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PROJECT ORGANISATIONS AND GOVERNANCE

– PROCESSES, ACTORS, ACTIONS, AND
PARTICIPATORY PROCEDURES

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ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

Over the past few decades, contemporary public policy and governance systems have been transformed in response to both local and supra-national societal problems and demands. Clear-cut means of tackling these problems and demands are rare. Public policy problems seldom fall neatly within specific jurisdictions or agencies. The state has become increasingly dependent on a wide range of policies and arrangements that produce public services, provide rapid results and facilitate timely interventions. As a response, the choice of governance mechanisms and organizational forms that enable collaborative, dynamic and flexible arrangements in the implementation of public policy becomes highly relevant.

This study analyses the increasing use of temporary project organisations as new governance mechanisms in contemporary policy implementation and the prospects for action that this entails. The main argument is that project organisations could yield significant benefits and can play a vital role as horizontal as well as vertical interlinking mechanisms between various administrative levels. They could also include challenges that have not yet been fully understood. The overarching aim of the study is to conceptualise and understand the benefits and challenges related to the increasing number of temporary governance mechanisms in the form of project organisations in the public sector context.

The study analyses the potential consequences and advantages of public sector projectification in four research articles and this summary article, focusing on how projectification is driven forward, as well as what the consequences of projectification are in the European Union (EU) context and the public sector in general. It considers the long-term effects of project organisations and the extent to which the added value they produce can be utilized. Who are the beneficial social partners and what types of collaborative procedures and actions are needed to achieve innovation in EU structural fund projects?

The multifaceted and ambiguous nature of public sector project research, the uniqueness associated with the various actor objectives, interests and participatory procedures regarding projects, as well as their management requires a broad theoretical view and a variety of methods. Three interrelated strands of research in this respect are particularly relevant: the New Public Management (NPM) discourse, theories of Governance, and project management ideals and Governance of Projects (GoP). They represent a mixture of old and new, which is necessary in order to understand the functioning of projects and projectification as well as their embeddedness in the public sector environment.

The study follows an empirically informed interpretive approach, which emphasises the intentionality of actions, practices, and social life. It uses a mixed-methods approach and advocates multi-perspectivism and paradigm

interplay. It also combines different interpretations of the existing governance frameworks and public sector projects, thus acknowledging that alternative views might exist. The methods used in the individual articles represent metaevaluation, qualitative content analysis, logistic regression analysis and social network analysis (SNA).

The findings highlight the lack of conceptualizations concerning the relationship between temporary and permanent structures, and suggest that an increasing temporality in public decision-making may challenge fundamental administrative values such as transparency and democratic accountability. The findings question the often over-emphasised value of using projects as opposed to other more permanent mechanisms in the public sector environment and suggest that there is a potential mismatch between the operational logic of projects and the prevailing project and program evaluation system in the public sector. Projects can act as hubs where valuable information is produced, and project stakeholder networks and various collaborative efforts can play a role in predicting project innovations. There is, however, an overly optimistic view of collaborative efforts in achieving project innovations, calling collaboration in projects into question as a direct remedy for a lack of innovation.

The study concludes that an increasing use of project organisations in the public sector may have significant consequences, as well as showing that the expected advantages of project organisations are related to the rationalistic ideals, but also that temporality as such poses challenges to permanent administrative structures. Although projects might be superior to permanent structures in producing quick outputs, too much focus on the rational logic of project organisations means that their added value remains underutilized in a public sector context. The study contributes to a theoretical understanding of projectification, what the key drivers of projectification are, as well as specific public sector features that need to be accounted for in a projectified public sector. The study concludes that contextually sensitive interlinking mechanisms between temporary and permanent organizations are vital in explaining the outcome of temporary organizations in a politico-administrative context.

Keywords: Project, European Union, New Public Management, Governance, Evaluation, Collaboration, Implementation

TIIVISTELMÄ

Viime vuosikymmeninä nykyaikainen julkishallinto ja uudet hallintamekanismit ovat yhteiskunnallisten ongelmien, paikallistason ja yli-kansallisten tasojen vaatimusten johdosta muuttuneet. Selkeitä vastauksia siihen, miten näistä vaatimuksista ja ongelmista voisi suoriutua, on kuitenkin harvassa. Julkishallintoon liittyvät ongelmat löytävät harvoin paikkansa yksittäiseltä hallinnonalalta tai virastosta. Valtio on yhä kasvavassa määrin riippuvainen laaja-alaisista toimintatavoista ja järjestelyistä jotka tuottavat julkisia palveluita, nopeita tuloksia ja edesauttavat juuri oikeaan aikaan väliintuloja ja ratkaisuja. Sellaisten uusien hallintamekanismien ja organisaatiomuotojen valinta, jotka mahdollistavat kollaboratiivisia, dynaamisia ja joustavia järjestelyjä julkishallinnon toteuttamisessa, on tullut keskeiseksi.

Tämä tutkimus tarkastelee väliaikaisten projektiorganisaatioiden lisääntyvää käyttöä uutena hallintamekanismina nykyaikaisessa julkishallinnossa ja sen toteuttamisessa, sekä sitä, mitä niistä johtuva yhteiskunnallinen kehitys ja toiminta tuovat mukanaan. Keskeisin argumentti on, että projektiorganisaatioiden käyttö voi johtaa huomattaviin hyötyihin ja olla keskeinen työkalu joka mahdollistaa sekä horisontaalisen että vertikaalisen hallinnon tason toimijoiden yhteenliittämistä. Projektin käyttöön saattaa kuitenkin sisältyä haasteita, joita vielä ei täysin ymmärretä. Tutkimuksen päämäärä on käsitteellistää ja ymmärtää projektimuotoisiin väliaikaisiin hallintamuotoihin liittyvät hyödyt ja haasteet julkishallinnollisessa kontekstissa.

Tämä tutkimus analysoi neljässä artikkelissa ja tässä yhteenvedossa julkishallinnon projektifioitumisen mahdollisia seurauksia ja etuja. Keskipisteessä ovat projektifioitumisen lisääntymisen syyt ja seuraukset Euroopan unionin (EU) kontekstissa sekä yleisesti julkisella sektorilla. Tutkimus analysoi projektiorganisaatioiden pitkän aikavälin vaikutuksia ja sitä, miten projektien kautta syntynyt lisäarvo hyödynnetään. Ketkä muodostavat hyödyllisiä sosiaalisia kumppaneita ja minkälaisia kollaboratiivisia menettelytapoja ja toimintaa tarvitaan, jotta innovaatioita voidaan saavuttaa EU:n rahoittamissa rakennerahastoprojekteissa?

Julkisen sektorin projektitoiminta on laadultaan moniulotteinen ja monimerkityksellinen. Toimijoiden erilaisten päämäärien ja tavoitteiden ainutlaatuisuuden, projektien myötä syntyvien intressiryhmien ja vaihtelevien osallistumismenettelyiden sekä niiden hallinnan tutkiminen vaatii siten laajan teoreettisen viitekehyksen ja monipuolisten tutkimusmenetelmien hyödyntämistä. Tässä tapauksessa kolme toisiinsa liittyvää tutkimussuuntausta ovat erityisen hyödyllisiä: uuteen julkisjohtamiseen (NPM) liittyvä diskurssi, hallintaan¹ liittyvät teoriat, sekä projektijohtamisen ihanteisiin ja projektihallintaan liittyvät teoriat. Nämä edustavat sopivassa muodossa sekä vanhaa, että uutta, joka on tarpeellista

¹ Governance

projektitominnan ja projektifikaation sekä niiden uppoutuneisuuden² ymmärtämiseksi julkisen sektorin ympäristössä.

Tutkimus perustuu empiirisiin tietoihin pohjautuvaan tulkinnalliseen lähestymistapaan, joka korostaa tekojen tarkoituksellisuutta ja niiden eri käytäntöjä, sekä yhteiskunnallista elämää. Tutkimus käyttää *mixed methods* – tutkimuskäytäntöä, joka kannattaa moniperspektiivistä ja eri paradigmojen kautta syntyneitä vuorovaikutusta. Se saattaa yhteen vaihtoehtoisia tulkintoja olemassa olevista hallintaviitekehyksistä ja julkisen sektorin projektinhallinnasta, vahvistaen siten mahdollisten vaihtoehtoisten näkökulmien olemassaoloa. Artikkeleissa käytetyt menetöt edustavat metaevaluaatiota, kvalitatiivista sisältöanalyysiä, logistista regressioanalyysiä ja verkostanalyysiä.

Johtopäätökset korostavat väliaikaisten ja pysyvien rakenteiden käsityksen muodostamisen puuttetta ja väittävät, että lisääntyvä väliaikaisten ratkaisujen käyttö julkisen hallinnon päätöksenteossa saattaa asettaa haasteita hallinnon perustavanlaatuisille arvoille kuten läpinäkyvyydelle ja demokraattiselle tilivelvollisuudelle. Tulokset kyseenalaistavat projektien usein ylikorostetun käytön hyödyn verrattuna pysyvien mekanismien käyttöön julkisessa ympäristössä, ja väittävät, että projektien toimintalogiikka ja julkisen sektorin arviointijärjestelmä ovat osittain yhteensopimattomia. Projektit voivat kuitenkin toimia keskiönä, joissa tuotetaan arvokasta tietoa. Projektien sidosryhmäverkostojen ja projekteissa käytettyjen, vaihtelevien kollaboratiivisten pyrkimysten tutkiminen mahdollistaa myös projektien kautta syntyvien innovaatioiden ennustamisen. Projektien kollaboratiivisten pyrkimysten merkitystä innovaatiovajeen tyydyttämiseksi on kuitenkin yliarvostettu, ja tästä syystä projektien käytön suosio suorana lääkkeenä tämän vajeen tyydyttämiseksi voidaan kyseenalaistaa.

Tutkimuksen johtopäätökset korostavat, että projektien käyttöön julkisella sektorilla saattaa liittyä merkittäviä seurauksia. Projektien kautta haettu lisäarvo liittyy usein rationaalsiin ihanteisiin mutta projektien väliaikaisuus sellaisenaan on myös haasteellinen suhteessa pysyviin hallinnollisiin rakenteisiin. Vaikka projektit saattavat nopeiden tulosten tuottamisessa olla parempia kuin pysyvät rakenteet, merkitsee niiden keskittyminen rationaaliseen organisaatiologiikkaan, että projektien kautta syntyvä lisäarvo on alikäytetty. Tutkimus edistää teoreettista ymmärrystä projektifikaatiosta, ja siitä, mitkä projektifikaation keskeiset ajurit ovat, sekä siitä, mitä pitää huomioida projektifioituneella julkisella sektorilla. Julkishallinnollisessa kontekstissa projektien lopputulosten selvittämiseen on keskeistä luoda väliaikaisten ja pysyvien organisaatioiden välille kontekstuaalisesti herkkiä yhteenliittäviä mekanismeja.

Avainsanat: Projekti, Euroopan unioni, uusi julkisjohtaminen (NPM), hallinta, arviointi, kollaboraatio, implementaatio

² Embeddedness

SAMMANDRAG

Under de senaste decennierna har samhälleliga problem och krav från både lokala och supra-nationella nivåer ökat. Till följd av detta har den moderna offentliga förvaltningen och governance systemen genomgått stora förändringar. Entydiga lösningar för hur man ska överkomma dessa problem och krav är sällsynta. Problem som berör den offentliga förvaltningen faller sällan entydigt in under enskilda jurisdiktioners eller myndigheters kompetensområden. Staten har till en allt större grad blivit beroende av en mängd riktlinjer och nya arrangemang genom vilka tjänster inom den offentliga sektorn snabbt ska produceras, och resultat ska uppnås inom snäva tidsramar. Governance mekanismer och organisationsformer som möjliggör kollaborativa, dynamiska och flexibla arrangemang i implementering av offentlig politik har därför fått allt större betydelse.

Denna studie analyserar den ökade användningen av temporära projektorganisationer vid implementeringen av offentligt beslutad verksamhet samt vilka konsekvenser detta kan ha. Huvudargumentet i denna studie är att projektorganisationer kan leda till signifikanta fördelar och spela en väsentlig roll som sammanlänkande mekanismer på både horisontellt och vertikalt plan genom att koppla ihop olika administrativa nivåer och sektorer. Användningen av projektorganisationer kan däremot också medföra flera utmaningar, vars konsekvenser man ännu inte har förstått fullständigt. Det övergripande målet i denna studie är att konceptualisera och förstå fördelarna och nackdelarna av den ökade mängden temporära governance mekanismer i form av projektorganisationer inom den offentliga sektorn.

Konsekvenserna av och fördelarna med projektifieringen inom den offentliga sektorn analyseras i fyra artiklar och denna sammanfattande artikel. Vilka är drivkrafterna bakom projektifieringen ur den Europeiska unionens (EU) perspektiv och inom den offentliga sektorn som helhet? Studien tar i beaktande projektorganisationers långtidseffekter och till vilken utsträckning mervärdet, som projekten förväntas producera, kan utnyttjas. Vilka deltagare är det fördelaktigt att inkludera i projekt och vilka kollaborativa arrangemang och handlingstyper behövs för att innovationer ska uppnås inom EU-finansierade strukturfondsprojekt?

De mångfacetterade karaktärsdragen i projektforskningen inom den offentliga sektorn, det unika i de involverade aktörernas preferenser, intressen och förfaranden, samt förvaltningen av projekt förutsätter en bred teoretisk förankring och olika analysmetoder. Tre besläktade forskningsinriktningar är i detta avseende speciellt relevanta, nämligen diskursen kring ny offentlig förvaltning (NPM), Governance teorier, samt projektledningsideal och projektgovernance (GoP). Inriktningarna representerar en blandning av gammalt och nytt, som är nödvändig för att förstå hur projekt och projektifiering fungerar och hur de är förankrade i den offentliga sektorns

miljö. Studien utgår ifrån ett empiriskt informerat interpretivt perspektiv och använder blandade metoder³. Metoderna som används i de individuella artiklarna är meta-analys, kvalitativ innehållsanalys, logistisk regressionsanalys samt social nätverksanalys.

Studiens resultat belyser bristen på konceptualiseringar som berör förhållandet mellan temporära och permanenta strukturer, och framhäver att den ökande temporaliteten inom offentliga sektorns processer kan utgöra utmaningar för fundamentala värden inom administrationen, till exempel transparens och demokratisk ansvarsutkrävning. Resultaten ifrågasätter det ofta överbetonade värdet av att använda projekt i stället för permanenta mekanismer inom den offentliga sektorn. Skillnaderna mellan projektens bakomliggande operationella logik och de rådande projektutvärderingsystemen inom den offentliga sektorn är betydande. Projekt kan visserligen fungera som nervcentrum där värdefull information produceras, intressenätverk skapas och diverse kollaborativa satsningar ingår. Resultaten visar även att dessa har betydelse för att man ska kunna förutse innovationer, men också att tron på de kollaborativa arrangemangens betydelse vid skapandet av innovationer inom projekt är överoptimistiska. Man kan därmed ifrågasätta det ofta förekommande antagandet om att samverkan inom projekt skulle fungera som ett botemedel för innovationsbristen.

Studiens slutledningar är att ökad användning av projektorganisationer inom den offentliga sektorn kan ha betydande konsekvenser. Slutledningarna visar att de förväntade fördelarna av att använda projektorganisationer står i relation till rationalistiska ideal, men också att temporalitet som sådan kan innebära utmaningar för permanenta administrativa strukturer. Även om projekt kan vara klart bättre än permanenta organisationer på att åstadkomma snabba resultat kan deras bakomliggande rationella logik leda till att resultaten förblir outnyttjade. Studien bidrar med en teoretisk förståelse av projektifiering, vilka de bakomliggande drivkrafterna är, såväl som vilka specifika särdrag som måste tas i beaktande inom en projektifierad offentlig sektor. Studiens slutsats är att kontextuellt känsliga sammanlänkande mekanismer mellan temporära och permanenta organisationer är väsentliga för att man ska kunna förklara utfallen av temporära organisationer i en politisk-administrativ kontext.

Nyckelord: Projekt, Europeiska unionen, ny offentlig förvaltning, governance, utvärdering, kollaborering, implementation

³ Mixed methods

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LIST OF ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS

The study is based on the following publications⁴:

- I. Stefan Sjöblom and Sebastian Godenhjelm (2009) Project Proliferation and Governance – Implications for Environmental Management. *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning*. Vol. 11. Number 3. September 2009
- II. Sebastian Godenhjelm (2013) Project impact in a multi-level context: The case of the European Fisheries Fund evaluation in Finland. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Administration*. Vol. 17. Number 2.
- III. Sebastian Godenhjelm, Rolf A. Lundin and Stefan Sjöblom (2015) Projectification in the public sector – The case of the European Union. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*. Vol. 8. Issue 2. April 2015
- IV. Sebastian Godenhjelm and Jan-Erik Johanson (Forthcoming 2018) The Effect of Stakeholder Inclusion on Public Sector Project Innovation. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*. Vol. 84. Number 3. August 2018 (Published online ahead of print on the 14th of March 2016)

The publications are referred to in the text by their roman numerals.

⁴ The articles are presented in chronological order according to publication date

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFF	European Fisheries Fund
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
EURA	EU structural fund monitoring system
GoP	Governance of Projects
MLG	Multi-level Governance
NPG	New Public Governance
NPM	New Public Management
NPO	New Public Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PA	Public Administration
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
SNA	Social Network Analysis

1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the overarching aim of the study, its background, and research framework. The aim of the chapter is to describe the complex conditions and context in which temporary governance mechanisms and instruments have evolved and exist today. It begins by highlighting the changes that have occurred in contemporary public policy and governance, and the embedded nature of these changes. It then introduces the potential consequences of an increasing use of projects in terms of coordination and continuity, and the underlying mechanisms behind the developments that have yet to be fully understood. The chapter ends with a summary of the structure of the study and how the four articles relate to its overarching research framework.

The overarching aim of the study is to conceptualise and understand the benefits and challenges related to the increasing use of temporary governance mechanisms in the form of project proliferation in the public sector context. This requires a framework that describes the complex conditions and context in which informal and temporary governance mechanisms operate and public policy is implemented. Only then can the potential consequences of an increasing use of projects in the public sector be seen, and the benefits and challenges understood.

Over the past few decades, contemporary public policy and governance has been transformed in response to both local and supra-national demands. The global financial crisis and economic recession have increased the attention of policy-makers to actions that produce concrete and quick outputs and value for money. A growing individualization and utility calculation among citizens is apparent. Citizens increasingly require tailor-made solutions to contemporary problems and demand greater levels of power and influence over service delivery (Klijn, 2008: 515). This has changed the politico-administrative system and raised critical attitudes towards governments, which has increased the need for effective governance of the public service delivery system (Osborne, 2013: 418).

Generally speaking, the state has become more dependent on a wide range of policies and collaborative arrangements that produce public service and results (Andrews, 2013: 282; Donahue and Zeckhauser, 2011: 288). In addition, governments have become more dependent on societal actors with conflicting values to achieve their goals (Kickert et al., 1997; Klijn, 2012; Sorensen and Torfing, 2007). The emphasis on both the domestic and international embeddedness of today's society relates to a growing dependence on government partners of various kind, as well as integration between state and international organisations brought on by globalization and Europeanization (Jacobsson et al., 2015).

Avoiding “wicked problems” and organizational silos requires the inclusion of actors from various fields (Pollitt, 2003a; Rittel and Webber, 1973). Despite different collaborative arrangements, governments are still held accountable for the outcomes produced (Pierre and Peters, 2000; Sjöblom, 2006b), which puts additional pressure on governments to find suitable solutions. New ways of legitimizing public interventions by involving the interests affected in the decision-making processes have also become important. As a result, policy-related issues have become more complex, and the politico-administrative system has been argued as being in a state of flux (Christensen and Laegreid, 2013a). Governments in post-modern societies have become less regulative and have taken on a more negotiating role (Godenhjelm et al., 2012).

Clear-cut solutions for how to tackle societal problems are rare, as public problems seldom fall neatly within specific jurisdictions or agencies (Bevir, 2011a). Efficiency gains are continuously sought in the design and implementation of public policy and the delivery of public services (Osborne, 2013: 418). The choice of an organizational form that enables effective, dynamic and flexible arrangements in the implementation of public policy and public service delivery therefore becomes highly attractive. Some even state that organisations need to adapt to the surrounding changes and rethink the way in which organisations should be structured, or go under (Lundin and Steinhórsson, 2003: 233–234). Consequently, the number of informal governance instruments has increased at all administrative levels.

Benchmarks, standards, partnerships and networks are examples of informal governance instruments, but additional organizational forms have also been introduced (Peters, 2006: 31). This study argues that one of the most profound expressions brought on by the so-called shift from government to governance, and which are increasingly driven by the European Union (EU), is the adoption of a large number of temporary governance mechanisms or project organisations at all administrative levels. Activities in the public sector are increasingly being organized as projects and processes are often both presented and understood as projects (Abrahamsson and Agevall, 2009; Anell and Wilson, 2002; Sahlin-Andersson and Söderholm, 2002b). The “project”, or temporary endeavour undertaken to create a unique product, service or result (Project management Institute, 2004), has in this way become an organisational form associated with efficiency, flexibility and innovative problem-solving, timely action and as a superior way of reacting to unanticipated situations (Sahlin-Andersson and Söderholm, 2002b; Sjöblom et al., 2013). Consequently, it has become an attractive management tool to implement public policy.

These expressions can clearly be seen in Finland, where successive administrative reforms since the 1980s at all administrative levels proved to be complex and inefficient. This created an obvious demand for quick solutions. Finland’s EU membership in 1995 entailed yet another renovation of the regional development system, which emphasises the role of EU strategies, leaving national regional policies in a somewhat residual position

(Godenhjelm et al., 2012). Between 2000 and 2007, for instance, the EU funded over 41,000 projects in Finland alone (Ministry of the Interior, 2015). This can be regarded as carrying an inherent risk of causing fragmentation and considerable variations in processes, procedures and outcomes at regional and local levels (Sjöblom, 2009: 167).

The increasing use of projects has been referred to as projectification. Public sector projectification is believed to originate from project use in the private sector, where project management is widely considered as an effective and flexible management tool. There are, however, several unclarities relating the use of projects in industries where projects have not traditionally been used (Carden and Egan, 2008). The consequences of using private sector project management ideals in an embedded public sector context have yet to be fully understood.

As emphasized in the seminal work by Morgan (1997: 298) organisations cannot be separated from their environment. The same principle applies to project organisations (Engwall, 2003). Public sector projects are embedded in a politico-administrative structure that is framed by a complex web of norms, rules, strategies and governance principles. Since they emphasize stability, hierarchy and continuity, the context deviates from traditional project fields of use such as business or industry context.

Complexity in terms of temporal coordination has also increased, raising the additional question of what impact projects have, and whether they can deliver a coherent contribution to public policies and achieve sustainable results given their temporary nature. The increasing use of projects has been argued to follow a hyper-rational logic according to which projects are believed to pave the way towards efficiency, clarity and unambiguity (Sjöblom et al., 2013). This belief also makes the use of projects a politically attractive solution by providing quick solutions to perceived public sector inefficiency.

Even though project organisations have become important devices for delivering public goods and services, the potential consequences of an increasing use of projects or projectification have been surprisingly neglected in the otherwise extensive governance and Public Administration (PA) debate. There is therefore an increasing need to understand the prospects for action that this entails. The main argument in this study is that project organisations as temporary governance mechanisms in the public sector could yield significant benefits, and might play a vital role as both horizontal and vertical interlinking mechanisms between various administrative levels. As described above, the increasing use of projects in the public sector, however, also include several challenges that have yet to be fully understood.

This study is aimed at a wide audience of social science scholars and academics, policy-makers, and project practitioners. It draws on three theoretical strands of research in order to discuss and synthesize the developments produced by an increasing use of projects in the public sector, thereby broadening the understanding of both the practical and theoretical aspects of project organisations and their governance. The study highlights the

key drivers behind and the actions produced by project organisations, and shows what the prospects and benefits for collaborative and multilateral action are in different settings. It scrutinizes the extent to which the existing project evaluation criteria are suitable and what the interlinking mechanisms aimed at maintaining coordination and continuity are.

The study follows an empirically informed interpretive approach to governance, which emphasises the intentionality of actions, practices, and social life (Bevir, 2011b: 51). The multifaceted and ambiguous nature of public sector project research, as well as the uniqueness associated with the various actor objectives, interests and participatory procedures regarding projects and their management requires a broad range of material and a variety of methods. The study therefore includes material ranging from personal interviews to archival data, and various forms of analysis. It follows a mixed methods approach that integrates both qualitative as well as quantitative research methods. This includes qualitative content analysis, logistic regression analysis and social network analysis (SNA).

This summary article provides a synthesis of the material presented in the four articles, which has at times required aligning their standpoints to suit the particular epistemologies of the journals. Articles I and III are analytical rather than empirical, while Articles II and IV include empirical data and analysis. Together they enable a broad view on project proliferation as a phenomenon with respect to the existing concepts of governance. The study does not, however, make any claim to be exhaustive.

This summary is structured as follows. Chapter two presents the background and theoretical framework within which projects operate and underlines the research problems that arise from the theoretical debate in more detail than was possible in the articles. Chapter three presents the overall aims of the study, its research methods, and the data used in the analysis. The fourth chapter presents the main results described in the four articles, and chapter five summarizes the contributions of the study as a whole. This is followed by suggestions for future research in chapter six. The summary article ends with some methodological reflections in chapter seven, and the concluding remarks in chapter eight.

This summary provides a synthesis of the findings in the four articles, and relates them to the overarching framework of the study in the following way:

- **Article I** introduces the main topic of the study by scrutinizing the potential consequences of project proliferation in cross-sectoral and multi-level fields. It highlights the lack of conceptualizations concerning the relationship between temporary and permanent structures, and suggests that an increasing temporality in public decision-making may challenge fundamental administrative values such as transparency and democratic accountability in public policy implementation.
- **Article II** explores the extent to which current evaluations are able to measure the long-term effects of projects. The article questions the often over-rated value of using projects as opposed to other more permanent mechanisms in a public sector environment. It suggests that a potential mismatch between the operational logic of projects and the prevailing program evaluation system in the public sector exists.
- **Article III** focuses on establishing a theoretical understanding of projectification, what the key drivers of projectification are, as well as specific public sector features that need to be accounted for in a projectified society. The article concludes that contextually sensitive mechanisms between temporary and permanent organizations are vital in explaining the outcome of temporary organizations in a politico-administrative context.
- **Article IV** examines the increasing use of projects in administering public policy and service delivery. It shows that projects may act as hubs where valuable information is produced, and that project stakeholder networks and various collaborative efforts play a role in predicting innovations produced by projects. The article identifies an overly optimistic view of collaborative efforts in achieving innovations in projects, and shows that collaboration as a remedy for a lack of innovation can be questioned.

2 PROJECT ORGANISATIONS AND GOVERNANCE FROM A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

This chapter, which presents the theoretical developments relating to the increasing use of project organisations in the public sector, sets the backdrop within which the study will operate and positions project organisations in the prevailing theoretical research debate. It begins by discussing the main theoretical developments in a public sector context. It then discusses the evolution of these theoretical developments, and introduces the central strands of research used in this study.

A functioning democratic system requires not only elections and an operational and efficient government, but requires a competent, ethical and professional PA that enjoys a democratic mandate to implement public policy as well. Normatively speaking, the implementation of public policy should be the product of objectives set by elected officials or political functionaries. They should be the result of what has happened at earlier stages of the policy process. According to this view political functionaries should provide the objectives, it is then the task of administrators and public officials to develop the appropriate instruments (Hill and Hupe, 2009). The study of politics therefore requires the analysis of organisations, PA and its management (Rothstein, 2008). This study takes its point of departure from such a PA perspective.

The study of politics and PA has been argued to be orientated towards the accumulation of knowledge, and focused on the way in which knowledge is acquired (Hill and Hupe, 2009: 197). Contemporary PA does not exclusively revolve around traditional bureaucratic issues within different levels of government, but is very much present in issues ranging from environmental management and fisheries policy to innovative technical developments. Public policy and its outcome is also subjectively defined by an observer, and arises from a process that involves intra- and interorganisational relationships and a multitude of actors and personal influences (Hogwood and Gunn, 1984). A significant number of choices that affect the everyday lives of citizens depend on matters outside of the traditional political sphere. Issues such as institutional design, organisational structure, different cultures, and the bureaucratic machinery that is in place, are also highly relevant. Bureaucracy is also the primary locus of contact between citizens and the state, shaping the image that citizens have of government (Peters, 2013).

Early mainstream policy process and implementation studies suggested that the policy goals stated in official documents is followed by corresponding implementation (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1984). Neo-implementation studies acknowledge that policies may be the result of social interaction between various actors, and is therefore more ambiguous than one could expect (Hupe, 2014: 174). Today, the political-administrative system encompasses a complex ecology of actors with varying beliefs, principles and resources (Christensen and Laegreid, 2002: 267). Understanding how these actors produce public services and influence policy outcomes for citizens is therefore crucial (Peters, 2013: 362–363).

The study and practice of PA has undergone significant changes in recent decades. Some argue that public policy developments produced by the so-called shift from government to governance has meant the abandonment of simplistic hierarchical models, and has resulted in a new level of complexity (Hill and Hupe, 2009: 41). It has moved from focusing on problem-solving and policy-implementation capabilities of the state in the age of interventionism to the contemporary governance paradigm in which actions matter the most (Hill and Hupe, 2009: 106). The increasing social complexity and international embeddedness has at least to some extent forced governments to reorganise their governing system in order to adapt to exogenous pressures (Jacobsson et al., 2015: 131). The increased focus on action that relieves this pressure resonates well with the ideals of projects and temporary organizations in which timely action plays the leading role (Jensen et al., 2013; Lundin and Söderholm, 1995: 438).

Research on PA is also an inherently interdisciplinary field (Raadschelders, 2011), requiring the study of both public and private sector actors, processes and activities. Although there are similarities between public and private management, particularly regarding issues relating to the search for efficiency, they are not entirely the same (Fry and Raadschelders, 2014). While performance management and measurement brought on by various reforms might have become important factors for both sectors, issues such as legitimacy, responsiveness and fairness are still key in public management.

This study falls within several strands of research. It addresses governance aspects, but can also be regarded as falling within the field of PA and various project management discourses. In fact, studies concerning PA can rarely rely on specific theoretical and methodological approaches. PA has often been referred to as an “umbrella discipline” for knowledge about government (Fry and Raadschelders, 2014: 467). A broad view of current developments is also of particular relevance in this study considering the temporary and unique nature of projects and the public sector environment in which projects are increasingly being used. Several theoretical and methodological approaches and perspectives are therefore needed to advance the understanding of project organisations in the public sector context.

Three interrelated strands of research are especially relevant in order to conceptualise and understand the benefits and challenges related to the increasing number of temporary governance mechanisms in the form of project organisations in the public sector context, namely; the New Public Management (NPM) discourse, theories of Governance, as well as project management ideals and Governance of Projects (GoP). (See figure 1.). These approaches represent a mixture of old and new, which are necessary in order to understand the functioning of temporary governance mechanisms as well as their embeddedness in the public sector context.

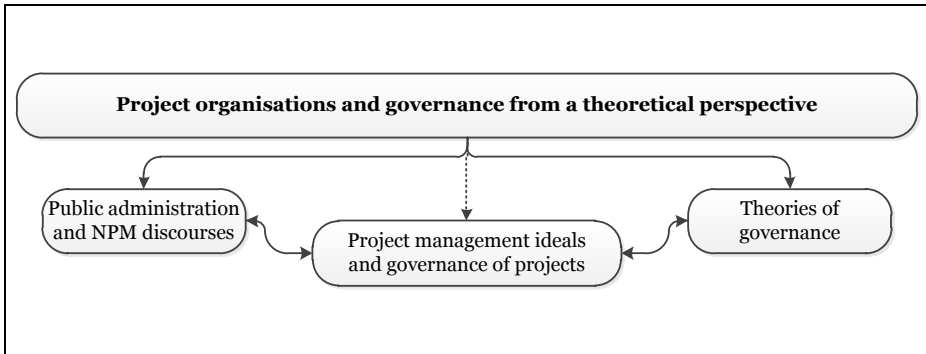


Figure 1. Central strands of research for the study

More specifically, the PA, NPM and governance discourses stress the context in which projects operate, thereby aiding in explaining the kinds of object that are present as well as the conditions under which different mechanisms operate. They provide answers to why the public sector has gone through changes, and clarify the drivers of the increasing use of projects in the public sector. The project management research provides an understanding of the ideals associated with project organisations. This includes ideals such as timely planning and execution, efficiency, flexibility, knowledge and expertise, as well as the ability to decouple and simplify agendas so that they can be executed more easily. In addition, theories of governance complement the PA and NPM discourses by illustrating the complexity associated with contemporary policy implementation. They also show the conditions in which the process of governing functions and draw attention to the consequences of contemporary policy changes in the public sector context.

The succeeding sections focus on the most important theoretical developments within the aforementioned fields of research, and the ways in which they cope with the contemporary complexity associated with the public sector, presenting working assumptions made by the theories and isolating the key building blocks of the analytical framework of the study. They emphasise the empirical expectations derived from the broad theoretical approaches required to understand the potential benefits and challenges related to project organisations and governance in the public sector.

2.1 PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT DISCOURSES

This section focuses on contemporary PA and NPM discourses, highlighting central elements within the research debate as well as their explanatory value for this study. It begins by defining PA and NPM and by introducing the background to these concepts and their key drivers. It then introduces the underlying values and principles as well as the evolution of these concepts. This is followed by a critical assessment of their uses in contemporary society. The section ends with a summary of the central issues presented in the section.

The increasing challenges and complexities within the public sector have triggered the NPM discourse associated with public sector policy formation and implementation since the 1980's. The discourse focuses on how public organizations have adopted new organizational forms through devolution, managerialism, and performance management (Christensen and Laegreid, 2002, 2013b; Klijn, 2012). The central elements of NPM reforms relate primarily to an increased efficiency drive, downsizing and decentralisation, the search for excellence, and a public service orientation that relies heavily on the adaption of market mechanisms to a public sector environment (Ferlie et al., 1996; Sulkunen, 2006; Yliaska, 2014). Governments have tried to legitimize their existence in this way through their outputs (Peters, 2013: 361).

NPM principles have been characterised as organizational instruments and more or less temporary arrangements for improving the performance of public organizations (Peters and Pierre, 1998: 65), thereby challenging the assumption that elections are the only means for influence between the people and the polity (Christensen and Laegreid, 2002: 267). This suggests that the state has rolled back in search of synergy and more effective governance mechanisms by relying on resources and actors outside of its formal hierarchical control (Sjöblom, 2006a). These developments have, at least to some extent, undermined the capacity of the political leadership to exert control (Björk et al., 2003; Christensen and Laegreid, 2002). The increasing focus on performance management and efficiency as well as reliance on outputs highlighted in the PA and NPM debate resonates well with the ideals portrayed by project organisations whose unique and temporary nature is widely believed to lead to concrete results and achievements that stay on budget.

On the one hand, NPM developments follow economic norms and values and see ambiguous goals, complicated formal structures, and complex civil service in the public sector as "diseases". Some argue that NPM principles challenge the traditional notion of the welfare state by promoting the ideas of citizens as customers or stakeholders, thereby downplaying the principles of public interest while prioritising narrow personal interests (Bengs, 2005). Advocates of NPM, on the other hand, stress the pluralistic dimensions these considerations imply and argue that it gives people more freedom of choice and increases channels of influence. By giving managers and their

subordinates more autonomy, political control is presumed to be strengthened through mechanisms such as contracts and incentive systems (Christensen and Laegreid, 2002: 289).

NPM principles acknowledge the existence of differences between public and private sector management principles. Still, proponents of the managerialist tradition stress that differences between public and private organisations are not significant and that public policy matters should therefore be managed in the same way (Boston, 2013: 20). In addition, more emphasis is put on single-purpose agencies and policy implementation monitoring systems in an attempt to reduce the transaction costs associated with traditional bureaucracies (Andrews, 2013: 281). Brunsson (2013: 66) argues that such notions have initiated an institutional shift that has resulted in New Public Organisations (NPOs), the boundaries of which are set either by the state or by the profession. These “delimited organisations” are responsible for their own management and rational decision-making systems. They have generated a collection of ideas, norms and actions such as organisational distinctiveness, clearer objectives and focus on one goal or task at a time. The use of projects in the public sector in this case can be seen as an attempt to remedy the alleged “diseases” characterised by the ambiguous goals and complicated formal structures within the public sector by simplifying agendas, isolating issues and breaking down work structures into separate projects goals and milestones.

The effects of NPM reforms are often disputed and systematic and reliable studies on the subject are lacking. The existing research tends to focus on NPM reforms rather than their effects (Christensen and Laegreid, 2013b; Pollitt, 2002). Some even regard NPM as a chameleon that changes its appearance to blend in with the local context (Pollitt et al., 2007: 199). It can, however, be regarded as an administrative argument based on specific doctrines that relate to a functional perspective, the managerialist tradition, administrative theory and new institutional economics which have been inspired by neo-liberalist movements and public choice theory (Boston, 2013; Marcussen, 2013). Since NPM has been described as a social or even quasi-religious movement that represents a mixture of ideas and interests comprising a particular worldview and a particular rhetoric (Hood, 2007: 13), it cannot be regarded as comprising a unified theory.

Differentiating between distinct reform waves or regimes is difficult, however. Some argue that NPM is obsolete, and that the discourse has evolved into a new generation of reform studies such as post-NPM, or the Neo-Weberian State (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2011). According to Osborne (2013), the design and delivery of public policy and services has passed through three regimes since the era of the welfare state. First, the PA regime from the late nineteenth century to the 1980s and, second, the NPM regime from the 1980s to the twenty-first century. The third and current regime is referred to as New Public Governance (NPG), which has emerged as a reaction to NPM not being able to deliver on economic measures (Christensen and Laegreid, 2013b).

NPG is both a product of and a response to complex contemporary policy implementation problems, representing a conceptual tool through which the plural state, where multiple inter-dependent actors contribute to the delivery of public services, can be understood (Haveri, 2006: 423; Osborne, 2013). It places more emphasis on clarifying what the underlying principles of public service delivery in a plural and pluralist state are, what organizational architecture is best suited to delivering public services in a plural state, and what values underpin public policy implementation and service delivery in such a system. This view insists that more attention should be paid to institutional and external environmental pressures that enable and constrain public policy implementation and service delivery within a pluralistic system (Osborne, 2013: 425–426).

As a result of change brought on by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the EU, NPM as a concept has thus been present since the 1980s. Although the adoption of NPM principles varies between countries its underlying principles survive alongside new reforms and developments (Sulkunen, 2006). For instance, rationalisation, knowledge authority and professionalization issues highlighted by NPM are still very much present in modern public administrations (Marcussen, 2013: 333). Today, different organisational principles and different factors work together in various ways, resulting in new semi-autonomous organisational forms (Christensen and Laegreid, 2013a: 402; Pollitt, 2003b). The ideas of single-purpose agencies, either delimited or the semi-autonomous organisational forms suggested also resonate well with the increased focus on project organisations and their essentially temporary nature. It is, however, unclear how far project organisations also meet the expectations of a plural state.

According to Christensen and Laegreid (2013a: 397) these trends have put increased strain on post-NPM leaders who now need to have broader competence than before. Rather than focusing on narrow institutional interests, they have to care about collective goals, norms and values, and accordingly counteract sub-cultures as well. Currently, more attention seems to be on increasing coordination, integration and strengthening the link between individual public sector organisations and larger policy objectives (Christensen and Laegreid, 2013a: 402). However, the NPG paradigm also raises additional questions that remain unanswered. For instance, while pooling public and private resources could yield benefits, the question of whether the partnerships created also meet the requirements of legitimate governance is often left open (Wolf, 2006). The paradigm not only blurs the boundaries between public and private, but has also created conditions in which a new organisational architecture has evolved. This raises questions such as the extent to which organisational architectures that are unbound by sectoral limitations are suitable for the delivery of public services, what their key dimensions of sustainability are (Osborne, 2013).

Organisational design is also vital in understanding any potential that performance management, Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) competition etc. might have. They do, however, need to be looked at beyond issues such as commonality of interest, access to private capital, or the transferring of risk (Skelcher, 2007: 352). Grasping the complexity and diversity of contemporary public governance not only requires a new research agenda, but is also crucial in order to ensure that policy-makers are on a firmer footing when extolling the virtues of new management procedures of various sorts (Andrews, 2013: 292; Osborne, 2013: 430).

The central elements of the PA and NPM debate emphasize the search for suitable organisational forms that will increase efficiency by focusing on their performance and achievements. The debate provides more accuracy in describing the desire to simplify and isolate agendas in the public sector service delivery by creating clearer objectives. The bulk of the debate predicts that this will not only lead to better outputs but also that it will result in more autonomy and freedom of choice for the citizen, or in this case consumer, customer or stakeholder. Although some broadening can be seen in the NPG debate, the traditional NPM focus on gain is rather narrow, and makes a clear divide between public and private sector activities and the inclusion of stakeholders. What the appropriate organisations could look like, the isolation of task performance, and the extent to which new forms of governing can be regarded as more efficient than traditional forms, and at what cost, are issues that should be addressed in this case.

NPM can, however, by no means be considered as representing a coherent development across countries (Wright, 1996). NPM developments in the Nordic States for instance show variation compared to Anglo-Saxon countries, and variation can also be seen within Scandinavian countries (Hansen, 2013: 129). Although some NPM similarities between these countries can be seen at national level, differences arise at local levels where a significant amount of freedom regarding local organisation can be seen. This makes the concept of NPM in a Nordic setting volatile, as development models might vary from one municipality to another. This freedom of choice is something that Klausen and Ståhlberg (1998) regard as a central market-related option that allows citizens to vote with their feet. In their view, NPM relates to the ability to find suitable market-inspired solutions to problems, as well as the adoption of regulating functions that empower users and foster acceptance. Contrary to purely economically inspired theoretical dimensions, which are more significant in NPM developments among Anglo-Saxon countries, the public sector in the Nordic States also includes elements that are not commonly associated with NPM developments such as different forms of participatory democracy as well as a strong inclination towards consensus-oriented decision-making (Klausen and Ståhlberg, 1998). NPM principles have in this way provided new instruments for public sector regeneration while preserving the structural foundations of the Nordic model (Sjöblom, 2006a).

Finland, for instance, represents a relatively strong inclination towards NPM ideals at least at state level. Denmark follows a more communitarian orientation while Sweden focuses on various public procurement efforts. NPM developments in the Nordic States thus seem to have at least two things in common. They rely on a consensus-based tradition according to which alternative service solutions are discussed collectively, thereby enabling decisions to be made at local level. Although NPM developments can be regarded as significant on a Nordic scale they still correspond more to evolutionary than revolutionary developments (Klausen and Ståhlberg, 1998; Yliaska, 2014).

According to this view, NPM developments, especially in the Nordic States represent a shift regarding the relation between politics and PA. The effects of NPM have been questioned, at least to some extent. Some argue that core NPM values such as effectiveness, productivity and competitive tendering in practice only correspond to vague interpretations without meaning (Yliaska, 2014). Others argue that NPM developments are increasing the amount of control and alternatives beyond purely economic incentives, thereby representing a “third way” by which the citizen is the smith of his/her own fortune at least to some extent (Klausen and Ståhlberg, 1998). All in all, the changes produced by PA and NPM principles have many similarities to central aspects of project organisations. Sulkunen (2006) even refers to these changes as having led to a project society that relies heavily on concepts such as governmental programs, funds, partnerships, agreements, projects and evaluations.

All in all, the PA and NPM discourses help to explain the drivers behind and the background to the underlying assumptions of how project organisations as a form of NPM can be expected to function in society. Although the changes brought by both PA and NPM discourses cannot be regarded as directly interchangeable with increasing use of project organisations in a public sector environment, they do include many significant issues that need to be taken into consideration. These include the isolation of issues and lowering of complexity, an increased search for efficiency and reliance on private sector ideals, as well as a focus on policy implementation monitoring systems for the results obtained, all of which resonate well with the ideals associated with projects. It is, however, unclear what the effects and consequences of these developments in the public sector project context are.

Summary of issues highlighted in PA and NPM discourses

- PA and NPM discourses contribute by providing a conceptual tool by which the complexities of contemporary society can be better understood. The central elements underlined in the PA and NPM debate relate to the search for increased organisational performance. Proponents of NPM see decentralisation and downsizing as remedies for public sector problems, and assume that the partitioning or *isolation of issues* will simplify agendas in a public sector, which will lead to better public service orientation.
- The background to the discourses can in essence be linked to the desire to *enhance efficiency and reduce the complexity* of the intricate formal structures of the public sector service delivery system, which facilitates new single-purpose private sector organisations and professional standards, suggesting that the state has rolled back. Accountability is to be based on the results that the actions produce.
- The PA and NPM developments are argued to rely on neo-liberal movements and public choice theory driven by *economic values and norms* which assume that this will yield more freedom of choice and channels of influence. The reliance on private sector mechanisms is believed to be controlled by elaborate contracts and *monitoring systems*.
- Over recent years, the traditional PA and NPM debate has evolved into the prevailing NPG debate, according to which more significance should be given to *coordination, integration and the use of softer steering instruments* than the previous management ideals. Despite this evolution, the underlying NPM rationalisation principles can, however, still be seen.
- The effects of NPM opens up questions that still remain unanswered. The extent to which the partnerships created meet the requirements of legitimate governance, the suitability of new organisational forms for public service delivery, as well as their sustainability in upholding public values such as *coordination and continuity* are key issues that still need to be addressed. More attention should therefore be paid to institutional issues and external pressures that either enable or constrain public policy implementation and service delivery within a pluralistic system.
- In terms of relevance for this study the PA and NPM discourses contribute to a greater understanding of the rationale behind an increasing use of new management ideals in the public sector. It is, however, unclear what the effects and *consequences of these developments in a public sector project context are*.

2.2 THEORIES OF GOVERNANCE

This section focuses on contemporary theories of governance and highlights central elements within the research debate as well as their explanatory value for the topic of this study. It complements issues raised in the PA and NPM discourse. The section begins by presenting the core idea of governance theories and offers a brief overview of the evolution of the governance concept. It continues with a description of the governance concept in an EU setting, followed by a critical assessment of their uses in contemporary society. The section ends with a summary of central issues in this section.

Governance is often referred to as a new process of governing or co-ordination of social systems where the boundaries between the public, private and voluntary sectors as well as the role of the state have changed (Pierre and Peters, 2000; Pierre, 2000; Rhodes, 1997, 2012). It is ultimately concerned with the conditions under which ordered rule and collective action takes place by raising questions about how the process of governance functions, who is involved, and what the consequences of various patterns of action are for society (Peters, 2012; Stoker, 1998). Theories of governance are often seen as focusing on practices of governing and on dilemmas relating to problems of representation, political control of bureaucracy, and the democratic legitimacy of the institutions to which they give rise (Fredrickson, 2007). They are highly relevant in terms of policy implementation by focusing on forms of action and on the performance that follows.

In contrast to NPM discourses, where the point is improving the existing bureaucracy and public organisations, governance theories open up a broader view of a more “horizontal” way of governing in which governments act together with a variety of public and private actors (Hill and Hupe, 2009; Klijn, 2008). Theories of governance are argued to be well suited to analysing processes, interactions and collaboration through which social interests and actors jointly produce policies, as well as practices that effect governing (Bevir, 2011a). The idiosyncrasies of governance theories are, as a result, often related to actors taken from within and outside the governed institutions where power dependences in collective actions are hidden and need to be identified (Stoker, 1998).

The concept of governance has, however, also been deemed problematic, confusing, and slippery. Its broad scope makes an all-encompassing definition hard to find. The theoretical developments seem to increase the number of variables associated with governing instead of reducing them (Hill and Hupe, 2009; Kohler-Koch, 2006; Pierre and Peters, 2000). In addition, Fredrickson (2007: 289) challenges the concept of governance by stating that it is based on old academic debates under new and “jazzier” names. He argues that since it is filled with values that are not agreed-upon, and that governance is based upon the assumption that things are broken when they might not be, too much emphasis is placed on the inclusion of various non-state actors, ignoring the fact that governance lies deep within the folds of jurisdiction, organisation and

bureaucracy. Although the complexity of the international embeddedness of society has increased, the capacity of the state to govern should not be underestimated (Jacobsson et al., 2015). Whether an actual shift from government to governance has occurred can therefore at least to some extent be questioned.

Instead, governance can be seen as representing a supplementary or complementary trend to government in which the state can have multiple roles in governing within various policy areas (Hysing, 2009). What is crucial in this respect is what happens when project management ideals such as flexibility, unambiguity and efficiency are confronted with what Pierre (2012: 197) refers to as entrenched public sector values and governmental ideals such as coordination, continuity and permanency that are contingent on institutional stability and consistency. When conceptualized adequately, Peters (2012), however, argues that governance lays the foundation of a significant political theory that is important for developing contemporary political science by asking fundamental questions about what the public sector does, and how it does it. Consequently, it is of interest for the topics raised in this study.

According to Bevir (2011a) governance arrangements are often hybrid, which means that they require administrative systems to be combined with market mechanisms. These mechanisms are often multijurisdictional in that they combine actors and institutions across policy sectors and levels of government. They involve a plurality of stakeholders, which means that non-state actors can become participants in governing. Finally, they are linked together in networks, which are believed to be an optimal design to solve contemporary governance problems. Successful governance in other words requires increased attention to goal selection, goal reconciliation and coordination, implementation, as well as feedback and accountability (Peters, 2012: 22). As will be further described in chapter 2.3, these developments also resonate well with project management ideals according to which the flexible and unique organisational forms projects take enable them to function across different levels and jurisdictions.

Traditional views of governance relate to governance as the minimal state, corporate governance, good governance socio-cybernetic systems or self-organizing networks (Rhodes, 1997). The theoretical developments have, however, not remained static and theoretical refinements are apparent. Governance theories appear to have gone through three waves of refinement. The first wave, introduced by neoliberal reforms of the state in the 1980s, was network governance. The main focus within this wave was either based on a modernist-empiricist description of the developments within the public sector, its functional consequences, or advice on how the centre can direct networks. Metagovernance, which represented the second wave, was the increasing use of soft steering instruments by which increased emphasis was put on coordination and negotiation. The state was thereby argued as creating spaces for non-state actors while exerting macro-level control over self-regulation; in other words, bringing the state back in. (Rhodes, 2012)

The third wave differs from the previous ones. This so-called interpretive governance wave appears in the hermeneutic tradition, focusing more on meanings in action by exploring the ways by which agents change the boundaries of the state, and the social construction of patterns that enable actors to create meanings (Bevir, 2011b). This wave questions the ability to create objective social processes and emphasises the need to adopt actor-centred bottom-up approaches for explaining patterns of rule. According to this view, governance emerges from diverse actions that are based on different beliefs and traditions; in other words, bringing people instead of the state back in (Rhodes, 2012: 34–35).

A significant part of the governance developments can be argued to stem from advancements in the EU. Fuelled amongst other things by the White paper on European Governance (Commission of the European Communities, 2001) Europe has become a highly dynamic policy environment. European, national and sub-national actors are involved in discussions about major issues ranging from the future direction of the EU to technical criteria for allocating EU structural funds and the management and development of EU programmes (Bachtler et al., 2013; Klijn, 2008: 516). The EU structural policy has been described as engaging EU Member States, subnational governments and private actors with the European Commission more than any other EU policy (Marks, 1996: 399). Authority has in this sense been relocated from states to their regions, which have reinforced a trend towards fragmentation of government down towards sub-national entities, up towards the regional and global level, and sideways to private and voluntary actors. In this case as well, project organisations play an important part in trickling supra-national demands down to locally implemented initiatives. The magnitude of these developments, however, seems to have gone unnoticed in the contemporary governance debate so far.

As a result of the EU developments, state politics and supra-national policies and institutions have become mixed together, thereby requiring new management strategies for steering. This mixture has often been referred to as a form of Multi-level Governance (MLG) which highlights difficulties in achieving results in the fluid decision-making processes that involves various actors and networks at different levels (Bache and Flinders, 2005; Bachtler et al., 2013: 7; Zerbinati, 2012). Networks can in this case be regarded as inter-organisational service delivery and policy implementation vehicles that focus on coordination and implementation, which emphasises the need for intensive managerial efforts (Klijn, 2008: 511). Research on what impact network management strategies have, and under what conditions they are effective is, however, still insufficient (Klijn, 2008: 520).

The so-called “governance turn” in research has further increased the focus on the EU with the desire to understand more fully how directing this complex political system is possible, as well as what strategies should be used to reassert control at state level (Kohler-Koch, 2006; Peters, 2012; Pierre and Peters, 2000). The ambiguous nature of the EU cohesion policy reforms in particular has

produced complex and contentious analysis processes. Their various ideological standpoints and multiple objectives encompass a macro-economic function which is practised by micro-economic initiatives. These initiatives are primarily implemented through multi-annual programmes and projects, which consequently need to be audited and evaluated (Bachtler et al., 2013: 11, 27).

Some argue that the governability of the EU cohesion policy by its EU structural funds only results in loose coupling between relatively autonomous actors (Benz and Eberlein, 1999; Heinelt et al., 2003: 137–138). Others also question the extent to which European decision-makers have the capacity to control the actions of decentralised actors via structural fund regulations, and the extent to which the regulatory framework enables the utilization of the results achieved at local level (Lang, 2003: 172). Some also claim that the increasing focus on EU programmes, regions and structural fund objectives have resulted in prescriptions about what, as well as how EU program goals should be handled. Given the central part that projects play in implementing EU policy, increased attention should be put on the projects' ability to function as implementation mechanisms. Projects that follow governance ideals have thus become tools by which EU, national, and regional goals are supposed to be implemented. It is, however, unclear how far the added value created by projects can achieve sustainable results.

Jacobsson, Pierre and Sundström (2015: 132) argue that since this type of metagovernance has emerged under embedded stable political, social, economic and institutional conditions, it can be regarded neither as the result of random acts nor as resulting in a hollowed out state. They also acknowledge that the embedded context urgently needs to take international norms and domestic governance constraints into account, and that exogenous factors such as sectoral networks, degree of decentralisation and popular ideas about how to organise affects the state's decision-making ability (Jacobsson et al., 2015: 136–137). They go on to argue that the degree to which governance policies are centralised depends on their saliency for the political leadership. They find that reforms that require the involvement of societal actors, technical considerations and expert involvement tend to be less centralised. These considerations are also central to this study and raise the question of what role EU-funded projects play, and how they should be managed.

Despite several advances, new governance still poses significant dilemmas for our current administrative and democratic practices, requiring the development of new forms of public action or even new political ideals (Bevir, 2011a: 16). Some even argue that the term governance as a function has outgrown its area substantially. Müller (2012: 297), for instance, suggests that while the term which was originally aimed at "steering" countries, it is also synonymous for steering nowadays, for example, corporations, their operations, and projects. The concept of governance is thereby no longer exclusive to public sector issues, and is used in relation to the management of organizations in the private sector as well (Peters, 2012). This, however, does not mean that governance is everywhere. As previously mentioned, several

tasks and services still rely on a bureaucratic setting, and many governance network functions depend on explicit managerial functions, as well as the political nature of governance processes in itself (Klijn, 2008). The challenge is in creating organisations and institutions that strike a balance between the ability to make changes in a complex society while fostering a degree of permanency (Jacobsson et al., 2015: 131–132). This not only highlights the need to capture the added value created by temporary governance mechanisms such as projects, but also the need to ensure that the results created are implemented so that long-term outcomes can be achieved.

In summary, the governance perspectives complement issues raised in the PA and NPM discourse by explaining the developments that have reinforced the adoption of informal and temporary governance measures and management procedures, expressing a shift from command and control to more collaborative instruments. Although governance theories contribute by illustrating the societal complexities and the multi-level conditions under which contemporary public policy is being implemented, its broad scope still leaves questions unanswered. The range and effect of collaborative governance mechanisms and the repercussions of increased decentralised involvement of societal actors and experts when confronted with public sector values and ideals are also crucial to this study. Few studies directly tackle the politico-administrative consequences of using projects as the primary mechanism by which the EU structural funds are implemented on the ground, and what impact temporary governance mechanisms have on long-term outcomes.

Summary of the theoretical perspective of Governance

- Governance theories contribute to the understanding of the changing role of the state, the new conditions under which the process of governing functions, and what consequences these changed circumstances might have. Central elements in the governance debate concern the *new steering mechanisms* introduced by the so-called shift from government to governance, and their subsequent actions, processes and interactions.
- Theories of governance can be regarded as eclectic. The broad range of issues addressed has opened up new research endeavours, but has also created confusion and criticism. Some question the emphasis the theories put on the changed steering conditions, arguing that the state is still very much present by providing the *institutional setting* in which governance takes place.
- Governance theories have also undergone several changes, having evolved from modernist-empiricist descriptions of the public sector to hermeneutically inspired forms of *interpretive governance*. Increased focus is put on beliefs and traditions in which actions are created while acknowledging that social constructs also affect contemporary governance mechanisms.
- EU developments have further fuelled the governance debate. The EU has created complex MLG arrangements by allocating structural funds to implement EU-wide macro-level objectives, as well as by strengthening of sub-national levels in policy implementation. This has drawn increased attention to network management capabilities within EU regions, and has drastically *increased the number temporary governance mechanisms*, specifically programs and projects.
- The conditions under which different temporary governance mechanisms are effective and what *added value* they have still remain unclear. Despite the significance of programs and projects as contemporary policy implementation instruments, little attention has been paid to the potential *politico-administrative consequences of project organisations* in the current governance debate.
- The governance debate contributes to a greater understanding of governance mechanisms by illustrating the complexity associated with contemporary policy-making and its implementation. The discussion highlights the need for flexible and *collaborative organizing mechanisms* that cut across levels and sectors and produce quick, sustainable responses in rapidly changing environments but leave open the repercussions of *project management ideals that confront public sector values and governmental ideals*.

2.3 PROJECT MANAGEMENT IDEALS AND THE GOVERNANCE OF PROJECTS

This section focuses on the contemporary project management research debate and its explanatory value for the topic of this study. It establishes a connection between issues raised in the PA, NPM and governance debates and the project management as well as the GoP research. It begins by defining project organisations and the drivers associated with the perceived advantages and drawbacks of projects and their increasing use in the public sector. It then outlines the state of the art in public sector project governance, and describes the evolution of project research from a public sector perspective. This is followed by a critical assessment of their uses in contemporary society, as well as what issues still remain unanswered. The section ends with a summary of central issues in this section.

As described in the two previous sections, the changing role of the state and emphasis on new governing arrangements has introduced a number of new organisational forms in contemporary public policy service delivery and implementation. Single-purpose organisations, delimited organisations and partial organisations have often been referred to in this respect (Ahrne and Brunsson, 2010; Andrews, 2013; Boston, 2013; Brunsson, 2013). This study argues that one of the most significant changes brought on by an increasing use of new governance mechanisms is the proliferation of project organisations. The consequences of an increasing use of projects as an organisational form in the public sector setting are, however, not yet fully understood.

A frequently-used definition of a project is that it is “a temporary endeavour undertaken to create a unique product, service or result” (Project management Institute, 2004: 5). Projects are widely considered as action-driven temporary organisations that are created for a special purpose within a predetermined time frame and contain a strong element of change (Lundin and Söderholm, 1995; Packendorff, 1995). The EU and the OECD define projects as “A single, non-divisible intervention with a fixed time schedule and dedicated budget” (Allen and Tommasi, 2001; European Commission, 1997). Projects are widely regarded as a superior way of organizing activities or producing products, services and results. Some go as far as to argue that projects are collective creative endeavours that have structured our world and shaped the way in which we live our lives (Hughes, 2000).

Projects are closely related to the rationalistic dream of achieving efficiency, clarity, and unambiguity. As also indicated in the previous sections, the perceived benefits of organising by project have opened up new application areas. Projects are increasingly being used outside of their traditional project management fields such as industry and technology. Consequently, increasing attention is directed towards the creation of value and benefit for multiple stakeholder groups instead of a narrow focus on core stakeholders (Bakker, 2010; Grabher, 2004; Hodgson, 2004; Winter and Szczepanek, 2008).

The funding principles of the EU as well as the conception of partnership have also strengthened the inclination to define almost all reform activities as projects. EU programmes and projects in this respect are expected to provide leverage by increasing innovativeness, growth and inclusiveness (Brulin and Svensson, 2011: 10; Sjöblom, 2006a). Organizing public policy by projects is often preferred as mere deviation from traditional operational models is regarded as something innovative. The use of projects can thus be regarded as political “display windows” that not only signal innovation, but also signal that the issue at hand is being taken seriously (Jensen et al., 2013: 132). The project has, in other words, become a post-modern symbol of adaptability and contingency, and is seen as a superior way of reacting to unforeseen and non-standard situations.

Projects do not emerge in a vacuum but by interacting with one or more permanent institutions or temporary organisations which they rely on (Grabher, 2002). They are also expected to provide these permanent organisations with some kind of surplus compared to traditional forms of organisation. Projects should therefore not be regarded as “islands”, as they are highly likely to be embedded in more permanent organisational or social contexts (Engwall, 2003; Grabher, 2004: 1492; Lundin and Steinthórsson, 2003: 248; Sydow et al., 2004: 1477). As pointed out in the two previous sections, the contemporary public service delivery systems require an additional differentiated approach to their management and governance that takes context and their organisational embeddedness into account.

Despite the seemingly temporary, effective and flexible nature of projects and the post-bureaucratic ethos of project work, the bureaucratic superstructure under which they operate tends to be underplayed. According to Hodgson (2004: 98) a heavy reliance on project management procedures and methodology might in fact trap project actors in a Weberian “iron cage”, leaving little room to manoeuvre. This resonates with ideas of the governance in the embedded state, as well as the increasing focus given different professions, standards and certificates that set the backdrop in determining how objectives should be met.

NPM developments and post-NPM reforms have been associated with the increasing interest in and use of projects in the public sector (Crawford and Helm, 2009: 75; Klakegg et al., 2008: 28). Concerns about information asymmetry and opportunistic behaviours in projects have been raised, however, emphasising the need for more central and administrative control of projects as a result. Management as silos, misalignment or undeveloped governance systems, missing linkages between goals and strategic priorities, lack of ownership, as well as insufficient flexibility and robust responses in turbulent environments have often resulted in project failure in the private sector as well (Knodel, 2004; Sanderson, 2012). Although there are contextual differences, private-sector projects seem to struggle with problems similar to those of contemporary governance in the public sector.

According to Klakegg (2009) most of these problems are associated with either project relevance or sustainability. He argues that relevance problems are

mostly related with unknown user needs and misunderstandings which can be addressed by increasing participatory decision-making processes and active stakeholder involvement. He goes on to argue that sustainability problems are mostly associated with lack of commitment and conflicts over objectives and/or strategies. Problems relating to the translation of strategic priorities into implementation by project, as well as the selection and monitoring of project results beyond funds spent, have also been identified as a key reason for public sector project failure (Young et al., 2012). As a result, research focusing on guidance mechanisms that relate to the translation of strategic goals into project objectives, the explicit expression of sustainability as evaluation criteria, as well as informing decision-makers about the long-term effects, is evolving. The operationalization of such guidance mechanisms in an ambiguous public sector environment is, however, left open in traditional project management research.

Another evolving research trend highlights the improvement of project governance as a remedy for project failure (Müller, 2012; Müller et al., 2014). The aim of project governance is to ensure consistent and predictable delivery of projects within the limitations set by corporate governance or the agreed-upon subset in contracts. The main challenge indicated in the project governance debate is aligning the internal management of projects with the overall governance structure (Jensen et al., 2013: 136). The existing project literature, however, displays a strong variance across several factors without a universally accepted view of what project governance actually is, and is deemed too multifaceted to be analysed by means of any single theoretical view.

According to Ahola and his colleagues (2014), two prominent strands of project governance research can, however, be identified within the research literature. One strand focuses on activities external to the project, emphasising the need to align the short-term goals of isolated projects with the long-term goals of the parent organisation. The other strand focuses on individual projects and internal project activities, where the emphasis is on governance as a way to ensure that individual projects will meet their goals. The authors, however, acknowledge that the governance structures of the project should take into consideration both internal and external contingencies.

The former strand also links the governance of public sector projects to political processes, acknowledging the highly dynamic and complex public sector project management environment (Wirick, 2009). This strand is often referred to as the GoP, which concentrates on a collection of projects such as programs and project portfolios. According to GoP, more attention should be paid to project selection, efficiency, and sustainability (Klakegg et al., 2008; Williams et al., 2010). The volatile socio-political context is thought to accentuate the need for project goals to be in line with the strategic objectives. More focus should therefore be on the entire lifecycle of projects, particularly the initial phases, and oversight and strategic reporting should be provided (Miller and Hobbs, 2005; Too and Weaver, 2013: 1383; Williams et al., 2010).

Although differences exist, most strands of research emphasize the need for a flexible framework within which projects operate. What role the state should play in this case is, however, not entirely clear. Some argue that governments should act more as project promoter than project enforcer, especially in larger projects (Flyvbjerg et al., 2003). This might, however, put the state in an ambiguous situation. Acting as promoter, participant, and regulator at the same time might result in a paradox that is impossible to resolve. Rather than trying to achieve a one-size-fits-all governance framework, more emphasis should be put on creating a flexible strategic process that draws on a variety of governance mechanisms which allows adjusting governance and project and program needs (Miller and Hobbs, 2005; Müller et al., 2014: 1318).

Not all share a positive view of projects. For instance, Sulkunen (2006) sees the increasing use of projects in the public sector setting as the result of deliberate under-budgeting by governmental actors and institutions. The use of projects in the Finnish public sector can in this sense be regarded as a compensating economic mechanism which Sulkunen, at least to some extent, sees as a result of the moral weakness of the State. The challenges that occur in the public context also have to do with their strong rationalistic bias. The business management heritage of project management might pose serious challenges to permanent administrative structures in the public sector. While projects might, for instance, be portrayed by civil servants and in documents as the solution to a fragmented organization, they might also risk leading to more fragmentation (Fred, 2015).

The rationalistic ideals associated with projects have created a normative pressure on public authorities to use project management as a tool for pursuing various goals. Research on public sector project management is, however, still underdeveloped. Some argue that much of the public sector project research has been dominated by “cooking-books” that follow a positivist, normative character which has limited the debate about the core of project management (Hodgson and Cicmil, 2006; Löfgren and Poulsen, 2013: 62; Morris et al., 2012). Project performance measurement in the public sector is, for instance, more complicated than in the private sector because of various overlapping oversight agencies that follow different rules and processes (Wirick, 2009).

In fact, little is known about what impact governance and projects systems might have on project outcomes, which might have significant implications (Pitsis et al., 2014: 1287). Despite the seemingly unique and goal-oriented nature of projects the public sector context in which projects operate can be regarded as particularly challenging. Not only may the boundaries of programs within projects operate be difficult to define, the unique nature of projects also increases the range and variation of ways in which projects can achieve their goals. Clear cause-effect linkages are notoriously hard to establish, the lack of which can lead to a so-called “attribution problem”, which is referred to as the central problem in impact evaluation (Bjurulf and Vedung, 2009; Leeuw and Vaessen, 2009). Some even state that there is little or no knowledge about the actual impact of the billions of euros that are spent on EU funded programmes

(Brulin et al., 2012). Projects thus run the risk of the *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* fallacy.⁵ Consequently, there is a need to understand how project effects are treated and what indicators are used to measure project success.

A broadening of the traditional technocratic and rationalistic inclination in early project research is apparent, however (Söderlund, 2004a, 2004b). As previously mentioned, the expected benefits of project management has also increased outside of its traditional fields of use (Hodgson, 2004). Mere focus on normative planning tools and techniques for projects as temporary organizations thus seems to have been opened up (Morris et al., 2012: 6). Proponents of this wider view on projects have acknowledged that multidimensional investigations are needed, and that a more pluralistic understanding of projects is essential in comprehending the idiosyncrasies of project governance (Müller, 2012; Söderlund, 2012). The introduction of various new schools of thought have thus altered the state of theorizing in and about project management (Söderlund, 2011). The introduction of new application areas and disciplines such as political science has also meant that there has been increased focus on descriptive and interpretive research on politics and decision-making in projects.

Some argue that we now are witnessing the third wave of formalization within project research. In addition to analysing projects in their organisational institutional context, this wave scrutinizes the way in which projects are embedded in the wider society (Ekstedt et al., 1999; Morris et al., 2012; Sydow et al., 2004). Proponents of this more inclusive approach to projects and project management have often been referred to as followers of the *Scandinavian school of process*. According to this school, project research should not only focus more on human activities over time, but should also pay greater attention to the complexities of organization, as well as making findings more process oriented and socially sensitive (Hodgson and Cicmil, 2006; Hällgren and Söderholm, 2012: 502). Researchers stress the need to specify what perspectives are applied, what types of projects are investigated, as well as what sub-problem the study emphasizes. More attention should therefore also be given to defining what processes are at the core of the particular study, and to moving away from the conventional single project foci towards a multi-level understanding of projects (Söderlund, 2012).

In closing, the project management research establishes a connection between project management ideals and trends in PA, NPM and governance. The isolation of issues, focus on efficiency and action, and monitoring of results all emphasise this connection. The discussion thereby contributes to a greater understanding of the drivers behind an increasing use of projects in the public sector. It highlights the perceived advantages associated with project management as well as the need to understand the consequences of using project management standards that to a great extent follow private sector ideals in the public sector context. The project research contributes to

⁵ "After this, therefore because of this" (Fisher, 1970).

greater understanding of the embeddedness of projects as well as the dualism between flexibility and stability that project management ideals embody. However, while the GoP literature has called for a more pluralistic understanding of projects, it seems to suffer from similar problems as the governance literature discussed above in being slippery and broad. The existence of a unified project management theory is also highly debatable. Several strands and schools of research exist.

In terms of relevance for this study the project research contributes by drawing attention to the nature of projects and the societal impact that projects might have as temporary governance mechanisms. It shows that projects to an increasing extent serve as instruments for acquiring greater knowledge and legitimacy, which means that they have important functions that go far beyond their seemingly occasional and delimited features.

Summary of issues highlighted in the project research debate

- Project management research and GoP literature contributes to an understanding of the *raison d'être* of project organisations, showing the operational logic of projects, and established linkages between its *underlying project principles* and the adaptation of temporary governance mechanisms introduced by contemporary NPM and governance.
- This research points out the prevailing inclination among governmental institutions and funding principles to define *almost all EU reform activities as projects*. Efficiency gains, contractual agreements and monitoring of project results are also emphasised. The research debate shows how the apparent benefits that it offers have put normative pressure on public authorities to use project management as a *central tool for implementing public policy*.
- Project research emphasises the necessity of *interaction between temporary and permanent structures*, which underlines the contextual embeddedness within which projects operate, thus accentuating the significance of the underlying structure that might either enable or constrain project manoeuvrability. It also points out that an excessive reliance on standards put in place by permanent organisations might result in projects working in the shadow of the hierarchy.
- Project research shows signs of *widening boundaries*, describing how it has evolved from focusing exclusively on projects as isolated incidents to a more pluralistic and multi-level understanding of project governance. The GoP research has acknowledged the *importance of the socio-political context* and the need for multidimensional investigations in order to understand the societal embeddedness of projects.
- Questions relating to the potential consequences of an increased use of project organisations in the public sector as well as the extent to which projects can deliver a *coherent contribution and achieve sustainable long-term outcomes* still remain unanswered. Projects seem to struggle with problems similar to contemporary governance, indicating the need for further research regarding temporary vs. permanent dilemmas.
- In terms of relevance for this study, project management and project governance research contribute to a greater understanding of the role that projects play in contemporary public policy implementation. The traditional perceptions of projects have evolved but leave how projects can be meta-governed and *what role the state should play* in this case open. It is therefore vital to determine *the extent to which projects are able to line up with the overall governance structure*.

3 THE AIMS OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter sets out the purpose and research design of the study. The chapter begins by presenting the overarching aim and limitations of the study, linking the aim to the research articles. It then presents a general discussion on research methods in the social sciences in relation to the overall aim of the research. It goes on to discuss the research design and methods used, the main data sets used, as well as the various data collection processes employed in the articles.

As described in chapter one, the overarching aim of this study is to conceptualise and understand the benefits and challenges related to the increasing number of temporary governance mechanisms in the form of project organisations in the public sector context. This summary article in combination with the findings in the four research articles shows what the participatory procedures in projects are, and what implications different project management practices have, and what the consequences of projectification are in the public sector environment. The empirical focus of the study is thus limited to policy implementation, primarily from a Finnish unitary state and EU perspective. The analysis of policy formulation processes is not included in this study. The overarching aim of the study is further specified in the four research articles in the following way:

- **Article I:** *Project Proliferation and Governance – Implications for Environmental Management* delimits project proliferation as a phenomenon with respect to the numerous existing concepts of governance, and analyses potential consequences, both advantages and disadvantages, of public sector project proliferation.
- **Article II:** *Project impact in a multi-level context: The case of the European Fisheries Fund evaluation in Finland* shows whether project evaluations are conducted so that the long-term effect of projects can be assessed, and the extent to which the contributions or added value of projects as a form of organisation are assessed in the evaluations.
- **Article III:** *Projectification in the public sector – The case of the European Union* establishes a theoretical understanding of what projectification means, and how it is driven, as well as what the consequences of projectification are in an EU context and in the public sector in general.
- **Article IV:** *The Effect of Stakeholder Inclusion on Public Sector Project Innovation* identifies beneficial social partners and defines useful actions intended to achieve innovation in EU structural fund projects, and shows how far collaborations are a prerequisite for innovation and what the beneficial collaborative procedures and project actions are.

3.1 OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES, METHODS AND DATA

This section presents an overview of the research processes, methods and data used in the study, describing how and why particular research methods have been chosen and discussing potential challenges associated with the choices made. It begins by addressing the complexities of studying governance processes and the organisational research context of the study, and justifies the use of a mixed methods approach. It then presents the individual research methods used in the study, and the main data sets as well as their collection processes. The section ends by summarising the research questions, the data used, and the main concepts within the articles.

Investigating governance and public sector project organisations is no simple matter. As we saw in chapter 2, governance mechanisms include a wide range of formal and informal arrangements by which states can respond to changes of varying kinds. The study of project organizations represents a sub-discipline of management without such strong core principles as other management related disciplines. The unique, once-in-a-lifetime nature of projects further complicates their analysis.

Researching project organisations in the public sector and their interrelations with various governance mechanisms requires consideration of issues that go beyond the isolated project. Elements of such issues can be seen in both the third wave of governance research,⁶ and the third wave of project research and its development associated with the GoP.⁷ Public sector projects, EU funded projects in particular, also involve a variety of concerns. This includes so-called hard versus soft governance steering mechanisms and the soft paradigms of project research. The research field includes numerous disciplines, such as public policy studies, strategy and organizational studies, etc. within which the construction of knowledge varies. In a similar way, Hill and Hupe (2009: 138) highlight problems relating to the selection of the policy goals and policy outcomes as the dependent variable in implementation studies. They point out that policy outcomes at times may have little to do with the actual policy interventions, and that judgements about outcomes may instead represent judgements about the appropriateness of the policy. This raises questions about the researcher's neutrality as well as the appropriateness of the choice of method (Buchanan and Bryman, 2009: 13–14).

The organisational research context displays three trends, namely; widening boundaries, multiparadigmatic approaches, and methodological inventiveness. Buchanan and Bryman (2009: 1) summarise this well by arguing that choice of

⁶ See chapter 2.2

⁷ See chapter 2.3

methods involves a broad, more complex, interdependent set of considerations which can never be overcome, even with diligent planning. Today, few researchers support the notion of a fixed hierarchy of evidence (Buchanan and Bryman, 2009: 3), and organizational research displays a variety of perspectives, ranging from positivist discourses aimed at developing causal relations and critical discourses to more interpretive discourses acknowledging that individuals are co-creators of social constructs grounded in both social and organisational practices. Since the paradigm wars in the 1980s, social science research has increased paradigmatic diversity and methodological plurality, particularly in the domain of qualitative and interpretive methods (Buchanan and Bryman, 2009: 4).

The methodological choices one makes also frame the data window through which phenomena are observed, thereby influencing what interpretations can be made. Choice of method always means that fundamental assumptions about the production of knowledge and core values have to be made (Deetz, 2009: 23). This study follows an interpretive approach, which ultimately aims to show the complexity and creativity associated with projects that has been overlooked (Deetz, 2009: 34). It acknowledges that methods are increasingly located in the context of broader and more fluid intellectual currents and discourages rigid epistemological positions. It also acknowledges that different methods and perspectives can be combined for different purposes.

Institutionalized norms and values might for instance affect the seemingly unique project in becoming standardized, resembling a “pearl necklace”, where similar projects follow each other (Jensen et al., 2013; Sahlin-Andersson and Söderholm, 2002a). Despite this standardization, few projects can, however, be regarded as entirely stable and predictable. They always embody a chaotic element that is multi-contextual, and dependent on the partly competing wishes and demands of a multitude of stakeholders (Lundin and Steinhórrsson, 2003: 247). Public sector projects are highly variable and structural changes are thus inevitable despite the project’s formal and seemingly stable organisational form. Since there is also a shortage of methodological analysis of the inherent temporal features of current organizational forms (Sjöblom et al., 2013), the focus on project organisations and governance as an object of study accentuates the need to select research methods that are sufficiently broad to capture this complexity.

3.1.1 THE MAIN RESEARCH METHODS

This section discusses the main research methods used in the study and how the empirical data has been analysed, describing the value of the four different methods. The background to the methods selected is described, then the context, and the method itself. It ends by linking the method to the research questions posed in the articles included in the study.

Background to the methods used

The methods used in this study advocate multi-perspectivism and to some extent paradigm interplay as well (Yanow and Ybema, 2009: 42). They combine different interpretations of the existing governance frameworks and public sector projects while acknowledging that alternative views might exist. This approach suggests that the use of mixed methods should provide multiple ways of making sense of the world (Edmondson and McManus, 2007; Greene, 2008: 20). Given the ambiguous and multifaceted nature of public sector projects as well as the purported uniqueness associated with project ideals in terms of their results, objectives, and forms of interaction and collaboration in achieving results requires a variety of methods and a broad range of data. A mixed method approach is therefore useful in revealing issues that otherwise might have gone unnoticed.

Metaevaluation

The uniqueness associated with project ideals suggests that every project represents particular outputs, not to mention the fact that public provisions are used to fund EU projects, highlights the need to evaluate projects. The increasing use of projects in the public sector has thus contributed to the existing boom in evaluations (Vedung, 2010: 264). Since the multitude of existing projects and the diverse and complex environments in which they operate has been deemed difficult, it is not surprising that public sector project and program evaluations often follow a linear one-way approach (Burlin and Svensson, 2011).

The methodological approach used in Article II was metaevaluation which focuses on the evaluation of the function, practice, and the management of evaluation itself, thus representing a metaprocess in the general governance process. It embodies a strong heuristic element which aims both to understand the different evaluations employed as well as to facilitate thinking of evaluations (Vedung, 2009: 44). The method aims to group several evaluations into metaevaluations and place the results in a larger context (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004: 454; Vedung, 2000: 21, 2009: 154, 2010: 265). The method is particularly useful in explaining how the regulatory framework within which EU funded European Fisheries Fund (EFF) project operates. It also clarifies how evaluations are conducted, what aspects are emphasised, as

well as how the effects of projects are measured. It is thus well suited to analysing the extent to which the evaluations used are able to measure the perceived impact of projects, and whether the added value created by projects can be assessed so that long-term outcomes can be achieved.

Qualitative content analysis

A project can produce a wide range of outputs which can be difficult to define. This is particularly so regarding descriptions of project innovation outputs. Not only can innovation as a concept be debatable, it can also mean different things to different actors. In addition, it is not surprising that projects that are funded for the purpose of producing innovations often state in their final reports that innovations were achieved.

The qualitative content analysis used in Article IV helped to analyse data within a specific context and to reduce the material presented in the final reports of projects. The method was in this case well suited to analysing the innovative outputs attained by EU funded project organisations, and the variety of types of innovation that projects produce. The method ensured that the units of analysis received equal treatment and established a specific context for inquiry (Krippendorff, 1989: 404). The construction of a coding framework for different types of innovation and applying it to EU funded European Regional Development Projects (ERDF) final reports enabled the alleged project innovation output types to be extracted and categorized (Schreier, 2014). This not only enabled the information to be used in a larger research effort but also played a vital part in the analysis of the extent to which collaborations in projects are prerequisites for innovation. A limitation of the analysis is, however, its replicability. An apparent challenge of content analysis is to be able to create observer independent categories and procedures without reference to the analyst. Although this limitation can never be completely eradicated, the analysis conducted in Article IV, however, showed inter-coder reliability.

Logistic regression analysis

Projects are often assumed to lead to innovative results. Innovations, however, do not emerge in a vacuum. As described in Article IV, a common assumption is that innovations emerge when various actors create partnerships, share ideas, interact and collaborate. The logistic regression analysis is useful in many cases in characterising the interaction effects in a given set of data (Jaccard, 2001). Apart from the regression co-efficients of the variables included in the analysis, the results of the exponentiated regression coefficients show the relative increase in the probability of an innovation occurring when there is a unit change in the independent variable.

This method was employed in Article IV to determine whether EU funded ERDF projects can be collaborative spaces where innovations emerge. The small sample size made it necessary to include variables one by one in the analysis. The method thus enabled the analysis of what types of collaborative procedure are prerequisites and what social partners are beneficial in achieving innovations in projects. In the analysis employed, odds greater than one indicate an increased “chance” of achieving innovation by including a particular actor or taking a particular social action by contrast with not including that partner or not taking some social action.

Social network analysis

The understanding of networks has become important for understanding informal relationships and are often deemed crucial for understanding organisational performance, learning, and innovation (Cross and Parker, 2004; Uzzi, 1997). Interest in the method has increased rapidly ever since the 1990s as a result of the realisation that the “social contexts” of actions matter (Wasserman et al., 2005). Various methods of researching networks exist (Johanson et al., 1995), the mapping of interaction patterns through SNA techniques often being regarded as a classic method. Other more qualitative methods have been used primarily by European researchers who have used case studies and discourse analysis as their methods (Klijn, 2008: 513).

The analysis in Article IV was conducted using two computer programs developed specifically for SNA and visualisation, UCINET (Borgatti et al., 2002) and Visone (Brandes and Wagner, 2004). The analysis was used in order to identify the stakeholder networks involved in innovation projects. This was analysed by measuring the degree of centrality of project stakeholders, which represents the number of links incident upon the node (Scott, 2007), thereby illustrating all linkages between projects and stakeholders. In this study, the method illustrates the staff and stakeholder networks linked to project organisations well, which enabled further analyses of whether the networks created by projects can lead to innovative results. The method was particularly useful in showing who is involved in projects, and the overlapping project staff and stakeholder memberships of various projects, thereby identifying potential knowledge brokers within the project networks. This aided in identifying social partners expected to be beneficial for achieving project innovations in EU funded ERDF projects.

3.1.2 THE MAIN SETS OF DATA AND THEIR COLLECTION PROCESSES

This section describes on the main sets of data used in the study and how the data was collected. It describes the value of data in response to the overarching aim of the study. It begins by presenting the background to the data after which it describes the three main types of data used as well as how the data was collected. The section ends by highlighting other material that has been relied upon in the study as well as a summary of the section.

Background to the data collection

A significant amount of the empirical data used in this study was gathered in cooperation with two projects. The first was the Finnish Academy funded research project on the Democratic Impact of Administrative Reforms – Temporary Governance Instruments in Regional Development (ProDem) which lasted from 2012 to 2014. The project primarily studied ERDF and to some extent the European Social Fund (ESF) funded projects during the 2007-2013 programming period. The material used in the research project was collected between 2012 and 2013, and included archival, survey, and interview data.

The other project was the evaluation of the EFF operational program in Finland during the 2007-2013 programming period, which was conducted in cooperation with Ramboll Management Consulting. The research was conducted between 2010 and 2011 and included data collection in the form of archival, survey, and interview data. Although the bulk of the material used in this study was gathered within these two projects, additional sources of data were also included. All in all, this study includes four different types of data, which are described in the next sub-section.

Archival data and its collection processes

The term archival data has many different meanings. Today, archival data extends far beyond the mere physical holdings of paper records (Moss, 2009: 396). Changes brought about by the information society have opened up a significant amount of information by, for instance, replacing traditional library archives with digital libraries. This is also the case regarding most of the archival and statistical data produced by EU-funded projects. While access to archival data can be regarded as beneficial by increasing transparency, however, it also requires some attention from a critical standpoint. The technical structure of the digital archive might determine what type of data can be archived (Derrida and Prenowitz, 1996: 16). The amount of data also involves an inherent risk of information overload because of the sheer volume of information that is now being produced. Archival data of this sort can be regarded as extensive, which places extra significance on the criteria by which samples are drawn in order to ensure representativeness (Sayer, 2010: 244). The archival data used in this study primarily is derived from two databases. One is the EURA2007-database

(Ministry of Employment and the Economy, 2015), and the other is the SNADI database (Ministry of Forestry and Agriculture, 2011).

The EURA2007 database contains information about ERDF- and ESF-funded projects in Finland during the 2007-2013 EU programming period. At the day of writing, the database, which consists of an open archive and a closed archive, includes information about almost 20,000 projects. The open archive contains basic information about the funded projects which included information about the project manager, a summary of the project's plans, as well as the amount of public funding awarded. The closed archive is intended primarily for the managing authorities and was accessed by applying for special permission and by signing a non-disclosure agreement with the Ministry of Employment and the Economy. The closed database included a significant amount of detailed information about the funded projects such as records about all project application plans, mid-term and final reports, project finances, and the stakeholders included, as well as information about what indicators measured project progress.

The projects' final reports included information such as:

- Basic information about the project (i.e., name, program category, type, etc.)
- The project's point of departure, goals and target group
- Project execution, cooperation and information dissemination
- Problems that occurred in the project and recommendations
- The project's results, innovativeness and effect on sustainable development
- Best practices, continuity and archiving of the project's material
- Project finances

This study, and Article IV in particular, analysed 275 ERDF innovation projects included in the EURA2007-database. The selection included ERDF projects within priority axis 2, which focused specifically on funding projects that promote innovation activity and networking, and reinforce knowledge structures (Suomen rakennerahastostrategia, 2007). The selection was also limited to projects that had ended by the 31st of December 2012. This limitation was imposed in order to ensure that the final reports were submitted, thereby enabling the analysis of what types of innovation projects produce. The selection was further limited to projects that were headed by different project managers in order to ensure variance among the cases selected. The selection of projects used in this study represented 84% of the entire ERDF priority axis 2 project population in Finland during the 2007-2013 EU programming period.

The ERDF innovation projects selected ranged from small budget projects to multi-million euro projects, most with a budget between 100,000 and 200,000 euros. On average, they lasted almost 3 years and included fifty stakeholders per project, most of which were categorized as privately held companies. All in all, the data showed that almost 11,000 stakeholders were involved in the projects selected. The most active stakeholders (≥ 9) were large multi-national companies within the forestry sector, mining industry or

technology sector. This data enabled the analysis of the network of actors present in the projects and the social partners involved.

The projects that produced innovations included a wide variety of goals such as projects that developed new applications using nanotechnology, those that created new testing facilities for the improvement of cold-weather clothing, and projects that developed new virtual reality learning environments in the health-care sector. As mentioned in chapter 2.3, this shows the broad range and variation in ways by which projects intend to address issues related to innovation. This data enabled the analysis of the proposed innovation outputs. The archival data also included information about the project execution, cooperation and information dissemination, which enabled the analysis of the collaborative efforts and procedures of the projects. Table 1 shows a summary of the selected ERDF project characteristics.

Table 1. Summary of ERDF project characteristics (N=275)

	Number of projects	Duration on average (months)	Organisational stakeholders	Company stakeholders	Total number of stakeholders	Stakeholders on average
Project budget						
Under 100,000€	49	17,5	236	405	641	13
100,000€ - 200,000€	59	28	435	1065	1500	25
200,000€ - 300,000€	50	34	472	1568	2040	41
300,000€ - 400,000€	40	36	453	1450	1903	48
400,000€ - 500,000€	16	37	190	460	650	41
500,000€ - 600,000€	19	38	347	813	1160	61
600,000€ - 700,000€	15	37	255	534	789	53
700,000€ - 1 000,000€	13	41	139	566	705	54
Over 1 000,000€	14	37	424	1161	1585	113
<i>Total</i>	<i>275</i>	<i>34⁸</i>	<i>2951</i>	<i>8022</i>	<i>10973</i>	<i>50⁹</i>

Source: Ministry of Employment and the Economy, 2015

8 Average

9 Average

The SNADI database contained information about EFF funded projects in Finland during the 2007-2013 EU programming period. This information, however, was not as detailed as that in the EURA2007-database. Access to additional information about the SNADI database was granted to the evaluation group by the Ministry of Forestry and Agriculture in Finland. The database contained information about 1640 EFF projects in Finland which were included in the study. Of these projects, 733 were categorised as support projects for damage caused by seals and were excluded from the analysis. The projects selected represented all EFF-funded projects in Finland from the beginning of the 2007-2013 programming period until the 1st of November 2010.

The projects included in the analysis in Article II represented a wide variety of goals within the fisheries industry, such as a project that created a biofuel facility that utilized waste from cleaning fish, one that developed new prospects for fishing tourism, and another that created an information management system for fisheries. Most of the EFF projects had relatively small budgets (\leq 20,000 euros) and were categorized as either sea fishing or fish farming or processing projects. Although limited, the archival data included information about both types of indicators used to measure project outputs as well as the extent to which different indicators were used. This data enables the analysis of both how the regulatory framework concerning EU funded EFF projects operate as well as how the evaluations measure project impact. Table 2 summarises the selected EFF project characteristics. A more detailed description of the selected EFF projects appears in Article II.

Table 2. Summary of EFF project characteristics (N=907)

	Sea fishing	Fish farming, inland fishing, fish processing and wholesale	Actions of public good	Regional cooperation	Technical assistance	Total number of projects
Project budget						
0€ - 5 000€	124	60	9	29	10	232
5,000€ - 10,000€	87	102	21	6	1	217
10,000€ - 20,000€	58	67	32	9	2	168
20,000€ - 30,000€	21	35	9	10	2	77
30,000€ - 40,000€	6	22	5	1		34
40,000€ - 50,000€	6	18	3	1		28
50,000€ - 100,000€	6	57	9	5		77
100,000€ - 500,000€	2	44	8	2	2	58
500,000€ -		12	4			16
<i>Total</i>	<i>310</i>	<i>417</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>63</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>907</i>

Source: Ministry of Forestry and Agriculture, 2011

The value of the archival data in response to the overarching aim of the study is that it shows the multitude of projects that are implemented in the public sector and how projects have operated in its various project stages. It also provides detailed information on who the actors concerned with project organisations are as well as how the structures within projects operate and the material conditions by virtue of which they can exist. This type of archival data also enabled a build-up of knowledge about the characteristics of different projects which is useful in gathering other types of data and respondents (Sayer, 2010: 245). It thus represents an extensive method of data collection, which provides relevant background information that facilitates explanations of why projects operated in a particular way. The archival data included in the study thus goes beyond the purely descriptive.

Although both databases provided valuable information about EU-funded project outputs and function in general, the objectivity of the material included cannot be taken entirely for granted. It is worth remembering the nature of the data, and that although it can be regarded as having relatively high external validity by including the majority of the projects within the defined populations within a particular timeframe, it is nevertheless provided by different project actors. The data is also aimed at the regulatory agencies that grant or refuse project funding and might therefore be positively skewed, painting an overly optimistic picture of the results gained by projects in order to get or continue to receive project funding. Similarly, the interpretation of this type of data also raises questions about the researcher's ability to remain objective in his/her interpretations. The multifarious nature of projects and their results as well as the problems relating to objectivity therefore highlight the need to complement sources of data.

Survey data and its collection processes

The study included data from two different surveys that complement existing archival data. One survey was conducted within the ProDem research project and another within the EFF evaluation project. The ProDem survey data was collected during summer 2013. The survey respondent population consisted of all project managers who had received ERDF or ESF project funding during the 2007-2013 programming period by the 31st of December 2012. This amounted to 4383 different projects. The respondents were limited in the same way as the limitation of the archival data mentioned above. This not only ensured that the survey would not be sent to the same project manager twice if for instance a particular person managed several different projects. The intention of this limitation was also to ensure that the responses would correspond to opinions regarding one particular project. All in all the survey was sent to 1750 project managers. The survey data used in this study, and Article IV in particular, was limited to responses from project managers who had received funding from the ERDF within priority axis 2. The population of this subgroup was 328, of which 275 were included in the study and were asked

to respond to the survey. The response rate was 41.8% which falls within the norm advocated for significant academic credibility in survey studies (Baruch, 1999; Hinkin and Holtom, 2009).

The survey consisted of 58 questions in eight different sections relating to the respondents' background, previous project experience, information about project actor involvement and composition, project steering group activity, information flows and work habits, cooperation between the project and external organisations, project results and their perceived effects, as well as future plans once the project had ended. The data thus complemented the archival data, enabling further analysis to be made on the projects' collaborative efforts and procedures. The cover letter which was sent to the respondents as well as a summary of the ProDem questionnaire containing the key questions used in the analysis of Article IV are presented in appendixes 1 and 2.

Another survey was conducted within the EFF evaluation project in cooperation with Ramboll Management Consulting. The EFF survey was collected during winter 2011 and was sent to 350 key stakeholders within the fishery sector, representing 10 different organisations in different Finnish regions. The survey consisted of thirty-four questions that addressed 6 different topics that related to the respondents perception of the EFF strategy, its organization and target-orientation, the program's effectiveness, best practices and the added value of the program, the fishery action group, activity as well as questions relating specifically to actors who had received EFF project funding. Despite considerable efforts, the survey only received ninety-one responses, making the response rate 26%. The low response rate limited the use of statistical analyses of the data and emphasised the importance of the additional sources of data that were gathered. The survey, however, illustrated how the operation of the EFF regulatory framework was perceived in practice. The cover letter which was sent to the respondents as well as a summary of the EFF questionnaire appear in appendixes 3 and 4. The use of this data is further discussed in Article II.

The value of the survey data in response to the overarching aim of the study was that it highlighted aspects that went beyond the immediate project organisation, increasing the understanding of the complex context in which projects operate and the project managers' own perceptions of project collaboration and its effects. The data thus also complemented the other sources of data included in the study. Critically speaking, survey data at least to some extent sacrifices explanatory penetration as a result of limited sample sizes and low response rates. Survey data also suffers from the possibility of varying interpretations of the survey questions by the respondents (Sayer, 2010: 245). Complete internal validity is next to impossible to achieve considering the open systems in which social science operates. The varying backgrounds of the project managers also need to be taken into account. Still, the data helps to understand the results gained through quantitative data thus strengthen the analytical findings (Miles et al., 2014: 43). It also helps minimize potential observer-induced biases.

Interview data and its collection processes

The study gained further insight from interview data collected both for the ProDem research project and the EFF evaluation project. The ProDem research project included interviews with thirty-six project actors. Seventeen interviews were conducted in Eastern Finland and nineteen in Western Finland. The interviewees represented key actors from regional regulatory agencies (5 interviews), as well as project managers (13 interviews) and stakeholders (18 interviews) from twelve different EU projects. The purpose of the interviews was to gain further knowledge about what impact project organisations had on regional development. This included asking the respondents about their perception of project work and working methods, project members and cooperation with external actors, project results and procedures relating to reporting, as well as the perceived impact that projects have in their region. The interviews lasted between 45 minutes and 1½ hours. Although no reference to the interview data gained in the ProDem research project has been made to the articles included in this study, the results of the interviews have aided in the understanding of the role that project actors play, thus confirming many of the assumptions and findings relating to the issues discussed in the articles.

The study included data from thirty-four interviews which were conducted within the EFF evaluation project. The interviewees represented relevant actors from within the fishery industry as well as representatives from the EFF program monitoring committee. They were selected based on relevance to the EFF program and represented a balance between lay and expert actors. The purpose of the interviews was to gain knowledge about the awareness of the EFF program strategy, the functioning of the operational program, as well as the perceived impact that they had. The interviews lasted between 45 minutes and an hour and were conducted in a semi-structured manner.

The interview data enabled further conclusions to be drawn about the functioning of the regulatory framework within which EU funded EFF projects operate as well as the potential added value created. The value of the interview data in response to the overarching aim of the study can be regarded as illustrating who the actors involved with project organisations are, as well as what the prospects are for project goal achievement. This type of data falls within the intensive data category which enables a better picture of the underlying structures to be created as well as how causal processes work out in particular cases (Sayer, 2010: 242–243). Critically speaking, while interviews cannot be regarded as totally “representative”, they still create a better understanding of the circumstances and specific conditions of individual projects.

Other central document material and summary

In addition to the data mentioned above, a significant number of policy documents from supranational, national as well as regional and local levels was used to complement the data described above. Although the effects of documents that reflect official viewpoints cannot be taken for granted, they do help to understand the priorities and ideals that have been set as well as the intended function of projects. Examples of such documents include *policy guidelines* such as management plans provided or indicative evaluation methods provided by the EU, *official documents, reviews and reports* on the results that policy programmes are expected to achieve, *laws and statutes* on how EU programs should be managed and how funds can and should be allocated.

In sum, the methods and material employed represent a variety of approaches which together contribute to an increased understanding of project organisations and governance. Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989: 259), for instance, justify and describe the purposes of mixed-method evaluation designs by arguing that it offers an opportunity to maximize heterogeneity by combining quantitative and qualitative data via triangulation. A more extensive use of methods also increases the interpretability of results so that they can be elaborated upon and complemented. This can in turn open up new perspectives and in some cases even lead to methodological development. Mixed methods can also lead to a better understanding of the data and to the discovery of paradoxes that in turn might lead to new perspectives for frameworks which may be initiated. Finally, the scope of inquiry can be expanded by using multiple inquiry components. The use of mixed methods can thus provide a fuller understanding of the phenomena in question by genuinely integrating the results obtained (Creswell and Tashakkori, 2007: 108). Table 3 shows a summary of the overarching research questions, data used as well as the main concepts in the original publications.

Table 3. Summary of overarching research questions, data used and main concepts of the original publications

Article	Overarching research question	Key sets of data	Main concepts
<p>I. Project Proliferation and Governance – Implications for Environmental Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can project proliferation as a phenomenon be linked to the numerous existing conceptions of governance? • What are the potential consequences – advantages as well as disadvantages – of public sector project proliferation? 	<p><i>The purpose of the article was analytical rather than empirical.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance theories • Efficiency • Participation • Rationalistic bias
<p>II. Project impact in a multi-level context: The case of the European Fisheries Fund evaluation in Finland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the regulatory framework concerning EU projects operate? • What is the perceived impact of EU funded projects and to what extent are EFF evaluations able to measure the perceived impact? • To what extent are the contributions or added value of projects as a form of organising assessed in the evaluations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archival data • Survey data • Interview data • Statistical data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation • Program theory • Impact • Coordination
<p>III. Projectification in the public sector – The case of the European Union</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the drivers behind the projectification of the public sector? • How does the public sector context affect the progression and sequences of individual projects? • To what extent can such effects be explained by means of existing theories in the field? 	<p><i>The purpose of the article was analytical rather than empirical.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projectification • Multi-level governance • Project drivers • Continuity
<p>IV. The effect of stakeholder inclusion on Public Sector Project Innovation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent are collaborations in projects a prerequisite for innovation? • What are the beneficial collaborative procedures, social partners and actions that should be addressed in order to achieve innovation in EU funded ERDF projects? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archival data • Survey data • Statistical data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative governance • Interactive governance • Project innovations • Stakeholder management

4 THE MAIN RESULTS OF THE STUDY

This chapter summarizes the findings of the articles included in light of the overall framework presented above. The aim of the chapter is to substantiate the theoretical notions presented above and to enable coherence between the discussion in this summary article and the findings of the individual articles. The chapter begins with a general discussion about the central theoretical notions described above and then how they are addressed in the articles.

In the introduction to the study, it was argued that contemporary society has become increasingly complex and that the emergence of new governance mechanisms has led to significant changes in public policy service delivery and implementation. The state has become increasingly dependent on collaborative arrangements and external actors, thus also becoming more and more embedded in both national and supra-national settings. In response to such contemporary developments, the requirement of timely solutions and dynamic, flexible and effective actions have increased the number of informal and temporary governance instruments such as project organisations. Projects are believed to pave the way towards efficiency, clarity and unambiguity, thus offering politically attractive solutions and the development of new management ideals within the public sector.

The three strands of research discussed in chapter 2 contributed to the overarching aim of the study providing an understanding of the background to the contemporary developments in society and the conditions under which project management ideals are expected to function in embedded governance structures. The PA and NPM debate showed the rationale behind the desire to reduce complexity and enhance efficiency by introducing new private sector mechanisms and ideals in the public sector. It also showed the increasing reliance on contracts and monitoring systems by which the developments are expected to be controlled. The governance research revealed the collaborative conditions under which the process of governing is expected to function and the challenges of creating organisations and institutions that are able to operate in a complex society while fostering a degree of permanency. The project management and GoP research described underlying project principles and further highlighted the need to study the interaction between temporary and permanent structures in order to determine to what extent projects can deliver a coherent contribution and achieve sustainable long-term outcomes.

Consequently there is an inherent need to establish what the effects of these developments in a public sector project context are, what the repercussions of project management ideals are when they confront public sector values and governmental ideals, as well as how projects are able to line up with the overall governance structure.

The developments described above emphasized the need to understand the consequences of project proliferation and the drivers behind and increasing use of projects in the public sector (Article I), what outputs projects produce and how the results and potential added value created by projects are measured (Article II), what is needed to create long-term effects from project outputs and results (Article III) and what participatory procedures and collaborative arrangements are used in projects and how this effects project results (Article IV). These questions are addressed in the four articles included in the study and will be discussed further in the following four subsections. Figure 2 illustrates the framework and its linkages to the issues addressed in the articles.

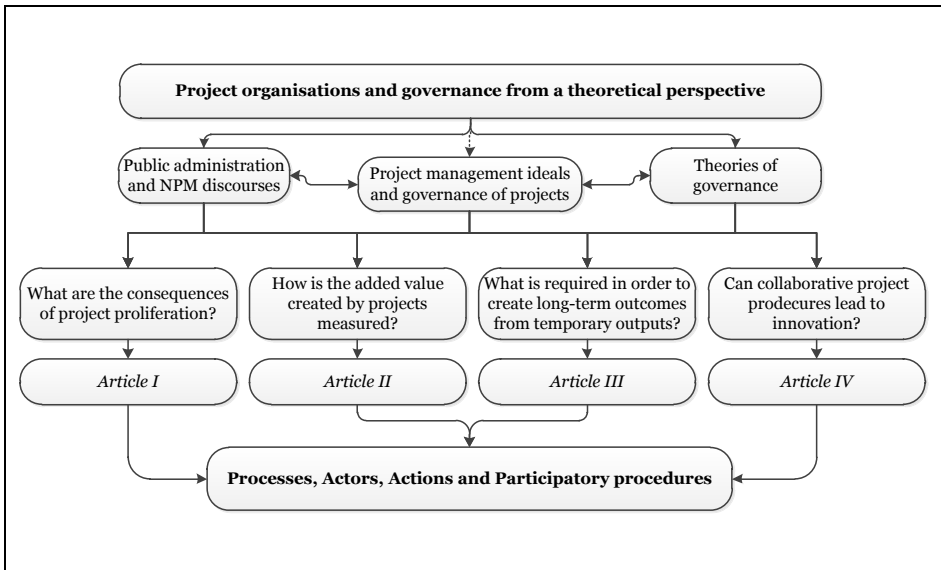


Figure 2. Links between the theoretical framework and questions addressed in the articles

4.1 THE CONSEQUENCES OF PROJECT PROLIFERATION

Article I introduces the concept of project organisations as a temporal governance mechanism in contemporary public policy implementation. It delimits project proliferation as a phenomenon with respect to the existing concepts of governance, and analyses the potential consequences – advantages as well as disadvantages – of public sector project proliferation. The article thereby establishes the backdrop for issues addressed in the other articles in the study.

The article describes how the so-called shift from government to governance principles and the complex nature of contemporary policy problems has resulted in an increasing use of temporary governance instruments. It argues that the state's rolled-back position and increasing reliance on resources outside of its formal hierarchical control has reinforced the adoption of more collaborative instruments, which have given rise to a new set of management procedures. As a result of an increasing demand for synergy and effective governance, a large number of new forms of interaction between societal actors have been introduced, taking the form of temporary project organisations. The argument in the article is that systematic knowledge about temporary projects and their relationship with permanent structures is limited, and that mechanisms by which temporary project results can be preserved after the project is dissolved remains unexplored.¹⁰

The article shows that while governance theories emphasize inter-organisational relationships and the potential benefits achieved by exchange between the state and society, projects focus more on creating favourable conditions for isolated timely action. However, projects do not emerge in a vacuum, but are to a great extent embedded in other more or less permanent structures. They emerge in interaction with other organizations and are expected to provide these organisations with some kind of surplus compared to other forms of organising. By decoupling activities, the project enables the isolation of issues through which flexibility, increased efficiency and innovative results are expected to be gained.

The argument in the article is that this creates tensions when project management ideals and particularized solutions are confronted with permanent governance structures and routines that should support policy coherence.¹¹ The creation of projects have thus become a way of legitimizing public interventions to some extent by involving affected interests and project stakeholders, which also is believed to create opportunities for creative solutions and innovative actions.¹² The extent to which projects succeed in involving stakeholders and how that affects the quality of the decisions is, however, still an open question. It is also unclear whether stakeholder inclusion leads to extended participation or the exclusion of interests.

The article concludes that the increasing use of projects is closely related to rationalistic project management ideals such as increased efficiency, clarity and unambiguity, as well as timely actions. It concludes that a lack of conceptualizations concerning the relationship between temporary and permanent structures exists. Project proliferation in public decision-making thus challenges fundamental administrative values such as coordination, continuity and democratic accountability in public policy implementation, especially in cross-sectoral and multi-level policy areas such as EU regional development.

¹⁰ See also Article II.

¹¹ See also Article III.

¹² See also Article IV.

4.2 MEASURING THE ADDED VALUE CREATED BY PROJECTS

Article II explores the extent to which current evaluations are able to measure project effects and impact. It analyses the extent to which projects can deliver a sustained contribution and long-term results, as well as how project outputs are evaluated, thus questioning the often over-stressed value of using projects as opposed to other more permanent mechanisms in the public sector environment.

The article illustrates how the EU project context operates in an MLG system, and how supra-national policy objectives are broken down into targeted national and regional multi-annual programmes which fund a myriad of projects at local level. It analyses the evaluation of the EFF program in Finland and the results obtained by the program. The article shows that measures corresponding to ideal project qualities such as results that relate to innovation and new operational models, as well as project outputs that have a positive environmental impact are included in the evaluations. The analysis employed in the article also shows that a significant number of the projects that were funded indicate that their projects produce such results. The utilization of the project results, however, was hindered because of evaluations that follow a rational logic of organisation which lacked measurement specificity and clarity. The instrumental evaluations employed may therefore inhibit learning and discovery, as well as the identification of long-term effects.

The results of the analysis also showed that the evaluation criteria are focused on outputs and that the long-term effects of projects as a policy implementation tool cannot fully be assessed. The findings indicate that the current evaluation approach is based on highly standardised quantitative evaluation criteria, which is insufficient insofar as it captures the achievements and added value of project-based policy implementation only to a limited extent. The analysis shows that the connection between the evaluation system and the project management logic therefore remains weak.

The article concludes that while projects have the potential to produce valuable outputs, current project and program evaluations are unable to harness the added value thus created. The article confirms that the evaluation focuses on output measurements that follow a linear and instrumental approach, and suggests a potential mismatch between the operational logic of projects and the prevailing evaluation system in the public sector. The extent to which the information about the added value is gathered so that it can be used for future purposes and contribute to strategic goals is therefore questionable.

4.3 CREATING LONG-TERM OUTCOMES FROM TEMPORARY OUTPUTS

Article III focuses on the increasing use of projects (i.e., projectification) in the public sector and the particularities associated with public sector project management, suggesting that a broader understanding of public sector projects is needed. It analyses the meaning of and the driver behind projectification and shows how politico-administrative embeddedness affects the progression and sequences of individual projects and their life cycle.

The article describes how tension between short-term and long-term perspectives has been neglected in both the practical and theoretical debates. It stresses the need to understand the conditions under which temporary organisations produce results, as well as the mechanisms behind the creation of action and change that are expected to go beyond what permanent organisations can achieve. It also establishes a theoretical understanding of what projectification means, what the key drivers of projectification are, as well as what the consequences of projectification are in an EU context, and in the public sector in general.

The article highlights the differences between standardised project management procedures in traditional project settings and their operational logic in the public sector environment from a theoretical perspective. It describes how the embeddedness of temporary organisations in the public context affects the project sequences of the project life cycle in ways that deviate from predictions of project sequences in traditional project contexts. It argues that the EU project system requires a delicate balance between politico-administrative structures and entrepreneurial discretion in order to secure policy coherence as well as project autonomy. The article also argues that the potential for commitment building during the execution phases of the project is restricted by the proximity of permanent organisations, and that this is determined by strategic and political priority being given to the temporary organisation. It points out that the current knowledge transfer mechanisms associated with the institutionalised termination phase in public sector projects needs to be complemented by a phase that emphasises institutionalised recoupling in order to create long-term outcomes.

The article thus adds a new dimension to the projectification debate by presenting a descriptive and conceptual discussion about the consequences of public sector projectification in the EU context. It complements an existing theory of temporary organisation, thereby taking the first steps towards a theory that can be applied to projectification in the public sector context.

4.4 COLLABORATIVE PROCEDURES AND PROJECT INNOVATIONS

Article IV examines the potential benefits of an increasing use of projects in the administration of policy and service delivery, clarifying how far collaborative procedures and project actions can become prerequisites for achieving innovative results. The article tests the ideal perception associated with projects, as well as the drivers of and barriers to collaborative innovation in a project setting.

The article describes the underestimated complexity associated with the term innovation, and discusses how the suggested requirements for reaching innovations can be interpreted for achieving innovations in public sector projects. It highlights the increasing focus on temporal and spatial horizons for strategic action from which innovations are expected to emerge. The article argues that despite the widely acknowledged ability of projects to bring about creativity that meets the requirements of innovation, the focus on projects as collaborative spaces has been surprisingly neglected.

The article takes its point of departure from EU regional development strategies that rely heavily on the capacity of projects to produce innovations using 275 EU funded ERDF innovation projects in Finland as its empirical base. The empirical analysis employed in the article shows that projects include staff, steering group and stakeholder members from a variety of occupational backgrounds, and that projects employ a wide range of collaborative features to inform and activate stakeholders. The analysis, however, shows that despite the projects often being regarded as wellsprings of innovation, relatively few produce innovations that match strict innovation definitions.

The results show that the project staff and steering group composition as well as the network of stakeholders included in projects has an effect on project innovation. Stakeholder networks formed by projects and various collaborative efforts that projects employ also play a role in predicting innovations produced by projects. The results, however, also show that not all network linkages among various project actors increase the odds of innovation. The inclusion of large numbers of stakeholders is thus no guarantee of innovation. Stakeholders might be included in response to legitimacy in the eyes of the funder rather than for the purpose of innovation. The analysis also showed that project staff members who had previous experience of innovation projects decreased the odds of innovation.

The results question the optimistic view of collaboration as a remedy for lack of innovation in the public sector and highlights the importance of staff selection as well as the role that the regulatory agencies play in approving project staff members. The article concludes that more attention should be paid to the significance of functioning regulatory agencies that are able to detect productive project staff linkages while at the same time providing projects with enough room to manoeuvre.

5 THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

This chapter highlights the contributions of the study, beginning by turning back to the overall aim and the theoretical framework within which it operated. It then highlights how the findings have contributed to the various strands of research. The chapter ends with the conclusions that can be drawn.

The overarching aim of this study was to conceptualise and understand the benefits and challenges related to the increasing number of temporary governance mechanisms taking the form of project organisations in the public sector context. The summary article followed an interpretive governance perspective and provided the basis of the study, in which the main points of reference were three interrelated strands of research within the extensive governance debate.

The three strands of research provided a greater understanding of the rationale behind an increasing use of new management ideals in the public sector and how the search for efficiency gains has given way to new organizational arrangements in the search for concrete outputs. They highlighted the need to clarify what the effects and consequences of NPM and NPG developments in a public sector project context are. The governance debate further showed the complexity associated with contemporary policy-making and the need for flexible and collaborative organising mechanisms that cut across levels and sectors and produce quick, sustainable responses in rapidly changing environments. It also emphasised the need to assess the repercussions of new management ideals that confront embedded public sector and governmental values. Finally, the project management and GoP research enabled a greater understanding of the ideals associated with projects and the role that they are expected to play in contemporary public policy implementation. It pointed out the need to understand the role that the state should play and the importance of determining the extent to which projects are able to line up with the overall governance structure.

As a whole, the conclusions that can be drawn from this summary article as well as the four research articles reveal the important role that projects play in decoupling and reducing the complexity of agendas, thus falling well within the NPM, governance, and project discourses. The findings of this study strengthen the links between existing theory, thus enabling more rigorous conclusions about the consequences of public sector projectification than previous research to be drawn. The results thus confirm previous research that emphasises the hybrid character of NPM and governance developments and contributes to a greater understanding of how institutional and external environmental pressures enable and constrain public policy implementation and service delivery within a pluralistic system. The study also specifies project organisation as a previously underestimated governance steering mechanism,

highlighting the ability of projects to cut across and operate at different levels and in different sectors. It thereby contributes to the body of research on contemporary public governance by emphasising the importance of conceptualising and understanding the benefits and challenges related to the increasing number of temporary governance mechanisms taking the form of project organisations in the increasingly complex public sector context.

A projectification of the public sector is occurring which can be regarded as one of the most important structural developments in the public sector in general and in the EU in particular. The analysis of the two EU funds included in this study point out the multitude of projects that are funded which are expected to bring about change and increase efficiency. The expected benefits of using project organisations in the public sector setting are often related to a hyper-rational logic fuelled by normative project management ideals. There are, however, limitations to how far such a traditional rationality logic portrayed by projects can be pursued in a public sector context. The majority of existing project management research tend to have a single project focus and see projects more as isolated incidents, which limits the analysis of projects that operate in a multi-level and embedded public sector context.

The study points out the challenging task of efficiently metagoverning projects in the public sector. Project coordination and monitoring mechanisms that are able to take advantage of knowledge gained and achieve sustainable results in a public sector project context are vital. The rational logic and linear approach used in project evaluations in creating long-term outcomes from project outputs can, however, be questioned. This accentuates the need for functioning evaluation mechanisms without which projects risk becoming isolated incidents and losing valuable information and knowledge accumulation. It also highlights the importance of contextually sensitive interlinking mechanisms between temporary organisations and permanent structures so that long-term outcomes from temporary outputs in a politico-administrative context can be created. Without such mechanisms, projects not only risk losing their flexible and innovative management qualities, but may also fragment the ability of permanent organisations to maintain entrenched public sector values and ideals such as transparency and democratic accountability as well as the ability to maintain policy coherence, coordination and continuity. This highlights the delicate tension that exists between flexibility and coordination.

This study suggests that a theoretical solution to these problems would be to revise the traditional sequencing concepts in the theory of temporary organisations and include a fifth project sequence that would reinforce institutional recouping, thereby enabling more systematic feedback functions and strengthening the link between temporary and permanent organisations. The results of such a revision thus contributes to existing theories about the effects and inner workings that projects have as decentralised governance arrangements for implementing public policy in an embedded state.

Projects also include a multitude of stakeholders which gives them the potential to increase both lay and expert stakeholder involvement which benefits effective problem-solving, especially in “wicked” transboundary policy areas such as environmental management. The extent to which stakeholder involvement can result in increased participatory forms of democracy can, however, be questioned. The rationalistic bias portrayed by the business management heritage of projects still raises particularised solutions over and above policy coherence and traditional democratic ideals.

The findings show that ideal interpretations of collaborative governance about the ability of projects to achieve innovative results are overly optimistic. Collaboration as a direct remedy for a lack of innovation should therefore be questioned. This does not mean that collaboration might not include other advantages that could lead to better project outcomes. It does, however, underline the significance of regulatory agencies and the skills that project managers need in both finding and including the right project stakeholders as well as in brokering vital information. The findings thus contribute to the collaborative governance debate by increasing understanding of the prerequisites for productive collective and multilateral action and the innovative gains that collaborative interaction fosters.

Despite many critical views about the consequences of public sector projectification, projects can also yield significant benefits and produce valuable outputs. Although the empirical findings showed that collaborative procedures have limited effect on the innovations achieved by projects, the empirical findings included in this study still highlight the potential that projects have in creating innovative results and solutions to environmental problems. Projects can act as hubs where valuable information is produced and the conditions under which they operate promote the achievement of their stated objectives efficiently.

There are surely many reasons in addition to the bureaucratic/project ideals that affect the degree of range given or taken. One important reason relates to regional differences and political management ability. This is particularly relevant in a country such as Finland where the fragmented regional structures and a reduced ability for political steering may result in widely differing project outcomes. This also accentuates the need for functioning project and program evaluation systems as well as mechanisms that effectively disseminate project results beyond local and regional borders. The same principle applies to all EU Member States. Given the magnitude of projects funded by the EU, and the increasing reliance on the project as a form of organising, it can be concluded that projects have far-reaching consequences that affect the ability of states to exert control. The trends in other words suggest the paradox *stepping on the throttle while hitting the brakes at the same time*.

6 FUTURE RESEARCH

This chapter highlights the constant need for new information and knowledge. It addresses the issues that were not included in the study and goes on to point out central new questions that have arisen during the study. The chapter ends with suggestions for future research.

Capturing the state of the art in research is challenging to say the least. As the Greek philosopher Heraclitus said “You cannot step into the same river twice, for other waters are continuously flowing on”. This quote has been argued as being particularly relevant for organisational research. As previously stated, the study of project organisations that represent unique, once-in-a-lifetime events has further complicated issues. Projects are, or at least should be, continuously on the move and embody a strong element of change. But just as social reality constantly changes, so do our research methods as well as our interpretations. The only possibility for the researcher is to catch it in flight (Lundin and Steinhórrsson, 2003: 238). The study of project organisations in a public sector environment is therefore a productive subject for further studies.

Many of the aspects addressed in this study require further research. How contextually sensitive interlinking mechanisms operate in different countries, sectors and contexts, as well as what inner workings of the mechanisms are in place for other types of organisations could yield significant insights into how policy coherence and coordination could be achieved in a projectified society and an embedded state.

An apparent subject for future research is the policy formulation process, which this study did not address. Research regarding the political debate and process preceding the decisions on program and project priorities could yield significant insights into the underlying rationale behind funding decisions, providing a more comprehensive understanding of projectification. The present findings also raised many additional questions such as how the project management gospel gets spread at local level. Given the large number of stakeholders and actors included in EU-funded projects they could hold significant potential for increased civic engagement and new innovative participatory forms of democracy. This, however, requires a broader and more detailed view of what effects projects have in terms of impacts on transparency and democratic accountability, and could yield important new insights.

The increasing reliance on predefined management standards regarding public sector projects is another particularly important topic for future research. The EU Council have recently taken the first steps towards this type of standardisation for the 2014-2020 programming period in an attempt to reinforce the administrative capacity of the authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes. Whether such project management standards also sufficiently take into consideration the specific

features of public sector management is unclear and accentuates the need to further develop a theory of public sector projectification.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the consequences of *stepping on the throttle while hitting the brakes* accentuates the need for comparative large-N studies, in-depth studies of differences between policy systems and sectors, as well as case studies that enable analysing the micro-management of projects. Future research should focus more on how different types of organisation operate in a public sector environment, and what is required for them to be able to coexist. This combination would also lead to significant insight into the functioning of the embedded state. There is thus a significant need for more international comparative research before the rationalistic dream of achieving efficiency, clarity and unambiguity in EU funded projects will be realised.

7 METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

This chapter offers methodological reflections relating to the study. Its aim is to present a critical discussion about the use of methods in complex governance environments, and perspectives on knowledge in a social science research context.

Fresh insights and the creative use of methods are often regarded as the way forward. Multiple perspectives can create greater insights, provided of course that a sufficient dialogue about strengths and weaknesses is maintained (Bryman and Buchanan, 2009: 705, 707). The mixed methods used in this study resemble a form of empirically informed interpretism and pragmatism, and can therefore be seen as freeing the appropriate methods and data sources that enable findings which are as comprehensive as possible (Bryman, 2009: 518). Revealing the effect that collaborative procedures have on innovations, for instance, would not have been possible without the use of various methods.

The use of innovative and new methods has also been deemed to be under attack by the regulatory context, which is seen as limiting the “pursuit of knowledge” to criteria established by rankings, impact factors, etc. There is no doubt that flexible research designs following constructivist ontology are harder to specify than “safer” methods, and are therefore often criticised, even though they might be better adapted to furthering understanding of the issues in question. Increased attention is now given to research that produces both rigour and relevance, leaving out relevant studies that do not directly inform practice (Bryman and Buchanan, 2009: 705–706).

This brings the question of what knowledge actually is, and the context in which knowledge can be developed in the social sciences to the fore. Knowledge cannot be obtained merely through contemplation or observation of the world, reduced to what we say, regarded as a thing or product, or be achieved solely by science. Knowledge is gained both through attempts to change our environment and through interaction (Sayer, 2010: 13). Another categorisation related to the production of knowledge is discussed by Flyvbjerg (2001), according to whom knowledge can be described as *episteme*, meaning universals in knowledge production, as the art of *techne* where technical knowledge is applied, and finally as *phronesis*, meaning knowledge about how to behave in certain circumstances.

The organisational and project research, at least to some extent, still seems to be embroiled in a debate on whether to subscribe to unification or a pluralist perspective. Proponents of the former argue that scientific consensus is necessary to accumulate knowledge, while the latter questions the existence of objective knowledge. Both arguments surely have strengths and weaknesses. On the one hand, fields with too little pluralism tend to become too specific and run the risk

of being caught in a *specialisation trap*, while fields with too much pluralism run the risk of being caught in a *fragmentation trap* (Knudsen, 2003: 263).

Traditional project research often follows a hard paradigm. This is to some extent understandable given the hyper-rational inclination that projects often are associated with. This type of research has, however, been deemed empirically limited, neglecting the projectification processes whereby projects are constructed, developed and institutionalised (Packendorff and Lindgren, 2014: 8). Given the widening boundaries of project research and an increased attention by new research fields, an increasing body of research suggests that the use of methods that follow the hard paradigm sidesteps relevant questions. As a result, epistemologies that follow soft paradigms and broader views in project research are gaining momentum. This has opened up a range of new theoretical frameworks (Pollack, 2007), which are believed to increase the understanding of issues such as societal discourses, organisational culture, and identity in the construction of project work in post-bureaucratic organisations (Packendorff and Lindgren, 2014: 17).

The increased complexity in contemporary governance mechanisms, and the inherent uniqueness of project organisations described in this study can be regarded as contributing more to an interpretive governance perspective. Society does not remain static and the methodology used to study societal actions can never exactly delineate the formal object of knowledge because there is no agreement about what the object of study is (Raadschelders, 2011). As Vincent (2004: 322) quite elegantly puts it: “We need to value reasonable uncertainties, ambiguity, hesitancy, and vacillation in human affairs, over and against the demands for absolute rational certainty, fixity of purpose, and decisive proof. We should not be concerned to place a template of universalistic rationality over the world, which it has to measure up to. The world will always disappoint the universalist and rationalist”.

Knowledge in social science research should, according to Flyvbjerg (2001), emphasise both *techne* and *phronesis*. According to this view, the purpose of social science is not simply to develop theory but to contribute to society’s practical rationality in elucidating where we are, where we want to go, and what is desirable according to diverse sets of values and interests. This scenario will contribute to society’s capacity to value-rational deliberation and action, and will also involve the social sciences in their role as *techne*. When combined with the element of *phronesis*, it will be a *techne* “with a head on it”, that is, a *techne* governed by value-rational deliberation. Hopefully, this study will contribute to such deliberations.

8 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter presents the concluding remarks of the study. The aim of the chapter is to place the contributions of the study and the findings of the articles in a broader context.

On a societal level, the increasing reliance on projects raises the question of the extent to which the results obtained from the projects can be utilized effectively. Their ideal conception and unique nature suggests that every project should produce new results of some sort. Successful or not, all results produced by projects should be taken seriously and should contribute to the existing body of knowledge. This is accentuated in the study by stressing the need for functioning, contextually sensitive interlinking mechanisms between temporary and permanent structures that should not only facilitate taking stock of successful project ventures, but should also identify unsuccessful ventures that need to be buried.

The study highlights the paradoxical situation brought about by projectification. The results underline that in order to benefit from innovative and timely project ideals, a significant degree of freedom is required. Projects need a spark to create impetus, and sufficient resources to create action. Innovation projects need to test boundaries, be radical, move out of their comfort zone, and even sometimes fail. Even unsuccessful project ventures can prove to be helpful and increase valuable knowledge. The amount of freedom to operate given to public sector projects, however, to a great extent depends on contingencies set by permanent public sector agencies or regulatory agencies, which are bound by bureaucratic logic that disrupts the fulfilment of project ideals. In a similar way, project ideals can be regarded as disrupting the bureaucratic logic.

More generally, project results also raise questions about the extent to which they can be fully exploited given the current rate at which projects are being funded. An emphasis on action surely has benefits in terms of getting things done, and producing outputs at a time when critical attitudes towards governments are common increases the credibility of political priorities. The focus on action can also clearly be seen in the current political climate and debate. At the time of writing, the Finnish state is undergoing significant structural reforms at an unprecedented pace. The leadership of the current government is highly focused on creating new innovative action where economic objectives are emphasised. The consequences of these reforms and actions are yet to be seen. A mere focus on action could, however, mean that valuable information might go to waste. This not only concerns the important aspect of dissemination and diffusion of project results in a sustainable way, but also highlights the need to sometimes take time to step back and contemplate what has actually been achieved without being regarded as passive.

Finally, it is necessary to acknowledge that the publications included in this study cover a relatively long time span (2009-2015). In a rapidly-changing world, this is a long time. During this time as a PhD student, I have worked in several different research projects, my own research plans have changed, and various endeavours have been pursued. Several economic and political crises have come and gone, and EU programming periods as well as management structures have changed considerably. Still, the study contributes to a greater understanding of the pros and cons of contemporary governance mechanisms and the processes, actors, actions and participatory procedures associated with project organisations and governance.

As two of the most significant researchers of temporary project organisations, Rolf A Lundin and Anders Söderholm (2013: 587), put it “Every theory is a child of its time and in need of reconsideration and reconstruction”. By opening up the consequences of project proliferation, by showing the complexities of measuring added value created by projects, by describing the challenges of creating long-term outcomes out of temporary outputs, as well as illustrating the effect that collaborative procedures have on project innovations this study will hopefully contribute to this reconsideration and reconstruction.

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APPENDIX 1: COVER LETTER TO THE PRODEM SURVEY RESPONDENTS

The appendix presents the cover letter (in Swedish) which was formulated as a part of the Finnish Academy research project on The Democratic Impact of Administrative Reforms (Acronym ProDem (251978)). The project's duration was from the 1st of January 2012 to the 31st of December 2014 and was headed by Professor Stefan Sjöblom. The cover letter was sent to managers who had received EU project funding during the 2007-2013 programming period.

Bästa Projektledare.

Vi kontaktar Dig eftersom Du varit projektledare/ansvarsperson för ett EU-finansierat regionalt utvecklingsprojekt under programperioden 2007-2013. Den bifogade enkäten är en del av ett forskningsprojekt finansierat av Finlands Akademi, där vi analyserar projektorganisationers betydelse i det regionala utvecklingsarbetet. Undersökningen genomförs vid Svenska social- och kommunalhögskolan vid Helsingfors universitet i samarbete med Åbo Akademi och Tammerfors universitet. Vi är intresserade av hur projekten arbetar, vilka påverkningsmöjligheter de har och hur projektledare ser på projektet som arbetsform.

Enkäten skickas till utvalda projektledare för EU-finansierade regionala utvecklingsprojekt under programperioden 2007 - 2013. Kontaktuppgifter om de projekt som ingår i undersökningen har vi fått ur databasen EURA2007. I databasen framgår det att du under programperioden lett projektet:

Projektnamn fylls i här:

Vi ber dig svara utgående från dina erfarenheter av detta projekt.

Till frågeformuläret kommer du genom att klicka på följande länk: <https://elomake.helsinki.fi/lomakkeet/43668/lomake.html>

Vi understryker att det här inte är en utvärdering av enskilda projekt. Svaren behandlas konfidentiellt och inga enskilda svar kommer att kunna identifieras. Vi undersöker projektledarnas erfarenheter enbart i forskningssyfte.

Den forskning som hittills gjorts i Finland om projektet som arbetsform i den offentliga sektorn är begränsad. Vi ber dig därför medverka i undersökningen genom att besvara enkäten. Just ditt svar är av stor betydelse för att vi skall kunna genomföra undersökningen så bra som möjligt.

Vi ber dig svara på enkäten senast den 20.6.2013. Ifall Du inte är rätt person att besvara enkäten ber vi Dig vänligen vidarebefordra frågeformuläret till den som bäst kan svara på frågorna.

Bland alla som svarat lottar vi ut en Apple iPad Retina 32 GB WiFi Tablet och fem presentkort värda 50€ till Suomalainen Kirjakauppa. Vi kontaktar vinnarna personligen.

Vid behov hittar du mera information om forskningsprojektet genom att klicka på följande länk:

http://sockom.helsinki.fi/prodem/FA_flyer_sve.pdf.

Frågor kan du ställa genom att svara på det här meddelandet eller genom att ringa något av numren nedan. Vi svarar gärna på frågor.

Med tack på förhand för din hjälp.

Stefan Sjöblom
Professor

Ansvarig för projektet "Förvaltningsreformers demokratieffekter. Tillfälliga organisationsformer i regional utveckling"

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APPENDIX 2: SUMMARY OF THE PRODEM SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

The appendix presents a summary of the survey which was conducted as part of the Finnish Academy research project on The Democratic Impact of Administrative Reforms (Acronym ProDem (251978)). The project duration was from the 1st of January 2012 to the 31st of December 2014 and was headed by Professor Stefan Sjöblom. The survey was directed towards EU-funded project managers during the 2007-2013 programming period.

The respondents were asked 58 questions in all. Of these 58 questions, the following 8 were important to the analysis of Article IV.

Question 18. Has the project engaged actors who represent or have represented the following organisations?¹³ (1 = No one, 5 = Everyone)

	1	2	3	4	5
Municipality or federation of municipalities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
State or regional authorities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Privately owned companies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Third sector organisations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research and education sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments?

Question 26. Which of the following organizations have been represented in the project's steering group?

	Yes	No
Regional cooperation group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional state administrative agency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional council	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

¹³ Dichotomized in the analysis.

Centre for economic development, transport and the environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Municipal or regional development companies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Municipalities or federations of municipalities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Privately-owned companies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Third sector organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vocational high schools, universities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Village community or similar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Question 41. Has the project's target group been informed by the following channels?

	Yes	No
Press releases	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Individual meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workshops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public hearings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"Open house"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conferences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seminars	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Webpage or social media	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
User surveys	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other, which ones?

Question 42. Which of the following has the project used as a means of influence?

	Yes	No
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Campaigns, petitions, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discussion events, seminars, panels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participation in village community activity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participation in organisations or associations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Client or user surveys	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Volunteer work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Newspaper articles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contact with elected representatives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contact with public officials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing to public authorities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Appeals or rectification demands	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please describe the project's means of influence.

Question 46. To whom did you mostly turn to for advice in matters relating to the project?

	Yes	No
Regional cooperation group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional state administrative agency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional council	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Centre for economic development, transport and the environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Municipalities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Privately owned companies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Third sector organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vocational high schools or universities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consultants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Feel free to describe your project experiences in relation to project work.

APPENDIX 3: COVER LETTER TO THE EFF EVALUATION SURVEY RESPONDENTS

The appendix presents the cover letter (in Finnish) which was formulated as a part of the evaluation of the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) in Finland. The cover letter was sent to key stakeholders within the Finnish fishery sector during the 2007-2013 EFF programming period. The survey was conducted in cooperation with Ramboll Management Consulting. An English translation of the cover letter can be requested from the author.

Arvoisa asiantuntija,

Suomen elinkeinokalatalouden toimintaohjelman 2007–2013 yksi keskeisistä linjauksista on keskittyä elinkeinokalatalouden kehittämiseen ja alkutuotannon jatkuvuuden turvaamiseen. Ohjelman yleisenä tavoitteena on luoda edellytykset kuluttajien ja elintarviketeollisuuden odotuksia vastaavalle ja luontoa kunnioittavalle kalastukselle ja vesituotantoviljelykselle. Toimintaohjelma jakautuu viiteen eri toimintalinjaan, joille jokaisella on määritelty omat erityistavoitteet, tärkeimmät toimenpiteet sekä kohderyhmät.

Tämä kysely on osa ohjelmakauden 2007–2013 väliarviointia, joka toteutetaan maa- ja metsätalousministeriön toimeksiannosta. Arvioinnin tavoitteena on tarkastella elinkeinokalatalouden toimintaohjelmalle asetettujen tavoitteiden toteutumista, ohjelman toimivuutta sekä tuloksellisuutta sekä ohjelman myötä jo nyt mahdollisesti nähtävää vaikuttavuutta ja lisäarvoa.

Näkemyksesi ovat arvioinnin toteutuksen kannalta erittäin tärkeitä! Vastausaikaa kyselyyn on 15.12.2010. saakka. **Kaikki vastaukset käsitellään luottamuksellisesti eikä vastauksia anneta muiden kuin arvioitsijoiden tietoon!** Toivomme, että vastaat kaikkiin kysymyksiin oman alueesi, organisaatiosi tai yrityksesi näkökulmasta.

Kiitos jo etukäteen vastauksestasi!

APPENDIX 4: SUMMARY OF THE EFF EVALUATION SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

The appendix presents a translated summary of the EFF evaluation survey questionnaire structure. The survey was conducted as a part of the evaluation of the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) in Finland in cooperation with Ramboll Management Consulting.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

STRATEGY

- The operationalisation of the goals set in the EFF vision
- The success and importance of the EFF priorities during the 2007-2013 period
- The EFF operational program's primary role
- The EFF operational program's strategic development and orderliness in the fisheries industry in your region
- Knowledge of other regional development programs and instruments

ORGANISATION AND TARGET-ORIENTATION

- Who to turn to in matters relating to the EFF program
- Information about the EFF program and its visibility
- The EFF program's ability to take different actors' needs into account

EFFECTIVENESS

- Whose interests the EFF program primarily serves
- Different types of effects of the program
- Examples of program effects and practices

BEST PRACTICES AND ADDED VALUE OF THE PROGRAM

- Added value for regional companies and other central stakeholders
- Added value in terms of securing continuity within the fisheries industry
- The significance of operational models regarding different issues
- The EFF program's impact on various issues
- The primary result that will have an effect during the current programming period

FISHERY ACTION GROUP ACTIVITY

- Regional fishery action group activity
- Significance of fishery action groups as an operational model
- Other comments regarding the EFF program

EXTRA QUESTIONS FOR THOSE WHO RECEIVED PROJECT FUNDING

- Project number
- Central actors within the project
- Key beneficiaries of the project results/accomplishments
- Knowledge gained by the projects and their dissemination
- Examples of knowledge gained by projects
- Significance of project funding for continuity
- Permanent results gained by projects
- Previous experience of project funding
- Future intentions to apply for project funding