and unconfirmed financing for the rail line, the development of the area and the plans were somewhat buried during the pre-project phase. Consequently, there was an increasing level of ambitiousness (Lundin and Midler, 1998) to advance the development of the area among the people who had closely followed the events and who placed value on taking the matter forward. The strategist was among the aforementioned people.

“Well, then there were several phases, you kind of tried to initiate [the development]. It did not really succeed. And then when I started [in my position], I initiated it by deciding to create this Marja-Vantaa project.” [Insider 2]

The increasing level of ambitiousness was accompanied with leadership and power, since due to the pluralistic context there were different interests in the organization (Cuccurullo and Lega, 2011).

“It is a question of leadership and of course the [fact] that, in a municipality, there are many kinds of undertakings and people see different things as important, and this just was important for me.” [Insider 2]

Actions regarding strategic change can begin when the right event occurs (Gersick, 1994). When the strategist gained power to negotiate with the state, the momentum to ambitiously advance his vision arose. Thus, he created the project organization and the specific structures and arrangements around it, so as to raise the status of the area in the organization to a level in which the execution of the existing plans for the area and their further development would be possible.

“And I would see that, when we had the project created so we had ambitiousness there, at least in my opinion, the decision makers and also [the public servants].” [Insider 2]

5.2. Interplay of independency and interests during the project phase

The project phase, which lasted from 2007 until 2012, was not a pre-defined period, since the finalization of the project organization was not defined during the creation of the project. Marja-Vantaa appeared as a spearhead project focusing on housing and jobs in the municipality’s strategy during the whole project phase. During the project phase, there was interplay between the independency of the project organization and the top management interests as shown in figure 12.
5.2.1. **Independency of the project organization**

The project organization was very independent from the line organization due to their physical separation and different arrangements, such as reporting structures, cooperative organs and resources. Consequently, the independency created progressions in the actions and interactions of people in and around the project organization which were continuous, temporal and event-based. These progressions revolved around the concepts of culture, inclusion of other actors and resources as presented in figure 13.

The coding process through which the aforementioned progressions were identified and the sub-core category independency of the project organization was formed, is presented in figure 14.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Open coding</th>
<th>Axial coding</th>
<th>Selective coding</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Of course the project organization, as we had fun together, we saw each other all the time since we were in the same open-plan office, so we had a different style of working than now when everyone is in their own shack, meaning floors, so it isn’t in that way similar, but on the other hand, times change.&quot; [Insider 4]</td>
<td>Different working style</td>
<td>Good aspects of a separate culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Yes, somewhat a state in a state started to create there. In which there were some schism in the human related matters, salary related matters, a bit in planning methods and the kind. No bad conflicts but the kind of symptoms which had not been necessary.&quot; [Outsider 2]</td>
<td>Culture separates</td>
<td>Bad aspects of a separate culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;But yea, maybe it’s exactly, that is the exact when you don’t have the information widely shared. It was a bit like, you did not necessarily know what they were doing.&quot; [Outsider 12]</td>
<td>Information sharing</td>
<td>Inclusion by communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Maybe the people from the different fields should be included earlier, when you for example start to think about a shopping centre, that probably a great deal of discussions had taken place already...&quot; [Outsider 18]</td>
<td>Inclusion of different fields</td>
<td>Physical inclusion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But then of course on the municipality level, they have been somewhat jealous that the city’s investment and planning resources are too heavily directed to Marja-Vantaa, and the development of other areas, was said that, it was given less attention.&quot; [Insider 2]</td>
<td>Investment and planning resources</td>
<td>Human resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 14 The sub-core category “Independency of project organization”
5.2.1.1. Culture

Since organizations comprise people who together aim for a defined goal, a specific culture which guides the behavior and the practices is created (Grattan, 2011, p. 35). In addition to providing a common goal for the project members, the project was organization wise and also by its physical location separated from the planning of the other areas. Consequently, somewhat an own working culture from the line organization developed for the project. In the beginning of the project phase, the culture was characterized by working together in an enthusiastic atmosphere with an ambitious aim for quality and new innovations. Moreover, the members of the project organization felt that they were doing something special and they had the flexibility to invent and apply new practices, for example work groups.

“Of course the project organization, as we had fun together, we saw each other all the time since we were in the same open-plan office, so we had a different style of working than now when everyone is in their own shack, meaning floors, so it isn't in that way similar, but on the other hand, times change.” [Insider 4]

“But there were mostly very enthusiastic people, for example when some people here sit in a coffee break for two hours, we did not even really take any official coffee breaks, that we worked a lot all the time and we drank coffee alongside work and so.” [Insider 3]

“...we’ll do as good [quality] as possible.” [Insider 1]

The good working atmosphere was noted also outside of the project organization. However, the downsides related to the culture were not clearly visible to the rest of the organization. The culture of an organization is difficult to truly observe by outsiders who may see only parts of the culture (Morgan, 1997, p. 151).

“...the kind of project being physically together, closely in the same space. It does create a certain kind of hype.” [Outsider 14]

“And then in the City planning they very much thought that the project work was only fun, we got to dabble a little and we traveled around Europe. And it was completely something else. It was very challenging work. People worked around the clock if needed, so it was completely different than these working hours from eight till four.” [Insider 3]

In fact, the outsiders saw that the work done in the project organization was similar or at least that is should be similar, since the work is done for the citizens. However, the development work for the project members did not mean only bringing new things by detailed planning, but it also meant developing the area for the old residents. Moreover, the project members had different working practices.

17 See more on the work groups in section 5.2.1.2.
"And then it separated in the way that it had its own systems and own ways of doing things and after all the detailed planning is, it should be the same for everyone from the citizen’s perspective. So it caused kind of problems.” [Outsider 5]

"...in Marja-Vantaa project, we truly thought about things in a big group from the development perspective. Then, when we moved to the organization of City planning, the project work ended, well this has been more the kind of normal detailed planning work, quite a large part of the larger development work was then left out.” [Insider 3]

The different views about the working culture, withholding views on norms, further separated the project from the normal organization, since outsiders experienced a sense of inequality. The inequality was described to have been greater since the end time for the project was not defined.

"Yes, somewhat a state in a state started to create there. In which there were some schism in the human related matters, salary related matters, a bit in planning methods and the kind. No bad conflicts but the kind of symptoms which had not been necessary.” [Outsider 2]

Towards the finalization of the project organization, the need for equality began to be emphasized more in the municipality organization. The way of operation that would be adopted by the project organization when turned into a detailed planning unit was similar to that of the other detailed planning units that developed other areas.

"...this City planning unit somehow operates in a way that all the detailed planning units need to operate in similar way. There is no possibility that you would operate differently in some area.” [Insider 3]

Moreover, despite the good working atmosphere, time pressures grew on the project and symptoms clearly arose inside the project organization in 2012. At the same time, there had been changes in the management of the municipality as well as scrutiny about the insiders of the project in the media.

"Well lets they surfaced, wait now, now I have to think, ’12 of course came those, it was in summer ’12 when they began to appear and then at the end of the year the project was taken down, was there something also before? Would it have been 2011...well they did appear along the way. May have been ’11.” [Insider 3]

The symptoms were also seen outside the project organization. Following the symptoms, a quick decision to integrate the project members to the line organization was taken in 2012. The fast and abrupt finalization of the project caused a paralysis in work for some of the project members, namely in the specific working culture which they had adopted.

"The change was executed really fast but there was a conflict of interest since all the people were leaving as the work satisfaction was bad there. So, that’s why it was it was executed fast, the organizational change, that there was really nothing else to be done.” [Outsider 5]
"It first of all paralyzed the operation for a few months. That it affected mentally the actions of many. But then from there, it took some resources, some resources [from some people] disappeared in this change. That it slowed the further planning of the area." [Insider 1]

5.2.1.2. Inclusion of other actors

Project organization is meant to reduce bureaucracy (Kerzner, 2013) yet the participation in strategy through strategic practices provides the individuals “with a sense of well-being” (Knights and Morgan, 1991). The independency and the secrecy of the project organization both allowed for and restricted the inclusion of the project’s outsiders in the planning of the strategic area, since the project organization mainly had the power to call for participation.

"Normally, a normal organization is that the director of City planning presents [plans] to the board. But in this case as it was this kind of project organization, so this [project member] took them [plans] directly to the board. In that sense, they passed the whole City planning organization, and they did not like it very much, but this is simply how it worked." [Insider 2]

The aforementioned specific reporting structures among other aspects separated the project organization from the line organization already in the beginning of the project phase. The problems related to the separation, which touched upon planning the area apart from other areas, were acknowledged inside and outside the project organization.

"Then you are a little bit apart from the other planning. It can be that it becomes narrow, self-sufficiency is created. That in a way it can easily be perceived as a separate area and then it is kind of looked at, under a magnifying glass, the issues regarding the area, while in the whole, is to develop Vantaa as a whole and look widely." [Insider 1]

"In my opinion, it was the mistake, that was temporarily made, was that the future of Vantaa and the future of this one area started to be planned separately, when they are crucially linked." [ Outsider 2]

However, at the same time the flexibility provided by the independence of the project organization, allowed creation of workgroups in which people from outside the project were also included in creating the vision for the future strategy. The workgroups, which existed during the project phase, were a new way of operating and tapping into and combining the existing know-how inside the municipality organization.

"Yes, we had these kind of workgroups which gathered. They had, at times there was a theme around which we examined a matter. For example, -- shops or medical services or something similar, cultural services. These were rather good ways to bring actors together. The thing that, they were all kind of a new way of operation, we did not all know how to use it the correct way.” [Insider 1]

"We have a huge amount of experts here and I was literally amazed when I started to realize all the things we have information about here. That kind of model is not used in the City planning organization. And I think it is a sad thing that it is not known how many people we have here who know very much. That, we use, quite a narrower sector in these expert meetings.” [Insider 3]
Although there were workgroups created by the project organization, the early inclusion of project’s outsiders was described as insufficient. If project management is taken into use in a municipality, the role of functional departments can become a provider of resources (Brown and Botha, 2005, p.5). For example, as can be withdrawn from the timeline presented in chapter four, the members from the different fields in the municipality, which represent different functions, were not included in the jury of the second idea competition arranged by the project organization in 2007-2008.

"Maybe the people from the different fields should be included earlier, when you for example start to think about a shopping centre, that probably a great deal of discussions had taken place already..." [Outsider 18]

The restricted inclusion in planning and discussions continued as the project moved forward. However, there were contradicting opinions about the inclusion among the outsiders. People who were part of the cooperative bodies created around the project, such as the Marja-Vantaa Committee or who were called to participate, felt included. The field of Land use and Environment and the project organization continued to control the participation.

"Probably for the execution they had all the significant [people] on board. But then the people in the City planning thought a bit that they don’t know what is going on and what is done there. The planning was not that clear. For regular people who were not involved in any of the cooperative bodies which had been created in the project." [Outsider 5]

"Well, in practice, almost all these who have interacted with the Land use, have at some point visited this Kivistö project in different tasks." [Outsider 16]

In addition to the physical participation in the planning and discussions, a lack of communication outside the project organization restricted the inclusion of actors. There would have been outsiders who would have liked to have been included more in the planning of this special project. Unique projects are at times kept as secret and consequently outsiders are not able or expected to see what occurs in the project (Lundin and Söderholm, 1998, p.15).

"But yea, maybe it’s exactly, that is the exact when you don’t have the information widely shared. It was a bit like, you did not necessarily know what they were doing.” [Outsider 12]

"Or yes, to have information, or to follow it since this is after all, a matter [concerning] the whole of Vantaa that this is not only a matter of a small group. That also is a bit bad in the kind of project model that who possesses the ownership, and who are responsible, that there can be also other people who want to feel it as their own even though they are not like doing, but the project, since it kind of was so special so maybe it caused problems in that." [Outsider 5]

Despite the restricted inclusion of the project’s outsiders in the city organization, the independency of the project organization facilitated the early inclusion of municipality’s external organizations which was crucial for the development of the area.
Ring Rail Line organization was one of the external organizations with which the project closely interacted with during the whole project phase. The members of the Ring Rail Line organization and the project organization were placed in the same open-plan office, which allowed them to align their tasks and to share information easily.

“And the kind of openness, at times you did not know whether they work for the state or the city.” [Outsider 3]

Besides the close interaction with the Ring Rail Line organization, the project also supported the initiation of Marja-Verkko\(^\text{18}\) which it closely interacted with during the project phase. Together with Marja-Verkko, the project organized several meetings to actively engage the residents of the Kivistö area in the planning. In addition to the meetings, the project created an informal event, namely a tradition of a summer celebration, to bring the residents and the planners together. The meetings were described to be arenas free of political debates, in which the planners truly listened to the residents. Due to the interaction with Marja-Verkko, the inclusion of the third sector in the planning was noted to be specifically good compared to that of other areas in the municipality. The wider inclusion of the third sector in the planning is becoming a trend (Crawford and Helm, 2009; Kornberger and Clegg, 2011, p.49).

“And then when the project started, we saw that it was very important to have a summer celebration every summer with the inhabitants and the employees so we created this kind of Marja day tradition. And Marja-Verkko was then always actively involved there in organizing the meetings and at some point when the name Marja-Vantaa had to be buried, it changed to Kivistö’s community celebration, and still Marja-Verkko was involved and their role grew and grew all the time.” [Insider 3]

Overall, it was seen that the more open inclusion of project’s outsiders from different professions in discussions and planning, specifically in the beginning of the project phase, would have aided to decrease the ambitiousness and the consequent idealism. For the outsiders, the idealism appeared as ideas in the project which were not relevant or which would not be executed.

“Yes, openness and certain kind, maybe it was too hectic, the busy schedule took, work became execution. So it kind of took. The openness in discussion and anyway you should have it more. Planning and building cities is not, after all, only architect’s job, not only engineer’s job. There should be more philosophic grasp. You should have more this kind of, more people.” [Insider 1]

“You have been able to note over the years that the planners of Marja or Kivistö area have also wanted the kind of thinking there, which has not necessarily been that relevant from our perspective. […] is one example, that has been thought there, but likely it will not be realized, but we could have said that already years ago, so there has been some kind of idealism among the Land use’s project people. In a way it is good to come up with ideas, no doubt, but at some point it is good to have realism.” [Outsider 18]

\(^{18}\) See more about Marja-Verkko in chapter three and four.
When the project organization was finalized in 2012, all the supportive functions in the municipality organization also came to their end. When the construction began in the area in 2013, the work that the project had been doing was described to be more visible also to outsiders.

5.2.1.3. Resources

In pluralistic organizations, projects compete for resources (Cuccurullo and Lega, 2013; Parker, Parsons and Isharyanto, 2015) and in the case, the project competed for human and financial resources with other areas specifically since the city operated with low resources. Due to the strategic decision to create a separate project organization from the line organization, relatively large portion of the municipality’s resources were invested in the development of the area the project concerned. Therefore, the project “won” the competition over resources and attention, which caused jealousy in the municipality organization already from the beginning of the project phase.

"But then of course on the municipality level, they have been somewhat jealous that the city’s investment and planning resources are too heavily directed to Marja-Vantaa, and the development of other areas, was said that, it was given less attention.” [Insider 2]

In the beginning of the project phase, the independency and the flexibility of the project organization regarding the resources, allowed the project members to properly concentrate on the planning of the area and to invest their time in larger scale development. The possibility to be able to properly concentrate on one area was appreciated by the insiders, since as the area was new, many aspects needed to be planned from zero which required concentration that the municipality organization as a context would not provide.

"It after all allows the kind of calm working atmosphere for the project members, which you cannot otherwise have in this municipality organization.” [Insider 3]

Moreover, from the project’s internal perspective, the project allowed to temporally adjust the human resources by hiring people with temporary contracts from outside the city organization. The amount of project members increased as the project moved forward. In fact, only a few members of the project organization had a permanent contract in the municipality and the rest had temporary contracts. Although, there was the possibility to adjust resources, a lack of resources was also felt inside the project organization.

19 See more in chapter four.
“...it is on the one hand very good in balancing the resources.” [Insider 1]

“But the biggest problem, from my point of view, from my role’s perspective was exactly that the resources were too low.” [Insider 3]

Even though the project was an independent organization, it utilized human, namely planning resources, from outside the project and was thus dependent on the rest of the organization. As the project’s resources were tied to Kivistö, specifically from the project’s external perspective, other areas suffered from any possible delays in the planning of Kivistö at the end of the project phase.

“And then what has suffered from the delay in the planning of Kivistö, is also the planning of the component master plan, that when we were moving this resource from Kivistö to the east, so when we could not move it after all, then some things are always left at worse.” [ Outsider 6]

Additionally, it was stated that the project was placed into the line organization so as to provide it with more resources.

“But then it like worked separately from the line and then it was thought, and it was thought it should be returned to the line, since then you could provide it with more, more resources then. That it was one strategic choice, to begin working in a line organization and not in this [kind of] project model.” [ Outsider 1]

5.2.2. Top management interests

Top management interests during the project phase can be divided into political interests and managerial interests. The managerial interest comprises that of the mayor level, the vice mayor level and the department level in the field of Land use and Environment as well as the project management level. The political interest withholds that of political decision making bodies, namely the Marja-Vantaa Committee, City Council and the City Board.

Similarly to the progressions presented in the section on independency of the project organization, the managerial and political interest can be seen as progressions. The coding process through which the top management interests were identified, is presented in figure 15 as a sub-core category20.

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20 Refer to the coding process presented in chapter three for the meaning of sub-core category.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open coding</th>
<th>Axial coding</th>
<th>Selective coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>Concept</td>
<td>Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Well, what was of course good in the project phase, was also that we had a very committed [strategist]. And then specifically the strategic and development perspective were very well under control, because [the strategist] was into this project.&quot; [Insider 3]</td>
<td>Committed strategist</td>
<td>Managers’ personal interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Apparently they noticed some bad aspects there, since it was moved back as a part of the City planning.&quot; [Outsider 6]</td>
<td>Lack of communication</td>
<td>Communication of interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;It was driven down, political changes. It was done clumsily. According to my understanding, the municipality politics influenced it greatly. The change was abrupt and powerful, that it caused more harm than good in the short run. But in the long run those things level.&quot; [Insider 4]</td>
<td>Municipality politics</td>
<td>Political changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Politicians and the vice mayor saw that the actual idea creation phase of what we want to have here, it’s done. The large lines about how to develop this have been confirmed. The line organization can begin since it starts to be this normal, detailed planning, such as planning the streets and planning the parks.&quot; [Insider 4]</td>
<td>Political interest in large lines</td>
<td>Decreasing interests</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 15 The sub-core category “Top management interests”
5.2.2.1. Managerial interests

The open and clear support from top management for project management is important (Arnaboldi, Azzone and Savoldelli, 2004; Brown and Botha, 2005). As noted before, expectations, common interest and ambitiousness in the organization lead to the creation of the project. The managerial interests derived from the ambitiousness, expectations and common interest, towards developing the area remained high in the beginning of the project phase. The strategist along with other members of the management visited and interacted with the project members in the open-plan office. Compared to other areas, the managerial interest towards Marja-Vantaa gave the area a special status in the city in the beginning of the project phase. The managerial interest was to produce information about developing a new area and it was seen that it was possible to do it better in the project than in the normal organization. Members of the management participated in the meetings of the Marja-Vantaa Committee usually once a month. The managerial interest was concentrated specifically in one person, namely the strategist. The managerial interest in developing the area encouraged and empowered the project members to create new practices such as the workgroups.

“Well, what was of course good in the project phase, was also that we had a very committed [strategist]. And then specifically the strategic and development perspective were very well under control, because [the strategist] was into this project.” [Insider 3]

Despite the high managerial interests, there was ambiguity among the management since different lines of thinking about the inherent meaning of project management were present in the organization during the project phase.

“Well, what was of course good in the project phase, was also that we had a very committed [strategist]. And then specifically the strategic and development perspective were very well under control, because [the strategist] was into this project.” [Insider 3]

“It was taken forward based on project management principles.” [Outsider 3]

“A project should have a beginning and an end and a budget. This had neither. Maybe it describes the project. Building a city is not a project, it’s a process.” [Insider 1]

Toward the end of the project phase, in 2011-2012, there were changes on different levels in the management of the municipality during a short time period. At the same time, as described in the section about culture, the insiders of the project were scrutinized in the media, which had an impact on the whole top management of the city. Following the changes in the management, the high managerial interest, which in the beginning of the project phase was topped by ambitiousness, decreased. The managerial interests shifted more toward equality in developing all the areas in the municipality as well as on economic issues. The decreased interest towards Kivistö was seen as a lack of presence in the everyday actions of the project members. Changes in
the top management in a municipality can cancel earlier decisions (Brown and Botha, 2005, p.4).

“So Kivistö was not in any kind of special position. Of course also, the [fact] that the own personal interest to develop Kivistö, decreased remarkably. Kivistö was seen as not having any kind of specific role compared to other area centres in Vantaa.” [Insider 3]

In 2012, the management decided to integrate the project to the normal administration, namely as a part of the City planning. The insiders noted the decrease in the management interests as the project was abruptly finalized. However, the reasons for the finalization or the decreased interests were not discussed or openly communicated in the municipality organization.

"It is very difficult to say as you have not been taking the decisions yourself. It was then just announced to us." [Insider 3]

"Apparently they noticed some bad aspects there, since it was moved back as a part of the City planning.” [Outsider 6]

5.2.2.2. Political interests

In addition to the support received from the management, the attention of politicians towards a project is important (Arnaboldi, Azone and Savoldelli, 2004). In the municipality, the political interest toward developing the new and strategically important area was notable in the beginning of the project phase. In 2007, the daily activities of the project were presented to the City Council in a strategy seminar. Moreover, the specific interest in the area can be seen in that Marja-Vantaa Committee, which in addition to public servants consisted of the most influential politicians of each party, was created in 2009 to ease and facilitate the decision making related to the project.

“[The committee] comprised members of the City Board or members named by the City Board. It means the political crème de la crème, who then followed the planning of the Marja-Vantaa area.” [Insider 4]

Committees serve as arenas for the lower level management to test their ideas in front of the upper level management (Hoon, 2007, p.243). The Marja-Vantaa Committee was actively involved in the planning of the area since it had meetings once a month during the project phase. In the meetings there was a dialogue between the political decision makers the planners, who did not represent only the management of the project. The planners presented their ideas to the committee who then could comment them and also make suggestions. The political interest shown in the meetings was felt as support in the project organization and the interactions with the politicians were good.
"In that way, the political level has been actively involved, this kind of unofficial committee from whom, when you gained acceptance from there, then you believed that this will move forward, as probably all the big political parties have representatives there and they nod their heads that this is how we go now. It was the great importance by the participation of political level." [Insider 4]

"But that, with Marja-Vantaa Committee, things run very smoothly, we got a lot of support from there that it wasn’t the kind that politicians would have been nagging or, making our life difficult. On the contrary, we got a lot of support from there." [Insider 3]

The project was specifically kept in the media during the beginning of the project phase, which brought positive attention to the development of the area. However, toward the end of the project phase, incidents regarding the insiders of the project organization that were either directly or indirectly related to the project’s work, were discussed in the media. For instance, in addition to the scrutiny about meeting the schedule, the transparency of actions of an insider of the project were scrutinized. If a project in public sector is taken under media scrutiny, it can cause embarrassment to the politicians (Crawford and Helm, 2009, p.84). Following the media scrutiny, there were changes in management between 2011 and 2012. At the end of 2012, the project was taken down about which there were different interpretations as already brought forward in the previous sections. However, the finalization which came as a surprise was seen to be connected to political reasons.

"And then we were both blamed strongly in public that Kivistö will be empty when the rail starts to work..." [Insider 3]

"It was driven down, political changes. It was done clumsily. According to my understanding, the municipality politics influenced it greatly. The change was abrupt and powerful, that it caused more harm than good in the short run. But in the long run those things level.” [Insider 1]

Alongside the decrease in the managerial interest, the political interest was described to decrease and the area development was stated to have been seen as more normal daily development. Moreover, it was seen that the decrease in political interest was a somewhat natural evolution in the process.

"Politicians and the vice mayor saw that the actual idea creation phase of what we want to have here, it’s done. The large lines about how to develop this have been confirmed. The line organization can begin since it starts to be this normal, detailed planning, such as planning the streets and planning the parks. Anyway planners are actually creating the city image here that, the members of the City Council rarely have ideas about what this will look as a finished city...” [Insider 4]

In 2013, the City Council changed and new members for Marja-Vantaa Committee were not appointed anymore, since the project organization had been taken down at the end of 2012.
6 DISCUSSION

The findings show that there are good and bad aspects related to the independency of a project organization and the consequent actions of people in and around the project in a municipality. The independency and the consequent actions are in interplay with changing top management interests. Moreover, how the project was created has implications on the actions during the project phase. Thus, the fit of the strategic project in the municipality strategizing is worth a discussion. Additionally, differences to other strategic projects and the relation to previous research are discussed and suggestions for further research are given.

6.1. On the fit of a strategic project in municipality strategizing

In order to analyze the fit, firstly the development to a strategic project needs to be looked at, since the history and pre-conditions have implications on a phenomenon (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p.166; Langley, 1999). As the findings show, expectations, ambitiousness and common interest lead to the creation of a strategic project. Since the area was important, the expectations and ambitiousness had been growing during the long process and a consensus had been reached. When the right event occurred (Gersick, 1994) and ambitiousness of specifically one strategist with a special interest in Kivistö area, gained a position of power, the common interest of the city with regard to expectations of income began to be driven forward ambitiously. However, the common interest regarding the creation of the separate project organization from the municipality’s perspective can be questioned, since there was a veil of secrecy casted by the power over the project. Consequently, it can be seen that some practitioners’ interests were emphasized over others as was also presented by Kornberger and Clegg (2011) in their study on strategizing in the city of Sydney.

In fact, as municipality is a public sector organization with pluralistic traits, the decisions do not always follow a rational planning process (Arnaboldi, Azzone and Savoldelli, 2004; Cuccurullo and Lega, 2013), and secrecy may prevail. However, the decisions taken in municipalities should be open, also to public scrutiny, which as described by Crawford and Helm (2009) is conducted by the media. Therefore, the secrecy which characterized the creation of the project and often characterizes product development, unique projects and projects of a large scale (Lundin and Söderholm,
is not fitting in the municipality context.

As brought forward before in the findings, the manner in which the project was created and separated as an independent organization from the rest of the organization set in motion progressions around concepts during the project phase. More specifically, the progressions comprised action and interaction between the individuals in and around the project organization. The progressions mainly resemble the parallel progressions described by Van de Ven (1992) who draws from Van den Daele (1969; 1974 cited in Van de Ven, 1992, p.172) and Flavell (1972 cited in Van de Ven, 1992, p.172). These progressions were connected to each other and were interplayed by the progressions of top management interests due to which they can be also seen as conjuctive. Moreover, due to the connection to the past, namely to the creation of the project as well as the past practices of the municipality organization, they can be seen as cumulative progressions (Van den Ven, 1992).

The first progression was around the concept of culture. The specific managerial interest towards the area, gave the managers the will to create the specific reporting and supportive structures for the project. Moreover, the project was physically separated from the line organization, which drawing from Blomquist and Packendorf, (1998) can be due to an aim to effectively manage the project. Due to the different structures and the physical separation, an own subculture developed in the project organization. The practices, withholding norms and values, in the subculture were not aligned with the ones in the rest of the organization, specifically where the planning of other areas was executed. However, in the beginning of the project phase, the creation of the own culture with own practices can be seen to have been good, since they served as motivation or even as hype for the project members. Moreover, the own way of working as well as the independency and flexibility provided by the project, allowed for creation of new praxis such as the work groups which brought together actors from different parts of the organization, to strategize about the area.

Supportive organizational environment is described to be important to project outcomes (Gray, 2001). In the beginning of the project phase, the high top management interest and consequently the support given to the project organization was notable. In the beginning of the project phase, the interests of the management and politicians toward the development of the area also created a new praxis, namely Marja-Vantaa Committee, where similarly to Hoon’s (2007) findings, the thinking of the different
level strategy practitioners in and around the project could be discussed and aligned. As there was regular interaction between the project members and the people in the positions of power, the project can be seen to have fit in the municipality strategizing at least from the organization’s upper echelon perspective in the beginning of the project phase.

However, as the secrecy, which characterized the development to a project, continued during the beginning of the project-phase, faulty information about the culture could spread in the organization, since outsiders were not able to observe the actions of insiders. Consequently, they were not able to attain a correct picture of the culture, since as Morgan (1997) brings forward, it is difficult to truly understand a culture from outside. The secrecy and the consequent faulty information are connected to the second progression around the concept of inclusion of other actors, namely the outsiders. The inclusion of outsiders, both by enabling the physical participation and by sharing information, in the actions of the project was restricted, since not all outsiders felt included. As found out by Mantere and Vaara (2008), dialogue enhances participation. Due to the secrecy there was a lack of dialogue in the beginning of the project phase. The project organization in the field of Land use and Environment had a central role in calling the participation due to which outsiders both in the field of Land use and Environment and other fields were partly excluded. Moreover, planning the area apart from others was not considered to be strategically wise, since the municipality should be planned as a whole.

Planning apart connects to the third progression, namely to the concept of resources. One reason why the project was separated from the line organization was the possibility to provide it with more resources, comprising both financial and human resources. In a pluralistic environment where projects compete for resources (Parker, Parsons and Isharyanto, 2015), an area which is considered as strategically important, a “spearhead project”, should have the resources and the time as well as the freedom to operate in the best possible manner despite the municipality’s low resources.

In fact, the good aspects of the independency were that it gave the project members the resources, that is, to invest more time in for example interacting with the parties outside the municipality organization, namely the Ring Rail Line organization and Marja-Verkko. Owing to the interaction with the aforementioned parties, the project members as strategy practitioners were given the right arena to share the information with the citizens and engage them in the strategy making similarly as shown by
Balogun, Best and Lê (2015). Larger engagement of the citizens in the strategizing is important which is promoted in the new public management and public value management thinking (see for example Crawford and Helm, 2009). Moreover, from this perspective, the flexibility of the project organization provided the practitioners with good opportunities for cooperation and possibly new ways of cooperation with the third sector, which according to Vaara and Whittington (2012, p.287), is a societal practice.

However, it needs to be acknowledged that the starting point for Kivistö was completely different than that of the strategizing related to the municipality’s other already built areas, since the area was one of the last areas which could be developed in the city and consequently there were also expectations laid on it. Moreover, the planning in the area needed to begin from zero. Although resources were constantly added, insiders of the project felt a constant lack of resources. The lack of resources can be seen to be connected to the time pressures and the consequent symptoms in the working culture, which influenced the internal fit of the project and consequently also the external fit as the symptoms were seen outside the project.

The event or events which can be seen to have finally shaken the fit of the independent project organization, are the changes in management between 2011 and 2012 as well as the media scrutiny directed towards the insiders of the project. Due to the changes in management, the special interest toward developing the area decreased. Consequently, it can be seen that there was no interest to solve the internal conflicts of the project organization. However, it has to be acknowledged that the different views about the project management can have played a role in the finalization and the fit of the project. In addition to the managerial interests, the political interests decreased which I believe is firstly related to the media scrutiny about the insiders of the project and to the consequent effects on the municipality. Secondly, the perception that the politicians saw that their part in the planning was done could be seen as a natural decreasing development of interests. However, the finalization of the project was also close to change of the City Council. Moreover, there can be seen to have been time pressures and consequently pressures to give more resources to the development. On the other hand, the project took resources from the line organization since there were resource dependencies. Thus, the project, despite being very independent in the beginning of the project phase, had resource dependencies to the line organization and therefore cannot
be considered to have been an autonomous unit as the one Lozeau, Langley and Denis. (2002) show.

Overall, despite the good aspects brought by the separate project organization, the overall fit of the project in the municipality strategizing was limited from the beginning of the project phase. The fit was limited due to the secrecy which was reflected in the bad aspects specifically in the progressions of culture and inclusion. Although there was a continuous limited fit, the project was kept as an independent organization by the high interest and commitment of the management, including both the public servants and the politicians. The aforementioned finding supports the arguments of the importance of top management support for project management brought forward in the previous research for example by Arnaboldi, Azzone and Savoldelli (2004), Brown and Botha (2005) and Crawford and Helm (2009).

6.2. On improving the fit

As can be withdrawn from the previous section, there were aspects in the actions of people due to which the fit of the strategic project in the municipality strategizing can be seen as limited. Due to the limited fit, actions to improve the fit are now discussed. Moreover, from a general perspective, since management by projects is more common (Lundin and Midler, 1998) and municipalities among public sector organizations are applying practices from the private sector (Lozeau, Langley and Denis, 2002), it is important that a project and the actions inside and outside the project fit to each other and to the context in which they are taken.

Based on the findings, an important aspect to improve the fit of a strategic project in the municipality strategizing revolves around transparency and communication. As can be withdrawn from the findings, secrecy characterized the creation of the project as well as the project phase, which is problematic in municipality context, since municipalities in general are characterized by openness. Therefore, creation of the project and the reasons for it should be openly communicated, although there might not be very clear outcomes of the project, which as described by Lundin and Söderholm (1998), can cause secrecy. The open communication could have noted the importance of a separate project organization and the different practices the insiders would adopt compared to the rest of the organization so as to allow for the creation of praxis. Thus, it would have likely decreased the symptoms and feelings of inequality, which were shown for example in the corridor discussions. Although to completely avoid the
hidden corridor discussions, the open expression of dissatisfaction should have been provided the right arenas. However, it is likely difficult to express differing opinions if a decision has been taken by a powerful strategist.

Moreover, as the project moved forward, the open communication could have improved the inclusion of the outsiders who felt excluded due to lack of information mainly in the municipality organization. In addition to the communication, the outsiders could have been included earlier on to the work of the project. However, including several people is difficult, yet it is important as can be also withdrawn from Feldman and Khademian (2007). Therefore, in order to improve the fit of a strategic project in municipality strategizing, managers should consider ways in which to better include people. Possibly, job rotation could be considered. However, job rotation, could decrease the possibilities of individuals to properly concentrate on strategizing regarding one area for a longer period. Alternatively, the sharing of experiences, as argued by Feldman and Khademian (2007) could improve the inclusion. Following this line of thought, attention should be placed on the possibilities for people who remain as outsiders to occasionally participate or to be shown the everyday actions of the insiders.

The communication touches upon the different interests and in a pluralistic context such as a municipality, aligning them, is difficult specifically during a long process in which people’s interests as well as the people, such as manager, may change. However, as brought forward by Denis, Langley and Rouleau (2007), the different needs and values of people should be understood by continuously looking at their practices and routines. However, communicating the interests openly would have been important specifically when the project was finalized so that the project could have been brought to a deserving end and that the future projects could better benefit from the experiences gained during the project.

6.3. Possible differences to other strategic projects

The size and the shape of the municipality can possibly influence the findings. In smaller municipalities, the interests concerning a strategic project are not necessarily as manifold since the amount of actors is smaller. Secondly, as can be withdrawn from the case description in chapter three, the continuous division of political interests between the east and the west in the municipality of the case was notable. I see that the division of interests derived from the butterfly like shape of the municipality, in which the very eastern and western parts are distanced from each other. Although
municipalities as pluralistic contexts always comprise different interests, possibly the division of interests could not be so drastic in other municipalities with different kind of shape. The division of political interest between two parts can be seen to have influenced specifically the resources. Moreover, it can be seen to be connected to the idea brought forward by some practitioners in the case municipality that the municipality should be developed as a whole.

Additionally, cultural differences both deriving from the working culture in a municipality and from the larger cultural context of a country can also influence the findings. Possibly, in very inclusive cultures, problems of inclusion during a strategic project would not be notable.

Moreover, I find that differences between a strategic project in a municipality and a private company exist. Drawing from the fact that municipalities have a compulsory service provider role (Jarzabkowski and Fenton, 2006) for all their “customers”, namely the citizens, they should also provide equal services for the citizens no matter whether they live in the western or the eastern parts of the municipality. Regarding a strategic project, this concerns specifically the progression of resources. In my opinion, the resource dependencies in private companies are not as drastic as in municipalities.

6.4. On the relation to previous research

The findings and the consequent discussion have a minor relation to the traditional fit theory with a static focus as described for example by Ensign (2001), since they show and examine a project organization which is a structure. However, the present thesis offers a more modern and dynamic view on fit by examining it as actions and interactions of people in and around a structure, namely the project organization. Moreover, due to the grounded theory approach adopted in the thesis, the view is rooted in empirical findings and does not base on pre-defined dependencies.

With regard to the internal and external fit as defined for example by Siggelkow (2001, p.839) and presented in chapter two, I see the present thesis to provide views on both. From the internal perspective, the findings and the discussion shed light on the actions of the project’s insiders. Additionally, they provide insight on the actions of the outsiders of the project. Although the outsiders, majority of whom were members of the municipality organization, can be considered to be internal to the municipality organization, they are external to the project organization and thus represent the
environment. Moreover, the case also briefly describes the activities and fit between external organizations, namely Marja-Verkko and Ring Rail Line organization, which can truly be thought of as the environment. Additionally, as events, such as changes in the management, internal conflicts and media’s role are considered, both the internal and external perspective come into fore.

From the process perspective, the case offers a dynamic view on process as actions and interactions of people accounting for events which I find connects to Van de Ven’s (1992) third definition of process and thus also to Langley’s (2007) view on process since it is aligned with that of Van de Ven’s. Moreover, it shows that the fit of a strategic project in municipality strategizing is a dialectic process of different interests and power (Van de Ven, 1992).

From the Strategy-as-Practice and Projects-as-Practice perspectives, the findings show a project and its fit to the municipality strategizing as a social phenomenon, comprising actions of people on various levels inside and outside the project organization. Moreover, from the Projects-as-Practice perspective, the present thesis adds to the growing body of research on strategizing in municipalities (for example Mantere and Vaara, 2008; Kornberger and Clegg, 2011), which show that different interests and problems of inclusion are present.

6.5. Suggestions for further research

Concerning the fit, it would be interesting to study whether a strategic project in other municipalities would cause similar progressions in the actions and interactions of people. Moreover, as a project does not necessarily need to be a separate organization (Lundin and Midler, 1998), the progressions could be examined even if a separate project organization was not created. With regard to a strategic project, which would concern area development, it would be interesting to know if equality between areas is emphasized in other municipalities. Moreover, from the time perspective, as this project did not have a defined end, it would be intriguing to know whether similar progressions, actions and perceptions would emerge or not if a project had a defined end.

With regard to the case of the present thesis, it would also have been interesting to know how the true outsiders saw the project or the development of the area specifically concerning the inclusion, as now people whose names arose mostly from the snowball
sampling, were interviewed. This could be done by acquiring a larger sample, which would probably imply the utilization of quantitative methods or alternatively, in a qualitative study, the utilization of a large research team. However, the utilization of quantitative methods might lead to the depth of answers being lost.

Although the present thesis briefly notes the role of the third sector involvement in planning and strategizing in the municipality, namely the inclusion of inhabitants through Marja-Verkko, studying it more in detail would have been interesting since the third sector inclusion is also becoming a trend as was previously brought forward in the theoretical framework. Moreover, accounting for the opinions of the individual inhabitants would be interesting and to compare those to how the city has seen the process.

The present thesis examines the strategic project and the related every day actions of individuals mainly from a retrospective perspective, as it heavily relies on the interviewees’ accounts which were given after the phenomenon had already occurred. However, drawing from the Strategy-as-Practice and Projects-as-Practice perspectives, it would be interesting to examine the everyday actions of people in and around a strategic project as it unfolds over time. Therefore, conducting a longitudinal study in which one would participate in the everyday actions of the people, such as meetings, could also bring forward additional interesting aspects on the fit of a strategic project in municipality strategizing, which this study has possibly not been able to reveal despite utilizing for example meetings material to triangulate with the retrospective accounts. Moreover, the aforementioned study could apply action research and try to seek improvements on the actions and issues when they actually happen.
7 CONCLUSION

Municipality development is a process which comprises the actions, interactions and interests of several people. When private sector practices such as project management are applied in a public sector organization, the interests and actions of people need to be taken into consideration since they may differ from those of the private sector as the two contexts are different. Thus, the aim of this thesis was to understand and generate knowledge about the fit of a strategic project in municipality strategizing.

The case study focused on a municipality in which a separate project organization from the line organization was created. The actions and interests of people during both the creation and the existence of a strategic project influence the fit of a strategic project in municipality strategizing. Expectations, common interest and ambitiousness can lead to the creation of a strategic project. Despite the common interest, secrecy and problems of inclusion can revolve around the creation of a strategic project. Since the strategic project can be an independent organization, progressions of actions and interests can be created. These progressions revolve around culture, inclusion of other actors and resources, which are central elements in the municipality context. These progressions comprise both good and bad aspects. On the one hand, good aspects of a separate culture include providing opportunities to create new ways to work and to combine knowledge. However, a separate culture combined with secrecy creates inequality in the organization, which is closely connected to the progression of inclusion. If the outsiders of the project are not able to participate in the work of the project either physically or through informational work, the project does not fit to its open municipality environment. Moreover, the project allows the insiders to have flexibility with regard to resourcing. Yet, due to the resource dependencies that exist in a municipality, some project outsiders are dependent on the project.

In addition to the progressions, events such as changes in management and internal conflicts in the project organization can bring the project organization to an abrupt end. Yet, ultimately the fit concerns the interests of the people in positions of power, which in a municipality are the managers and the politicians. Therefore, the independency of the project organization with its progressions is in interplay with top management interests which at times are very individual as can be seen with regard to the strategist.

Improving the fit of a strategic project in municipality strategizing is important, since as private sector practices are taken to the public side, project management can be seen
to become more common in municipalities. Consequently, several implications for managers follow. Despite the secrecy associated with projects specifically in the private sector, the managers in municipalities should create projects openly, since the secrecy is not fitting in the municipality context, which is characterized by openness. Moreover, during the project’s existence managers should find ways to include also the outsiders of the project in the project’s work. While the physical inclusion of several people is difficult and likely impossible, the informational inclusion can be done by open communication. Moreover, job rotation and shared experiences could also contribute to achieve better inclusion.

All municipalities, due to comprising many different stakeholders, are pluralistic which means that there are inevitably different interests concerning a strategic project and also the problems of inclusion. Thus, the findings of the present thesis can likely largely be applied to other municipalities. However, the size and the shape of the municipality can possibly influence the findings. Additionally, cultural differences both deriving from the working culture in a municipality and from the larger cultural context of a country can also influence the findings. Further, the findings could also be applied to strategic projects undertaken in other pluralistic contexts such as state agencies. Moreover, the findings could possibly be applied to municipalities in which a separate project organization is not created and it is not as drastically separated from the line organization as in the case of the present thesis, since projects do not need to be specific organizational structures.

The present thesis makes theoretical contributions to the theory on fit. Firstly, it shows the fit as a dynamic phenomenon comprising actions, interactions and interests of people in and around a structure. Secondly, it sheds light on both the internal and external fit. Similarly, to the process perspective, the case offers a dynamic view on process as actions, interactions and interests of people, also accounting for events. Additionally, the thesis adds to the Strategy-as-Practice and Projects-as-Practice research with a retrospective study on the everyday actions of individuals.

Although the findings can likely be applied to other strategic projects undertaken in pluralistic contexts, the single case study delimits the possibilities of generalizing all the findings of the present thesis to other municipalities. Consequently, more studies should be conducted to find out if similar actions occur in other municipalities. Moreover, the retrospective nature of the present thesis, although having the benefit of
capturing a wide picture of the everyday actions during a long process, is not able to
capture, observe or improve the actions in the moment they occur.

In fact, longitudinal studies which would examine the actions of people during the very
moment and which could even take an action study approach, could aid the managers
and other practitioners on various levels, inside and outside the organization to
improve the fit of a strategic project as it evolves.

Finally, although the fit of a strategic project in municipality strategizing can be
questioned, a project provides opportunities for challenging the old practices and
combining knowledge in different ways. Overall, there are still many opportunities to
study strategic projects in municipalities and their fit in municipality strategizing since
the fit is ultimately about people, their actions, interactions and interests which change
specifically during a long process in which people change. Thus, as the title of the thesis
suggests, the fit of the strategic project in municipality strategizing is a dynamic social
phenomenon.
Acknowledgments

Several people aided me during my thesis process whose contribution I want to acknowledge. Firstly, I wish to thank my supervisor Virpi Sorsa for the valuable guidance and suggestions throughout the thesis process. I also want to thank my interviewees for their time and the valuable insights on the case that contributed to my understanding about it. Further, I appreciate the help of the people who either provided me with material or aided me in acquiring material concerning the case. Moreover, I am grateful for the comments that I received from my fellow students and from the steering group of the research project my thesis forms a part of. I also want to thank my parents and boyfriend for the support and patience during the thesis process.
REFERENCES


Rouleau, L., 2013. Strategy-as-practice research at a crossroads. M@n@gement, 16 (5), pp. 547-365.


## APPENDIX 1  INTERVIEW GUIDE (IN ENGLISH)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Examples of questions</th>
<th>Examples of possible follow-up questions (if response not acquired based on the first question(s) or clarification is needed)</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description of the development process</strong></td>
<td>Could you describe your view of how the development of the area has been (what kind of phases)?</td>
<td>Possible other relevant questions</td>
<td>To understand the possible different views on the development of the area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role and interests in developing the area</strong></td>
<td>What has been your role in developing the area?</td>
<td>Further questions about the interviewee’s interests concerning the development of the area</td>
<td>To understand the role and the interests of the interviewee in the development process, provide background for the question on conflicts of interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The nature of developing the area</strong></td>
<td>How do you see the development of the area (the nature how the development of the area has been taken forward)? How would you describe the nature of the area (e.g. organized, unorganized)?</td>
<td>At the initiation of the project, were there time limits (e.g. a defined beginning and an end)? Was there a budget? Were the risk evaluations?</td>
<td>To understand if the interviewee sees the development of the area as a process or a project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development/Change</strong></td>
<td>How has your view about the nature of the</td>
<td>Have more precise time limits, budget etc. been</td>
<td>To understand if the interviewee’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Question 1</td>
<td>Question 2</td>
<td>Question 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development changed</td>
<td>Has the nature of the development changed due to a certain event in time (for example a meeting)?</td>
<td>perspective about the nature of the development changed, how and what caused it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social interaction</td>
<td>How has the social interaction with other participants in the development process affected the nature of the development of the area?</td>
<td>Questions concerning description of daily activities during the development process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicts of interest/views</td>
<td>How did different interests affect the nature of the area development (process/project)?</td>
<td>Further questions about the conflicts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancing/Undermining factors during the development</td>
<td>How do you see the success of the development over time?</td>
<td>What kind of factors have enhanced and what kind of factors have undermined the development? How could you improve the development process/project?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>Could you tell about your background (name, how long have you been involved in the development of the area)?</td>
<td>Possible other relevant questions concerning the background</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>To acquire background information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Social interaction**

How has the social interaction with other participants in the development process affected the nature of the development of the area?

Questions concerning description of daily activities during the development process

To understand the effect of the social interaction to the nature of the development and the views of the participants (Strategy-as-Practice)

**Conflicts of interest/views**

How did different interests affect the nature of the area development (process/project)?

Further questions about the conflicts

To better understand the effects of the different interests/views on the nature and success of the project

**Enhancing/Undermining factors during the development**

How do you see the success of the development over time?

What kind of factors have enhanced and what kind of factors have undermined the development? How could you improve the development process/project?

To understand the views on the success of the project to improve alike projects in the future

**General**

Could you tell about your background (name, how long have you been involved in the development of the area)?

Possible other relevant questions concerning the background

To acquire background information
### APPENDIX 2  INTERVIEW GUIDE (IN FINNISH)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teema</th>
<th>Esimerkit kysymysistä</th>
<th>Esimerkit mahdollisista jatkokysymyksistä</th>
<th>Tarkoitus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kehitysprosessin kuvailu</strong></td>
<td>Voitteko kertoa miten olette nähtneet Kivistön alueen kehityksen kulun (millaisia vaiheita)?</td>
<td>Mahdolliset muut relevantit kysymykset</td>
<td>Ymmärtää prosessia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rooli ja tavoitteet Kivistön kehittämisessä</strong></td>
<td>Mikä on ollut roolinne Kivistön kehittämisessä?</td>
<td>Jatkokysymyksiä tavoitteista</td>
<td>Selvittää roolia ja tavoitteita kehittämisessä, pohjustaa kysymystä intressiristiriidoista näkemyseroista</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alueen kehittämisen luonne</strong></td>
<td>Millaisena näette Kivistön alueen kehittämisen (luonteen, miten tätä kehittämisä on viety eteenpäin)?</td>
<td>Oliko alusta lähtien aikarajoja (määritetty alku ja loppu)?</td>
<td>Selvittää, näkeekö haastateltava kehittämisensä prosessina vai strategisena projektina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Miten kuvallisitte Kivistön alueen kehittämisen luonnetta (esim. oliko järjestelmällinen)?</td>
<td>Oliko esim. budjetti, riskiarviot?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kehitys/Muutos</strong></td>
<td>Miten näkemyksen kehittämisen luonteeesta on muuttunut/ onko näkemyksen muuttunut Kivistön kehittämisen aikana (siitä, millä tavalla</td>
<td>Onko mukaan tullut (tarkempia) aikarajoja, budjetti ym.?</td>
<td>Selvittää, muuttuuko haastateltavan näkemys kehittämisen luonteesta ja miten ja minkä seurauksena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Onko kehittämisen luonne muuttunut jonkin tietyn tapahtuman (esim.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sosiaalinen kannsakäyminen</td>
<td>Miten kannsakäyminen muiden Kivistön kehittämisseen osallistuvien toimijoiden kanssa on vaikuttanut kehittämisen luonteeseen?</td>
<td>Kysymyksiä päivittäisten tehtävien kuvailusta Kivistön kehittämisprosessin aikana</td>
<td>Ymmärtää kannsakäymisen vaikutusta kehittämisen luonteeseen ja näkemyksiin (Strategy-as-Practice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intressiristiriidat</td>
<td>Miten eri intressit vaikuttivat alueen kehittämisen luonteeseen (prosessi/projekti)?</td>
<td>Jatkokysymyksiä intressiristiriidoista esim. henkilöristiriidat, ongelmat</td>
<td>Ymmärtää tarkemmin eri tavoitteiden ja näkemyserojen vaikutusta projektin luonteeseen ja onnistumiseen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onnistuminen/parantaminen</td>
<td>Kuinka näette, että Kivistön alueen kehitys on onnistunut?</td>
<td>Millaiset toimenpiteet/asiat ovat edistäneet/heikentäneet alueen kehittämistä?</td>
<td>Ymmärtää näkemyksiä projektin onnistumisesta, jotta vastaavat projekteja voi tulevaisuudessa parantaa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demograafiset kysymykset</td>
<td>Voitteko vielä lopuksi kertoa taustatietoja (nimi, kuinka kauan mukana Kivistön kehittämisessä)?</td>
<td>Pääasialliset tehtävät, koulutus, työura</td>
<td>Kartoittaa taustoa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>