



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND LAW

Master Degree Project in Management

Dual Leadership: An Example of How Leadership Might be Shared in a Non-Profit Organisation

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Master Degree Project No. 2013:50
Graduate School

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Abstract

The concept of leadership is deeply rooted in our culture and the common understanding is that there is one leader and a group of followers; however, examples of leadership being shared in different ways have increased over the last two decades. The Swedish Scout Movement planned and realised the large, international scout camp World Scout Jamboree 2011 with two leaders appointed to every leadership position. Two leaders equal in the hierarchy is here called a dual leadership and this article discusses why an organisation chooses to work with dual leadership and explores, through surveys and interviews, how such a leadership might work in practice by focusing on the Jamboree project. The leadership worked very differently between leader pairs; however, a common denominator is the perceived need to act as if the two were one. When asking the leaders, there is a strong, positive feeling surrounding dual leadership; however, the followers do not completely agree. Non-profit organisations, which focus on morality and democracy, have a stronger incentive to work with dual leadership than what corporate organisations have.

Keywords

Shared leadership, distributed leadership, dual leadership, joint leadership, non-profit organisation

Introduction

There are numerous examples of leadership and if asked to describe leadership, people would in most cases describe one leader and his or her actions towards the followers. Focusing on the one leader when discussing leadership is the common way, however, maybe it is time for this to change. Already in ancient Rome, leadership was shared and the consuls, the highest officials of the state, were two, sharing tasks and power equally. However, this concept seems to have been lost in the corporate world and it is somehow build into the culture and the concept of leadership that there is only one leader (Döös & Wilhelmson, 2003). Shared leadership is witnessed in organisations today, mostly in the shape of empowered groups or a chair and vice chair leading together. This way of working with leadership is getting more common and asked for in the ever faster changing and challenging global world of today (Heenan & Bennis, (1999); Pearce, 2004; O'Toole et al., 2002) and there are also examples of the most extreme form of shared leadership where two individuals are appointed to the same position, sharing responsibility and tasks, having the same authority. The notion of shared leadership is that the creation of a good leadership needs to involve more people (Souba, 2004).

What is interesting about sharing leadership? The traditional structures around leadership are built on the principle that there can only be one leader (e.g. Fayol, 1949; Öman, 2005). Researchers disagree on whether shared leadership is good because more people contribute with more competencies, knowledge and ideas; or if it is bad because exactly those things might lead to conflicts (McBeath & Townsend, 2011). Questions are raised about how shared leadership is

practised, how work is divided, how the leaders communicate, who takes responsibility, who gets credit or is to blame? One example of how leadership might be shared is the planning organisation of the World Scout Jamboree 2011, a large international scout camp, where two leaders were appointed to work together on the same hierarchical position, a phenomenon here called a dual leadership. The planning team structure was huge and produced the largest World Scout Jamboree so far with 40 000 participants from 153 countries staying on a field for ten days (WSJ, 2013a). This large planning organisation practised dual leadership at all leadership positions, which leaves several people who have a close experience from working both in a pair practising dual leadership and in a team having two leaders. After the project, the Swedish Scout Council, which organised the jamboree, in 2012 introduced dual leadership with two chairs of the organisation, an example which Scouterna, the new joint organisation for all Swedish scouts, followed in 2013 (Press release, 2012). The aim of this article is to look specifically at how leadership might work in practice when two leaders are appointed to the same position and also why an organisation chooses to work with this kind of leadership. Scouterna and the project of planning the World Scout Jamboree 2011 are used as the context for the research upon dual leadership.

Souba (2004) writes that “Understanding leadership as being about a person in charge is not wrong, but is no longer adequate” (p. 177). This article focuses on dual leadership and the concept of leadership painted by Alvesson & Spicer (2011) is used, where leadership is defined as something created by the leader, the followers and the context. Looking at the weak selection of previous literature on shared leadership, e.g. Döös et al. (2003) and Moraeus (2012) has interviewed pairs of leaders working in dual leaderships. The focus there is on the relationship between the two leaders and in e.g. Döös et al. (2005) the focus is only on the relationship between the leaders and the followers. However, following Alvesson & Spicer’s (2011) definition, the leadership can only be described when focusing on the relationship between the two leaders, but also on the relationship between the leaders and the followers in a specific context. This article shows that practising dual leadership is not easy and practised differently between leadership pairs and it is also necessary to involve the whole group into the leadership. The research also emphasises how the individuals in the dual leadership affect the leadership created and how non-profit organisations have stronger incentives to work with shared leadership.

This article starts with a theoretical framework, where views on leadership and shared leadership are emphasised, as well as the specific context of non-profit organisations and the importance of communication in leadership. This is followed by an explanation about how this study was designed and conducted and a short description of the World Scout Jamboree 2011 and Scouterna as the context. Thereafter, the survey and interview answers are reviewed, followed by a discussion about the empirical findings in relation to the research questions.

Theoretical framework

The importance of leadership is not new; leadership has long been discussed in literature, both the traditional, or vertical, leadership, but also different kinds of shared leadership (e.g. Heenan & Bennis, 1999; Döös & Wilhelmson, 2003). What is defined as a well-functioning leadership changes over time and with the viewer. Common is though that the leader is romanticised and seen as more than just a leader (Blomquist & Röding, 2010). Using Alvesson & Spicer’s (2011) definition that leadership is “an influencing process involving some degree of voluntary compliance

of those being influenced” (p. 4), means that leadership is created in the interaction between leader(s) and followers in a specific context. If leadership is created by all people involved in the interaction, this would also imply that everyone is equally responsible for the resulting leadership. Reading the leadership literature, the normative way of viewing any leadership situation, independent of how leadership is defined, is by viewing the leader as one (e.g. Duke, 1998; Kotter, 1990; Svensson & Wood, 2005).

Leadership and management

The concept of leadership includes both the formal and the spontaneous leader and the word is used in numerous ways both in literature and in practice. Some authors stress the importance of differentiating between leadership and management (Fogh Kirkeby, 1998). Kotter (1990) states that using the word leadership for management is confusing, since they are connected to different processes. Management is about planning, budgeting, goal setting, organising, staffing, organisational structure etc., while leadership is about creating a vision, motivating, and inspiring. Fogh Kirkeby (1998) describes management as an asymmetrical relationship, where one has more power and knowledge about what is best for the other, while leadership is described as a symmetrical relationship, which has to be accepted by both parties. A manager’s tools are requests, instructions, commands and threats; while a leader’s tools are encouragement and recommendations (ibid). Some authors state that almost all managers today also deal with leadership and that leading is part of managing (Blomquist, 2010; Mintzberg, 1998). The leadership in a non-profit organisation includes both what is defined as managerial process and leadership processes. The leaders, which are interesting for this research, have both managerial and leadership tasks, however needs to use the tools of leadership to practice the management. Thus, in this article the word leadership indicates a leader, which has both managerial and leadership tasks.

Leadership in non-profit organisations

In non-profit organisations, such as the Swedish Scout Movement, neither leaders nor followers are normally employed, i.e. bound to the work by a contract or receiving any monetary compensation; they are committed to the work only by their word (Moraeus, 2012). It is also common that leaders and followers change over time in a project, making it hard to call someone to account for actions. Without a clear leadership structure, it is also a risk that those who take up most space take the informal lead, which could inhibit the democratic processes. People, who involve themselves in non-profit organisations, are in it to make a change for someone, themselves or someone else, which means that people are committed under very different conditions and will leave the organisation if the work does not feel meaningful (ibid). Thus, a leader must motivate people to strive for the individual vision, however, at the same time work for a joint vision within the organisation (Blomquist & Röding, 2010). Despite all challenges with leadership, it is as important for a non-profit organisation as for a corporate organisation (Moraeus, 2012). Important is also how people think about leadership, which affect how they exercise and understand it (Souba, 2004).

New ways of leading - sharing leadership

Even if people still mostly think of the traditional, vertical, leadership when considering leadership, there are some moments of shared leadership integrated in most organisations. Flatter organisations, a global environment changing more quickly, a higher degree of knowledge intensive work, and scarce time resources increase the use of empowered work groups, which has been a trend since the middle of the 20th century (Pearce, 2004; Blomquist & Röding, 2010; O’Toole et al., 2002). In

those groups, each individual is responsible for the relationships in the group and to the managers as well as increasingly for their own development (Blomquist & Rödning, 2010). This can be seen as sharing the leadership following Pearce's (2004) definition that "shared leadership occurs when all members of a team are fully engaged in the leadership of the team and are not resistant to influence and guide their fellow team members in an effort to maximise the potential of the team as a whole" (p. 48). Among the first to write about the concept of sharing leadership was Heenan & Bennis (1999), who wrote about different kinds of, co-leadership, where groups or pairs, e.g. a chair and vice chair, lead together. This is common in corporate organisations and is about changing the focus of leadership from the leader to the interaction between leader(s) and people surrounding them (Pearce, 2004). For a shared leadership to work well, Heenan & Bennis (1999) state that it is about hiring people who are better than the leader and subordinate ego. They are also clear about that a shared leadership is about actually sharing power and not only empower subordinates.

Leadership can be shared in different ways and Döös & Wilhelmson (2003) describe four different ways: *Joint leadership* (joint authority and tasks), *Functionally shared leadership* (joint authority but divided tasks), *Shadow leadership* (divided authority but same tasks), and *Matrix leadership* (divided authority and tasks). The extreme form of shared leadership is the joint leadership, which would describe two leaders in the same position with the same authority, responsibilities and tasks. Both joint leadership and functionally shared leadership would fit the description of dual leadership used in this article. Moraeus (2012) describes different ways of working together in a joint or functionally shared leadership: one strategic leader and one operative leader; one taking on external tasks, e.g. representing the organisation, and one internal tasks, e.g. leading the board; or divide according to subject fields, where the leaders represent the organisation in different questions. Leader pairs seem to divide the work differently, however, in the end the success and setbacks are the responsibilities of both (Döös et al., 2003).

The word dual leadership, which is here used to describe the leadership used in the case studied, is used in literature in different ways. It is described as a group having one leader who is socio-emotional oriented and one who is task oriented, where the two leaders could be the same person in some situations (Etzioni, 1965), which Döös and Wilhelmson (2003) would call a functionally shared leadership. Another example is a corporate organisation having different people as CEO and chairman (Fosberg & Nelson, 1999), which would be like a shadow leadership. But dual leadership is also used to describe two leaders with equal rank (de Voogt, 2006), which would be called a joint leadership.

There are other organisations, besides the Swedish Scout Movement, which during recent years have tried to work with a dual leadership; however, not many evaluations have been conducted. The Swedish Green Party has made this kind of leadership famous in Sweden by almost since the start having two spokespersons instead of one party leader in an attempt to make the organisation more equal and democratic (Skalin, 2011). Other political parties have to some extent followed their example, e.g. the Feminist Initiative party (FI, 2013). Other examples are the Danish Scout Movement (DDS, 2013), the youth association to the Swedish Green Party (Moraeus, 2012) and the Swedish temperance organisation UNF (UNF, 2013). These are non-profit organisations, which seem to be in front in trying a dual leadership, however, there are also examples found in corporate organisations. However, these are not communicating that clearly that they believe in this kind of

leadership and it is more often distributed in other ways (e.g. Moraeus, 2012; Döös et al., 2005; Troiano, 1999; O'Toole et al., 2002).

Pros and cons of dual leadership

Opinions differ in the literature upon shared leadership as to whether a leadership where two are appointed as leaders is good or bad for an organisation. Some see dual leadership as only a temporary way to smooth change in mergers and Troiano (1999) states that due to weak defined responsibilities, dual leadership at executive level risks to make an organisation unstable, which might lead to decreased performance. It is a problem for the followers not knowing who of the leaders to turn to (Troiano, 1999) and it is seen as unclear and time consuming (Pearce, 2004). Döös et al. (2003) also raise the issue that even if the leadership and responsibilities are shared, it is a risk that the leaders complement each other in a way that demands more of one of them, which might focus more responsibility on that person. There might also be resistance among workers, resistance which is hard to define the source to (Pearce, 2004), which Heenan & Bennis (1999) indicate is due to the belief that the concept of leadership includes only one leader and also the cultural wish to raise individuals to the skies and acknowledge them with saintly traits. Leaders in a dual leadership can be threats to each other, rivals, and it is also a risk that it might disrupt power relationships in making the duo too powerful towards the followers (Döös et al., 2003).

Even if the arguments against dual leadership are strong, there are arguments for as well, one being "None of us is as smart as all of us" (Quote in O'Toole et al., 2002, p. 67), which captures the essence of the pros for shared leadership. Two leaders can contribute to the leadership more than only one. A dual leadership means more time for the leaders to be on the field building relationships with followers, easier to reach, they complement each other with skills and experiences, challenges and inspire each other, have more room for reflection and dialogue, and have better discussion (Pearce, 2003; Döös et al., 2003; Moraeus, 2012). Blomquist and Röding (2010) report from a questionnaire where Swedish managers state that being a manager is being very lonely. In a shared leadership, the leaders are not alone with their responsibilities and also feel safer if the leadership would be questioned. It might also be more stable for the organisation since one leader is still there if one leaves. There are different reasons to why organisations try dual leadership; however, in all cases it increases the quality of work (Döös et al., 2005). Looking at the structures surrounding the organisational world with rules and regulations, most of them are written with the intention of a leader being one person. However, as Öman (2005) states, if there is a will to share leadership, it is possible in almost all cases.

Complexities with dual leadership

Eliciting the pros of a dual leadership does not go without work. A leader has relationships with his or her followers, superiors and co-workers and with a dual leadership it is yet another relationship to nurture, that between the two leaders (Döös et al., 2003). They need to divide and redivide joint tasks, and define how to make decisions and handle crises together. How the tasks are divided is not as important as the clarity in how it is divided. It demands more of the individuals in the duo, who needs to be loyal, prestigeless, generous to each other and share common values, as well as having a joint vision about where the organisation is heading (ibid). They also need to be honest and talk to each other about their needs for power and acknowledgement and they need to trust each other and let loose of their egos, which might be seen as the largest challenge (O'Toole et al., 2002). With hard work, the leaders might develop a team, which is important for success (Hill & Farkas, 2001).

The literature provides some tips on how to manage to work in a dual leadership: view the organisation as most important and not the leader, nurture trust, balance power, not compromise - create a common apprehension instead, think and talk everything through with each other, and utilise upon the individual differences (Heenan & Bennis, 1999; Döös et al., 2003). Both authors just mentioned compare a well-functioning dual leadership with the metaphor of a marriage; trust and commitment is needed, and arguments are solved without loss of respect. Moraeus (2012) also emphasises that a dual leadership is a relation that needs constant work and also enhance the fact that most leaders in a dual leadership in non-profit organisations are not chosen together, but as individuals, which might obstruct the relationship building. Most of these organisations do not have any support for the leaders, any statement describing how they should work together; this is up to the leaders themselves.

The importance of communication

Continuous communication and reflection between the two leaders is important since they need a joint vision about the future of the organisation (Moraeus, 2012). Decisions, which are agreed on by everyone have direct effects on the performance of the group members (Dess & Origer, 1987). Communication is about interaction between the leaders as well as with the followers and others surrounding and is about steering, informing, motivating and expressing needs, however, it is not only important to communicate, but also how to communicate. Blomquist & Röding (2010) talk about the concept of storytelling, which is building a story around, in this case, the leadership, to affect how people think about it and create a common view. Using the word “we” in the communication e.g. strengthens the feeling of working together. In the case of dual leadership it is about how the leaders talk with and about each other and the followers with and about the leaders.

It is also important to be clear in the communication and not giving mixed messages, since people are very fast in drawing conclusions upon what they hear (Nilsson & Waldemarson, 2010), which is also why a constant dialogue between the two leaders is important. Defaults in the messages, such as insinuations, which means saying something obvious, but meaning something else; or double messages, which is when someone says something, but clearly means the opposite can make communication with one leader complex, however, with two leaders, the risk for double messages must be larger. This is even more important with the leadership of today, which is more about a dialogue with the followers, building a relationship, than just giving orders (Groysberg & Slind, 2012). The new technologies, endless possibilities to interact with other people through the Internet, and globalisation are both enabling tools for dual leadership.

The design of the research and how it was conducted

In the planning organisation of the World Scout Jamboree 2011 (from now on WSJ), a dual leadership was used at all levels, which makes it a perfect object for the research about how a dual leadership might work in practice. Being a scout myself and being part of the planning team creating WSJ provide me with both knowledge of the organisation and the possibility to dig deeper. In the attempt to answer the questions about dual leadership, a research was designed consisting of two studies: one discusses the leadership during WSJ 2011 and how it worked and one focuses on the leadership in the organisation of Scouterna today, which works increasingly with dual leadership. At the end of the research, the comprehensive answers in the first study helped decide about focusing on the WSJ project. Discussing leadership with those involved in and representing

Scouterna today showed to be harder than discussing it with those who were involved in the planning of WSJ, since the former are used to inform about and explain this kind of leadership. Those who worked with the finished project told more thoroughly about how it really worked.

Understanding how the concept of dual leadership is experienced, I needed to gather experiences and interpret them into an understanding about the concept (Van Maanen, 2011), thus, six deep interviews followed the surveys (Bryman & Bell, 2007). With a constructivistic ontological orientation, my aim was to elicit people's subjective view on dual leadership. The surveys were created in the attempt to reach many and provide the respondents with the possibility to give their view anonymously. They were designed with both yes or no answers and questions using how or explain in an attempt to get longer explanatory answers and a wide range of experience and I had no intention to express the results in frequencies (Troost, 2012). On several places there were comment fields for additional comments. The questions were standardised in the sense that the questions were the same for all respondents. However, since both leadership and situations are interpreted differently and all had different experiences from the project, the interviews are important to understand more about how terms are interpreted (ibid). Creating the surveys, I gathered some background information both on the Internet (e.g. Arnold et al., 2000 & Svensson and Wood, 2005) and in books (e.g. Jönsson & Strannegård, 2009). The questions for both surveys were then created around what I thought would be the key issues about a dual leadership: collaboration between the leaders; communication between leaders as well as leaders and followers; decision making; control; and responsibility. These five categories were used as indicators and the survey was put together in the online survey tool Webropol. Both surveys had three parts, one directed to leaders, one to followers and one to both followers and leaders.

Gathering contact information to people involved in the planning of WSJ showed harder than expected, however, through my personal contact network I managed to reach a mixture of people from ten out of fourteen departments within the planning organisation. The first survey was, thus, sent to 76 persons, both leaders and followers, via e-mail and 23 leaders and 14 followers answered the survey very thoroughly. Most important for me was to include more than only one department, since I know that the leadership worked very differently in different departments. It was a convenience sampling, however, with focus on the sample being representative for the organisation (Troost, 2012). The second survey was sent to leaders and followers in the organisation of Scouterna today, in total 29 persons, out of which six persons came back to me telling that they had not worked in that kind of leadership long enough to answer the questions and nine leaders and six followers answered the survey.

The answers to the survey were used as basis in creating the questions for the follow up interviews. I wanted to follow up more thoroughly about the concepts on which it seemed that people agreed or not agreed. The interviews were more of a dialogue, with few direct questions and more of the respondent telling his/her story. They were recorded and I also took some notes about what I felt and thought during the interviews. This being an inductive analysis leads to the fact that the main subjects from the interviews were introduction to what theories to use when analysing the whole concept (Ryen, 2004). In addition to surveys and interviews, I also got some deeper explanations via e-mail from people who had answered the surveys and I also got the opportunity to conduct an observation during a meeting held by the two chairs of Scouterna, where I participated in the meeting, but tried to focus on their collaboration and communication. This observation was

conducted because I had the possibility and was not originally a part of the research, however, showed to be very useful to the understanding of how externals might understand a dual leadership.

While the answers from the first surveys came in, I started creating the questions for the interviews. The interviews were transcribed and all the data from both interviews and surveys was analysed together, first by categorising all answers under different themes of what the answers were examples of (Ryen, 2004 & Trost, 2012), such as e.g. how work was divided; the leadership was explained; decision making was performed; and how information, communication and the relationships were experienced. After finding several common denominators within each category, I then combined the categories in order to find connective concepts, which are used as the headlines in the discussion.

Scouterna as the context

The project studied was performed in a non-profit organisation, where only some people supporting the project were employed, the rest were all working without payment and committed to the work only through their own will, vision or incentives. In total, the project lasted seven years, however, some people left and other came in during it, which also obstructed the leadership. It was also a lot of work and after the realisation of WSJ, many involved was too tired to talk about their experiences; however, now after some time, I experienced a sense of relief by some respondents when they finally got to think back and evaluate the leadership. The Scout Movement stands on a foundation build on trusting the individual and believing that everyone can be a leader. Thus, this article starts by introducing Scouterna and WSJ to emphasise the specific context in which this research was conducted. In the context description there is one part which is written in italic. These are my own memories and notes and are included here to deepen the understanding of the size and feelings of this project.

My own involvement

I am myself a member of Scouterna since almost twenty years, have taken some leadership courses, have been involved within the movement on a regional level and was also part of the planning team of the WSJ organisation. Thus, I have a lot of knowledge of the context and surroundings and I know who to ask about what and I had the possibility to find participants to my surveys and interviews through my own personal network. However, this involvement is not only positive. In this research I want to create a picture of how people working with a dual leadership vies this concept, which is a challenge since I have my own experiences, views, assumptions and opinions about this, which are important also, but have to be put aside when formulating the questions and performing the interviews as well as the analysis and finally writing the text. As Van Maanen (2011) notes, the experiences of people are expressed to me in words and actions and I have to interpret it to understand it. In this interpretation it is important for me to try to be objective, but still use the knowledge of the context I have in the interpretation.

The Scout Movement and WSJ as the context

The sun has disappeared behind the trees at the end of the field and the lukewarm breeze caresses my cheek as the cloudy sky gets darker. After days of empty fields I hear voices everywhere. English. German. Arabic. Spanish. Chinese. Something that could be Italian and languages I do not understand blur together into a calming noise as I close my eyes. For the last 12 hours, one bus

with scouts from all over the world has arrived every minute and the green fields, which were empty only some hours ago, are now filled with people building their camps, where they are to stay for the next ten days. For me it is fascinating. However, at this point I still do not understand the greatness of what I am part of creating: the world's largest World Scout Jamboree, on a field in southern Sweden during ten days in July 2011 with 40 000 scouts from 158 countries, the realisation of seven years of planning. At this moment, as the dusk is darkening the sky and the scent of the green grass is being mixed with whirled up sand from the roads, I do not think about all the work we have put down in enabling this, all I feel is happiness, excitement, and I focus on realising all the planned.

(Own notes from August 2011)

This World Scout Jamboree (WSJ) was the 22nd of a row jamborees organised almost every fourth year since the first one in London 1920 (Puke, 1982). The planning organisation was special in the sense that it was large, clearly structured into departments, sections and blocks, each lead by two leaders in a dual leadership (WSJ Organisation, 2009). An organisation where people worked during seven years without monetary compensation, giving about 350 man years work in time only during 2011 to create the best experience for 40 000 scouts. Together we built a small city on a huge field with cafés, restaurants, banks, shops, Internet, pharmacy, electricity, activities, water toilets and much more.

To understand why this dual leadership was implemented in such a large project, the story needs to begin over 100 years earlier with the founder of the Scout Movement: Robert Baden-Powell of Gilwell, a writer, drawer, actor, skilled scout (pathfinder) and eventually a lieutenant general in the English military (Dahlby, 1983). Experiences during missions in South Africa taught him about nature and how important actions and behaviour are and back in England, he figured that through his years as a scout, he had found a method to bring out the best in all people. He tried his ideas during the first scout camp on Brownsea Island 1907, which is today considered the start of the Scout Movement (ibid). After this camp, Baden-Powell wrote the book *Scouting for boys*, which spread quickly over the world and reached Sweden only a year later and during 1909, the first Swedish scout troops started (SSF, 2013). As scouting spread across the world, the core values stayed the same: to let young boys (now people) take on responsibilities at an early age with the risk of failure, however, they will learn from it; a positive encouragement to good behaviour through the scout law (WOSM, 2013; Scouterna, 2013a); fun activities through which to learn to take care of one self and that everyone is equal; and doing valuable things together rather than doing nothing alone. In his last written words, Baden-Powell said “Try and leave this world a little better than you found it”, which captures the core values of scouting (Baden-Powell of Gilwell, transl. 1960).

The Swedish Scout Movement stands for a leadership, where everyone gets to lead themselves and others, where you learn through trying and reflecting on the results (Scouterna, 2013b; Scouternas folkhögskola, 2013a). The Scout Movement also provides some well-known and established leadership courses, with the latest in Sweden being Value based leadership, which started in 2006 and has a reputation quickly spreading also to the corporate world (Scouternas folkhögskola, 2013b; Scouternas folkhögskola, 2013a; VBL, 2013). The general leadership philosophy within the Swedish Scout Movement is that everyone can learn to become a good leader, compared to those who believe that leadership is something you are born with.

Following this spirit, it was decided that the planning team creating WSJ should have a dual leadership, Where the idea about dual leadership came from is not clear, however, people agreed that the organisation was ready for this kind of leadership, that it was necessary for this huge project, and no-one remembering anyone questioning it (Interviews, 2013). WSJ was a project organised under the Swedish Scout Council, the former national Swedish scout organisation (WSJ, 2013b). At the top of the planning team, there was the Jamboree Executive Team holding the overall responsibility of the project. Two additional support units were Jamboree Office, employees at the Swedish Scout Council working with WSJ, and Operational Support, which entailed business control, IT co-ordination and guidelines and working methodologies, as well as following the development of the project. The rest of the planning team was divided into twelve departments, each responsible for some parts of the planning and as a complement there were also a communication department and a human resource department.

Every department was led by two Heads of Department, both completely equal in the hierarchy. The document WSJ Organisation (2009) stated that “Responsibility for the Department lies jointly with the two Heads of Department. Both Heads take full individual responsibility and act as Head” (p. 12). The same document also states that “Decisions within the Department are taken by the Heads of Department, in co-operation with the Department Team” (p.12). Within the departments

were different numbers of sections, each with two Heads of Sections. Some sections consisted of blocks, which had one or two Heads of Block depending on assignment.

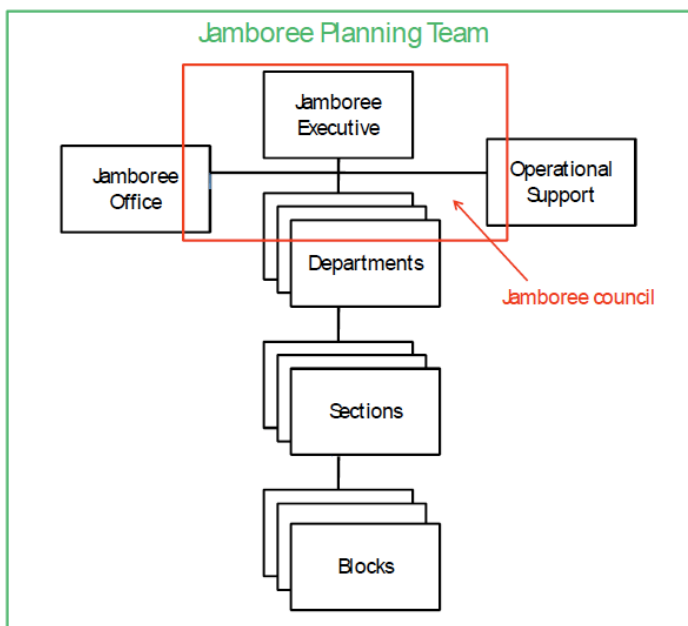


Figure 1. Jamboree planning team organisation

This project was part in creating the future of the Swedish Scout Movement. In 2012 a new national organisation for the Swedish Scout Movement was founded, Scouterna, which is today the only scout organisation with which other organisations practising scouting can sign agreements (Scouterna, 2013c). On national level, the work groups within Scouterna have two chairs, one working without payment and one employee. November 24, 2012, the organisation took a huge step in standing up for believing in a dual leadership as the first annual meeting for the new national organisation

was held, where not only one, but two chairs for Scouterna were elected (Press release, 2012). Scouting is a movement built on an ideology of personal development, education and young people getting together doing activities, without any political or religious links. Scouting today is somewhat different from scouting a hundred years ago, however, the core values and the ideology is still the same (Granlund, 1962; Scouterna, 2013d).

Dual leadership during WSJ

Several respondents talk about the Scout Movement and how they have experienced shared leadership in different forms before, most commonly with a chair and a vice chair or leadership distributed in a group. However, dual leadership was new to everyone and they all painted it as something extraordinary. Most of them are celebrating it but some are not sure if they would do it again. These people are experts on dual leadership and here is their joint description of how a dual leadership works.

Entering the project WSJ, not much information was given about the dual leadership. The leaders were told that they should be two leading together, both with equal amount of responsibility. However, one leader explains that “no information was given about the background or how it should work. I got to figure that out myself”. The followers discovered while working that there were two leaders. The recruitment of leaders seems to have focused mostly on individuals and not of an individual being a part of a leader pair. Most people working together did not know each other from before, even less had worked together before and one leader said “the challenge was to work this tight with someone you do not know, but at the same time you are getting to know”. The three explanations given by the respondents to why it worked under these circumstances is that Scouteria is an organisation more inclined to changes; that in a non-profit organisation you cannot order someone around, you can only give a direction; and that within n the Scout Movement, people are used to working in project and sharing leadership in different ways.

What a dual leadership looks like

The respondents all have different experiences and talks both about how the dual leadership worked very well or not so well and that people even quit the project due to problems in the leadership. Some respondents, both leaders and followers, do not describe it as a shared leadership, but rather as a parallel leadership, with two leaders working separately. However, most respondents explain the leadership as being divided in different ways, but still sharing the responsibility for the joint goals. The leaders divided the tasks in different ways, e.g. one focused on realisation, the other on communication and the organisation; one being more practical and one administrative; one working up in the hierarchy and one down; or each worked with the own field of tasks, only discussing strategic questions. Tasks were mostly clearly divided, but some pairs had a more floating division, where the leader with most time at the time took more tasks. The division could be according to professional knowledge; experiences; competencies; time and opportunity; geographic location; interests; and personality. Some leaders also went through meetings beforehand and divided who were to talk about what at the meeting. Some leaders state that even if tasks were clearly divided they had insight in all activities and could, at least formally, replace each other. Some say they could cover for each other both in meetings or other communication. They talk about situations where it was good to cover for each other, but also about situations where one leader interrupted the other leader’s tasks without having all information. One respondent describes this as the largest challenge: “it was a real challenge to support and complete without stepping on the other person’s area, but respect the shared responsibility”. Another respondent adds to it that “I feel responsible to make sure that my partner gets the conditions to do what s/he is supposed to do. I cannot control if s/he does it”. Two thirds of the leaders felt they had an overview of all the joint tasks. Sharing responsibility over divided tasks did not bother any of the respondents; however, they all said that the work was better when they divided the tasks clearly. When they did not, it was hard for the

leaders to work together and for the followers to work. The respondents' stories range from clearly divided tasks to a chaos and no structure at all when asking the followers.

The respondents agree that decision making was not an issue. One explains how they both tried to participate at all meetings to create a common understanding facing a decision. They all say that they made all important decisions together after having discussed the issue, some using the word consensus, while minor decisions was made by the leader in charge of that task. If they did not agree, they discussed the issue with the group or in some cases asked the level above. If a disagreement occurred, some also let the one with that task have the last say or the one with most knowledge within that area. However, the respondents find it hard to explain where the line between important and not as important decisions was. "It was about founding a level that suited us and our leadership". The respondents explain that it is about trusting each other and each other's competencies. One respondent stated that "the challenge was to feel comfortable in daring and being able to take own decisions". Some had a system where they informed each other about all decisions made, however, some found it to be a problem when one takes decision without informing. One said "it we did not agree, we discussed it another round" and several of the respondents witness decision making taking longer than they are used to.

Some mention an internal and an external view on a dual leadership. A quote made by many is that "the idea is that the leaders need to act as if they were one person", which is explained to be true when viewing the leadership externally, where the leaders should have one view and stand loyal behind one decision. The leaders could also both be brought to account for anything within their joint responsibility. However, they also say that internally, it looks very different and also should look very different and the mentioned quote is no longer viewed as true. That the leaders do not always agree is painted as something good and the discussions between the leaders are what many state as the best with a dual leadership. However, internally the leaders can bring each other to account; internally they are not both responsible for their joint tasks since they have divided them. It also concerns the leaders how they are viewed from the followers, thus most of them went through all meetings beforehand and decided who speaks about what. The views on this seem to diverge about how the relations are from the leaders and up. Many respondents also emphasise the information technology as the key to the success of the dual leadership in that it enables two to be informed as if they were one.

The relationships

The relationships between the leaders were very different. Some had a hard time working together, with a partner interrupting on the tasks and not communicating enough, while others complemented each other and worked well together. The leaders focus the stories around how they worked together, how tasks were divided and how they tried to be viewed as equal. They all stress that the relationship grows along the project and with it the division of tasks changes and that "you quickly learned what questions the other [leader] was quick to respond to. But sometimes you were wrong". The leader pairs worked differently with updating each other and communicating. Some informed each other about almost everything; other did not feel the necessity of having "too much information about the tasks concerning the other" or interrupt the other. Some stated that reports could wait until next meeting; other said they wanted immediate notice about everything. Some experienced work being done twice because of lack in communication.

From a follower point of view it was quickly noticed when the responsibility was not equally divided between the two leaders. Many leaders think that one of them was more of a head than the other; however, they disagree on whether this was perceived by the followers. Things like one being part of the organisation longer, commitment or time to spend on the project could lead to inequality in the responsibility. What some leaders call to “support each other”, by sharing tasks and responsibilities over time, would by the followers be interpreted as someone taking over or even being more head. Some experienced a lack of co-work between the leaders and say that it did not feel like a dual leadership and that one was more head than the other. They also say that one leader took the lead, but involved the other; one was more practical and visible; one took on the role as the person in charge. Several talks about trouble in understanding how the two leaders worked together and one say that “I was not always sure if it was enough with one yes or if I had to wait for another”. Two third though that both leaders were equally responsible for the end result.

Almost all leaders stress the importance of discussions between the leaders, however, towards the followers they “need to act and think as one entity”. If a decision was made by one it was indirect a decision both stood behind. However, one respondent describe how they turned to the leader who was more driven or chose to ask the leader they though would give an answer more in line with the own intentions. If the two leaders gave different directions, they went on the most clear. The leaders did not always agree and many followers noticed this. They did not always feel attuned and in the discussions one could run over the other. However, some followers also say that the leaders discussed their issues before they told the group. At times when the leaders gave separate directions, the group witnessed confusion, irritation and it was time consuming. The leaders almost always both got all information from the top of the organisation; however, it was most common that only one had the contact to the groups down the organisation. The followers who felt it was clear what leader did what praised it and those who felt it lacked clarity said it was confusing. The leaders mainly though that the followers knew who to go to, however, the followers were not that sure. With two leaders it is also possible to choose who to communicate with, if you are more comfortable to communicate with one. One leader tells about a “no wrong door” philosophy where the followers could talk to any of them and if it was the wrong person for that task the leaders communicated that. Other leaders said that the followers were sent back and forth between the two leaders sometimes until one could take the question. “We used them in different ways”.

Dual leadership has both pros and cons

All but only a few respondents recommend a dual leadership. It was experienced as time consuming, however, all discussions are seen as positive. The largest differences between a dual leadership and a traditional leadership are told to be the responsibility; that it “takes away the pains in being a manager”; more perspectives; hearing ideas out in the air; and more input in decisions. One respondent talks about how tough especially the role as middle manager is: “you are tremendously lonely as a manager. No matter how good or tough you are, it is hard from time to time”, but one respondent compares this leadership with the one in the military and states that in some circumstances a dual leadership would be impossible. There are also risks mentioned, for example when a pair of leaders does not work, which could lead to a bad performance as a leader, which in turn influences the group in to being two groups; easy for one to hide behind the other; risk that one runs ahead of the other; and that one is not seen in favour of the other. More than one respondent compared a dual leadership with a marriage, a relationship that needs to be worked on, which has its good and bad times, and which sometimes work well, but sometimes does not work at

all. Another respondent describes the beginning phase of the dual leadership as a honeymoon, where they still discuss calmly and finally agree without any argues or fights. One respondent adds to this view on dual leadership by saying that “[dual leadership is] The ultimate leadership as long as it does not get troublesome...”.

Focusing on what the respondents perceive as the best and worst about using a dual leadership, there are mostly positive things mentioned in the stories told, however, the negative comments are more common from followers than leaders. Here is what the respondents lined up as the best things about dual leadership: Someone to discuss with gives carefully prepared decisions; back each other up and be more available; learn from and inspire each other as well as complete each other’s competencies; there is one leader left if one gets ill or needs to quit; support each other when there is a lot to do; not being alone with the responsibility; and more fun to be two. However, as one respondents puts it, “shared responsibility is of course also a shared burden”, and even if the thoughts are mostly positive, there are also some negative things lined up: Decision making takes longer; risk of confusion about who to turn to and different information; unclear who is in charge; risk that something falls through the cracks; demands more communication; risk that both quits if they do not work together; one takes over (consciously or unconsciously); and demands many people and creates large directorates.

It is clear that the respondents also want to send their recommendations to how to work with dual leadership and they stress that it has to be a conscious decision to work with dual leadership. There needs to be preparations in the beginning, discussing the rules of the game as well as expectations. All involved also need to be prepared to communicate more and have the insight that decisions can take more time. A will and belief that it will work is important, but also common values and a joint vision about leadership. Words used are respect, trust, humbleness, sensitivity, but also two leaders who are prestigeless. It is also important to “find two persons who are comfortable in their own person and do not have the need to assert themselves to the surroundings”.

Discussion and main findings

Listening to the respondents, they are overall very positive towards a dual leadership, however, when they tell about their experiences, they are not all good. Thus it is important to listen to how they talk or write and there is a clear feeling of ambiguity in the stories, which is expressed in for example the quote about this being the perfect leadership as long as there are no problems. The first part of the discussion focuses on trying to understand how a dual leadership might work, which is followed by a discussion about why an organisation chooses to work with dual leadership.

The leadership was in text and words described as a shared leadership (delat ledarskap) and if using the four different kinds of shared leadership by Döös and Wilhelmson (2003), the leadership intended by the statements (WSJ Organisation, 2009) would be described as a joint leadership. The respondents clearly describe how they divided the tasks and to some extent also the responsibility and they also stress the fact that it is important to do that. This would be seen more as a functionally shared leadership or in some cases a matrix leadership. The authority was always joint in the eyes of the organisation, however, the leadership worked very differently between the leader pairs and the followers did also view the leadership differently. Thus, it is clear how ambiguities in the communication around what kind of leadership this is and the fact that no-one was told beforehand

how this should work leads to different kinds of leadership when people form what they think is the best leadership. This does not have to mean that the leadership was not good enough. All leader pairs needed to find out where their line between supporting each other and interfering in each other's work lied and also find out which questions were important enough to demand the respond from both leaders or if one was enough. However, if the leadership was good depends on who you ask, the leaders or the followers.

Listening to how people talk about leadership might give a clue to how they practice it (Souba, 2004). Respect is mentioned several times, however, explaining the relationship between the two leaders is not easy. Moraeus (2012) compares dual leadership to marriage, which is a metaphor existing in more than one place in the respondents' answers as well. The relationships were very different; however, all respondents describe a relationship that needed work to function well.

A way of explaining the relationship between the two leaders is that they are actually leading each other. This can be seen in the stories about how the leaders worked. They divided tasks between each other, reported to each other, met to follow up together, let the other know if one could finish on time, they gave each other mandate to make decisions, could call each other to account, and wanted to support the leader partner to succeed within his or her tasks. It is possible that this is why a dual leadership is positive to the leaders, they are responsible, but still have someone to lead them. They supported and helped each other without taking over the tasks and they discussed all issues together. This could be viewed as two persons leading each other, or if rather mentoring or coaching each other, however, both seem to have developed.

The struggle to be equal

The statements clearly said that both leaders are equal in the hierarchy (WSJ Organisation, 2009). How this worked in practice could be described as a struggle. Not a visible struggle, but a question taking up everybody's mind along the project. The leaders thought about it when dividing tasks and responsibility; holding meetings; as well as communicating. The followers thought about it when deciding who to turn to; who to listen to; and who is more responsible. It seems that the terms used by some respondents about internal and external view on the leadership is very useful. To some leaders it was important that the two leaders were equal internally, however, some also found it useful to be able to let one take tasks at times and as Döös et al. (2003) explain it, tasks were divided very differently. To the leaders it was important that they were viewed as equals from the followers and therefore most tried to convey equality in all situations. However, the followers seem to have understood most leader pairs as unequal in some way. Many of them saw one as more head, which might be due to an internal division of work, which was not clearly communicated, which Troiano (1999) raises as the main issue of shared leadership. They also describe how they turn to one leader in some questions and another in other questions as well as listen more to one leader if given different directions. The equality seems to have been more important to the leaders. It was also clear that the division of both tasks and responsibility changed during the project, as time was spend on working on the relationships (Moraeus, 2012). It is by some described as a process or a travel, how to work grows with the the relationships until you find a way of working that fits all. This is like a team process (Hill & Farkas, 2001), which is a good way of describing shared leadership. There does not seem to be any support for the statement that there would be less democracy with a dual leadership (Döös et al., 2003), rather the opposite, since there are two deciding at the top and they are easier to reach.

The importance of including the group

Alvesson and Spicer (2011) argue that the leadership is created by the leaders, the followers and the context. The context is discussed by many respondents and will be emphasised below, the leaders and their relationships, how they should work or act, took up much room in the respondents' answers, however, the followers were rarely mentioned. In a dual leadership it seems that the relationships between the two leaders are getting more focus than the relationships between leaders and followers, which leads the view on leadership back to being something practised or owned by the leaders and a decreased involvement of the group affects the group performance (Hill & Farkas, 2001). As the responses from the followers show, the dual leadership is not experienced the same way by leaders and followers. It seems that all positive things about a dual leadership is positive for the leader. Only one thing is mentioned that is good for the followers and that is that the leaders are easier to reach and that you can talk to the leader you feel most comfortable talking to. However, on the negative side of leadership the relationship to the followers are found in that it can be confusing, different information, ambiguities etc., which Pearce (2004) emphasises. It is important not to forget to involve the whole group in the discussions around leadership (Alvesson & Spicer, 2011; Hill & Farkas, 2001). It is stressed by respondents to sit down and make up the rules of the game and take time for discussions about the leadership in the beginning. Following this, the discussions about how the leadership should work and making up rules should involve the whole group and not only the leaders.

Is it in the culture?

A dual leadership was new to the respondents and there was little information about how it was supposed to work. The culture of thinking of leadership, as Döös et al. (2003) describe it, involving only one leader, shines through the answers of the followers. Some experienced little co-work between the leaders and thus looked for the one leader seeming most responsible or more head. When different directions were given, many followers turned to the leader with most clear and direct directions and listens more to that person. They seem to have looked for the one leader, however, in some cases experienced confusion when this was not found. Heenan & Bennis (1999) also state that it is in our culture to praise and look up to one leader. Our structures surrounding leadership also implies one leader. This is seen both in the law (Öman, 2005), but also in how we communicate and how we want to find out who was responsible. One respondent compared it to a murder being committed and where no-one was convicted, because there were two in the room and they could not find out who of them was guilty. The modern information technology might be the key to break these structures, since it enables two to have the knowledge of one. Most negative thoughts about dual leadership can also be connected to being used to having one leader. Also the word head (the English word was used) indicates one leader, since this metaphor comes from one head leader the body and the body cannot have two heads. Thus, the norm about leadership is so strong that even if it is stated that there are two leaders, the leadership is affected by the need to find out who is the leader.

Why a dual leadership is more common in non-profit organisations

Two times the leadership is compared to a marriage to explain both the relationship between the leaders and that between the leaders and followers, where the leaders are compared to the parents leading the children, trying to raise them to succeed by themselves. This also makes the metaphor fit into the non-profit context, where the followers cannot be ordered around (Moraeus, 2012) and also in this kind of value based organisations, where other things part from efficiency and goal

reaching are important, i.e. that everyone participates and can develop along the way, democracy and legitimacy. The metaphor works when explaining the leadership on WSJ, since parents share responsibility of the children, but divides both tasks and to some extent responsibilities, however, in the end they are both responsible for the goals and some marriages work well and some do not. Some break up and all relationships of this kind is a process in need of continuous work.

Moraeus (2012) talks about how a shared leadership is a good idea in a non-profit organisation. This is supported by almost all respondents, which find it harder to see dual leadership in a corporate organisation. The conditions for people involved in WSJ were special and they all had the common interest in scouting and making this jamboree a good experience. The fact that Scouterna is a non-profit movement and that people are scouts seem to have influenced. The respondents emphasised the fact that they are scouts and that this would be a reason to why the dual leadership worked. Scouterna is an organisation, where people are used to work with leadership and the strong values of commitment and wanting to do the best, as well as respect and being prestigeless, shine through in the interviews. They are all used to work in groups, taking on responsibility and planning projects and all this put together might have been the reason to the success of the dual leadership during WSJ. However, since the leadership was practised very differently, it is possible that different thoughts about leadership lie behind that (Souba, 2004). A non-profit organisation grounded in strong values of democracy, such as e.g. Scouterna, UNF or political parties, could benefit from a dual leadership in that it seems to strengthen the democracy. People see the organisation and its aims as more important than the own winning (Heenan & Bennis, 1999) and they are not rivals in the sense of monetary payments or competing for another position (Moraeus, 2012). It is also important to involve many in the lead of the organisation, which Souba (2004) states is one of the keystones in sharing leadership. Comparing this to leadership in a corporate organisation, where efficiency and profit are common lead words, the incentives to increase democracy, worker participation, and also the time of decision making are probably lower.

One important note made by almost every respondent is that dual leadership is in need of two prestigeless leaders, which coincides with the recommendations by Döös et al. (2003). In terms of equality this means that the two leaders have to let each other be equals even if this means to let the other do something that you would have done better or faster without interfering; only supporting. The relationships between the leaders cannot be interfered by competition and all respondents express the importance of a common goal who both, and also the group, strive for. It might also be a risk when one leader takes on more lead, which Moraeus (2012) explains might disrupt the democratic processes.

Main findings

Overall, a dual leadership seems to have many positive sides, although mostly for the leaders, who do not have to be alone at the top, both have a leader in the other, and are able to take better and more well-reasoned decisions. However, for the followers it does not come through as all positive. The respondents agree with theory (e.g. Moreaus, 2012) that this kind of leadership needs to be worked on and it seems that all that work and the extra communication as well as the extra time it takes to e.g. make decisions are all worth it in the eyes of both leaders and followers. It is important to get a good start by sitting down with the whole group discussing expectations and how to work and together make up the rules of the game. Most of the negative things with dual leadership seem to have its roots in the culture and the traditional concept of leadership, which is still very strong

and according to e.g. Döös et al. (2005), we have to look beyond that today. It is a continuous struggle for the leaders to both be equal and keep the appearance of being equal towards the followers. Here, as well as in other discussions concerning dual leadership, the expressions internal and external views on leadership are useful. The internal view describes the relationships between the two leaders, which is not always the same that is communicated to the followers. What during WSJ was described as a shared leadership could in some cases be called a joint leadership, a functionally shared leadership or a matrix leadership depending on how they divided tasks and responsibility (Döös & Wilhelmson, 2003). Without any directions on how to work, the leadership evolved differently, which does not have to be negative for the project or the individuals involved. A dual leadership or a leadership shared in different ways is appropriate for non-profit organisations according to both literature (e.g. Moreaus, 2012) and the respondents; however, the respondents disagree upon whether it would work in a corporate organisation. The examples of organisations using shared leadership are all non-profit organisations, which do not have as a goal to earn money, but emphasise values such as democracy, morality and personal values instead. A dual leadership seem to be a way of suiting the leadership of the organisations, which is important even in a non-profit such (Moraeus, 2012), to the core values and purpose of the organisation. Within the Scout Movement, the dual leadership answers to the aims of the organisation in developing people, supporting each other, involving many in decision making, including more people to leadership, encouraging people to try leading, and stating that a leader is leading and not someone with power to order you around. Such an organisation differs from a non-profit in that people work for monetary compensation, which means that the incentives to go through troubles in creating a dual leadership structure might not be as high. People might get more compensation if they work well, which means it is important who gets the credit for what actions, which must be irrelevant in a dual leadership. The risk is that the leaders become competitors and do not work well together, which risks the whole leadership.

Conclusion

The project team which planned and realised the World Scout Jamboree 2011 used a dual leadership at all levels within the organisation. This research aimed to find out how a dual leadership might work and why an organisation chooses to work with dual leadership. It is clear that the dual leadership can work in different ways and will do so if the structures and rules for the leadership are not stated beforehand. This and also the fact that the internal relationship between the two leaders are affected by the values, knowledge and experiences by the two individuals, which in turns affect how they build their relationships, makes dual leadership a concept that can be structured in a certain way, however, will always work differently. The recruitment of leaders is important as well, since it is expected of them to be able to communicate, both with the co-leader, followers and external, and is prestigeless enough to share the leader position and all that comes with it with another and e.g. experiences of working in groups must be more emphasised.

In a corporate organisation, values such as efficiency and profit are important, however, in a non-profit organisation, values such as democracy and the communion are emphasised instead. Thus, a non-profit organisation could strengthen their values using a dual leadership, however, it also contains hard work in making it work well and demands an understanding in the organisation that e.g. decision making can take longer, but will end up more well-reasoned. It is also important to note the strong cultural norm surrounding the concept of leadership that there is only one leader.

However, the only way of breaking this belief is through trying. The organisations, which have dared to try sharing leadership, both in the literature reviewed and in the study, are positive towards it and it would be interesting to revisit the organisation Scouterna in some years to see if their view on dual leadership is still the same.

This study provides a story of how a dual leadership might work. However, it also raises further questions, which were introduced by the respondents or the author. Could a dual leadership work in a corporate organisation and would it benefit from sharing leadership this way? How would dual leadership work in another country, which believes more strictly in hierarchy than Sweden? How does dual leadership affect the gender issues surrounding leadership and how does recruitment need to be adapted?

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Figures

Figure 1. The organisation of the World Scout Jamboree planning team (WSJ Organisation, 2009, p. 7).