Trust… tends to be somewhat like a combination of the weather and motherhood; it is widely talked about, and it is widely assumed to be good for organizations. When it comes to specifying just what it means in an organizational context, however, vagueness creeps in.

- Porter, Lawler, & Hackman, 1975: 497

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It has been both a tough and challenging journey writing this master thesis. At the same time it has been eye-opening and informative giving me a much broader perspective on the topic of trust which I will continue to carry with me. It feels like a personal victory to finally have completed it and in this regard I would like to express my gratitude towards the people whom without I could not have completed this.

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Jørn Kongsten Brevik

Abstract:

The subject of my master thesis is to see how leaders view and think of trust in their relationships with their subordinates and how this could be related to the use of task control. The themes explored in this study are mainly drawn from a wide range of theory, thus giving it a deductive approach. The main theoretical framework is constructed of proposed theory on trust by Dirks, Long & Sitkin, Gargiulo & Ertug, and McAllister. This study will explore the definition of trust, how trust is built, the relationship between cognitive-based and affective-based trust, and how trust is related to task control.

In order to investigate this subject I have chosen a qualitative approach, interviewing three team-leaders within one particular organization. I have turned, mainly, to Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) for inspiration when dealing with the analysis of the interviews. The main purpose of this study is then to investigate how experiences color the view points of these leaders regarding trust and control mechanisms and to then convey their thoughts of this topic. The findings in this study correlate, in most cases, well with the theory.

The main research question is *"What role does trust play in the encounter between leaders and subordinates?"*

The main findings in this study are:

- Trust is seen as vital in order to build working relationships.
- There is a connection between cognitive-based trust and affect-based trust.
- Trust has an impact on the level and form of control utilized by leaders.
- The organization seems to have a trust-organizing effect.
- Trust lowers the levels of monitoring, vigilance and safeguarding.

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Introduction:

When we think about it, every relationship we are a part of is built upon one bottom-line, key factor – trust. We then may want to ask ourselves why trust is so important to us, how can we try to grasp what defines trust and what elements trust is composed of? Are these easy questions? Most people would say "no". Trust is something which we might know by heart, but to define it, consider what it is made up of and how we build it tends to be more challenging to us.

Through my studies and the practice I have been doing during the last year, my interest in trust and how trust affects us in relations with other people has risen. It stems mainly from one particular incident which baffled me and to this day continues to spring to mind in certain situations. I do not think that trust is something we think about on a continuous basis, but if we experience the downsides of trust it is sure to spring to mind. Having the awareness of trust is something that I see as a very important part of the counselor – working with clients one on one and/or working in a larger environment with several participants. The latter is mainly the basis for this study, where I would very much like to emphasize the effects trust plays regarding performance at a workplace.

High trust levels within organizations can contribute to increases the performance, competitiveness and efficiency of their employees. The trust within an organization cannot be taken for granted, and this shines through as only the wisest organizations are able to grasp the major part trust plays in their success and how to be able to contain this trust and use it as a resource. In this sense trust will be of crucial importance when looking at how successful organizations are. It is likely that only the most competitive and agile organizations are the ones who are able to make trust grow within and amongst the people working there. Those who succeed in nourishing trust will have a higher understanding of the work environment and the downfall low trust can bring, not only for the employees but also for the organization as a whole.

The implications of this lead me to ask the question *"What role does trust play in the encounter between leaders and subordinates?"*

Out of this main question several underlying questions arose: What do leaders think about trust? How is trust created? What has an effect on trust? What does trust bring into the

relationship? Does trust have an effect on control mechanisms? Through these questions I will attempt to answer the main question.

In the following part I will, with basis in interviews done with team-leaders argue why trust is vital, not only in the relationship between leaders and subordinates but also in relation to the organization in which this relationship is built. First, I will introduce the theoretical perspective which will be the backbone of this study, touching on theories regarding perspectives on how we might define trust. Once a definition of trust has been given, I will then examine some of the proposed antecedents of trust. In trust-building the cognitive-based and affective-based perspectives will be accounted for and put in relation to each other, and the concept of stakeholder agility will be introduced. After the presentation of theory on trust, an overview of theory about task control will be given where task control is defined as two types – one formal, the other informal – and how these can be used separately or supplementary. A brief section will cover how trust can be seen in relation to performance followed by how excessive trust may have a negative impact on relationships.

Once the theoretical framework is presented, I will deal with the method used to collect and analyze the data. As I am interested in how leaders think about trust I have used a qualitative, phenomenological approach to gather information on this topic. A presentation of how and why I chose the informants I did, how the interviews were conducted and how the data was treated and analyzed will be given. How I have dealt with validity and reliability will also be accounted for.

I will then present the results of the analysis, constituting of main themes and sub-themes that appeared throughout the analysis. Because of limitations I have chosen to use only the main- and sub-themes that I think of as important to this study, hence the discussion section which follows the result section will only deal with these particular ones up against the theory proposed.

Literature review:

Defining trust:

When defining trust, Gargiulo & Ertug (2006) assert that the normal agreement of what trust really is – a belief that reflects an actor's expectations about another actor – , is actually concealing differences among numerous conceptualizations about 1) the object, 2) the nature and 3) the preconditions of trust.

1) Regarding the object of trust, the difference will be whether it refers to the trustee's intentions or behavior. It is important to notice that the difference reflects the ability of the trustee to behave according to his or her intentions – *"A person may want to honor the trust we place in her but she may be unable to do so due to circumstances that are beyond her immediate control" (Gargiulo & Ertug, 2006:166)*. The dominant approach when defining trust has been to include both the intentions and ability of the trustee, even if the trustee's actual abilities are far easier to comprehend than the intentions.

2) The nature of trust: The relevant distinction is here between expecting that the trustee intends to cooperate actively with the trustor or that the trustee merely intends to behave in a non-harmful way. Is trust then based on the expectation that the trustee intends to refrain from acting in ways that could be detrimental to the trustor, or is trust based on the expectation that the trustee will actively help the trustor, even at the expenses of own benefits? When trying to determine how to conceptualize trust one might ask oneself the question of whether the trustee will act in a detrimental way or in a way in which will benefit the trustor, Gargiulo & Ertug (2006) adopt the latter – the definition of trust is based on the expectation that the trustee intends to behave in a way that is not detrimental to the trustor.

3) Regarding the existence of opportunities to defect, this is somewhat implicit to the intentions of the trustee (Gargiulo & Ertug, 2006). According to Deutsch (1962) trust is less likely to emerge in situations where there are few or no opportunities for the trustee to act in ways that will be harmful to the trustor. These situations are also characterized by a lack of interdependence between the two parties, either by a binding contract that causes the trustee to refrain from detrimental behavior or by the trustee's ability to defect. Situational constrains will force the trustee to behave in appropriate ways, hence the trustor does not need to have any specific expectations

about the intentions of the trustee. The lack of such constrains will create opportunities for defection and the trustor is less likely to enter such a relationship unless he feels he can trust the trustee's intentions (Gargiulo & Ertug, 2006). Thus, trust is more likely to emerge when defection is possible.

Considering this, trust can be defined as *"the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the trustee intends and is able to perform in ways that will not harm the trustor in particular situations, irrespective of the trustor's ability to control the trustee's behavior" (Gargiulo & Ertug, 2006:167)*. This is further supported by Mayer et al. (1995), Long & Sitkin (2006) and Rousseau et al. (1998).

Antecedents of trust:

Gargiulo & Ertug (2006) have located three main factors that can promote trust; dispositional-, relational- and situational factors.

Dispositional factors refer to the role of individual traits of the actors involved and to the similarity/dissimilarity of these traits when promoting trust. Individuals differ in their predisposition to trust others and this is important to acknowledge. If an individual is predisposed to trust others, one can then expect that trust is more likely to emerge in the relationships entered by this individual. Even though the dispositional factors typically refer to traits within the individual, there has now been established a strong body of research which suggests that similarity within relevant characteristics plays a vital role in the emergence of trust (Gargiulo & Ertug, 2006). Typical of these characteristics are that they are bound by culture and time. Zucker (1986) argues that people who share attitudes towards daily life and have a mutual understanding of each other's perspective will be likely to have common expectations about the behavior of each other, which will facilitate the emergence of trust.

The relational factor is comprised of both history of interactions between actors and their interactions through a common third party. These factors will be based on past direct/indirect experiences in which the behavior of the trustee can be more accurately ascertained (Gargiulo & Ertug, 2006). The number of direct interactions, emotional closeness and the duration of relationships increase the communication and exchanges between the parties, rendering the actors to maintain a healthy relationship even when expectations are not fully met. How interactions through common third parties work is that both trust and distrust is amplified by the presence of a mutual contact. If a third party is involved, this may cause both parties to

have a higher probability to trust each other if they are equally close. If the third party is tied closer to one of the actors it will increase the probability of mistrust.

The situational factors take into account the context in which the relationship between the parties evolve. Gargiulo & Ertug (2006) argue that the development of trust is conditional of the presence of uncertainty, an uncertainty that may be present in a relationship regarding the behavior of the other actor. It is then necessary that there is a risk that the other party involved may act in detrimental way. If the parties are constrained from behaving in opportunistic ways, the observed attitudes will unlikely be attributed to trustworthiness and vice versa., Two studies, conducted by Malhotra and Murnighan (2002) and Molm et al. (2002), propose that exchanges in which reciprocity cannot be taken for granted provide a more fertile basis for the development of trust than exchanges where such honoring is dictated by binding contracts, and thus the partner's behavior cannot convey information on his or her interests (Gargiulo & Ertug 2006).

Trust-building and task control:

Trust-building:

In promoting organizational trust the levels of voluntary subordinate compliance, commitment, performance and behavior are increased. Leaders who work on building trust will often reduce the time and effort they spend on monitoring their subordinates *"...while enhancing the quality of their subordinates' contributions and their capacity to achieve organizational objectives" (Long & Sitkin, 2006:87).* Trust is thus a key to organizational effectiveness. When trying to understand managerial actions, the two mechanisms of trust-building and task control are essential to investigate. Long & Sitkin (2006:78) contend that *"...managers integrate and balance their attempts to promote organizational trust with their efforts to apply organizational controls."* In this perspective trust building and task control ought to be used jointly in an effort to promote cooperation. The two elements could be seen as complementary and the relationship between them is constantly in flux; a balance must be maintained according to the relationship between manager and subordinate. The relationship should exhibit a harmonious integration of trust-building and task control activities.

In order to understand what lies behind a successful implementation of these two control mechanisms Joiner & Josephs (2007) might give us some clues. One of their four main competencies is *Stakeholder Agility* which enables leaders to identify their initiative's key

stakeholders, appreciate what they have at stake, assessing the configuration between their own and theirs objectives and finding ways to increase the alignment of the objectives (Joiner & Josephs, 2007:34). Two underlying capacities will be crucial to understand how trust may be promoted; *Stakeholder Understanding* and *Power Style. Stakeholder understanding* determines how well and deeply a leader understands both the viewpoints and objectives of those affected by the initiatives taken, and especially when they differ from the leader's perspective. *Power Style* will be determined partly by the leader's assumptions about power and authority. This capacity can typically be divided into two basic forms of power, and most leaders will have an emphasis on one of them; *Assertive Power* and *Receptive Power.* The former resembles a form of advocating one's own interests, where the latter is a form of subtle power based on the willingness to understand and consider other's views and objectives (Joiner & Josephs, 2007:35). A successful implementation of trust should then be indicative of a high level of stakeholder agility, given the statements above. In what way the leaders build trust should be indicative of their power style.

The construct of trust-building is hence seen as actions managers take to promote organizational trust and these actions can be viewed as mechanisms used to assure others of their capability, interest in accommodating others' needs and willingness to fulfill promises that are made to others as well as to promote trust in the organization they represent. The kind of trust they try to promote can be divided into two categories; *Cognitive / Knowledge-based trust* and *Affective / Value-based trust* (Long & Sitkin, 2006:90; McAllister, 1995:25).

1) *Cognitive / knowledge-based trust* is a calculative trust where managers intend on demonstrating an understanding that their intentions and actions will benefit others in calculable ways.

External factors that enable parties to predict the others' behavior make up the foundation for cognitive-based trust. Trust is cognition-based in that *"we choose whom we will trust in which respects and under what circumstances, and we base the choice on what we take to be 'good reasons,' constituting evidence of trustworthiness" (Lewis & Wiegert, 1985:970).* Simmel (1964) suggest that the amount of knowledge necessary for trust lies between all and none (total knowledge and total ignorance). If there is total knowledge there is no reason to trust the other party, and if there is total ignorance there is no basis upon which to rationally trust. The decision to trust someone is therefore based on the available information/knowledge about the other party.

Regarding trust in organizational settings, competence and responsibility are two central elements (Butler, 1991; Cook & Wall, 1980). Zucker (1986) further contest that reliability and dependability expectations must be met in a relationship for trust to develop, let alone exist.

Antecedents of cognition-based trust:

The extent to which a leader will be willing to vest cognition-based trust in peers may depend on such elements as the success of past interaction, social familiarity, and the organizational context (Zucker, 1986).

Past interactions: As working relationships are personal and extend for a period of time, assessing trustworthiness may be based upon the track record or how well role-related duties have been carried out in the past (Cook & Wall, 1980; Granovetter, 1985). It is vital that the peer demonstrates behavior consistent with norms of reciprocity, fairness and is able to follow through on commitments made. In a work environment where there is high interdependence, the impact of peer performance can determine personal productivity and when peers carry out role responsibilities reliably it will enhance a manager's assessments of trustworthiness in that person.

Social familiarity: Groups of individuals who share similar fundamental characteristics may have an advantage in their ability to create and maintain trusting working relationships (McAllister, 1995). External attributes such as race, gender, age and internal attributes such as beliefs and attitudes are objective attributes often used when individuals form groups (Turner, 1987). This may cause an in-group/out-group way of thinking which cause the in-group individuals to perceive out-group individuals as dishonest and untrustworthy.

Organizational context: Organizations in their formal role specifications specify boundaries for trust relationships and the professional credentials signals role preparedness (Baier, 1985; Fox, 1974). Zucker (1986) goes as far as to say that organizations that depend heavily on credentials manufacture trust because they, through their credentials, provide certain guarantees to would-be trusters. The way this works is that the credentials operate as a certificate assuring that individuals meet standards for acceptability (in a larger professional community).

2) *Affective / Value-based trust* is a relational form of trust promoted by managers where interpersonal care and concern for their subordinates is displayed to assure the subordinates that their interests and motivations are understood.

The affective foundations for trust consist of the emotional bonds between individuals (Lewis & Wiegert, 1985). In a belief of reciprocation and intrinsic virtue of relationships sentiments such as emotional investment, and the express genuine care and concern for the welfare of partners are being made (Pennings & Woiceshyn, 1987; Rempel et al., 1985).

Antecedents of affect-based trust:

Insights into the motives of the other party within a relationship provide the foundation for affect-based trust. Behavior that is recognized as personally chosen rather than role-prescribed may be a critical factor in the development of affect-based trust. The reason for this is that this kind of behavior displays interpersonal care and concern rather than self-interest (McAllister, 1995). This behavior provides help and assistance that is outside the work role and is not rewarded, but does contribute to the organization. In this way it closely resembles altruism and McAllister (1995) contends that altruistic behavior may be providing an attributional basis for affect-based trust. Affect-based trust should be limited to context of frequent interactions where there is sufficient social data to allow the making of confident attributions, because this form of trust is grounded in an individual's attributions concerning the motives of other's behavior (Lewis & Wiegert, 1985).

The relationship between cognition-based and affect-based trust:

The development of interpersonal affect is based upon cognition (McAllister, 1995). Hence cognition-based trust is seen as more superficial than emotional trustworthiness, which implies that a certain level of cognition-based trust is necessary in order to develop affect-based trust. In situations where *"...baseline expectations are not yet established" (McAllister, 1995:30)*, there might be a call to behave in an extra-role way. Once cognition-based trust exists, *"...confident attributions concerning the motivations for that person's citizenship behavior may follow" (McAllister, 1995:30)*.

Affect-based trust should be seen as a distinctive form of interpersonal trust rather than as a higher level of trust. When the affect-based trust matures there is an increased probability for the decoupling of trust forms and reverse causation where the affect-based trust influences the cognition-based trust. As affect-based trust develops it will become incorporated into a

stable and global picture of a partner's motives, which will be taken as permanent and unquestioned even if they are disconfirmed (Zajonc, 1980:157; Holmes and Rempel, 1989).

Task control:

The definition of task control used in this paper will be that of Long & Sitkin (2006:90): *"...the range of formal (i.e. written contracts, monetary incentives and surveillance) and informal (i.e. values, norms and beliefs) mechanisms that managers use to direct subordinates toward the efficient and effective completion of organizational tasks."*

As trust building and task control are linked together, there is a need to know what may affect different choices leaders take in order to do so properly. I have turned to Joiner & Josephs in order to gain a better understanding of what may lie behind decisions taken, as a successful implementation of both trust and task control requires not only requires an understanding of what others may have at stake, but also what the outcome may be. Parts of the integral theory used by Joiner & Josephs (2007) fit with the thoughts behind how managers may implement control mechanisms, what skills may be needed in order to do this in a proper manner. Joiner & Josephs (2007, p. v) recognize the need to take both an inside-out and an outside-in perspective when approaching leadership development. The outside-in perspective highlights the skills which are needed for agile leadership; *pivotal conversations* – direct person-to-person discussions where important outcomes are at stake, *team initiatives* – initiatives intended to improve a team and/or its relationship with its larger environment, *organizational initiatives* – initiatives designed to change an organization and/or its relationship with the larger environment. The inside-out perspective identifies mental and emotional capacities that work together to enable agile leadership in the three arenas mentioned above. According to Joiner & Josephs (2007, p. iv) these capacities will enable a more agile anticipating and initiating change, work with stakeholders, overcoming challenges and learning from ones experience.

A harmony between trust-building and task control activities will partially be determined by the context within which that specific integration occurs. Which particular type of balancing process the leaders use will be reflected by the organizational- and relational contexts (Long and Sitkin, 2006). Sutcliffe et al. (2000) outline three main process categories which managers may utilize to achieve a balance between trust-building and task control; *Antithetical, Orthogonal, and Synergistic*. Long and Sitkin (2006) argue that the

understanding of these will aid researchers in organizing the huge variety of constellations that can be expected to be witnessed in trust-control relationships in a systematic way.

Turning to Joiner & Josephs might give us some clues to the underlying competencies needed to integrate trust-building and task control in a desired way. Their *Context-setting Agility* (Joiner & Josephs, 2007:34) is a competency allowing managers to successfully scanning their environment, foreseeing important changes, deciding upon which initiative to take, consider each initiative, and determine the most desired outcome. How successful a manager is in carrying out these leadership tasks is determined by the development in two capacities, namely: *Situational Awareness* and *Sense of Purpose. Situational awareness* refers to the quality of attention to the larger context that surrounds it. This particular capacity enables a manager to step back from an issue and take a wider perspective on it. It also enables the manager to focus the attention on the minor components of the issue when needed. One of the important aspects of the ability is that the broader perspective will always be in mind. Developed situational awareness will enable a manager to see how the initiatives have an impact on the larger social context and on the environment in which it takes place. This will be seen as related to the development of *Sense of Purpose*. As the sense of purpose develops, it becomes increasingly important that the leadership initiatives taken will serve others in a meaningful way. The initiatives themselves are seen as a highly motivating factor, whether the outcomes are in the near future or not. As sense of purpose develops, moving back and forth between different time frames will become easier (Joiner & Josephs, 2007:34). Further, *Stakeholder Agility* as is noted above, may also provide some insight as to how trust-building and task control is implemented.

Antithetical, is when a manager chooses more of one process and thus has to choose less of the other (trust and control are seen here as substitutes). This can be seen as the negative effect efforts in trust-building can have on efforts to promote control and vice versa. Trust-building and task control in this case will be *"…applied in a zero-sum world" (Long and Sitkin, 2006:94)* where the emphasis on one of them will hinder the other. Activities, in a positive way, such as trust-building and task control will consume both time and energy; hence managers may shy away from implementing both these mechanisms as they seem costly and risky and choose one of the mechanisms that favor their organizational philosophy. In organizations where this form of balancing process occurs there is a greater chance of legalizing practices of formal control – which will inhibit the development of relational trust. Even though formal control may be suited for ameliorating context-specific reliability

problems, the over usage of it in addressing reliability-based concerns about subordinates is most likely to increase the value incongruencies between the superiors and subordinates. This can evolve into a negative spiral where managers use formal control mechanisms to solve trust problems using even greater amounts of formal control. This increasing amount of control on the subordinates may cause them to react negatively because the amount of control diminishes their trustworthiness.

Orthogonal, the choices one makes regarding how much to engage in each of two or more action options is completely independent of what is decided concerning other potential options. In this form of balancing process the managers do not attempt to align their efforts in trust-building and task control. Managers will act on the presumption that in what way they do trust-building will not be of any assistance to their efforts to control and vice versa. What may cause this form of balancing process are company-wide incentive policies which managers follow rigorously, hampering them from obtaining trust from their subordinates and not recognizing the effects trust play in increasing the performance and efficiency of their subordinates. Orthogonal balancing process may be used in situations where the trust subordinates have in their managers will not be affected by the implementation of task control. Another way of saying this is that there will be a mutual understanding of the orders their manager gives them, as a result the level of trust that the manager will gain from the subordinates will not necessarily affect the controls utilized.

Synergistic, used in situations where the activities are positively related, the focus is on balancing the two processes (trust and control as complements) so that they become mutually reinforcing. An important part of this balancing process is that the managers try to promote a particular form of task control in their subordinates as well as a particular form of trust that would fit the level of each other thus making them reinforcing (Long & Sitkin, 2006). A key in understanding this synergistic type of balancing process is to recognize that the particular control mechanisms used by the managers are expected to enhance both the forms and levels of trust that the managers seek to obtain in their relationship with the subordinates, or vice versa. Sitkin (1995) imply that legalistic mechanisms of control may increase both calculative- and institutional trust that the subordinates have in their manager. This is because the restraints that are placed on the leader's actions will make sure that the subordinates' interests are protected. In relation to this Joiner & Josephs (2007) shows that as higher action logics develop in leaders they move from the lower agility levels to more synergistic ones in which their perspective of things is broadened.

Trust associated with performance:

Dirks (2006) refers to two different mechanisms of trust which might affect behavior and performance of subordinates thus determining the effective functioning of organizations.

1) Relationship-based trust which is founded on the principles of social exchange and deals with *"...employees' willingness to reciprocate care and consideration that a leader expresses in a relationship" (Dirks, 2006:16)*. Followers will have a tendency to see the relationship with their leader *"... as beyond the standard economic contract such that the parties operate on the basis of trust, goodwill and the perception of mutual obligations" (Dirks, 2006:16)*. As the element of social exchange is in play, the thought of what benefits might be received for reacting in response to the needs of another will be unlikely. The basis for this is that individuals who feel as if their leader is demonstrating care and consideration will have a tendency to reciprocate this in the form of desirable behaviors. Within this kind of relationship spending more time on required tasks and engaging in organizational citizenship is encouraged. It is important that the reciprocity is associated with the closest leader and not senior leaders and management.

2) A character-based perspective tends to focus on how the perceptions of the leaders character impacts subordinates' willingness to participate in a hierarchical relationship that may put them in a vulnerable position (Dirks, 2006:17). This perspective proposes that subordinates are more comfortable engaging in behaviors which might put them at risk if and when they have faith in their leader regarding integrity, capability and benevolence. When subordinates do not have this kind of faith in their leaders they will direct a lot of energy which could be spent on increasing performance, toward 'watching their own backs'. In this perspective trust-related concerns about a leader's character are important because the leader may have authority to make decisions that have significant impact on a follower and the follower's ability to achieve his or her goals. This approach implies that followers will make inferences about their leaders characteristics, such as integrity, fairness and ability, which will affect the followers work behavior and attitudes towards their work and leader.

Dirks (2006), referring to three studies, suggest that trust in leaders is associated with more distal 'bottom-line' benefits for both groups and organizations. This is to say that the higher the trust in the leader, the better the performance and higher achievements. Where trust is high the organization is able to reach goals faster and even further than first thought. Dirks further suggests that performance and trust are reciprocally related – past performance

impacts trust which in turn impacts future performance. Trust in leadership will accordingly affect organizational performance in two complementary ways. 1) By increasing individual-level outcomes such as individual performance and citizenship behavior and 2) aiding the co-workers in going in the same direction and at the same pace. Individual doubts and personal motives are set aside and their efforts are directed at the common goal.

Behavioral consequences of trust:

Gargiulo & Ertug (2006) have identified three positive, distinct behavioral consequences of trust which they categorize as 1) lowering the levels of monitoring, vigilance and safeguards towards the trustee, 2) higher levels of commitment towards the relationship with the trustee, 3) expansion of the scale and scope of the exchange between the parties.

Monitoring, vigilance and safeguards are negatively related to high levels of trust within a relationship. The emergence of trust requires relatively low levels of monitoring and safeguards, in relation to this, when trust is present there will also be a less inclination to guard against unwanted behavior such as opportunism through mechanisms such as monitoring and safeguarding (Gargiulo & Ertug, 2006). It is therefore a positive relationship between trust and the perceived accuracy of information and a negative relationship between trust and monitoring.

As trust is associated with higher levels of commitment and less conflict within a relationship, it will lower the likelihood of exit by one of the parties. Linking this to organizations, subordinates that have high levels of trust in their managers are less likely to quit their jobs, even if their psychological contract suffers from a breach. Tyler and Degoey (1996) have found that trust in a person occupying an authority position led to greater deference in response to actions taken by that person.

The scale of a trust relationship produces observable phenomena such as more open communication, multiplex relationships and greater, richer resource exchanges (Gargiulo & Ertug, 2006). Zand (1972) found that trust has a positive effect on groups in a way which enables the participants to be more open about their ideas which will have a positive effect on communication. McEvily et al. (2003) claim that by improving both the scale and the scope of communication, trust results in thicker and richer exchange relationships, effectively 'expanding' the relationship between partners. Even the perceived trustworthiness of others may lead to greater exchange of resources between the units.

The negative sides of trust, when trust becomes excessive:

Where mainly all approaches to trust have stressed the positive sides of the phenomenon, Gargiulo & Ertug (2006) recognize the need for a better understanding of the negative aspects of trust. They claim that excessive trust may have negative effects for individuals and organizations, that this negative effect can occur whether there is malfeasance or not.

Gargiulo & Ertug (2006) argue that the detrimental effects of trust are closely linked with its alleged benefits. As high trust levels diminish information gathering and process costs by reducing the need for monitoring and watchfulness, excessive trust may lead to blind faith. Trust leads to greater satisfaction with and commitment to a relationship, it may also lead to smugness and to the acceptance of less-than-satisfactory outcomes from such a relationship. Lastly, trust expands communication and the process of information exchange, but can also lead to over-embedded relationships which create unnecessary obligations between its participants.

Dark side of trust:

According to Gargiulo & Ertug (2006), the existing studies of trust are largely focusing on the negative aspects of trust when there is an insufficient amount of trust within a relationship and the consensus amongst the scholars is that trust can at times have a negative effect on the parties involved. They argue that trust become negative once it reaches a critical threshold, that is to say when the level of trust becomes excessive the amount of benefits derived from trust will diminish. Gargiulo and Ertug (2006) identify three main negative effects of trust; Blind faith, complacency, and unnecessary obligations. The excessive amount of trust will increase the speed at which the behaviors fostered by trust reach and eventually surpass the critical threshold beyond which the effects of trust turn negative.

Blind faith, drives the trustor to reduce monitoring of the trustee's behavior beyond what is desirable in a given relationship where trust has reached a point well beyond what can be seen as reasonable. As a result, the risk of and potential damage caused by malfeasance is increased. Even though trust results in lower levels of safeguarding, monitoring and vigilance, and that the removal of such protective measures will reduce information-processing costs and increase the net benefits of the trustor, this may come at a high price. An actor typically reduces the monitoring of the other party in the relationship over time and ideally this should accompany the evolving of the relationship. However, the reduction of

such protective mechanisms should not surpass, what Gargiulo & Ertug (2006:175) call, an optimal threshold that can be defined by *"...the amount of damage the trustee could inflict on the trustor if he decides to behave opportunistically."* The danger in this case will be that the protective mechanisms will be deactivated too fast if there is excessive initial trust, causing the minimal threshold to be reached at relatively early stages of relationship development.

Complacency is a result of excessive trust where it inhibits the trustor to react to declining performance by the trustee. Commitment facilitates the exchange of information, helps to alleviates concerns of opportunism, and diminishes the likelihood of exit from a relationship. Commitment may also be a negative factor when it results in *"...rational inertia" (Gargiulo and Benassi, 2000)* which traps the actor in an underperforming exchange. The result of this inertia can be seen as complacency. Beyond a certain threshold, decline in performance will trigger corrective actions towards changing the performance of the partner or exiting the relationship completely. The threshold will vary with the different levels of trust one can expect within the relationship, so optimal trust relationships will indeed have a higher threshold than excessive trust relationships.

Unnecessary obligations which act as restraints for the trustor may be created when the excessive amount of trust leads to an expansion of the relationship beyond what is optimal, taking into account interdependence and uncertainty which characterize the initial exchange between parties. The parties involved take on obligations well beyond what is required to secure the exchange that prompted the relationship in the first place (Gargiulo & Ertug, 2006). The scale and scope of a relationship will grow as the actors signal their willingness to reciprocate the cooperation of their partner. The higher the trust, the higher is the probability that the relationship becomes embedded in multiplex ties. Although the embedding can reduce uncertainty surrounding the exchange, this can also lead to a situation where it creates obligations that will constrain the behavior of the trustor. The relationship may evolve beyond what can be seen as optimal for this particular relationship, where unnecessary obligations are created by this over embedding causing negative effects on performance (Gargiulo & Ertug, 2006). In relationships with excessive trust, the actors will hurry to establish mutual obligations in early stages of their relationship or they establish higher levels of trust than the nature of their relationship requires. The excessive trust burdens have a marginal effect in reducing uncertainty, smaller than the associated costs.

Method:

In the following section I will give an account of how I conducted this study. I will first give a brief introduction to the phenomenological approach and traits of the qualitative method followed by a swift introduction to a partially structured interview and account for my use of this. I will then go over the preparations done for the main interviews, how I chose informants and recruited these followed by the planning and execution of the interviews. I see it in order then to explain my own role as a researcher in the interview-settings. How the data was treated and then how it was analyzed will follow. Finally I will bring up the matter of reliability, validity, generalization and ethical considerations related to this qualitative study.

Research question:

What role does trust play in the encounter between leaders and subordinates?

Sub-questions:
- What do leaders think about trust?
- How is trust created?
- What has an effect on trust?
- What does trust bring into the relationship?
- Does trust have an effect on control mechanisms?

The choice of- and description of the chosen methodological approach:

In my attempt to find answers to my thesis I decided to go about it in a phenomenological way. This has to do with the fact that I wanted to gain descriptions of the leaders' understanding of how and what role trust plays in their meeting with their subordinates. Phenomenology as a philosophical approach was founded by Edmund Husserl, and it was developed further as an existentialistic philosophy by Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre. Early on phenomenology was concerned about consciousness and experience, but it later became to include peoples' lifeworld (Lebenswelt) (Kvale, 2009). In terms of qualitative research phenomenology is a notion where the main focus lies in understanding social phenomena based on the actor's own perspectives and to describe the world how it is experienced by the informants. I felt this approach to my thesis would be fertile as it gives a rich, thick description of the phenomena I set out to find information about. Phenomenology in this way is situated on the belief that the real reality is the one that humans perceive/apprehend. In the way a phenomenological approach narrows down the interview to

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the perceived meaning of the interviewee's lifeworld, its relevance to the clarification of understanding has become apparent. In addition to this, my study also falls within the area of case-studies. Typical for a case-study is that it is directed towards studying a lot of information based on few units and a widespread conception of a case-study is that it deals with an empirically defined unit such as a group or an organization (Thagaard, 2004).

Traits of qualitative method:

"Through the qualitative method of interviewing the researcher seeks to understand the how the informant perceives the world" (Kvale, 2009:21). The main purpose of this, the goal so to speak, is to enhance the meaning people draw from experiences and uncover their apprehension of the world, preceding scientific explanations.

Particularly thoughts and emotions will be conveyed through this form of research method. The most distinctive part about the qualitative approach is that the events being described are narratives, characterized by the informants understanding of the particular event at hand (Thagaard, 2003)

Interview data is seen as descriptions of incidents in the informant's life hence it is a representation of the outside world. In addition to this type of data will reflect how the informant understands his or her own experiences, and how the informant perceives the researcher (Thagaard, 2003).

Interview structure:

In a partially structured interview the questions have mainly been formulated beforehand and the sequence of the questions are loosely determined. The qualitative aspect of this procedure is that the informant is free to frame his/her answers and through this the criteria of how the situation experienced is communicated. Because of this the researcher is in this way able to follow the informant's narrative and at the same time get information about the subjects which are predetermined (Thagaard, 2003). A necessity for this type of interview is flexibility – the researcher has to be open about the subjects as they may change if the informant brings up new themes that the researcher had not thought of.

A semi-structured interview can be used when one seeks to understand themes that originate in the daily life from the interviewee's own perspectives. Kvale (2009) contends that this type of interview seeks to collect descriptions of the interviewee's lifeworld and particularly interpretations of the meaning by the phenomena described. The way it is done

will resemble a typical conversation. What mainly separate it from this is that a professional interview has a particular purpose unlike a conversation. Further a semi-structured interview is neither an open conversation nor a closed questionnaire based conversation. It is largely based on an interview guide, which has been created beforehand, where suggested questions to themes and topics to be investigated have been set.

Why I used a partially structured interview:

The reason for using a qualitative approach was because I wanted the leaders to tell me about their understanding of the phenomena as accurately as they could, with their own words. I also felt like this approach would make the interview have more flow to it, than it otherwise would if I was to have rigid, structured interview. If the interviewee would bring up a certain topic of interest it would be easier to follow them up and see what was at the end of the trail. Through interviewing I believed I could gain greater knowledge of the leaders' thoughts and in this way get a clearer picture about the complexities and variations within the field of trust. Through using a semi-structured interview the sequence of the questions can be determined in transit. In this way the researcher can follow the interviewee's narrative and at the same time be sure to gain information about the themes which has been set as a basis (Thagaard, 2004). In addition to this it is important that the researcher is open to the fact that the interviewee's may bring up themes which had not been thought of before, which is something I felt I did in a successful way. As I only had a few questions I was very much open to follow which ever road the interviewee's wanted to take when talking about trust. I managed this by asking follow-up questions to parts of what had been said which seemed to interest the leaders I interviewed. Sometimes this led to other questions I had, sometimes to new aspects which I previously had not thought of and sometimes they had a dead end.

Preparations for- and test-interview:

After my initial research on how leaders may think about trust, how they use trust and how this in term may affect their approach to control mechanisms I set out to create an interview guide which would cover, what I saw as, the most interesting points. The idea was that these questions, with pairs of follow-up questions, would let the leaders describe their thoughts about the phenomena I was interested in. As I used theory to create these questions it became apparent that the amount of questions was overwhelming, some would surely cover each other as they were very detailed and the time available for each interview made it impossible to cover them all. I had, in search of answering all my questions, created a mess.

Consulting with my supervisor, I made an effort to narrow the interview guide down and ended up with 17 questions – some of them optional. Even though I left a lot of questions out, the core questions remained either in their original wording or rewritten.

When I had my new interview guide in place I conducted a test-interview with another student, to see if there were any parts or questions that could be seen as misleading or difficult to understand. Through this I became aware of some of the wording that felt not right, and needed to make some adjustments to make questions more clear and rewriting them as to fit how I wanted them to sound. I felt this process was rewarding as it enabled me to make final corrections and be more directly in my approach to the themes.

On what grounds did I chose informants:

To get a hold of informants I turned to an organization which I had become familiar with through my study at NTNU. At first I sent an e-mail to the person whom I knew at this particular organization, she is working in the HR department particularly towards the leaders. I informed her about my study, what I was interested in, my theoretical approach and my own interests. I received positive feedback from her, and she would personally take my request up with her leader. After a short time it was decided, I got the formal letter saying they would let me carry out my research there. I sat up a meeting with my, now contact person, and we discussed both my needs in terms of informants and their need in terms of confidentiality.

The way in which I chose my informants became a strategic one. For this thesis I wanted leaders with longer experience and who had a team of a reasonable size. After a thorough conversation with my contact person I was given a list of names that fit my description and criteria. I also wanted the ratio of men and women to be as close as possible to what it is in this organization; hence I ended up with the ratio of 1:2 female, male.

How I approached my informants:

I approached three of the leaders I was told about, explaining that I needed informants and that I was interested in interviewing them. I gave them information about my study, the purpose of the interviews, how the data would be recorded and preserved and that I would guarantee them full anonymity. I received positive replies from all of them. Each of the three interviews lasted ~60 minutes and they were conducted within a time period of one week. They also agreed upon the interview being recorded on tape.

Planning and execution:

The planning and carrying out of the interviews happened in a relatively short time period. From the day I met with my contact person in the organization, the first interview took place after 4 days (over the weekend). Via e-mail we agreed up on time, date and location. The leaders would themselves, kindly enough, get hold of meeting rooms if they did not have a closed office where we could conduct the interview.

As the organization has offices spread out, I was open towards travelling out of town if necessary. I conducted two interviews in Trondheim and one out of town. The first interview took place in the leader's own office, the other two in meeting rooms. I strongly recall the feelings running through my body before that first interview. I was nervous, excited, anxious and happy at the same time. I was nervous about how I as a person would come across in meeting with the leader – would I be just "somebody" or someone who made an impression? I was really excited about finally getting some answers to what I was wondering about – could not wait to hear all the interesting thoughts and opinions on my topic! The anxiousness was related to my interview guide, was I prepared well enough? Did I have the needed knowledge to actually go through with this interview? At the same time I felt happy about finally getting to ask somebody! Actually, getting interviewees made me feel like stepping into the next stage in my thesis. It felt very much like progress even though the interviews had not taken place yet.

Through each interview I became more self confident, and I felt as I made progression in terms of paying attention to details, having follow-up questions that sprung out of what the interviewee said and just being present in the here and now situation. There was a feeling of relief being able to carry out interviews without having to be so dependent on the interview guide. Losing this "bond" to the interview guide let my focus more on the interviewees, in such as how fast they talked, how soft or hard, to see where they became more engaged than otherwise, and in what position they were seated.

The researcher role:

The interview is an interpersonal situation where how I as a researcher perceive the informant and how the informant perceives me as a researcher (Kvale, 2009). Thagaard (2004) claims that this will in turn affect the data from the interview. My informants were older than me, they had been working for a lot of years and they were in a leadership position. I am on the other side of the spectrum, so to speak.

As a student that has not been working for years on a continual basis I lack a lot of the experience my informants have. Considering this I might have asked different questions and approached the leaders in a different way if I had more experience. The lack of this experience may have a positive effect in a way that it allowed me, as a novice, to ask and explore grounds that might not have been that obvious to the leaders or to actually explore the obvious and have the leaders formulate their thoughts in these areas. How I perceived each of these leaders holds no universal truth, and the way in which they are depicted is only a representation of my own interpretation which in either case may vary or resemble the way others perceive them.

As an interviewer and researcher I was controlling the conversations and defined what topics we were going to talk about through asking questions for the interviewee to answer (Kvale, 2009). I do not think that the interviewees felt uncomfortable during the interviews, as they were the ones hold the information, having the knowledge and expertise I desired. The impression I got from the interviews was that the interviewees were, mostly, open towards me being a "stranger", relaxed and considerate in that they tried to convey their meaning in an understandable way. Rhetorically speaking, they very often finished a sentence with "right?" and "true?" as to confirm that their meaning actually was conveyed and understood and this enabled me to "dig" further into the issue if there was something I did not quite understand. Factors such as my background, my age and my appearance are all elements which could have affected the interview situations and in effect the answers I got from my interviews.

How the data was treated:

Transcription:

The tape recorder used was digital and the recorded interviews had excellent sound. I had tested it out before hand, but I was unsure about how it would turn out once the interviews were uploaded on to my computer. After the interviews were completed I started with the tiresome task of transcribing them. Initially I did not expect this part to take that long, but it actually turned out to take quite a while. This was due to my decision to do it thoroughly, noting down sounds, pauses, places where the interviewees were thinking and such, relying on both the recordings and notes done during the interviews. The decision to do this was based on the accuracy I wanted the interviews to have once they had been fully transcribed. I wanted them to maintain their feeling so to speak, how the interviewees replied, where they

needed to think about a subject more than in other places, made me feel like I still was in the interview situation when I read through them later. Transcribing the interview in a thorough way enables the researcher to easier pay attention to minor nuances within the interview situation, these minor nuances can be decisive when interpreting and concluding what statements mean by looking at the way the interviewee formulates him/her self (Kvale, 2009). It was at times difficult to transcribe the interviews as the informants sometimes would start a sentence three or four times before finishing it. It was also exhausting to stay focused and listen carefully for a longer period of time. Sometimes I did not hear what my informants said or I thought I had heard wrong, so I re-winded the tape over and over again when this was the case. When I did not feel like I was able to transcribe correctly I often took a short break and resumed when I was recharged, and in most cases this helped where I earlier had missed out on what had been said. After I had transcribed each interview I ended up with about 120 pages worth of text.

Analysis:

After completing the transcriptions I printed out each interview with a wide margin, then read through each interview several times, without having any theoretical "lenses" on, imagining myself back to the interview and just noting down in the margin whatever came to mind when I read statements – what I felt, what I thought was the center of attention and words which I though stood out and I deemed important. This step is what the existential phenomenological approach calls *familiarization*, where the text is read and then re-read in order to catch the sense of the whole and trying to understand the meaning of the experience from the standpoint of the interviewee (Castro, 2003). It is here important not to put one's own intentionality in the experience of the interviewee, but to follow the interviewee's experience looking at his/her intentionality. *"The general sense grasped after the reading of the text is not interrogated nor made explicit in any way. Primarily, it serves as a ground for the next step." (Giorgi, 1985:11).*

As I had read and re-read each text, trying to get a sense of the whole my next step was to divide the transcriptions into categories and codes. In the existential phenomenology this is referred to as *Meaning Units* (Castro, 2003). I had been reading up on how to do this, but the challenge was to actually do this in a "proper" way that I felt satisfied with. I started out making categories under which I put different statements that I thought were closely related, trying to make some logic of all what had been said and connections within the text.

While doing this I continued to write notes in the margin of what I thought each of the statements represented. Completing this with each interview I still did not feel satisfied, so I turned to the books one more time. This became quite frustrating after a while, the more I read the more confused I got. I gave it another shot, four actually, where I sorted out different statements under newly made categories, epitomizing the longer more unclear answers to make them more tangible – still writing in the margin. I came up with quite a lot of categories, some overlapped, some could be excluded, and some were unique. This is what Kvale (2009) calls data-determined coding, where the researcher starts off without any codes and develops them by reading through the data. At last I felt satisfied with the categories and codes I had ended up with. This circular process had enabled me to develop a deeper understanding of the interviews. I had a sense of connection to the transcriptions, feeling as if I understood the position of where the interviewees came from. The task in this step was to discriminate the different units that express self-contained meaning by understanding these unites in terms of the whole meaning. The units are divided by looking at the different key terms, aspects, attitudes or values that the interviewee express in the description. It is here important that the researcher is aware of the changes in topics and meanings in the description (Castro, 2003). Overall, I combined mainly two methods, the interpretive phenomenological approach and the descriptive phenomenological method. I now had the necessary means to construct my result section.

About reliability and validity:

Today these terms are used in qualitative research, but with another terminology than in quantitative research (Dalen, 2004). Within the qualitative research field there are different conceptions of the terms *reliability* and *validity* where some researchers have ignored or disqualified the questions of reliability, validity and generalizing as oppressive, positivistic terms that hinder creative and liberating qualitative research (Kvale, 2009). Some have gone even further in the anti-positivistic direction, using everyday terms such as trustworthiness, certainty and acknowledging. By not disqualifying the original terms of *reliability* and *validity*, but rather re-conceptualize them to fit interview-research in a relevant way would enable us to re-use these terms to gain a better understanding. The understanding here simply means that individuals create and construct their social reality and gives meaning to their own experiences, thus implying that there are numerous true, universal laws than just one. Saying this, there are still strict demands to ensure the quality in qualitative research, and it could be seen as a continuous process where each part of the research is carefully examined.

Validating depends on the researcher's choices and actions in the process of research (Kvale, 2009).

Validity:

Validity inherently says something about the strength in a statement and the data's quality. Validity is used in social-science to determine whether a method actually can be used to investigate what it says it will. The criterion of validity is if the interpretation of a statement is reasonably documented and logically consequent (Postholm, 2005). When a statement is interpreted within a theoretical context the validity of the interpretation is dependent on that the theory used in the research area and if the interpretation logically follows the theory (Kvale, 2009). It is important that the researcher, when disputing the validity, give an account for how the data has been developed. This means that I as a researcher have to ask myself questions about the course of the interview, what happened in the different interview situations and how I may have functioned as a research instrument. Fog (2004) points out two particular points regarding validity; the use of empirical material is central, if one has been loyal to it and divided into reasonable categories which can be supported by argumentation. The second point underlines the significance of the researcher's theoretical understanding and work up of the material.

What can be seen as a factor which increases the validity in this study is that I was very much aware of the situation I was entering with the informants. Within the interview situation I tried to be aware of my own role, and what the situation of the interviewees was. I tried my best to be active and paying attention to what they said, which is particularly important in the semi-structured interviews I conducted, as I in this way can ask follow-up questions that way unveil new meaning and insights. At times where misunderstandings happened, whether it was my questions or the informants' replies, I actively sought out to clarify them. In the cases where I was unsure of what the answer meant I re-framed it and sent it back to the informant to see if it fit the description given. I also tried to achieve a deeper meaning of answers by asking *"How?" "Why?" "In what ways?"* in order to minimize my own interpretations and to expand my understanding of the statements given. Further I did my best to avoid leading question which can compromise the validity of the research.

I also recognize the need to build a trusting relationship with the informants. As they become more confident in you as someone with knowledge about the topic in question, they

may feel freer to elaborate and share deeper thoughts and emotions. This was challenge within the first interview, where I felt that there was a bit of reluctance and that the informant seemed a bit reserved. Through the "warm-up" questions this vanished and we connected. The second and third interviews were totally different in that the informants and I clicked from the first moment.

What can be seen as a weakness in this current study is that none of the informants were given a summary or a printed copy of the interview to have a closer look at. This has to do with time constraints, where I did not find the time to send them this and coordinate a new meeting to go through these. It would also have been an advantage to this study if I had other researchers to work with as this could have broadened my understanding of the theme even further, but due to constraints this was not possible.

Reliability:

Reliability says something about the consistency and dependability of a research report where intra- and inter-subjective reliability refer to whether a result can be repeated at another time and by other researchers by using the same method. This has to do with the possibility that the interviewee would change his/her answer in an interview with another researcher (Kvale, 2009). In the phenomenological approach it would, on the contrary, be an advantage that the interviewer's sensitivity varied. In such cases there would be a possibility to get a more balanced and wider perspective on the themes in focus (Kvale, 2009). It would be impossible to repeat an interview in the same way because the informant would be unable to repeat what had been said. What affects this is the informant cannot remember what he/she said and the fact that the informant gains new and better understanding about the theme after the first interview (Postholm, 2005).

As the interviews were recorded it enabled me to focus more on the informants such as their body language, voice, how they positioned themselves. None of the informants seemed to feel bad about the interview being recorded and they all agreed to the use of a recorder. Thagaard (2004) claims that interpretations from different studies can confirm each other, but at the same time it is important that the researcher gives an account for how the interpretations have been done. In this study I have been conscious of specifying how I reached the results I present and how my understanding has created the basis for the results. Related to this, one other way in which I have tried to increase the reliability of this study is by investigating other studies done of trust, compare the findings with mine and use this in

the discussion. I have done so as I acknowledge the importance of being aware of other findings that might differ or be equal to mine.

Generalization:

The answer to the question of whether or not these findings can be generalized or not is: "no". This study is quite small considering the number of informants. It does however say something about how these informants experience trust and how they view trust in relation to their subordinates, thus is gives us some information of the research topic. It is possible to think that the answers I got, the categories and codes created would have been different had I done this research within another organization. Still I believe that the data is reliable as it accounts for the informants' perspective and thoughts, there are then no universal truth.

Ethical considerations:

What is interesting and relevant to this study is the thoughts on and experience of trust, not any data which can identify or put them and their positions at risk. I tried to be very clear on this before the interviews took place. I sent out letters with information and had their consent on the start of the interviews. The requirement of informed consent is of central importance in relation to the ethical instructions. It is necessary to inform the informants of the purpose of the research, the theme(s) and design in advance and to inform them of the possibility they have to withdraw from the study (Kvale, 2009). The amount of information given and at what time this is given might color the way in which the informant answers question posed by the researcher. The informants in this study were aware of the research topic and the selection criterions for becoming an informant, such as being a team leader, within a given organization. I informed them participants of that the interviews would be anonymous and that I would not use any data that could help outsiders identify them. I also told them about how the data would be stored, treated and that it would be deleted upon completion. I made sure that the informants had understood these terms and I also told them that the research had been reported to NSD (Norsk Samfunnsvitenskapelig Datatjeneste) and been approved. I have not used any names or any other elements which can be used to find out who the informants are.

Result Section:

Now that I have shown how the data was collected and treated, the time has come to present my data and portray my informants' perspectives on the question of how leaders think about trust, in relationship with their subordinates.

In the following part I will present to you the data collected from interviewing 3 team-leaders. The leaders have the responsibility for 13 – 20 subordinates on which they rely on to achieve the desired results. They work within the same organization, but are situated in different departments and locations. How long they have been in a leader position varies, but a factor which pulls them close together is that they have been working most of their careers at this given organization. The length of being in a leader position ranges from ~8 to 24 years. I think that it is only fair to imply already here that the length of being in a leader position may have something to do about where the focus is. The two first leaders have been in a leader position a shorter period of time than the third. The length in leadership ranges from informant 1 with 8 years to informant 3 with 24 years of leader experience.

The main question I sought answers to was how leaders think about trust, in their relationship with subordinates. There are numerous possibilities of how to define trust, the elements which trust is comprised of and how the thoughts of this are expressed by the trustor. My standpoint in this case is shown in the theoretical chapter of this thesis. I wanted to see how this point of view was in relation to actual leaders out there. Needless to say, there is no right or wrong way, there are a multitude of different perspectives and these perspectives might color the way in which trust is shown, given and thought of.

Due to constraints in length and time, I have decided to pick out some of the most relevant themes and sub-themes which appeared through the course of the analysis.

Trust defined:

The three leaders participating in this study were introductorily asked how they thought of trust. They proclaimed that trust was essential to the relationship with their subordinates and that it affected how they went about their work.

As informant 1 describes her thoughts of trust she express that she values openness and honesty on behalf of both parts as vital elements to develop trust.

"That I have trust in my subordinates is that they really do what I tell them to do. And then that they dare tell me things, that they are open and honest. And it should be the same way around they should also be able to trust me in that I do not have any hidden agendas."

Informant 2 shows that there is a need to be giving when it comes to trust and that expectations should be met in order for the trust levels to evolve.

"I think it is fundamental to actually be able to give trust! My opinion is that if you do not have trust in others then you cannot expect anything back either. My experience is that they [subordinates] experience greater room to maneuver, and greater room to maneuver and greater trust gives better results."

Informant 3 shares much of the same points of view as informant 2 collaborating further on reciprocity in relation to trust.

"Trust is something most people have the need to be shown. At the same time it is also something that one has to deserve to be shown. I feel as if it is an interactive process. I think it is somewhat of a combination of being shown trust and at the same time have a feeling of safety. Sort of like, you can be shown trust without necessarily being thrown in at the deep end and swim by yourself. Without a life preserver!"

Overall, there were commonalities in how trust is thought of in terms of the object – and nature of trust. There was a belief in that the subordinates would have pure intentions and also that they had the possibility to show them. The leaders further expect their subordinates to act cooperatively.

Bona fide:

There were numerous things that came across when talking about what was needed on the leaders' behalves concerning the trust-building process. These elements would be seen as fundamental in order to build the wanted trust. I will turn to the similarities or complements between the leaders in question.

Openness and honesty was something that came across pretty strong during each interview, particularly in the first interview there was an emphasis on openness.

Informant 1 expressed the need to be open and honest in the following way emphasizing on that this was something she highly valued and wanted to incorporate into the work culture.

"We have meetings once every month, should have, right. Where we bring up things and such, but not everything emerge in these meetings. There are a lot of things which comes just to me and I think that is fine. But we need to have a focus on talking from ourselves and not others. I am interested in what <u>you</u> think, not what everyone else thinks. And in this way we get a culture where we are being open and honest."

Openness was to informant 2 also viewed as an important aspect of leadership whereby the subordinates would always be able to see where he stood in terms of things.

"There is no ceiling in my office. It is not because everyone says what they think, to me as well, and in public. You do not need to drag me aside to tell me things and then enter a discussion, whether it is occupational or organizational-wise, they are very free. And that is very much a relief because then the discussion is had, everyone has heard it and then we are moving ahead."

To informant 3, openness was important in a similar fashion as to 1 and 2. If anything arose the subordinates should have the opportunity to let the leader know of it and vice versa.

"Either the case handler comes and asks about something, whatever it might be whether it is in relation to a case being handled or anything. Or he will come and say, we have weekly meetings, 'in the next meeting I would like to bring up this case' like 'I would like a discussion around it'."

This subtheme shows that openness is seen as a main ingredient in setting the stage in order to build trust in the relationship between the leaders and their subordinates. The leaders actively try to use openness and honesty in their encounter with the subordinates.

Show yourself. In relation to openness, being who you are and not to put on a mask was regarded by the leaders as important. Openness was linked to and incorporated in to this part of being a leader.

Showing yourself as who you are and what you stand for was a key factor to the felt success of leadership to informant 1. The ability to do so is in this case connected to openness and having the environment that enables one to do so.

"I think that the reason why I kind of feels like I have succeeded in coming here as a new leader and really gotten a lot of positive feedback has something to do with openness. If there is something I do not agree with then I can say, as I say, 'I do not agree with this but this is how it is and we just have to do it like this', right".

Informant 2 viewed showing yourself as important to the relationship between him and his subordinates because it could prevent misunderstandings and misinterpretation of behavior.

"I am myself 100 % in my leader role. I am very easy to read, whether good or bad. And I think they appreciate that they know where I stand. I always, always say what I mean, always! Consequently I do not put anything in between whether good or bad, and they know that."

The effects of not being oneself as a leader can damage the trust in the relationship between the leader and subordinates, as informant 3 states.

"I think it is critical to be yourself as a leader! It matters, to be someone else than yourself and try to come across as something else than what you really are will be a total and utter failure in the long run. You will be revealed and that damages the trust. You need to dare to be yourself, it is necessary in order to gain trust from the subordinates. Because who you see is who I am and if that is not the case, then the trust will easily diminish".

This sub-theme sheds light on how the leaders thought being oneself was a key issue in order to build trust with their subordinates. They thought that it had worked out for them, to be open about who they are and how they believe the group should be lead.

Vulnerability. The leaders expressed that by being yourself meant that they could become vulnerable and this would have an effect on trust in the way they behave towards their subordinates.

Becoming vulnerable as a consequence of being too open was something that affected Informant 1s approach to her subordinates. This did something to her, not that it was wanted, just that it occurred. She felt that she was aware of this and actively bearing in mind this effect.

"Of course I have some that I do not trust because they have done things I know of, right. So I become a bit suspicious because what if it happens again! (…) It does something

to me, I put up blocks and I am not that open back towards them. So there are no good relations with that person. You hold back on what you give them if you know it might be used [against you]. So there are those you cannot trust and then there are those you can always trust who are you loyal to 'the bitter end'."

Informant 2 thought that being vulnerable was something that one had to deal with when having his style of leadership and that this worked for him.

"I think that as a leader you must dare, dare to develop and dare to make yourself very vulnerable and to suffer defeats. You need to dare to give trust and responsibility. If you do not dare to make yourself vulnerable, then you have lost before you even began. Because you will not be able to build the trust that is actually necessary to improve your team and yourself. (…) If you dare to be vulnerable then it rubs off, everyone you lead will then lower their shoulders."

Being vulnerable was considered by informant 3 to allow the group to build a trusting environment where their limitations were not exploited and that it created a milieu of cooperation and interaction.

"You cannot be afraid of showing your own limitations, to put it like that. Then it very quickly goes wrong. I think it is fundamental, really, that when you get handed a task where you have to stretch a little, there needs to be an understanding within all parts that one can ask for help or guidance."

The above examples bring attention to how being vulnerable is experienced by the leaders in relation to their groups and that being vulnerable is considered as an important aspect of being in a leadership position.

Participating. From each leader there was an expectancy that their subordinates would participate in trust-building activities and in by doing so building trust to both others and decisions made would be easier. The informants expressed that they were not top-down kinds of leaders and this sub-theme will try to capture how this influence trust-building.

It was important to informant 1 that her subordinates would be participating in the decisions regarding the handling of cases. She felt that it was also their responsibility to create a trusting environment.

"In collaborator dialogues we have a focus on if there is anything I can do to make them do more. I am also very conscious of the fact that you are the one that needs to take care of yourself. I might be pushing work tasks but you have the responsibility to say 'no [name], I cannot do any more'. It has something to do with us giving tasks away with both hands – 'you need to do this, but this is a bit more urgent', right. They produce so differently and I cannot always see that."

The collaborator dialogue was an element which informant 2 also emphasized as important to building trust between him and his subordinates and he also focused on the importance of bringing things up as they happen.

"I am clear on making sure that everyone knows our direction. When we have a collaborator dialogue, which usually just confirms what we know from before, we bring up both theirs [subordinates'] and my wants. We then have the chance to do adjustments and to set bigger goals and long term goals if we feel the need to do so. And we do not wait for this collaborator dialogue, we bring up whatever we want on a daily basis and set things straight."

Like informant 1 and 2 the usage of collaborator dialogues was important to informant 3 to be clear on the group's needs and wants and it relation to the bigger picture. He saw this as important as it would have an effect on their work and described the effect in a more explicit way than the two others.

"We get quite a few ethical cases where there is an imbalance in the power relation (…) where we cannot think strictly juridical and pure law, but also how this matter looks. You can with the law in hand commit infringement, and this is a kind of thinking we try to implement in our culture the ethical perspective. (…) and when we have this thinking within our environment I am confident that our cases get solved in a proper manner."

This sub-category tries to illustrate how the leaders value the participation of their subordinates in order to make the group function in a desired way, both inside the group and as a group towards the larger environment.

Harmony:

There seemed to be a harmony between how trust was given by the leaders and in what ways the leaders would use certain elements to build this trust between them and their subordinates. The following four sub-categories will try to capture the essence of this.

Action speaks louder than words. A commonality in the three leaders was that they based their levels of trust upon how the subordinates behaved. What the subordinates said to each other and how they talked within the group would be secondary to behavior.

How behavior was the most important element to informant 1 and she depicted very clearly. This could be related to the fact that this group often had a deadline that they needed to get their work done by.

"The results show up and I see that most people do as good as they can. And I do not need to push them when I see the results. We do it well, we produce well so then there is not a any need to say that it is going too bad, neither as long as everything goes well!"

Informant 2 meant that his subordinates would reciprocate the trust he had given in their ability to get the work done and that this way of giving trust was working as intended.

"They show trust through actions and independence. I presuppose and have told the subordinates in my group that they are in charge of their own destiny. Everyone knows our goals, their roles and my expectation to each role. Everyone knows that it will be revealed if one does not do what you have been told. My experience up to now is that, as long as I have practiced this way of leading, I have never experienced any breach of trust."

In the case of informant 3 actions were also valued as a pointer used to decide how to build trust. The occupational competence and the high motivation the subordinates in this group had dictated his approach.

"Well, people with very high occupational competence will have, trying to put myself in their shoes now, a need, and this has something to do with trust, to have freedom in task solving. You cannot stand behind their backs and control them. I have trust in that cases get solved if I do not hear anything about it."

This sub-category tries to capture the essence of reciprocity in trust, the need for the subordinates to show that the trust placed in them is done so for a good reason.

Feelings. To build the wanted trust feelings was seen as essential. Informant 1 and 2 were very clear on that they used feelings, informant 3 was more inclined to use reason rather than feelings even though feelings was also thought of as a key aspect.

The main cause for the use of feelings was to show a reaction pattern and informant 1 related this back to openness, the factor which overarched the interview with her.

"I do not think feelings are something I put a lid on. So I think that my subordinates notice that I sometimes get annoyed and frustrated, I do not usually get angry, but a bit irritated and then it comes! I think I can say 'that hurt me' and 'that made me really frustrated' and I think that having a reaction pattern like that is important. To see how the subordinates react when I say such things. It has something to do with deal with what is evident, do not be so afraid of that."

Informant 2 has a sober approach to the use of feelings, this is who he is and it is what works for him even though it sometimes has a price.

"It is just like that. I have a picture of what reason is and that is that. I quickly become very passionate, whether good or bad. It makes you very, incredible vulnerable. I have more than once gone back and thought that 'you really should have restricted yourself this time'. But certain things engage and provoke me more than others. I think I have just come to terms with that I am that way. It has a price and that price is less than what I achieve, if not immediately then in the long run."

Informant 3 on the other hand saw reason as an equally essential element, but he acknowledged that showing feelings was proper to use because it in most cases would describe your reaction pattern.

"Well, hopefully you will turn to reason quite often. I try to be conscious of that things are understood as they are meant to be understood. That is one side of it, right. I am not sure if that has to do with reason in this sense. Either way, it has something to do with trying to have an understanding of what and why you mean things. Feelings, I will not say I that I <u>use</u> feelings. There is a difference in using feelings and showing feelings, right. And I think it is OK to show feelings up to certain limitations. And sometimes it can be very reasonable to do so because it explains your reaction pattern.

This sub-category shows that feelings could be a key aspect in how leaders try to build trust with their subordinates, and why it is important.

(Dis)similarities. Similarities were, overall, not seen as very important to the leaders in this research when it came to trust-building. This might have something to do with how they thought of similarities and dissimilarities in traits and qualities. How this affected the time the leaders spent on following up the subordinates and what this meant to the task completion varied.

Informant 1 thought that the subordinates who the group is comprised of were quite dissimilar and that this effected the time she spent on them. The way she thought of this was in relation to her, not the group as a whole.

"Clearly we are a lot unlike and I have different types as well. I as a leader do not behave in the same way towards everyone I treat them a bit differently, according to what types they are. There are some that needs a bit more feedback than others. I treat them the same based on what types they are. (…) I just have to! But some take up more of my time than others, so of course there are some that I should have had more focus on (…) and helped them build more self confidence. It has something to do with them not trusting themselves, so by building more confidence they will produce a lot safer too."

Qualities and traits seemed to be associated with external elements to informant 2 and not so much to ways of thinking, ways of working and what is favored. This quotation will show that there are some similarities between the trustor (leader) and the trustees (his subordinates) though not in the way it was first thought of.

"I think that people in general appreciate trust and that someone has faith in them, that we have faith in each other then. And that has to do with trust. No one likes to be micromanaged and followed up closely. I do not believe in that, so there we have a great starting point with trust, then."

Me: "So that will say that you within the group are similar in that way?"

"Yes, my experience is that we are. And the feedback I get from the group is that they are happy with the way they are being led."

To informant 3 it was much in the same way as with the previous leader. He also thought that there could be other things than similarities which could promote a healthy level

of trust. As shown by this quotation, these other factors could very well be related to similarities.

"It might go both ways, I do not know. I think there might be other things that matters more [than similarities]. I think the most important thing is what you perceive as important that you have a fellow feeling of what you recognize as important in the work situation. So that you have the occupational focus and a culture which helps you develop each other. And last but not least that you make known your own limitations. There is something in that when I show you my limitations I show you trust and the way you then act towards me in that situation (...) is more trust-building than if we are similar as persons [explains this with age differences within the group]."

In sum, similarities was not seen to be of any vital importance to these leaders when building trust.

Countering formal control. The leaders in this study proclaimed that as the levels of trust grew the need to use formal control diminished. The level of control was accordingly suitable to the level of felt trust between the leaders and their subordinates.

The need to control was to informant 1 strongly related to the acceptance of different pace of work the subordinates have. She had faith in that everyone did their best to get the work done.

"We do not have that kind of control where I check up on that everyone has done, say, 70 [cases] today. Because we are a bit different and some may do maximum 70 % of what someone else are doing. It is allowed to be different, so it is sort of like that I trust them to do their best from what they are capable of."

To be more controlling would to informant 2 means that he has to rearrange his leader style. This was seen as troublesome and having a negative impact on both him and the group.

"I could have micromanaged a lot more than I do. Could have! First of all it would have been bad in that it would have required a totally different capacity. It sort of means that I would have become inhibiting I would have become a bottleneck in the work we do. It would also break the good dialogue we have. The work they do is so good that I do not need to micromanage."

To what degree to use control was to informant 3 dependent on the subordinates. He knew he could micromanage if he wanted to, but much like informant 2 he did not see the need to go about it in that way.

"It has something to do with the kind of people they are, and it has to do with their motivation, and it has to do with their competence. My need to have more control would have been greater if their occupational competence had been lower. So then I would have been more clear [on things], right. I most certainly would have."

In summary, the trust these leaders have in their subordinates' works as a counter-effect on the need to use formal control in order to control what and how they do their work.

Follow-up:

Control was generally not seen as a negative element by these three leaders. Control was rather seen as a necessity whereby it allowed the leaders to not lose track of how well their subordinates executed their tasks. That is to say formal control was kept to a minimum and informal control was used in a much wider sense. Out of this three sub-categories arose.

To not lose track. In order to see the subordinates the leaders took use of monitoring, not to safeguard or to rule, but to show their subordinates that they were not lost in everything that goes on.

Informant 1 is seeing control to be useful as her group has fairly strict deadlines and they often have bulks of work.

"I have the possibility to do a thorough control and I do check up on them on what they do. I use it in preparation to our production targets, what has that one and how is that in comparison to that one. So I use it [control] to keep up with what they do and if things are going a bit slow I might say 'I that it is going a bit slow – is there any reason for that?'."

Informant 2 felt that the control he takes use of was more related to informal rather than formal and that this also affected how their relationship would work out.

"I do not have any more control than that I see our products. I see everything we deliver and based upon that I make an opinion of their work. What they deliver gives me the basis to continue our work together. (..) Some expect that you know what they are doing, while others have a totally different expectation about feedback and follow-up, right. We

have a mutual understanding of what feedback is and we talk about what kind of feedback you want."

When having an environment in which the subordinates have a lot of freedom and where formal control is less used, a dilemma was arising that informant 3 pointed out.

"You create a huge challenge when you give people a very high degree of freedom to solve tasks. Because, how am I to see what they do if I do not control them? I got a question [from a subordinate] of 'how do you know what I do?' and I think that is a fairly good question. So I check up on their work and what they do. Just to keep updated, not to control or correct anything. [And by not monitoring a lot] it free up a lot of time that I can use to do what I want or have to do, both parts."

All in all the leaders thought it was more appropriate to check up on their subordinates rather than continuously monitoring them. This would stem from their trust in them to be loyal and obligated through sharing common values and norms.

Influencing in a gentle way. The way in which the leaders use control seemed in this study to be limited to, mostly, informal control. The emphasis was placed on norms, values and beliefs rather than rules and contracts. How they exercised the use of control was in an indirect way where they focused on communication, dialogue and contact.

Being one of "them" seemed to all of these leaders to have some importance in relation getting their work done. Informant 1 felt that she was close to her subordinates and that she could get them to work in a desired way by allowing them some independence in their work routines.

"I am for the most part a team player. I will never be a top-down leader. I am sort of one of them even though I know I have the responsibility for what goes on in here, but together we will make it happen. I cannot get anything done without them so I am very humble in terms of what they produce because that is my result."

As with informant 1 informant 2 also told a tale of a group that was tied closely together, even more so than informant 1's group. The soft influence was the way it worked for his group and it did so as they all shared the common goals.

"My group is strong in general and we all know that my role is not very special, my role is just one of many. So we are equal, there is no hierarchy in the group. (...) I have to

delegate [work tasks] and [I] have the responsibility [of the group]. And in that way I also build trust because I mean that I in that way also show them that I trust them and that what they do is fine. (...) If you tell someone where the field is and what rules apply, then most will eagerly seize the opportunity to show that they are worthy the trust placed in them.

Informant 3 did also place great value on having a gentle approach. He saw this as key when it came to having the subordinates solve cases in a desired way and that this was very much working for him and his team.

"You can say that my need to sort of make my mark on how the job gets done does not happen primarily in single cases, right. It is done through discussions we have of our sense of direction and thinking of how our unit should work. How we in general should act towards other groups, really. (...) So that is how I exercise control and the arena in which I influence how the cases are being treated with discretion."

This sub-category sheds light on how the leaders influence and direct their groups in a gentle manner, harnessing the subordinates drive into one force so that they fulfill their tasks.

Show interest in the subordinates. To the three leaders showing interest and understanding stood out as vital part of their relationships. Showing interest and understanding would promote the grounds upon where to build higher trust.

As the department and the group to informant 1 had undergone several changes in the past years, she felt that it was essential that she shown her subordinates that she understood that these changes might not always have been welcome in that work routines and work specifications had changed.

"I think it is really important, even if you cannot always please everyone. Now, after the re-organization, a lot of assignments vanished and we got [specialized area] which some do not find interesting at all – it is not what they want to work with! So some might be in conflict with this. I think there are those who might have some grief and that it has to be processed, maybe try something else, it might not be that bad to learn something new. And I see the need to have some empathy if something occurs in their private life, (...) it can affect their work."

Informant 2 saw this, showing empathy as he stated, as something he did in the way he appeared on a daily basis. Never the less he also saw it as somewhat challenging because

of the number of subordinates. He felt as he had to adapt to the situation, being more considerate of the subordinates wishes and not his own.

"I think I [show empathy] in the way I am and the feedback I give throughout the day involves all sorts of things included private things. As a person I try to be like I would have been towards anyone. Some do not expect any feedback at all, some are happy with 'hello'. (...) As a leader there is a challenge to adapt to the span of expectations to each subordinate, to remember that someone was at the doctor's yesterday, (...) – small things which you talk about anyways. As a leader you need to have an extra consciousness of these things, you need to balance it so that it does not seem false. You need to, as a leader, just go with the flow and be a good friend and as genuine as possible. If you are not, then it just goes wrong."

To informant 3 the need to show interest and understanding was related to the competence of his subordinates. Without portraying them as an elitist group, there was a need to fill up their knowledge "tanks" and this had been hard to do due to budget restrictions and such.

"I think it is very important [to show care and understanding], at least when the subordinates have high occupational competence because they will make demands to development. I try to consider things like this in our collaborator dialogues and in the assignments of tasks. In an organization that has had as much change as ours (...) the focus on development of expertise becomes, call it, rookie-like (...) and there is a real threat that they forget the ones that already are on a high level. And that has been a cause I fight for."

Overall, the leaders seem to value their subordinates and show this through being considerate towards their needs and wishes.

The organizational effect:

It was evident through the testimonies that trust was affected by the organizational policies, culture and control mechanisms. How this affect was described got divided into two categories, negative and positive.

The only one of the informants which mentioned the organization having a positive effect on trust was informant 1. She thought that this positive effect stemmed from the re-organization of the organization in which new strategies that was supposed to turn the

organization been implemented. She told of these strategies as ground breaking in their field of work.

"I think it has a lot to say. This is because we have just gotten new strategies! And one of these strategies is actually openness. The organization is really turning its approach around. (...) It affects the subordinates in a way that the whole culture becomes a bit different, we tell what we have. And it is just like that between us too. (...) I think it is very exciting and it is very positive, I have to say that I was thinking sort of like 'is it possible?!' because I am from the old culture. (...) But I see we profit more from openness (...) that we are ahead of things. There are still things, like how we talk and such but we are working on it."

Informant 2 felt that he was at times working against his own organization and that it was challenging to be heard. He experienced that his group did not always feel as a part of the organization.

"Yes, my experience is that the trust in the organization's drive is in a lot of cases rather dull. This is because it takes too long, measurements are done in the wrong areas and they do not listen to the mass of the organization. So you can thrive within your own group and be happy with what you do but you do not have trust in that the organization copes with the organizational conditions.. There is a great dissension between the levels within the organization (...) we do not have trust in the decisions made and the goals which are set because you do not trust that they have listened to you."

Informant 3 saw the organizational culture as divided where there was an overarching culture and that this did not always fit with the lesser parts which make up the group cultures. This was experienced as troublesome at times.

"I think it is difficult to talk about an organizational culture when the organization is as big as ours. It has something to do with that you try to profile yourself and have some paramount values and strategies that you want to color the organization. And this tends to get a bit big so if you dive down into a group the question of what the culture in this group is will be on a different level. Sometimes it can collide. As a leader you will be challenged in that you want to lead in a different way than what the policy is and you then need to be loyal to that policy which has been determined."

This category tries to show that the organization can have an effect on trust, whether it is positive or negative and what challenges or up-sides can be.

Discussion:

Introduction:

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into how leaders, team leaders to be more specific, think of trust and what role trust plays in the relationship between them and their subordinates through using a phenomenological approach. The findings in this particular research suggests that trust plays a vital role in the relationship between leaders and subordinates and that trust is an element which leaders rely upon and actively use in order to increase the subordinates performance.

The results saw the emergence of a number of main themes and sub-themes. In the following section the main components of the results are discussed and related to the theoretical framework presented earlier in this thesis.

The nature of how each theme is presented is decided by how they could be seen to naturally follow each other. First off I would like to discuss how the leaders think of and view trust, then how they see the trust-building process. This is followed by the discussion of cognitive-based trust as this could be seen as having an impact on the development of affect-based trust which is presented next. I will then continue with the discussion of the organization as a trust-organizing factor, followed by how these leaders can be viewed as synergistic in their approach to task control and trust-building. To end this discussion section I will account for how trust may reduce monitoring, vigilance and safeguarding.

What do leaders think about trust?

The leaders participating in this study believe in and regard trust as an essential part of their working relationship. How they define trust can be compared to the initial definition of trust in the theory section. What in this study seemed to be the most fundamental element of trust is that the leaders see the circumstances that surround them to enable the desired behavior of the subordinates. As this is the case, they expect their subordinates to behave in a cooperative manner and to have them do so they promote an environment of openness, honesty and loyalty. They experience that higher levels of trust promote higher performance in areas such as task solving, cooperation and making deadlines. As trust grows the experience is also that it eases the communication and increases the interactions between the parties. The opposite is also the case; lack of trust is recognized to result in withholding of

information, relocating of- or dismissing subordinates, and failure to create that all important community where everyone is working towards the same goal.

Trust is not seen to be high, initially. The contrary is actually the case – there is a low level of trust initially, where the leaders are conscious of the need for some trust, to have a basis to work from when building trust further on. Trust is formed through a long process whereby the leaders are feeling their way ahead with the subordinates. The leaders are initially trusting and the subordinates need to reciprocate this. If the desired level of trust is not established within a given period of time, it is less likely that the relationship evolves into a productive cooperation between the two parties. Overall, trust is seen as an important aspect of the relationship between the leader(s) and subordinates outside the work role as well, even though there are some discrepancies between the informants where some emphasize this more than the other. Where the relationship outside of work is emphasized, the building of this "other trust" is highly valued and it is seen as a contributor to the work context as the bonds created within the outside-work situation is regarded as thicker and stronger than what is experienced in the work context.

There are several elements that need consideration when defining trust such as the intention or behavior of the trustee, the expectation that the trustee will cooperate and whether or not the trustee can defect (Gargiulo & Ertug, 2006). The informants in this study, consistent with this, consider the intention and behavior of the trustees and they expect that the trustees will cooperate actively, not merely in a non-harmful way. An inconsistency is that none of them try actively to account for the possibility the trustees have to defect. The reason for this might be that there are, in most organizations, contracts which minimize the possibility for a subordinate to defect without suffering a great loss and these contracts are used to insure that the work subordinates do should be of the expected standard. However, this does not affect how the leaders portray trust – it very well might have been more critical if there were no contracts which force the subordinates to behave in appropriate ways.

There was little said about the negative possibilities of trust. Only one of the leaders actually mentioned something negative and that was in relation to a breach of trust. This does however not imply that too high levels of trust exist or that too much trust does not have negative effects. It just did not stand out in these interviews, but it should be paid attention to.

To summarize, the leaders experience that trust promotes cooperation, performance, interaction and interdependence. The surrounding elements which facilitate the trust-building

process are perceived as available and functioning. Trust-building in itself is seen as a rather long process of intricate exchanges that reinforce and further develop the relationship.

Building trust:

To build the desired trust is not seen as an easy task. The informants see themselves as competent in trust-building and they think of this as a bumpy road, a process with a lot of trial and error whereby being allowed to fail is vital in order to establish trust. It is made clear that openness is seen to help the process of trust-building. Through having an environment which facilitates openness and honesty it will be easier to admit errors one might make in the process of trust-building, showing that building trust not necessarily is a straight forward process. In relation to this, the group members are encouraged to engage in trust-building even if it sometimes backfires. One informant put it this way: *"I (…) jump in it with both feet at times, and do something I should not have done. And then I say 'I am sorry, that was a mistake!'. When we are open and honest about such things it makes it easier to admit to them."*

Trust between the leader(s) and subordinates is created through a mutual reinforcement or reciprocity where trust is initially "given" then to be "handed back" in a form, such as results, desired behavior or open communication. As this is the basis for further cooperation this requires both parties to participate, as trust cannot be given to a passive part and this interaction is seen as an interactive process in which trust is constantly evolving into new heights. As this evolution unfolds the trust given is symbolized by more responsibilities, more intricate communication, less monitoring and vigilance.

The leaders in this study seem to have a quite high developed *Stakeholder Agility* in that they have identified who their decisions have an effect on, considering what they have at risk and working towards a configuration between theirs and their own objectives (Joiner & Josephs, 2007). How their decisions affect their subordinates is something these leaders are quite conscious of. Further, these leaders portray a highly developed capacity of *stakeholder understanding* (Joiner & Josephs, 2007) where they indeed try to gain an understanding and knowledge of the viewpoints and objectives of their subordinates, whether they differ or are similar. This process is reoccurring on a continually, daily basis within the groups where feedback and openness is supporting this. In that they work towards gaining insights and understanding of their subordinates they also promote a particular form of power, namely *receptive power*, more than they do *assertive power* (Joiner & Josephs, 2007).

They do not intend on advocating their own interests, but consider the whole groups'
interests alongside their own when deciding on e.g. how to solve a case, how to approach the
larger organization and alike. They see this is as the appropriate way of doing this as they feel
their own interests will be taken into account regarding decisions taken. This does however
not mean that *assertive power* is forgotten, never to be used, rather as the subordinates also
take the leaders' points of view and feelings into consideration the necessity to use a more
direct form of power, such as *assertive power,* is low. *"Compared with Experts, Achievers
also are more agile in moving back and forth along this continuum, depending on the specific
situation they are facing" (Joiner & Josephs, 2007:86).*

This could be related to the type of trust the leaders try to promote. These leaders are
mainly building an affective form of trust, whereby interpersonal care and consideration is
displayed through behavior and interdependence. The importance of *citizenship behavior* and
interaction frequency (McAllister, 1995) in relation to trust can be seen as strong in this
study.

Having openness and honesty ease the process of trust-building to a great degree as
they promote an understanding through which such a process is encouraged. The two
elements are paramount, overarching the whole process. Frequent, open communication,
higher interaction, less monitoring and vigilance acts as indicators of trust in this study. To
be aware of who decisions have an impact on, in what ways and how this is compared to the
leaders' own is seen as important in determining their power styles.

What in this study seemed to be disconfirmed is that similarities and professional
credentials have an impact on the investment of cognition-based trust. These findings are
partially consistent with McAllister's study (1995) of 194 managers on trust, although the
findings in this study report that role performance may have an impact on cognitive-based
trust. In the following part I will try to account for this.

Cognitive-based trust:

The extent the leaders invest in cognition-based trust in their subordinates is in this
study strongly related to *peer reliable role performance* where as *cultural-ethnic similarities*
and *professional credentials* (McAllister, 1995) play a lesser role than the former.
Expectancies of reliability and dependability must be met in order to continue the trust-
building process, thus cognitive-based trust is necessary but could be seen as a stepping stone

to a much richer trust. As a result of where these elements are not met, the relationship will be terminated as it lacks the fertility needed for developing trust. This could very well suggest that there is formed a psychological contract between the parties and that there are obligations that need to be fulfilled within this. And when these are fulfilled, honoring the spirit of the contract through signifying commitment and fair behavior there is an empowerment of the subordinates whereby they are encouraged to continue the cooperation, building higher levels of trust. Thus, *peer reliable role performance* can be seen as a viable variable in building cognitive-based trust.

The leaders report that cultural-ethnic similarity is not seen as a determinant factor in trust-building, though it is not reported as a negative side neither. Even though internal attributes such as beliefs and attitudes color the way in which the group acts towards others it is not a main factor in trust-building. This may be caused by how the leaders think of similarities as such elements as gender and age, and not in how they share the same attitudes, thoughts patterns and alike. Judging from the results there is evidence that points to the fact that these leaders and their subordinates do in fact share much of the same points of view, ways of thinking and preferences in the group structure. This is in contrast to the research findings proposed by Gargiulo & Ertug (2006) which suggests that relevant characteristics play a vital role in the emergence of trust. Even though similarities are not considered important to develop trust there are no reported negative effects of it either. The opposite is the case in these groups as they are populated by different kinds of people and the leaders see this as a good blend where the differences makes up the wholeness. So one could speculate that it is not where you come from that counts, it is what you carry with you. This can very well have something to do with the type of society we live in today, where differences are appreciated and valued whether these are connected to age, gender, back-ground, and so forth.

The credentials of the leaders are minimized as the leaders are actively working towards being one of the groups and not one that is above the group. As this is the case, the significance of leaders' credentials are reduced to the point where they cannot be seen as a contributor to the trust-building process. Thus the leaders cannot be regarded as would-be trusters as their credentials do not provide a reinsurance of them being able to provide higher levels of trust. This could be seen as that the leaders do not wish or intend on standing out as someone above the group or that they want to paint an image of themselves that is untrue. As reported in the result section, it is important that the leaders are themselves and that if this is

not done, it will be uncovered later whereby the trust put in them will plummet and ruin the relationship they have built up.

To summarize, the expectancy of subordinates to meet the expectancies of reliability and dependability is seen as a key in order to continue the trust-building process. Cultural-ethnic similarity and credentials are seen as less important, if not unimportant, to trust-building.

Building affective-based trust:

Citizenship behavior (McAllister, 1995) is crucial in determining how to build trust and to understand how trust works within the respective groups. They feel that they succeed in building this form of trust as they and their subordinates greatly value openness and honesty and that they, from these elements, are able to acquire insights into the motives of their subordinates. This is indicative of *relationship-based trust* where the subordinates follow the social exchange principles in that they reciprocate the benefits received and they target their efforts to reciprocate towards the source of the benefit received (Dirks, 2006) here the leader. According to Dirks (2006) behaviors highly related to trust are: Perceived fairness, participative decision-making and perceived organizational support. As one informant expressed it; *"(…) it is easier to participate in a decision process as a subordinate where there is full disclosure. [Where] you see what is said and by who."*

Interaction frequency (McAllister, 1995) is also seen as an important factor in building and maintaining trust between the parties in this study. To further develop higher levels of trust the leaders are making themselves available to their subordinates outside of work as well. One informant proclaimed; *"(…) I am very available to my subordinates, to all hours of the day. So if they need me they can just contact me and I will be there. (…) [I do not] stop being a leader at 4 p.m."* They recognize that this will strengthen their relationship and that being a trusted leader outside work is beneficial in the work environment in that it brings a new and broader perspective to the table. This could be explained by the fact that one, through more frequent interaction, becomes more aware of who the other persons are, where other sides are being shown that do not necessarily become evident through the normal working hours. Getting to know each others' strengths and weakness may promote a more fertile basis for cooperation, seeing how you can play on each others' strengths and avoid entering processes where the weakness of the other party becomes evident.

The affect-based trust seems to be stable and deeply rooted in these particular leaders as they express that even if they sometimes are "let down" by their subordinates they still cling to the global picture of their subordinates and maintain a trusting relationship. This is also found by Zajonc (1980) and Holmes and Rempel (1989). What helps to maintain this picture is that the leaders see themselves as a part of the group. The leaders are trying to counteract the formation of in- and out-groups by implementing the organization's policies and culture in the way they meet their subordinates. It is reported that in-/out-groups are still formed and at times the organization as a whole is considered as an out-group in which there is a lack of trust. The cause of this is often reported as a lack of communication. This is seen as a negative factor in trust building as it causes a lot of frustration and irritation because the processes tends to quickly come to halt which in turn has a negative impact on the groups relation to the organization. Expressed by one informant; *"(…) it breaks down the trust to the organization, which is so important to have. It is a source of irritation, always!"* This finding is supported by a study done by Brewer and Silver (1978) in which in-group members are perceived to be more trustworthy than out-group members. Thus the in-group members perceive themselves as more trustworthy as they do share common goals and values which at times are not congruent with the organization's goals and values. The reason for this might be *"because those who are grouped together tend to share common goals and values, they tend to perceive each other in a positive light" (Kramer, Brewer & Hanna, 1996).* There is then an absolute need to align the expectations, interests, and visions of the subordinates with that of the organization in order to create a trusting environment which facilitates cooperation, communication and through these the desired achievements can be obtained.

According to the theoretical framework presented, there seem to have been developed a certain level of cognitive-based trust between the leaders and their subordinates which serves as a platform for the development of affect-based trust. This affect-based trust can possibly be viewed as the staple, more rigid trust prevailing in the longer run. Cognitive-based trust is related to behavior which is easier to grasp than the intentions of the trustee which is related to affect-based trust. There seems to be two dimensions, where one serves the purpose of initial interaction and as the foundation, if prosperous, for a more intricate, deeply rooted way of regarding the other party.

The leaders in this study are relying upon citizenship behavior and interaction frequency to build relationship-based trust. In the way they do this they promote an affect-

based trust. The form of trust these leaders have been able to build results in a stable global picture of their subordinates, even if they at times may be let down.

Organization as a trust-organizing factor:

The focus in this organization seems to be on building trust in supervisor-subordinate relationships rather than trust-building in senior management. The leaders in this interview acts as an intermediates between the employees and the senior management and there seem to not be a strong connection between the subordinates and the senior management. The organizational context is having an impact on trust-building in that it lays the foundation up to what level the leaders are able to actually build the trust they see fit. *"Organizational attributes, such as structure, policies, and culture may dictate the degree of control managers – acting in the role of principal – should exert over the actions of their employees. In doing so, these attributes may inhibit or support the extent to which managers engage in a variety of trustworthy behavior"* (Whitener et al., 2006:150). The leaders in this study report that they are free to decide upon how to govern their groups and that the organization is open towards different leader styles. This freedom is greatly valued as it enables the leaders to build trust in a way which they desire. How the organization affects the leadership style of the leaders is for the most part seen as a positive way. It does however impose some challenges where the interests of the subordinates and leaders clash with those of the organization, where the leaders are caught in the middle. One informant puts it like this: *"everyone is aware of that it is I who in the end make the unpopular decisions and they respect that."* In these cases the leaders express that having trust between them and their subordinates eases this problem, whereby the subordinates may see that decisions taken are not necessarily decided nor wanted on the leaders behalf. *"It is not always possible to defend and explain the decisions made, we know this and we are honest about it. The decisions are made but you do not have to agree on them."*

Risk was seen as a part of trust by the leaders in this current study, whereby to actually trust someone could put you at risk whether it was related to benefiting the other party directly or indirectly. There seems to be no hesitation to enter such relationships on the leaders behalves, rather it seems to be a natural part of being a leader. The risk associated with trusting another party may in this case not be all that damaging to the organization as a whole, but it might have an impact on the trustor. *"Organizations provide both the resources to experience risk and the expertise to cope"* (Hewitt, 1984). If this is the case the

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organization needs to have some policies directed towards this, to help those who have suffered a breach of trust to recover. In fact, this organization has an extended HR-department which can facilitate such aid when necessary.

The overall culture of this organization can have an unspoken influence on their experience and leadership styles. This may enable them to engage in the trust-building activities they focus on and they ways in which they do so. One informant points out;*"We have a brilliant head of department. (…) I feel comfortable with him as we think very much alike and rule by the same principles. (…) He is a perfect fit to my own philosophy and that is reflected out in the department, his way of running thing."* The fact that this informant points this out makes it a viable assumption and one might consider how other more veiled dimensions can have an impact on the leadership styles and on what aspects the leaders have a focus on in relation to trust.

In sum, the leaders are seen as a link between the senior management and the subordinates. It is the leaders' responsibility to adapt the super eminent objectives set by the organization. The organization could then be seen as a controlling agency whereby it determines how the leaders could and should engage in trust-building. There is also the possibility of hidden factors within the organization to play a role in how the leaders build and promote trust activities.

Trust-effect on control:

I will argue that trust is working as an informal control mechanism as trust is substituting the need to rely on formal control mechanisms to have the subordinates perform their tasks up to the expected standards.

To the informants in this particular study trust promotes the usage of informal control and it reduces the dependencies on formal control as it is expected to yield better results and deeper, desired relationships. To have a congruency between values, norms and beliefs is seen as a more appropriate approach to control than relying on rules, contracts or monetary incentives. This resembles what Sako (2006:268-9) calls *Contractual trust* which *"...rests on a shared moral norm of honesty and promise-keeping".* This then evolves through to two other trust-levels called *Competence trust* which *"...requires a shared understanding of professional conduct and technical and managerial standards."* And from this to *Goodwill trust* which *"can exist only when there is consensus on the principle of fairness."* In order to

achieve this congruency the leaders are very clear on expressing their values and beliefs to their subordinates and to get everyone on the same path. "*A move from contractual trust to goodwill trust involves a gradual expansion in the congruence in beliefs about what is acceptable behavior*" *(Sako 2006:269).* They express that it is difficult, if not impossible, to have a working relationship with subordinates that do not share the common values or beliefs. A positive effect of this, to share the same mindset, is that it frees up both time and capacity which is then allocated towards the focus tasks of the leaders. This is seen more like a positive, beneficial side-effect rather than something the leaders are trying to achieve. In this one could assume that trust actually replaces the more rigid formal control, thus trust is seen as an informal control mechanism. "*'Governance by trust' is an informal control mechanism which enhances the effectiveness of transactions whether they take place in markets or within a hierarchy (Smitka, 1991).*

A brief recapture; when trust reaches a desired level between the parties it begins to act, or takes over, the function of control mechanisms. The reason for this is that norms, values, and beliefs become more important than rules and regulations, where the former is seen to be more effective regarding work issues such as performance and task solving. There seem to be a thin line between how trust and control are being used in the encounter between the parties.

A synergistic approach to task control and trust-building:

The leaders in this study could be seen as *synergistic* in how they approach task control. They try to align trust-building with task control, seeing the two mechanisms as complementary where the level of trust is accommodated to the degree of task control and vice versa. Control mechanisms are first and foremost used to keep track of what the subordinates do and not to actually force them to do what the leaders want them to do.

The interviews give the impression of fairly high *Context-setting Agility* (Joiner & Josephs, 2007) within the leaders. They pay much attention to the broader perspective that surrounds their own groups and how their groups are related to it. In this they have the capacity to maintain the organization's values and norms in mind while at the same time keep the focus on their respective groups and adapting the organizational way of thinking to these (Joiner & Josephs, 2007). As this *situational awareness* is fairly high, so is the *sense of purpose*. One thing that exemplifies this is how they work towards long term goals, some 5 years ahead now – which were 7 years ahead when they started. An impression of how the leaders look back at historical contexts, seeing how it worked before and then tries to imagine

how it will work in the years to come is also an example of this. The leaders do factor in how their initiatives affect the subordinates and in doing so they try to serve a meaningful purpose. It is not always an easy task making decisions that have an effect on their subordinates and the organization has a huge impact on this part. As described in the results section; especially the organizational policy and culture affect decision making on the leaders behalf. These leaders are working towards optimizing their outcomes, where as the process in how they do it, "doing it right", becomes the secondary objective. They realize that there is seldom such a thing as "right", but rather there are many ways in which their subordinates can solve the given tasks to the required standards. Hence informal control is seen as a more appropriate way of governing as the outcomes are so important.

It is also worth to mention that informal control is the wanted way in which the leaders themselves wish to be governed. They appreciate being part of decision-making, having openness between their leaders and themselves, relying more on norms and values rather than rules and contracts.

A question which should be raised according to this is how would it look, would the leaders still be synergistic in their implementation of trust and control, if they had other kinds of individuals within their groups? This will not be a main element of my discussion, but there is the possibility to imagine that how the leaders implement trust and control is related to their subordinates. As one informant indicates by saying *"If the occupational competence had been lower, then my need to control would have been greater, I would have been clearer."*

Overall, these leaders seem to have a synergistic approach to trust-building and task control, where the two mechanisms are moderated to see fit. As well as being able to moderate these mechanisms the leaders keep the broader perspective in mind. Regarding the implementation of values and norms it is seen as vital to incorporate these into the group and create a congruency between the groups' and organization's ideals. The leaders gain a sense of purpose by being aware of long term goals and working hard toward these.

Fading of monitoring, vigilance and safeguarding:

It is reported that as trust reaches higher levels it lowers the need for monitoring, vigilance and safeguarding towards the trustees. Monitoring is said to be used in order to keep up with what the subordinates do and not so much as a protective measurement.

Safeguarding is said to fade out after trust has been established and when there is a congruency in openness between the parties. The general use of vigilance and safeguarding was said to be used in the introductory meeting between the leaders and new subordinates, as they have no past history of interaction and all that they know is information given to them by e.g. former employers. This is consistent with Gargiulo & Ertug (2006). There is then a need to incorporate these new ones into the group's way of thinking and behaving, and this is supposed to happen quite quickly. One informant said: *"It will be prioritized [that the newcomer is quickly incorporated] (...) because we are, professionally and socially, a tight knit group."* When the leaders are confident of that the new subordinate is behaving in the appropriate ways, values and norms taken into account, then vigilance and safeguarding begins to diminish. *"It is important that the new one feels as if he has been in the group the whole time."* This is consistent with what Langfred (2004) found, in a study of 71 teams, that trust was a strong and significant negative predictor of monitoring. There is thus a positive relationship between trust and the perceived accurateness of the information received. These findings, in this particular study, then support that there is a connection between trust and defensive mechanisms.

In sum, as the level of trust grows into new heights the need to use defensive control mechanisms such as monitoring, vigilance and safeguarding diminish. These mechanisms then become tools used to keep up with the subordinates' work as it is important for a leader to know what the different subordinates are doing at all times. They then move from being negative to positive in that the leaders actually embrace how these, in this relation, can provide aid.

Conclusion:

When I started working on this project my initial stance was to do a quantitative study of how trust could be related to performance. Due to a number of circumstances and constraints I did not have any control of I had to change my stance towards doing a qualitative study of how leaders, team-leaders to be more precise, view trust in their relationship with their subordinates. Upon completion I can now say that this is in fact related to what I initially wanted to write about, I just got there in another way than what I expected. What I have found is that trust does matter, in so many aspects of relationships. I will now, as I make the conclusion of this study, account for the importance of trust between leaders and their subordinates found in this study.

The necessity and importance of trust cannot be stressed enough and this study has tried to bring to light in how trust influences and affects relationships. The findings in this study point to the fact that trust can be seen as a foundation upon where relationships can grow, reaching new heights and deeper connection between the parties involved. For trust to grow there are some baseline expectations that have to be met in order to proceed with a deeper trust-building process. There needs to be an environment which facilitates and allows the parties to engage in trust-building activities where trust is forged. When these conditions are present and working satisfactorily, the experience is that trust promotes cooperation, higher interaction frequencies, higher performance and interdependence. These elements will, as they continue over time, strengthen the relationship. As a result of this, monitoring, vigilance and safeguarding will diminish to the point where they become tools only used to follow-up on the progress of the groups' members.

Key factors which promote and encourage trust-building are openness and honesty. Openness is important towards having the environment which embrace information exchange, being who you are, and accepting differences. Honesty in that the parties can say what they feel, how they think, and why they do so. These factors could then be seen as related to the overall perspective the leaders have on how their decisions have an impact on the subordinates and their power style.

In this study one component of the cognitive-based trust had a strong impact on trust, specifically the peer reliable role performance. The subordinates then have to meet expectations and be seen as dependable within the work situation. What did not have an effect on trust-building were cultural-ethic similarities and credentials. Within the affective-

based trust citizenship behavior and interaction frequency were paramount to build the trust wanted and through this a stable, global picture of their subordinates was formed. This was not seen to weaken even if the subordinates did not meet the demands.

To be able to build the desired level of trust is dependent upon having an organization which allows for such a process. The organizational policies and culture have a significant impact on how leaders can build trust. This current organization is indeed letting their team-leaders work towards this how they see fit and they seem to be able to reap the rewards of this. As trust grows it will actually function more as an informal control mechanism in which norms, values and beliefs are viewed as better and more functional ways of controlling and directing the subordinates than through micromanaging and formal control mechanisms. There is then the need to have a congruency between the leaders and their teams, and the teams and the organization. The way in which control and trust is used by these given leaders can be seen as synergistic, in that they balance and adjust them to the level they see fit.

Overall, trust between parties can be seen as fundamental for the relationship to evolve further. There are quite a few elements which must be present for trust to evolve and when they are there it all comes together. Trust does, still, matter.

This study does have its limitations. One is that I only had three informants from the same organization, making my sample small and impossible to generalize. Even so the findings open up for new hypothesis and future research questions. Some of these themes are: It would be interesting to see, in a deeper sense, how or in what ways cultural-ethnic similarities can have an impact on trust within relationships and what this does to the relationship. The same goes for credentials, as I found that credentials did not seem to have an impact on trust – are there cases where this is not so? How will this affect trust and the parties involved in this relationship?

I am aware that there is substantial research done on distrust and the negative sides of trust, still it could be a very interesting topic to cover especially within an organizational context. How does a breach of trust have an impact on the organization and the co-workers? Further, could the different approaches to task control and trust-building such as antithetical, orthogonal and synergistic be related to the subordinates rather than the leader(s) in question?

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Appendices:

Interview guide:

Introduksjon:

- Presentere meg selv
- Fortelle kort om studien
- Minne intervjupersonen om konfidensialitet og deres rett til å trekke seg når som helst

Start:

- Kan du fortelle meg en kort historie om denne organisasjonen, som beskriver arbeidskulturen?

Hvordan blir tillit oppfattet av lederne i denne organisasjonen?

- Hvordan tenker du om tillit?
- Hva ser du som nødvendig for at tillit skal utvikles?
- Hvilke elementer tror du påvirker tilliten du gir dine underordnede?
- Klarer du alltid å gjøre det du ønsker for å bygge den tilliten du vil ha hos de som jobber for deg?
- Hvordan vil du beskrive forholdet ditt til dine underordnede?

Er lederne predisponert for tillit?

- Anser du deg selv som en person som lett stoler på andre?
- Hva gjør det lett for deg å stole på andre?
- Påvirker usikkerhet din evne til å stole på noe, om det gjør det – hvordan?

Likheter mellom lederne og underordnede, betydning for tillit i deres forhold?

- Tror du at det å ha noen kvaliteter eller like trekk gjør det lettere å ha tillit til dine underordnede?

Integrere og balansere tillit og kontroll?

- Påvirkes tillit av organisasjonens politikk, kultur og kontroll mekanismer?

Hvordan tillit?

- Til hvilken grad bruker du fornuft eller følelser for å vinne tillit?
- Kan du fortelle meg om en gang du benyttet kontrollmekanismer for å øke ytelsen til en av dine underordnede?
- Hva vil du si påvirker hvordan du gjør dette?
  - På hvilken måte syns du det er viktig å vise omtenksomhet og forståelse for dine underordnedes interesser?
  - På hvilken måte syns du det er viktig å være seg selv som leder?

Letter to possible informants:

Hei, mitt navn er Jørn Kongsten Brevik.

Jeg studerer ved Pedagogisk Institutt, som er underlagt det samfunnsvitenskapelige fakultet ved NTNU, og jobber for tiden med min masteroppgave i Rådgivning. Jeg ønsker å gjøre en undersøkelse blant mellomledere/teamledere for å se på hvordan de benytter tillitsbygging og kontroll av arbeidsoppgaver i møte med sine underlagte. (org.) har sagt seg villig til å delta i undersøkelsen og min kontaktperson er (fjernet).

Intervjuet vil i stor grad basere seg på hvordan du som leder forstår, oppfatter, og bruker tillit. Spørsmålene som stilles vil på ingen måte være direkte knyttet til organisasjonen du arbeider i, deg som person, og heller ikke påvirke taushetsplikten. Formen for informasjon jeg ønsker går på personlige synspunkter og meninger om det aktuelle temaet. Jeg vil også gjøre det klart at dette er helt frivillig og om du skulle kunne delta, så er det mulig å trekke seg når som helst i prosessen og du er heller ikke nødt til å svare på alle spørsmålene om du ikke ønsker det.

Jeg er på utkikk etter informanter som kunne tenkte seg å delta på et intervju, som blir tatt opp på båndopptager, med en varighet på ca 60 minutter. Jeg vil skaffe til veie utstyr som blir brukt under intervjuet. Slik jeg har forstått det finnes det rom i bygningen til (org.) som er disponible i forhold til intervjuene i Trondheim og at det skal være mulig å holde av ett av disse til gjennomføringen.

Både organisasjonens og informantenes navn vil holdes anonyme, og jeg kan forsikre om at det ikke vil være mulig å spore svar tilbake til hver enkelt informant. All data vil bli destruert etter at prosjektet er ferdigstilt. NSD (Norsk Samfunnsvitenskapelig Datatjeneste) er kontaktet og gjort oppmerksomme på mitt prosjekt.

Ønsker du mer informasjon, kontakt meg eller (kontaktperson).

Jeg håper inderlig at du har muligheten til å avse én time til å delta i mitt prosjekt!

Med vennlig hilsen

Jørn K. Brevik

e-post: brevik@stud.ntnu.no

tlf: 907 40 225

Letter to the organization:

(fjernet)

(fjernet) Trondheim

<div align="right">Trondheim, 2010-02-05</div>

Jørn Kongsten Brevik

Wessels Gate 14A

7043 Trondheim

Jeg ønsker først å takke for hyggelig korrespondanse pr e-post i uke 4.

Undersøkelse om tillit og kontroll.

Jeg studerer ved Pedagogisk Institutt, som er underlagt det samfunnsvitenskapelige fakultet ved NTNU, og jobber for tiden med min masteroppgave i Rådgivning. Jeg ønsker å gjøre en undersøkelse blant mellomledere/teamledere for å se på hvordan de benytter tillitsbygging og oppgavekontroll i møte med sine underlagte.

Bakgrunn for forespørsel.

I min praksisperiode var jeg hos dere da dere hadde en medarbeiderundersøkelse gående og jeg fikk delta på både informasjonsmøter før undersøkelsen og gjennomgangen av disse med mellomleder/teamleder og de underlagte. Jeg fant dette veldig spennende og tenkte at det hadde vært interessant å kunne få utføre mitt prosjekt hos dere da jeg vet at dere har arbeidet med områder som faller inn under hva jeg ønsker å se på.

Tema for prosjektet.

Temaet jeg har valgt å fokusere på i min masteroppgave er tillit mellom ledere og ansatte, hvordan mekanismer som blant annet tillitsbygging og oppgavekontroll blir benyttet av ledere for å øke ytelse hos de ansatte. Bakgrunnen for dette er at jeg særlig på rådgivningsstudiet, hvor det har vært både teoretisk og praktisk, har blitt fascinert av tillit. Både når det er lite og når det er (for) mye, og hvordan dette påvirker forhold mellom mennesker. I tillegg til dette, har tillit i senere tid blitt tildelt status som en viktig komponent i

suksessen av en organisasjon, internt i det mellommenneskelige og i møte med andre bedrifter. Grunnen til at jeg har valgt å fokusere på tillit internt i en organisasjon er at jeg anser viktigheten av dette som høy, samt at jeg finner det spennende å kunne forske på hvordan ledere benytter seg av tillit da de må forholde seg til flere personer.

Jeg er da særlig interessert i hvordan ledere implementerer både tillitsbygging og oppgavekontroll, enten som sammenhengende mekanismer eller hver for seg. Gjennom intervjuer av ledere ønsker jeg å undersøke om det er faktorer som gjenkommer hos de ulike lederne i hvordan de opparbeider tillit og benytter seg av oppgavekontroll. Det hadde også vært interessant å se hvordan dette gjenspeiles i evalueringer som gjøres av de ansatte opp mot sine ledere.

Kort om teoretisk bakgrunn.

Forskere på tillit har antatt at det er to ulike mekanismer av tillit som muligens påvirker opptreden og ytelse/prestasjon. Den ene går på tillit i relasjon som er knyttet opp mot sosial utveksling. Her er fokuset er på forholdet mellom leder og underordnede, hvordan den underordnede forstår forholdet deres. Den andre er karakterbasert, hvor fokus ligger i hvordan oppfatninger av lederens karakter påvirker den underordnede sin villighet til å delta i et hierarki som muligens kan skade ham/henne.

Det er videre identifisert tre måter ledere kan/vil benytte tillitsbygging (trust-building) og oppgavekontroll (task control) i møte med sin underordnede. I hvilken grad disse to mekanismene forekommer hver for seg eller ulikt vil kunne si noe om hvordan lederen styrer sine underordnede og hvilken effekt hans/hennes fremgangsmåte kan ha på de underordnede.

Til sist er det funnet at for mye tillit, likt som for lite tillit, kan gjøre at det oppstår negative sider ved et forhold. Tillit vil i følge i en sammenheng bli sett på som en kurve, formet som en U snudd på hode, hvor det optimale forholdet mellom tillit og fordeler befinner seg på kurvens toppunkt. Det og også identifisert flere negative elementer som kan oppstå hvor det er for høy tillit og hvordan disse påvirker ytelse og selve forholdet.

Fremgangsmåte.

Med bakgrunn i dette, ønsker jeg å intervjue tre av deres mellomledere/teamledere. De trenger ikke nødvendigvis å være situert her i Trondheim, men det er ønskelig at de ikke

befinner seg for langt unna med tanke på transport og tidsbruk ved eventuelle nye intervjuer. Det er ønskelig at hvert intervju kan ha en lengde på ca. 60 minutter.

Spørsmålene som stilles i intervjuene vil ikke være direkte rettet mot deres organisasjon på noen måte som kan påvirke taushetsplikten deres ansatte er underlagt, eller omfatte informasjon om organisasjonen på noen annen måte enn hva en utenforstående kan finne. Den type informasjon jeg ønsker å ekstrahere fra intervjuene mine går på deltakerne sine personlige synspunkt og meninger, altså hvordan de selv benytter (om de gjør det) mekanismer som går på tillit og/eller oppgavekontroll.

I tillegg til intervjuene av mellomlederne/teamlederne er det også ønskelig å få tilgang til medarbeiderundersøkelser som har blitt utført, som kan gi en viss pekepinn på hvordan intervjuobjektene blir oppfattet av de ansatte som arbeider opp mot dem.

Sikkerhet.

Både organisasjonens navn og deltakerne sine identiteter vil holdes anonymt. All data vil bli destruert etter at prosjektet er ferdigstilt, og det vil ikke være mulig å spore data jeg bruker tilbake til deres ansatte eller organisasjon. I forbindelse med dette vil jeg også kontakte NSD (Norsk Samfunnsvitenskapelig Datatjeneste), slik at de er informert om mitt prosjekt og at det ikke skal oppstå noen etiske problemer rundt dette.

Gjennomføring.

Jeg vil selv skaffe til veie det utstyr som trengs i forbindelse med intervjuene. Jeg ønsker å belaste deres organisasjon på minst mulig måte, derfor er jeg villig til å gjennomføre intervjuene når det skulle passe best for dere og deres ansatte. På grunn av tidsbegrensninger er det dog ønskelig at intervjuene tar sted før utgangen av mars måned.

Mulighet for å trekke seg.

Jeg vil også informere deres organisasjon og de eventuelle deltakerne om at dette er en frivillig undersøkelse, noe som innebærer at de som deltar når som helst i prosessen kan trekke seg om de ønsker det.

Mer informasjon?

Hvis de som står til ansvar i organisasjonen har betenkeligheter eller spørsmål angående dette prosjektet, ber jeg dem vennligst å ta kontakt med meg via e-post eller mobiltelefon.

Jeg håper virkelig at dere har muligheten til å avse tid til å være med i mitt prosjekt!

På forhånd, takk!

Jørn Kongsten Brevik

Documentation from NSD.

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES

Jonathan Reams
Pedagogisk institutt
NTNU
Dragvoll
7491 TRONDHEIM

Vår dato: 22.03.2010   Vår ref: 23786 / 2 / IBH   Deres dato: Deres ref:

KVITTERING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 16.02.2010. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

23786	I hvilken grad ledere benytter seg av tillitsbygging og oppgavekontroll i møte med underordnede
Behandlingsansvarlig	NTNU, ved institusjonens øverste leder
Daglig ansvarlig	Jonathan Reams
Student	Jørn Kongsten Brevik

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.
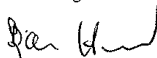
Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, vedlagte prosjektvurdering - kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven/-helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.
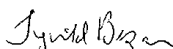
Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/forsk_stud/skjema.html. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/prosjektoversikt.jsp.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 31.05.2010, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Bjørn Henrichsen   Ingvild Bergan

Kontaktperson:Ingvild Bergan tlf: 55 58 32 32
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

Personvernombudet for forskning

Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar

Utvalget består av 3 mellomledere innenfor en organisasjon. Førstegangskontakt med utvalget opprettes av studenten, Jørgen K. Brevik. Datamaterialet samles inn ved personlig intervju, som det gjøres lydopptak av.

Utvalget mottar muntlig informasjon, og samtykker muntlig til deltakelse. Formuleringen "det garanteres full anonymitet" bør presiseres slik at det fremgår at det er i publikasjon anonymitet garanteres, og at datamaterialet for øvrig behandles konfidensielt. Vi forutsetter at utvalget også blir informert om tidspunkt for prosjektslutt og anonymisering/sletting av datamaterialet.

Det forutsettes av bruk av privat pc er i overensstemmelse med NTNU sine interne retningslinjer for IT-sikkerhet.

Ved prosjektslutt, og senest innen 31. mai 2010, anonymiseres datamaterialet. Ombudet minner om at med anonyme opplysninger forstås opplysninger som ikke på noe vis kan identifisere enkeltpersoner i et datamateriale, verken direkte eller indirekte. Lydopptak slettes.

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