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STRATEGIC PRACTICES OF STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT IN MEGAPROJECTS

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ABSTRACT

The practices by which relationships among megaproject stakeholders are managed evolve over time. The autonomy of interconnected actors, which is a characteristic of megaprojects, affects the ways the organisations involved in the project form collaborative practices to manage stakeholders within the project. Hence, stakeholder management strategies in megaprojects evolve in the context and are influenced by individual actors' activities. Our empirical study of a European district development project seeks to improve the current understanding of the ways strategic stakeholder management practices take form in megaprojects. We take a micro-level perspective to investigate the adaptation of individual actors to the interaction among the organisations embedded in the project. The study contributes to the emerging literature that has considered the role of complementors in shaping stakeholder strategies. In so doing, it takes the network and micro-process perspectives to studying how stakeholder management practices evolve and take form in the interactions among the actors in megaprojects. The study adds to the understanding of the dynamics and forms of stakeholder management in megaprojects, which have remained unexplored in many details.

KEYWORDS

Megaprojects, stakeholder management, strategy-as-practice

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INTRODUCTION

The performance and survival of megaprojects is highly dependent on the ways the objectives and goals of the project are aligned with those of their stakeholder environments (Flyvbjerg, 2014). In particular, managing the expectations of external stakeholders plays a key role in the establishment and maintenance of the legitimacy of a megaproject among the actors that are not part of the daily activities within the project, but can still influence and be affected by the project in unpredictable ways (Aaltonen, 2013; Winch, 2004). External stakeholders in the project's environment include actors that are not formal members of the project coalition, but may have a

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role in affecting the project's outcomes by providing linkages to the environment. Recent research in project management and practical examples of megaprojects accentuate the importance of developing strategic stakeholder management capabilities, because managing stakeholders in complex projects is challenging and often underestimated by the core stakeholders who are the formal members of the project coalition and decision-making processes (Flyvbjerg et al, 2003a; Lundrigan & Gil, 2015).

What makes stakeholder management particularly challenging in megaprojects is the inter-organisational nature of project operations. This implies that the actions taken to manage stakeholders in megaprojects are not coordinated and enacted by a single organisation in dyadic relationships with the stakeholders, as suggested in the traditional hub-and-spoke stakeholder models (Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Freeman, 1984). In contrast, the relationships among actors in megaprojects are often formed, defined, revised and maintained through interactions in a networked system (Rowley, 1997).

Project management research has focused increasing attention to the stakeholder related processes that take place in complex projects (Eskerod et al., 2015). While research in the field of general stakeholder theory is highly established, the temporary and inter-organisational nature of projects offer new perspectives for elaborating the stakeholder theory beyond the traditional, established and static contexts (Aaltonen & Kujala, 2016). Moreover, the general stakeholder theory is rather underdeveloped in project-based organising, or more generally in temporary organising contexts. This have recently been acknowledged in organisations and strategic management discourses (see recent special issue *Temporary Organizing on Organization Studies*), by promoting projects as essential units of analysis for novel theorising areas in existing and new theoretical domains (Bakker et al., 2016).

Prior project stakeholder research has been dominated by models and frameworks developed for identifying the relevant stakeholders based on their key characteristics (De Schepper et al., 2014; Fassin, 2009; Olander & Landin, 2005; Winch & Bonke, 2002). Moreover, the extant literature on related stakeholder management strategies has been dominated by holistic level and static descriptions, which are for instance formed based on salience-position matrix (Aaltonen et al., 2015) or power-interest matrix (Olander & Landin, 2005). These higher-level strategy descriptions such as 'keep informed' (Olander & Landin, 2005), lack detailed empirical grounding. So to say, significantly less attention has been paid to in-depth theorising on stakeholder management strategies, related causal logics and particularly on the analysis of the practices through which different stakeholder management strategies are actually devised and enacted in a complex network of stakeholders. Moreover, there exists a clear disagreement of the benefits of early versus late external stakeholder involvement in decision-making and management processes of projects (Aaltonen & Kujala, 2010; Missonier & Loufrani-Fedida, 2014).

To construct a more comprehensive understanding of the formation and implementation of stakeholder management strategies, we empirically analyse the micro-level practices and related processes of stakeholder management by the key actors of a megaproject coalition. We pose the following research question: *How are strategic practices of stakeholder management formed and devised over a project lifecycle?*

By addressing this question, we provide praxis-like (processual) descriptions of the micro-level practices of stakeholder management strategies in the investigated megaproject. In so doing, we highlight the strategic stakeholder management practices that key stakeholders employ in a megaproject, and analyse how and why they are formed, and when and where are they applied.

The megaproject chosen for our study is a district development project located in the Northern Europe. The megaproject is located in a capital region, in which a withering district is completely demolished and rebuilt, whereby about 3 billion euros are invested in the project. Our research follows the principles of a single case study, where stakeholder practices and related processes are explicated. Data is collected from key actors of the project, which include both core and external stakeholders (N=9). The data were collected through semi-structured interviews supported by a secondary data archive such as newspapers, brochures, plans and company reports. The data is analysed inductively through a grounded theory approach in three phases: using thematic analysis, followed by content analysis and triangulation.

The main contribution of the study is to show that strategic stakeholder management practices are not deliberately utilised, enacted and devised through dyadic relationships, rather they develop through the interactions of project stakeholders in a polycentric or networked system. Moreover, our findings indicate that instead of pursuing higher-level, static and holistic strategies (e.g. keeping all actors informed), the stakeholder management strategies are actually very temporary, dynamic and based on specific actions and intentions (i.e. actor-specific, time and context-dependent activities). This means that the use of stakeholder management strategies toward specific stakeholders is not constant, but fluctuates over time depending on the environment and interactions among the participants. Moreover, our findings indicate that a higher-level strategy, e.g. ignoring a stakeholder, can actually be implemented and enacted at a micro-level in many specific variations. For instance, by clearly and actively stating that a specific stakeholder is excluded from decision-making processes and therefore ignored, or passively just not returning any kind of references. Finally, based on our case, we provide new micro-level descriptions of stakeholder management strategies, such as a pacing strategy, where information is being strategically eased step-by-step to certain external stakeholders changing between inclusion and exclusion based strategies.

The practical relevance of this paper lies in increasing understanding of how to improve stakeholder management in project-based organising, particularly in megaproject contexts. Albeit the use of any kind of project management approach (i.e. alliancing, turnkey, cost-plus etc.), managers ought to understand that in order to successfully deliver megaprojects, the focus has to be in engaging and managing all kinds of stakeholders to collaborate and coordinate for establishing a unified target. That is, the focus should be shifted from the pure technical challenge to the challenge of organising with heterogeneous (i.e. different kind of organizations, such as constructor and architect) and pluralistic (i.e. distinct values, beliefs and even norms) stakeholders. In practice, core project actors or stakeholders ought to take into account the divergent interests, expectations and objectives of various external stakeholders and convince them to co-create and co-capture value instead of any sub-optimising behaviour. Thus, every stakeholder has to benefit from the megaproject but not with the expense of others. Too late or too early engagement of external

stakeholders can cause severe problems for successfully organising of megaprojects to stay in budget, quality and schedule.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

GENERAL STAKEHOLDER THEORY AND MANAGEMENT

Stakeholder theory and research ultimately deals with the question of how different individuals and organisations are (i.e. descriptive stakeholder theory (Jawahar & McLaughlin, 2001)) or should be (i.e. instrumental stakeholder theory (Jones, 1995)) taken into account in the decision-making, who can somehow affect or are affected by the achievement of the firm's objectives. The firm's extremely challenging and complicated task is to balance with and still engage timely a heterogeneous group of external stakeholders also possibly into the decision-making and management processes (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). These external stakeholders range from political decision making bodies and consultants to neighbourhood associations with oftentimes conflicting goals and divergent interests, stemming from divergent value-creation logics (e.g. non-profit, for-profit, public).

The general stakeholder management theory has advocated that stakeholder management and related strategies are enacted and implemented by a single organisation in a dyadic relationship with its stakeholders, as suggested in the traditional hub-and-spoke stakeholder models (Freeman, 1984). Later development has advocated the need for stakeholder theory and analysis to move beyond the dyadic relationship and consider a network of heterogeneous organisations (Rowley, 1997), like in the context of project-based organising. Stakeholder theory is rooted in the neoclassical theory of a firm, where a firm is seen operating in a rather static and permanent context (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). It offers a broad range of tools and frameworks for stakeholder analysis and classification (Bourne & Walker, 2005b; Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997) from the perspective of a production function. However, these tools, frameworks and the related ontological assumption of a firm as a production function are controversial to what the firms are encountering in reality, especially in complex project settings where the operations are highly dynamic and temporary due to the evolving and invariably changing inter-organisational nature of the project operations.

Research of stakeholder management in the context of temporary organising is scarce outside the specialised field of projects and project management. Hence, project-based organising, especially in the megaproject contexts, may offer novel advantages for elaborating stakeholder theory and for theorising beyond the traditional, permanent and dyadic contexts in mainstream organisations and strategic management literature (Aaltonen & Kujala, 2016).

STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT AND THEORY IN PROJECT-BASED ORGANISING

Stakeholder management versus engagement in projects

Project stakeholder management denotes the incessant development of relationships with stakeholders for the purpose of achieving a successful project outcome, and that its objective is in explaining and predicting how organisations function with respect to stakeholder influences (McElroy & Mills, 2003). Prior research on a project's

stakeholder management activities include two major discourses: First, extant research has focused on demonstrating and explicating the overall managerial importance of stakeholder management by examining the role and value of stakeholder management processes for a project and its operations (Bourne & Walker, 2005a; Cleland, 1986, 1995, 1998; Olander & Landin, 2005). Second, research on managerial behaviour with regard to project stakeholders has adopted a practice-oriented view, which has focused on the conceptual development of different managerial frameworks, tools, models and processes to identify, categorise and manage project stakeholders (De Schepper et al., 2014; Olander & Landin, 2005; Winch & Bonke, 2002). More recently, the terms stakeholder engagement (IFC, 2007) and stakeholder involvement (El-Gohary et al., 2006) have appeared as synonyms for the concept of stakeholder management.

The difference between concepts engagement and management lies in their etymology. The concept of *management* may include also the more negative stakeholder relationships and interactions (i.e. ignoring a stakeholder) (Zhai, Xin, & Cheng, 2009), whereas *engagement* concept is inherent with more positive variations (El-Gohary et al., 2006), encompassing mainly collaboration and partnering ideologies. Even though research has argued for the openness, transparency and engagement of various stakeholders as early as possible (Missonier & Loufrani-Fedida, 2014), in practice many practitioners feel that the boundaryless approach to stakeholder engagement is extremely resource-intensive, costly and may result in extremely painful and challenging front-end phases of megaprojects with lock-ins and dead ends (Aaltonen & Kujala, 2010). Thus, what seems to be a major paradox in research and practice of project stakeholder management is the question of early versus late stakeholder engagement.

Project stakeholder management strategies

Within project management literature projects' managerial approaches to stakeholders are oftentimes referred to as stakeholder management strategies (e.g. Bonke & Winch, 2002). Stakeholder management strategies can be understood as means enacted by project management to shape the attributes or positions of stakeholders. For instance, proactive influence strategies consisting of active dialogue and early stakeholder engagement enacted by project management can shift the opposing stakeholders into neutral ones (Aaltonen & Sivonen, 2009). Several typologies also suggest that managers should differentiate their stakeholder management strategies based on the position of stakeholders (Olander & Landin, 2005; Savage et al., 1991). For example, the strategy of collaboration can be used to increase the most crucial stakeholders' degree of supportiveness and the strategy of defending to decrease the power of non-supportive stakeholders (Savage et al., 1991). Hence, stakeholder management strategies enacted by project management can be understood as activities that may contribute to the changes in the level of stakeholders' salience as well as may change the position of stakeholders towards the project.

Despite the criticism presented for existing managerial stakeholder management processes and tools being ubiquitous and too abstract, only few studies have actually empirically described the employed activities and behaviours with regard to stakeholders. For example, the managerial responses to the influences of stakeholders have deserved only scant research attention, and the focus has been only on proactive deliberate management instead of reactive responses to various interactions in

dynamic contexts. Furthermore, different contextual factors present in projects that may guide project's behaviours with regard to stakeholder influences have received only little attention. For instance, even though the importance of mastering the stakeholder management process throughout the continuously evolving project lifecycle is shared in much of the existing literature (Cleland, 1995; Flyvbjerg, et al., 2003a; Flyvbjerg, et al., 2003b), the majority of the stakeholder management process guidelines tend to focus on the use of stakeholder management techniques only during the early implementation stages of the project (Jepsen & Eskerod, 2009; Kolltveit & Grønhaug, 2004). Most of these existing stakeholder management strategy tools, frameworks and models are implied being ubiquitous and based on meso (e.g. organisation-level) or macro-level (e.g. project-level) descriptions in the stakeholder management. Thus, the existing stakeholder management strategies have not been empirically grounded according to actual embedded causal logics.

The practice perspective to project stakeholder management strategies

The project stakeholder management research has almost unquestionably adopted perspectives from general stakeholder theory, which manifests itself in the majority of project stakeholder management models, frameworks and tools (Aaltonen & Sivonen, 2009; Winch & Bonke, 2002). The assumptions of static, permanent and dyadic contexts, stemming from the general stakeholder theory are misleading, because they are intended originally for a firm operating its business as a production function (Donaldson & Preston, 1995), unlike in projects where the operations are highly networked, dynamic and temporary (Sydow et al., 2004). That is, in contrast to the implications in general stakeholder management theory, the relationships, and therefore stakeholder management, among actors in projects are often actually formed, and enacted through the interactions of heterogeneous and pluralistic stakeholders in a network.

While the project stakeholder management literature offers a set of tools and frameworks for stakeholder analysis and classification (e.g. Aaltonen et al., 2015; Fassin, 2009; Olander & Landin, 2005), the ways stakeholders are involved into the project development and decision-making are constantly debated in the context of large projects. That is, the reasoning and decisions concerning stakeholder involvement often rely on uncertain information on the evolving nature of the project's stakeholder landscape. Consequently, prior research has started highlighting the importance of staging and timing in the use of stakeholder management strategies over time, the tailoring, altering and adaptation of the strategies to the special needs of different stakeholders as well as the use of expectation management to deal with the controversial demands of stakeholders. Thus, there exists extremely limited research into the actual dynamic practices and processes that go beyond the static, permanent and dyadic contexts in stakeholder management strategies.

Our study employs the strategy-as-practice and projects-as-practice perspectives to investigate the ways stakeholder strategies are formed and maintained in a megaproject by the key actors in the project (Blomquist et al., 2010; Cicmil et al., 2006; Vaara & Whittington, 2012).

RESEARCH STRATEGY AND ANALYSIS

We adopt a qualitative research strategy (Bryman & Bell, 2007), since our study scrutinises and deepens existing theory of stakeholder management and stakeholder management strategies in project contexts. In so doing, our goal is not to derive ubiquitous outcomes or holistic frameworks, rather elaborate a unique context with its own history and gain rich insights for inductive based theory development (Ketokivi & Choi, 2014).

RESEARCH DESIGN

We employ a single-case study design (Yin, 2013). Specifically, an extended case method (Burawoy, 1998), which is suitable for qualitative research strategy aiming at elaborating and extending established theories. Our case selection followed the idea of theoretical sampling (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). A large city district infrastructure development project, characterised as a megaproject was selected as our unit of analysis based on close proximity, accessibility to data through a research project, and de facto, a complex project as a context in the light of our study and research question is particularly suitable due to inter-organisational, temporary, dynamic and networked nature of project operations.

The selected case megaproject is a district development project, located in Northern Europe inside a metropolitan area, 10 kilometres off of capital's downtown. The project is owned by Corresponding City Authority and a real estate development company named Insurance Company, who is also the main investor of the megaproject. This district is internationally known as a garden district and cultural cradle of the metropolitan area, inherent with historical architectural designs of buildings and park and garden areas, which manifest post-war modernism in form of a centre tower, public pool (ice-rink in winter time), culture centre, modern art museum, theatre, library and many other cultural subjects that aided the inhabitants to recover from war times. The heritage were ought to be valued and preserved in the district development project.

This megaproject began in 2004 and is still an on-going project. The initial project scope in 2004 included only the renovation of few district centre buildings, in which two department stores were operating, and the enhancement of street pavements with new pavement flags and street lights. However, the scope gradually expanded during the project's lifecycle resulting in 2014 to the demolishment of five district centre buildings and rebuilding of new commercial buildings with residential housing blocks above.

This would result in a shopping centre and residential complex with new centralised underground parking of over 2,000 parking slots, new metro station extension, and new main bus terminal of the district. The cultural heritage in the district was enhanced with new park and green areas, park roof terraces and by restoring a historical roundabout. A total of 3 billion euros are being invested in this megaproject. The project initially in 2004 contained only few actors, whom were the real estate owners of the district centre and the department store tenants, but during the gradual expansion the stakeholder network broadened to several core and external stakeholders including new tenants, resident union, political actors, contractors, inhabitants (or end-users), private investors, consultant and architect companies. The

case project's actors for our study with short descriptions and interview data information are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Actors participating in the case project and related interviews

Organisation name	Brief description	Interviewees	Interview years	Total interviews
Insurance Company	A large real estate investment and development department of a large insurance corporation with a strong presence in the studied district project, also the main investor (Core actor)	CEO, Real estate investment manager, Fund manager, Head Manager of Real Estate Investment, Manager of Real Estate Constructing, Real estate manager, Shopping centre manager	2011, 2015	11
Architect Company	An architect company widely known for its many recognised designs which was responsible of master planning of the project (Core actor)	Architect	2012, 2015	2
Designer Company	A design and architect company responsible of reference planning of the project (Core actor)	-	-	0
Consultant Company	A project management and real estate constructing consulting company hired by core actors to aid in project planning and execution (Core actor)	Consultant	2015	1
Residents' Association	Organisation for the purpose of promoting the interests of residents of Tapiola district (External stakeholder)	Chairman, Member	2012	1
Corresponding city	The focal district is located in this city's area, this actor is the original project owner (Core actor)	Project manager, Property manager, Leader of urban planning unit, Trade promoter, Development Director, Chairman of the Urban planning Unit Board,	2011, 2012, 2014	8
Local Cultural and Environmental Bureau	A government authority set up for the preservation of historical heritage in this city (External stakeholder)	Department manager, Senior specialist	2012	1
End-users, inhabitants and individuals interested in the project	All the future users of the new district who pay interest in its planning and constructing (External stakeholder)	Pensioner	2011	1
Customers and Tenants	The future customers of the district, including various tenants, entrepreneurs and housing investors (Core actor)	Director of the department stores in Nordic and the Baltic countries	2016	1
Railway company	The railway company responsible for constructing the metro station and metro extension in the area (Core actor)	CEO	2016	1

Our study focuses on the perspective of core stakeholders' key representatives from Insurance Company, Corresponding City, Designer Company, Architect Company and Consultant Company. Our analysis investigates the longitudinal setting from the early project initiation 2004 up to the beginning of project execution in 2016.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Our methods for data collection were two-fold. First, we gathered primary data through semi-structured interviews (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013), a total of 27 interviews between the years 2011 and 2016. Second, we gathered a secondary data archive electronically. We combined these data collection methods for the purpose of data triangulation (Jick, 1979) and to produce a valid and proper background information and chronology of events in our longitudinal description.

We collected the primary data through semi-structured interviews, which is a valid method for case study design and qualitative research in general due to the flexibility and lack of input bias (Bryman & Bell, 2007). We approached interviewees utilising a purposive method (Densin & Lincoln, 2005), and during the interviews we employed snowball sampling (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981) to identify other relevant interviewees. We interviewed informants from 9 distinct organisations including both core and external stakeholders. The data from external stakeholders functioned as a triangulation method to reduce bias of interpreting core stakeholders' actions, events, activities and practices. We included informants with distinct roles to cover a spectrum of knowledge and perspectives to observe convergence and divergence in events and actions of different informants and to ensure transverse rigor and validity in our data set (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). The interviews occurred in between 2011 and 2016 in four rounds to ensure longitudinal data set and to limit post-hoc rationalisation. The interviews were fully recorded and fully transcribed.

The purpose of the interviews was to collect and reveal all events, stakeholders, activities and relations from the perspective of the interviewee and his or hers organisation in focus. Hence, we obtained thorough understanding of the roles and activities of different organisations towards other stakeholders in distinct time periods of the project. Semi-structured interviews seek for a confidential and active setting through interpretive and explorative approaches (Holstein & Gubrium, 2004). We had no official interview structure or guideline, but a mutual understanding and format based on methodological literature enhanced the reliability of our method assuring that interview contents matched the study and its objectives (Stake, 1995).

The interview format always first began by asking the interviewee to give an introduction to her or his working life and history, followed by a question to describe their own role in the megaproject and in the corresponding company or organisation. The atmosphere was retained as informal to promote openness, transparency and convenience in the situation. The interviews continued based on the interaction and maintained atmosphere focusing on the interviewee's own voice and interpretation of the project, its stakeholders, events and actions by asking only open-ended, guiding and indirect questions regarding various stakeholders to avoid input biases. We also utilised a critical incident technique (e.g. Flanagan, 1954) by asking the interviewee to memorise certain positive or negative events or activities encountered with any stakeholder during the project to advance our understanding of the temporality of important events and activities at different time periods.

We used our secondary data archive for triangulation by complementing our real-time data and extending our time frame. Also, the secondary data ensured that the temporality, dynamism, networked project operations and key stakeholder roles were interpreted as correctly as possible from the interviews. We also obtained a more thorough understanding of the case context by producing a proper background

description to understand the historical embeddedness (Dubois & Gadde, 2002). Our data archive contained both publicly available open data sources and data acquired from private actors of the project. The publicly available data included news articles, brochures, project reports and press releases from web sites of involved actors and national trade journals covering the project. The private part of our secondary data was obtained from the actors as presentations, plans, company reports and memos from meetings. We started the secondary data collection retrospectively from year 2004 and continued from 2011 in real-time.

DATA ANALYSIS

Our data analysis embodied three phases. First, we utilised inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) based on grounded theory principle (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Second, we employed a content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Third, we triangulated our findings in regard of our electronic data archive to ensure the validity of our interpretations considering chronology of events and actions (Jick, 1979).

The analysis of our interview data was performed using ATLAS.ti software. The level of analysis is at micro-level scrutinising individuals' intentions, actions and activities. In this analysis phase we recognised and coded inductively general themes and patterns regarding our research context to construct a narrative, i.e. first from the perspective of a single core stakeholder in the studied project context. The general idea in this phase was to make a general map and proper background comprehension of all the events, actions, activities and intentions of various individuals of key organisations in different time periods (Braun & Clarke, 2006). We coded general activities, events, relationships and roles of a single stakeholder and its key individuals, one at a time in the project context with as accurate timestamps as possible, ranging from years to exact dates. The other stakeholders' interview data was used simultaneously to triangulate events, activities and actions as much as possible to reduce potential biases. The timestamp information was triangulated with the secondary data archive whenever possible to ensure the trustworthiness of our dynamic descriptions (Jick, 1979). The code bank functioned as a general description of our case events. This was a necessary step to later understand the temporality and dynamics in the creation of stakeholder management strategies throughout the longitudinal case. In this stage we made no attempt to distil categories, which resulted in a myriad of codes.

In the content analysis, we followed the approach suggested by Mayring (2000), in which all tentative stakeholder management strategy practices are inductively aggregated from the code bank with the information of who did, what, how, why, when, where, with whom and to whom, to provide fine-grained descriptions of the temporality of the strategies at the micro-level. We explicated the actions, intentions, activities and actions (practices) of core individuals (practitioners) who were in a focal role in the stakeholder management strategy creation processes (praxis). We reflected similarities and differences among the coded practices to distil them properly from each other. Also, we grouped the codes into higher level stakeholder management strategy categories to improve the theoretical distinguishing.

Finally, we triangulated our findings in the light of the public and interview data archives to ensure that our interpretations of events and actions were in chronological

order (Jick, 1979). Analysis resulted in writing a detailed narrative of the case and distinct stakeholder management strategies, how they emerged or developed and how they were implemented over time. A data structure table summarising our findings and analysis is presented in Table 2 below. In total, we found 10 stakeholder management practices. The narrative is represented as a condensed yet detailed enough version in the findings section illustrating the 10 main findings of our study.

Table 2. Summarised data structure of our findings

Sample quote of empirical evidence	Observed strategic stakeholder management practice	Related higher-level stakeholder management strategy
"We are not there, because residents are not actors. Real estate and land owners and commercial community are. There they decide what is to be done and then it is left for the City to be done [officially]. There, by the way, reputedly, they write memos in the management group, but they [memos] are being tore after and no information is left on paper."	1. Founding a joint organisation for deliberately excluding the opposing stakeholders	Minimal effort, Ignore strategy, Avoidance strategy, Dismissal strategy (Aaltonen & Sivonen, 2009; Olander & Landin, 2005)
"We are not there, because residents are not actors. Real estate and land owners and commercial community are. There they decide what is to be done and then it is left for the City to be done [officially]. There, by the way, reputedly, they write memos in the management group, but they [memos] are being tore after and no information is left on paper."	2. Founding a joint organisation to create a communication channel toward the external stakeholders in order to ease the informing	Keep informed (Aaltonen et al., 2015)
"In my opinion a critical starting point solution was the using of reference planning... it has surely been an innovative way to think about this way, but from the authority perspective, undeniably... there has developed some teething problems between the administrative proceeding and the reference planning."	3. Implementing a novel planning system as a tool for slowly easing the information, and to actively inform the external stakeholders	Keep aligned, Attempt to decrease salience and minimise impact, Influence strategy (Aaltonen et al., 2015; Aaltonen & Sivonen, 2009; Olander & Landin, 2005)
"All this [master planning] started when building inspection authority's head said to me that this building will not get construction permits, unless we can indicate that all this [ensemble of buildings] will be a functioning entity... Then piloting this term master planning toward the authorities... We began to do these functional plans, there was human safety, fire safety, heat and smoke venting, and anything... But with this [master planning] we actually managed to work the holdouts into this."	4. Implementing a novel planning system as a tool to actively argue, justify and defend the planning to the external stakeholders	Keep satisfied, Conduct dialogues, try to convince, Influence strategy (Aaltonen et al., 2015; Aaltonen & Sivonen, 2009; Olander & Landin, 2005)
"There was also this Tower Seminar held in [modern art museum] if you remember, which dealt with the issues regarding high-rise construction, also considering this district."	5. Actively communicating the project planning in person to external stakeholders, and providing a platform for external stakeholders to influence and engage in the project	Keep informed, Keep aligned, Conduct dialogues, try to convince, Influence strategy (Aaltonen et al., 2015; Aaltonen & Sivonen, 2009; Olander & Landin, 2005)
"We discussed about the architectural aspects and about how is this district going to be developed, and we also highlighted some other [cultural] boundary conditions. But in the end we realised the economic and financial boundary conditions, what is enough in terms of economies of scale so that the development is profitable. These were never discussed properly with us, and we then of course think that they try to maximise efficacy over reasonable modesty. The openness particularly ends at the side of the real estate owners and private sector, these things are never brought up here, even though it de facto affects."	6. Deliberately concealing specific information from external stakeholders and ignoring them	Minimal effort, Attempt to decrease salience and minimise impact, Ignore strategy, Avoidance strategy, Dismissal strategy (Aaltonen et al., 2015; Aaltonen & Sivonen, 2009; Olander & Landin, 2005)
"[Specialist] is then again here thinking about the district centre and the expression of the architecture, and he is for instance then reasoning these for the authorities that how does they look like and why does they look like so. And when they [authorities] provide distinct comments, he is of course very capable of addressing them."	7. Utilising specialists as heralds in communicating project planning	Keep informed, Keep aligned, Keep satisfied, Conduct dialogues, try to convince, Influence strategy (Aaltonen et al., 2015; Aaltonen & Sivonen, 2009; Olander & Landin, 2005)
"It is officer propaganda, but there are of course good things. There are good things... such as enliven the district."	8. Incorporating the external stakeholders' perspectives to the project planning	Keep aligned, Keep satisfied, Keep informed, Monitor proactively and engage, Comprising strategy, Adaptation

		strategy (Aaltonen et al., 2015; Aaltonen & Sivonen, 2009; Olander & Landin, 2005)
<i>"Well in regard of some smaller issues, I have personally went and have discussions with the Corresponding City's preparatory officer, when something has turned up and I have familiarised myself with these smaller issues and maybe provided some viewpoints in some smaller issues."</i>	9. Actively discussing about the project planning and idealisation with external stakeholders	Keep key actors aligned, satisfied, and informed, Conduct dialogues, try to convince, Build win-wins, Comprising strategy (Aaltonen et al., 2015; Olander & Landin, 2005)
<i>"[Commercial consultant] have been as a commercial consultant for us, in a way that they have used this Danish [other commercial consultant] as a help, it is this kind of commercial shopping centre designer. Actually they conducted this kind of enquiry about what is needed her in this district and what kind of buyers do we have here and then they compared it to the [capital downtown], they visited also there and went through a lot of shopping streets, for instance [a famous shopping street] and many others, and they also visited the shops and looked their interiors and checked the overall quality of the shops. They also did interviews and approached this issue, a bit, if I may say so, more from a psychological perspective, like what would the new atmosphere be like , or the feeling there in the new district in future, so that it would serve the people who visit there. They see the people in four elements, whether you are rational or more impulsive or something, so what kind of people goes by there. They developed this kind of synthesis, and based on that we would start to create the district or actually the feeling there."</i>	10. Actively joining in the external stakeholders to the project	Keep key actors aligned, satisfied, and informed. Build win-wins, Engage in managing other stakeholders, Comprising strategy, Influence strategy (Aaltonen et al., 2015; Aaltonen & Sivonen, 2009; Olander & Landin, 2005)

The left-most column contains empirical grounding and evidence, to which the middle-column observed strategic stakeholder management practices are related. Then, in the right-most column we provide the linkages to the extant literature, which shows to which higher-level stakeholder management strategies in the literature the identified strategic practices separately relate.

FINDINGS

FOUNDING A JOINT ORGANISATION FOR DELIBERATELY EXCLUDING THE OPPOSING STAKEHOLDERS

In the beginning of the project in 2004, the former CEO of Insurance Company after having discussions with Development director and Property manager of Corresponding City Authority, rounded up all the real estate owners of the district, and the real estate owners, core actors, of the district area established a joint organisation District Area Development (DAD). There were several purposes for doing such a thing.

In terms of stakeholder management strategy practices, there were two reasons. First, this kind of umbrella organisation constituted and formalised the boundaries between the core actors and external stakeholders of the project. Moreover, as a closed system, it would be used in form of an ignorance strategy to deliberately exclude the external stakeholders during the early phases of the project, i.e. not to communicate the project planning to them or listen to their proposals. This was because in the beginning, the core actors realised that it would be easier to keep the planning in close hands and to have a manageable ensemble instead of trying to satisfy everybody in the very beginning, when the entire scope of the project is completely ambiguous.

We call this stakeholder management strategy practice as *deliberately excluding the opposing stakeholders*.

“We are not there, because residents are not actors. Real estate and land owners and commercial community are. There they decide what is to be done and then it is left for the City to be done [officially]. There, by the way, reputedly, they write memos in the management group, but they [memos] are being tore after and no information is left on paper.”

Chairman/Member of Residents’ Association

FOUNDING A JOINT ORGANISATION TO CREATE COMMUNICATION CHANNEL TOWARD THE EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS IN ORDER TO EASE THE INFORMING

Second, this umbrella organisation was used to represent the collective interest of the real estate owners, especially for authority related external stakeholders such as construction office and building inspection authority. The reason for this was that the fragmented ownership in the district caused problems (such as multiple parallel divergent ideas) in communicating the various planning ideas to external stakeholders, which hindered the early project initiation. So, this unified communication channel would unify the voice and ideas of distinct core actors, such as Corresponding City, Insurance Company and other real estate owners in the area, as a collective interest and ease the communication and interaction with authority related external stakeholders. Thus, core actors communicated and introduced their early project plans and ideas through this channel to authorities such as Building Inspection and Surveillance Authority, Urban Planning Unit Authority or National and Local Cultural and Environmental Bureaus.

We call this stakeholder management strategy practice as *creating a communication channel toward the external stakeholders and ease the informing*.

IMPLEMENTING A NOVEL PLANNING SYSTEM AS A TOOL FOR SLOWLY EASING THE INFORMATION, AND TO ACTIVELY INFORM THE EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

During the early phase (2005) of the project, the core actors so called designer team of key representatives of Insurance Company (Manager of real estate constructing), Consultant Company (Consultant) , Designer Company (Designer) and Architect Company (Architect) invented a novel reference planning procedure, which they utilised during the entire project. In particular it was the idea of Designer and Consultant in the designer team. The purpose of the reference planning was to visualise in 2D and 3D forms that how would the district look like in the future in various different phases and with alternative options as a big picture, i.e. a means of slowly easing, communicating and introducing the planning ideas to external stakeholders such as, Building Inspection and Surveillance Authority, Local Urban Planning Unit Authority and Local Cultural and Environmental Bureau, as well as the residents to gain acceptance prior official decisions and plan proposals without any chance of official rebuttals. The need for this kind of procedure ascended from the interactions between core actors and external stakeholders, because it was hard for the core actors key representatives to communicate the ideas robustly toward the external stakeholders, especially to the authorities through the regular bureaucratic town

planning procedure, which would have been too slow anyway. Moreover, the reference planning would be used to share the plan ideas in graphical form to a wider audience including end-users and customers to market the project in positive way throughout the entire project. This reference planning would sort of aid in partially bypassing the official town planning procedure in favour of core actors to make the planning procedure faster.

We call this stakeholder management strategy practice as *implementing a novel planning system as a tool for slowly easing the information, and to actively inform the external stakeholders.*

“In my opinion a critical starting point solution was the using of reference planning... it has surely been an innovative way to think about this way, but from the authority perspective, undeniably... there has developed some teething problems between the administrative proceeding and the reference planning.”

Senior Specialist of Local Environmental and Cultural Bureau

IMPLEMENTING A NOVEL PLANNING SYSTEM AS A TOOL TO ACTIVELY ARGUE, JUSTIFY AND DEFEND THE PLANNING TO THE EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Meanwhile, in 2006 the core actors' designer team's key representatives Consultant and Architect invented and started to utilise a second novel planning protocol during the entire project. This planning protocol emerged from the interactions between the core actors' Consultant Company's key representative and external stakeholders' building inspection authority to overcome the external stakeholders' opposition regarding certain buildings' building permits, because they lacked detailed analyses (e.g. sewage, maintenance, firewalls), which couldn't be inspected from the reference planning that was too abstract and generic level visualisation. The master planning was a more detailed in-depth analysis of the district built upon the reference planning, which would show the building specific analyses. This master planning protocol was used throughout the project to slowly ease, communicate and introduce the planning more in depth to external stakeholders such as, Building Inspection and Surveillance Authority, Local Urban Planning Unit Authority and Local Cultural and Environmental Bureau, as well as the residents to gain silent acceptance prior to official decisions and plan proposals without any chance of official rebuttals.

We call this stakeholder management strategy practice as *implementing a novel planning system as a tool for slowly easing the information, and to actively inform the external stakeholders.*

ACTIVELY COMMUNICATING THE PROJECT PLANNING IN PERSON TO EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS, AND PROVIDING A PLATFORM FOR EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS TO INFLUENCE AND ENGAGE IN THE PROJECT

After the beginning of the project, between 2007 and 2011, the core actors' Corresponding City's few key representatives (Trade promoter, Project manager, City manager) held several different types of briefings for external stakeholders, especially for residents' association, residents in general and other end-users of the district. The purpose to organise such briefings emerged from the interactions between core actors' representatives and external stakeholders. In particular, National and Local

Cultural and Environmental Bureaus and residents of the district strongly opposed the planning toward core actors' designer team at that time, because of the district's cultural heritage value and history. The need for core actors to have a straightforward and honest way of communicating the planning to end-users ascended from the interactions, leading into especially the Corresponding City's project manager organising various information seminars open for anyone at the district's movie theatre and art museum, and creating a website for the project to even more introduce graphical material, analyses and provide information openly. Moreover, these briefings provided a platform for external stakeholder to influence and engaging in project planning.

We call this stakeholder management strategy practice as *actively communicating the project planning in person to external stakeholders and providing a platform for external stakeholders to influence and engage in the project.*

“There was also this Tower Seminar held in [modern art museum] if you remember, which dealt with the issues regarding high-rise construction, also considering this district.”

Department Manager of Local Environmental and Cultural Bureau

DELIBERATELY CONCEALING SPECIFIC INFORMATION FROM EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS AND IGNORING THEM

However, at the same time period between 2007 and 2011, the openness and active informing about project planning had its downsides. The core actors' designer team's key representatives concealed specific information and did not respond to all references from external stakeholders. This emerged through the interactions between Corresponding City's representatives, residents and local and national cultural and environmental bureaus in various briefings. Many of the external stakeholders wanted to know more specific details about the project, and have an opinion or influence. The core actors interpreted that in order to have a manageable ensemble and proceed with the planning, everybody couldn't be satisfied or listened to, and some issues were better to be kept in one's own hands. Thus, the core actors on purpose concealed certain information and didn't return certain references from external stakeholders. These issues especially concerned total construction volume, floor and square meter prices, and other economic and financial factors behind the planning. The sole purpose of concealing specific information and ignoring certain references from external stakeholders was to protect the project planning and proceed in time as a manageable entity.

We call this stakeholder management strategy practice as *deliberately concealing specific information from external stakeholders.*

UTILISING SPECIALISTS AS HERALDS IN COMMUNICATING PROJECT PLANNING

The pluralistic backgrounds of external stakeholders and core actors developed schism when the project's planning continued to proceed between 2006 and 2012, which meant that the progression of project planning was hindered because of the strong opposition from external stakeholders. The external stakeholders, Residents' Association and Local Cultural and Environmental Bureau still fostered and held tight to the cultural heritage, which was contradictory to the project plans. Even though the

core actors' designer team had invented both reference and master planning procedures, they were less effective as hoped. The core actors' designer team decided to alter their tactic. Previously, a representative from Designer Company had been the specific individual who would represent the master and reference planning to external stakeholders to gain acceptance. However, this person's prestige, authority or capabilities were not that rigorous. Core actors decided to put another individual forth, this time from Architect Company (Architect), who held a professorship in local university, and was nationally famous for his designs. This specific individual could especially convince the authorities about how the new plans would also take into account the cultural heritage value, and gain further acceptance to proceed and overcome the opposition, even though the official town plan wasn't decided yet, but they could provide the first town plan proposal.

We call this stakeholder management strategy practice as *utilising specialists as heralds in communicating project planning*.

"[Specialist] is then again here thinking about the district centre and the expression of the architecture, and he is for instance then reasoning these for the authorities that how does they look like and why does they look like so. And when they [authorities] provide distinct comments, he is of course very capable of addressing them."

Real Estate Manager of Insurance Company

INCORPORATING THE EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS' PERSPECTIVES TO THE PROJECT PLANNING

From 2009 to 2011 the opposition from external stakeholders, especially from the Local Cultural and Environmental Bureau, Residents' Association and end users, was still very strong resulting in the rejection of official town plan, which was based on core actors' contemporary planning proposals. The core actors' designer team needed to invent some new stakeholder management practices to progress with the project planning and get the official approval of the town plan. During the initial official town planning proposal the core actors had active discussions with the external stakeholders about the boundary conditions, even though this first round resulted in a rejection. The core actors' designer team interpreted that they have to include and integrate external stakeholders' boundary conditions better in the planning to get the official town plan proposal approved in the future. The designer team's representatives together invented one novel thing, so called District's Development Theses (Theses). The thesis analogy was invented from the original Luther story about nailing the 95 theses to the church's main entrance. In practice, the Corresponding City's project manager wrote such development theses about the district and published them in the earlier opened website about the project and its development. The contents of the Theses were about, how the new project planning, after the first rejection of town planning, would now take into account the boundary conditions of the external stakeholders and integrate the cultural heritage values better. The incorporation of external stakeholder's boundary conditions of course required the core actors to restrain own planning, for instance regarding high-rise construction and park and garden areas. The purpose of the theses was to include and integrate the

boundary conditions of the external stakeholders in the planning by listening to them and openly expressing it, which would legitimise the planning.

We call this stakeholder management strategy practice as *incorporating the external stakeholders' perspectives to the project planning*.

ACTIVELY DISCUSSING ABOUT THE PROJECT PLANNING AND IDEALISATION WITH EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

After 2011, based on the interaction with external stakeholder in initial official town planning procedure and after inventing the Theses, the core actors comprehended that they need to be more active toward the external stakeholders to progress properly with the project. The core actors' designer team's various representatives (e.g. Consultant, Architect, Designer, Project Manager, City officers) collectively altered their stakeholder management strategy in general and started to actively meet the external stakeholders, Local Cultural and Environmental Bureau and Local Urban Planning Unit Authority in particular, and listen to their expectations, similarly as in the early project phases in the different briefings. The purpose of actively joining in the external stakeholders was to progress with the project accordingly and promote mutual value creation and capturing. Moreover, this was obligatory to some extent, in order to create harmony with the authorities and have the official town plan approved in the future.

We call this stakeholder management strategy practice as *actively discussing about the project planning and idealisation with external stakeholders*.

"We have had this kind of very open interaction, we have met them [external stakeholders] often and had conversations, but from the discussions we can't really develop... we do have interaction, but they have said that this specific building is dominant [can't build higher buildings than a historically preserved tower building], and so be it."

Project Manager of Corresponding City

INCLUSION OF EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS TO THE PROJECT

From 2011 to 2013, the core actors' designer team started to join in the external stakeholders, especially the residents and end-users, even more to the project planning, which was reaching its final phases before entering into the project execution phase. Based on the interaction efforts with external stakeholders and due to the complexity of the project context, the core actors' key representatives decided to put more effort into the active stakeholder engagement, instead of management. In particular, the Insurance Company, as the main developer, decided then to invest in commercial consulting. The Insurance Company's CEO, Real estate investment manager, Fund manager, Head Manager of Real Estate Investment hired commercial consultants to conduct a commercial enquiry in the district area. In practice the commercial enquiry would mean that the hired consultants would conduct a large survey in the district by interviewing and collecting data from the district's inhabitants, end-users and tenants, as well as data from other rival districts. The aim of this enquiry was to disentangle a more advanced commercial profile for the future premises, by listening to the actual end-users and customers (tenants) and comparing

the existing profile to other districts. Practically, the motive for core actors was to engage the external stakeholders even more to the project in planning the future operations phase.

We call this stakeholder management strategy practise as *actively joining in the external stakeholders to the project*.

In Figure 1 below, we have summarised and presented the used stakeholder management strategy practices in a flowchart form. The used practices are listed in the left column. The project timeline is presented in the bottom row. The duration for each stakeholder management strategy practice can be read from the graph.

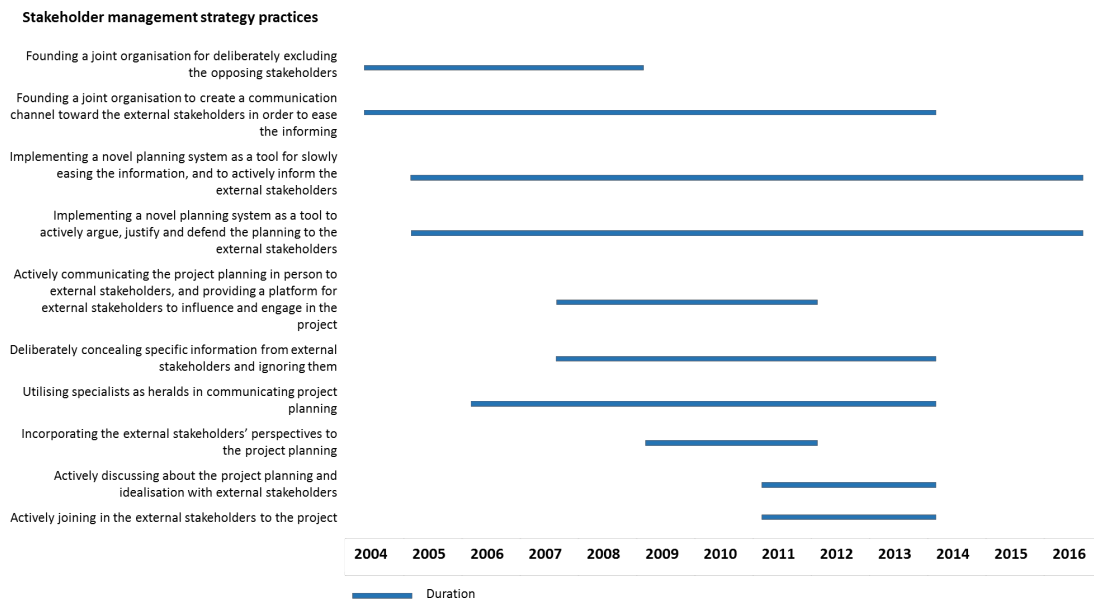


Figure 1. Used stakeholder management strategy practices in flowchart form

DISCUSSION

The present study sought to improve the understanding of the ways stakeholder management practices evolve and become enacted over the project lifecycle. We conducted an empirical study of a European district development project to critically explore the phenomenon in a real-life setting.

PACING STRATEGY

As illustrated in Figure 1, the stakeholder management strategies changed drastically over time through the interactions of various actors. First, our analysis reveals that many of the later established engagement and inclusive related strategies were first ignored and even excluded by the participating core actors. This is because, according to our findings, in the beginning the core actors' representatives thought that it would be better to exclude and ignore external stakeholders to make the fuzzy early phases of the project a manageable ensemble that would be within the core actors' hands. This observation takes stand on the earlier conceptualised paradox of including versus excluding external stakeholders during the early stages of the projects (Aaltonen &

Kujala, 2010; Eskerod et al., 2015). Our data thus provides an antithetical perspective to what the prevalent project stakeholder management literature suggests that external stakeholders should be included early on in the decision-making (Missonier & Loufrani-Fedida, 2014).

What is more, the data illustrates that the practices evolved and became legitimate gradually through the creation of simple rules (i.e. routines) for collaboration by the organisations involved. Such practices occurred as design rules that were used as means of internal coordination, but also as frames for stakeholders' legitimised inputs in the project. In practice this means that the core actors created the visualising planning protocols to inform and slowly ease the information to external stakeholders. Additionally, these protocols were used to argue, reason and justify that the project planning was robust, and would include the divergent interests of external stakeholders. Moreover, this led to core actors organising the face to face communication channels and negotiations with the use of heralds.

While such simple design rules became established as pathways to empower stakeholder strategies, they also formed the praxis by which the core actors enacted inclusiveness based strategies later during the development stage. This led the core actors to first incorporate the external stakeholders' perspectives, through actively discussing and negotiating, which eventually led into actively joining the external stakeholders in the formal project coalition. The additional influence of the challenging context of cultural heritage value can't be ignored, since the socio-political pressure influenced the core actors both directly (town planning procedure) and indirectly (e.g. through media) to engage and include the external stakeholders even more.

Contributing to the existing research on project stakeholder management, which revolves around static and permanent strategies to external stakeholders (Aaltonen et al., 2015), we identified that the inclusion and exclusion strategies are not static, but dynamic. That is, the core actors alter their stakeholder management strategies from exclusion to inclusion and vice versa slowly easing information over time, depending on the contingencies of the project. This dynamic perspective to stakeholder strategies is new to project stakeholder management literature, and the extant research has not described it sufficiently. Therefore, this kind of fluctuating strategy is what we call *pacing strategy*, as a new higher-level description in stakeholder management strategies, which goes beyond the static and permanent description of existing descriptions.

DYADIC VERSUS NETWORK PERSPECTIVE

The current project stakeholder management research has advocated the original stakeholder management theory from permanent and static firm contexts (Donaldson & Preston, 1995), that the stakeholder management and related strategies are enacted and implemented by a single organisation in a dyadic relationship with its stakeholders, to say, that the activities that are taken to manage external stakeholders in megaprojects are coordinated and enacted by a single organisation in a dyadic relationship with its stakeholders (Freeman, 1984; Rowley, 1997). The project stakeholder management research has almost unquestionably adopted this perspective, which manifests itself in the majority of the project stakeholder management models, frameworks and tools (e.g. Olander & Landin, 2005; G. M. Winch & Bonke, 2002).

However, in contrast, we argue that this perspective is misleading, because it is intended for more static and permanent contexts, related to a firm operating its business. In projects, the operations and relationships are highly dynamic and temporary, and consequently the stakeholder management practices among actors are often formed, defined, revised and maintained through the interactions in a polycentric system of core project actors.

Our findings indicate that strategic practices of stakeholder management rise from the interactions among core actors as well as between core and external stakeholders. For instance, as the authorities required more specific reasoning for the plans, the core actors invented the master planning protocol to address this issue. Further, as the core actors experienced strong opposition of certain external stakeholders when interacting with them in briefings, they started to shift incrementally toward the inclusive strategies in general. Moreover, the core actors in the beginning idealised and realised that they need to have a mutual channel to communicate with the external stakeholders to slowly ease the information flow.

Our data shows that the core actors did not have any pre-set toolkit from which they would have chosen strategies and deliberately utilised them toward specific external stakeholders. In fact, the strategies welled from the interactions and were utilised in a network perspective instead of dyadic management. This implies that the strategies unfold over time and are dynamic due to the various interactions and longitudinal time period, instead of being static. This is a rather contradictory perspective to what the extant project management stakeholder strategy literature advocates.

MICRO-LEVEL DESCRIPTIONS

The extant project management research is filled with more holistic higher-level strategy descriptions such as keep informed and keep satisfied (Aaltonen et al., 2015; Olander & Landin, 2005). The existing descriptions are not providing very detailed account on how the strategies are formed, enacted and devised specifically, thus, they lack empirical grounding to the causal logics. Our findings in general are described in detail, in fine-grained level, i.e. micro-level, which provides empirical grounding and add causal logics to the various higher-level strategies in existing literature.

Moreover, these higher-level strategies are quite static (e.g. Bonke & Winch, 2002). Our findings provide a longitudinal description of a specific case context with its own unique history, addressing the utilisation of various micro-level strategic practices unfolding over the lifecycle of a project. Thus, our descriptions add the longitudinal fine-grained perspective to existing project stakeholder management strategy literature.

An interesting observation is that some of the strategic dynamic stakeholder management practices were new. These were related to activities that sought for slowly easing the information to certain external stakeholders. This kind of slowly easing, is new in a sense that the previous accounts usually manifest concrete actions that take place in certain moment of time, whereas this kind of slowly easing practice is dynamic, taking a long time period to be conducted completely. Moreover, this long time period is due to the various interactions among and between the core and external stakeholders. Thus, in general our strategic stakeholder management practices advocate that the strategies and therefore related practices are not occurring

as immediate actions at specific moments of time, rather they well from interactions and are unfold over a longer time period. Hence, our descriptions also add the dynamic perspective to existing project stakeholder management strategy literature.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

We make three contributions to the current knowledge of project stakeholder management theory and practice. First, we enlighten the existing stakeholder management and engagement strategy classifications with empirical micro-level process descriptions providing rich insight how the strategies unfold over time from a multi-stakeholder perspective instead of traditional dyadic relationships.

Second, we provide a networked view on the stakeholder management strategies, which have been merely discussed in the existing literature as dyadic relationships between actors, or around a focal actor. We observed that it is mistaken to consider that core actors manage external stakeholders by pursuing directly strategies indifferent of other relationships in the project, but the management actions and strategies ascend as a result of continuous network interactions of actors in the project network instead of hub-and-spoke dyadic deliberate management.

Third, we provide longitudinal process-like descriptions of how the stakeholder management strategies unfold over time (as praxis) by the actions and activities (through practices) of certain project's core actors' representatives (by practitioners), delivering rich insights of the context specific causal relationships influencing why actors as a result of continuous interaction employ certain stakeholder management strategies in distinct time periods.

Moreover, we found a new stakeholder management strategy type, a *pacing strategy* in which core actors alter their stakeholder management strategies from exclusion to inclusion and/or vice versa depending on the context specific phenomenon. According to our best knowledge, this dynamic higher-level strategy category is new to project stakeholder management literature, since the extant descriptions are insufficient in describing this kind of fluctuating and dynamic strategic behaviour.

Our study is in-depth and rich, but it focuses only on one case. Other megaprojects in other contexts might have different challenges and stakeholder management strategies. As a result, we do not intend to generalise our findings. Therefore, we suggest future research in different contexts to conduct both quantitative research and in-depth qualitative research identifying other possible causal logics of stakeholder management strategies embedded in other contexts.

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