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Managers of tomorrow

A case study of how Talent Management is performed within the public sector in Sweden

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Abstract

Problem: Organisations of today are facing high pressure to identify critical competences in order to handle future challenges, due to demographic changes and competition of talent. In order to face these challenges and keep critical competences it is important to direct focus on the relatively new concept of Talent Management. This new concept of Talent Management can work as a tool for organisations to identify and develop employees with critical competences in order for the organisation to meet future demands. How Talent Management is performed within the public sector is still an unexplored area.

Purpose: The purpose of this thesis is to explore the field of Talent Management in a public sector context. This study aims at exploring *why* an organisation within the public sector in Sweden performs Talent Management. The aim is also to increase the understanding of *how* this process is performed within the organisation. Further aim is also on individuals' role within the Talent Management program.

Methodology: In order to answer the research questions a qualitative approach was necessary, in this explorative and descriptive case study research. Data was primarily collected through fourteen semi-structured interviews and corporate documents. The interviews have been performed with individuals on different levels within the organisation's and all of these individuals are connected to the Talent Management program, and they have different roles within the program.

Findings: Talent Management can be used as a tool when identify critical competences needed for the future. Furthermore, identifying employees that have the interest and ability to fill these critical positions can function as a way for organisations to proactively identify and develop managers of tomorrow by the use of a talent pool. The findings indicate the importance of feedback in order to keep developing individuals. Feedback and follow-up meetings can function as a way to motivate employees and to ensure they stay within the organization. In this way the organisation can gain advantage of the talent pool.

Key Words: *TM, Talent Management, High Potential, Talent, HR, and Human Resources.*

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1. Introduction

In 1997 the global management consulting firm McKinsey & Company created the expression “*The war for talent*”. This expression describes the labour market during these times where organisations tried to do everything in their power to keep competent employees within the organisation. Simultaneously, highly skilled employees had the advantage to carefully choose organisations to work for and to put high demand on these organisations, since organisations were in desperate need to recruit. Many organisations started to view talent as an asset to the organisation’s competitive advantages and it was therefore crucial to attract, retain and develop talented employees (Handfield-Jones & Axelrod, 2001).

The economic crisis in the years 2000-2008 resulted in restructuring and downsizing. At this time many organisations laid off employees and are now facing a talent-shortage (Colling & Melliah, 2009). Both demographic changes, where a large amount of managers are expected to retire within the coming years (SKL, 2011a), and existing talent-shortage as an effect of the bad economic times (Colling & Melliah, 2009) result in challenges for today’s organisations. In this way the “*war for talent*” is still on-going. Organisations are in need of developing strategies to reach competitive advantages.

1.1 Background and problematisation

Since the environment that organisations are working in has become more globalised during the past decades organisations face increased challenges to sustain competitiveness, keep their talent and reach internal and external competitive advantages. Some of the challenges that globalisation has brought with it are an increased variation in talents, higher demands from customers, suppliers and employees and rapid changes in critical competences (Tarique & Schuler, 2009). Several researchers have investigated how organisations in the private sector are facing challenges and how these organisations are working with strategies to retain talent in order to gain competitive advantages (Tarique & Schuler, 2009; Iles, et al, 2010; Wollard, 2010; Collings & Mellahi, 2009). But is it only the private sector that is affected by these global challenges? Or is it also crucial for the public sector? Hood (1991) describes a paradigm shift from the bureaucratic public administration towards a new public management (NPM). This shift includes the importance for the public sector to adjust and use private sector styles of management practices in order to stay competitive. The organisation for economic co-operation (OECD, 1997) describes in a report the increased use of incentives in order for the public sector to be competitive with the private sector as one way to improve performance. Falconer (1997) indicate that in order for the public sector to compete with the private sector it must be more business-like, in other words adjust to the private sector regarding e.g. reward structure, more flexible work practices and pay-for-performance.

If we turn to the public sector in Sweden the following example are visible. Within the public sector in Sweden have about 37 000 managers employed. Approximately 15 000 of these are in the age of 55 or older (SKL, 2011a), which indicates that a large number of them will retire in the near future. This demographic challenge that the public sectors in Sweden is facing indicates an interesting case. Since there is no

research within this specific context it becomes interesting to explore how and an organisation within the public sector in Sweden handles these challenges.

In order to face these challenges and keep critical competences it is important to focus on Talent Management (TM). There are various definitions of TM but the most common one is focusing on managing people, which encompasses succession planning, career planning, learning and development as well as resource planning. These activities are important for every employee within the organisation but when it comes to TM the main focus is on identifying talented employees and key positions (Lewis & Heckman, 2006; Woollard, 2010; Collings & Mellahi, 2009). These talented employees are often mentioned as high potentials within academia and described as employees with key competences that organisations want to sustain and develop within the future (McDonnell, Lamare, Gunnigle & Lavelle, 2010; Colling & Mellahi, 2009; Tarique & Schuler, 2009). It is vital that the organisation have the ability to identify these talented employees with critical competences needed to face the future. Furthermore, it is important that these identified individuals stay committed to the organisation (Colling & Mellahi, 2009). This ability is crucial for every organisation, independent of sector, to manage since these individuals are important for future success. There is a range of researchers that have shown the importance of TM and identification of high potential employees with critical competences (McDonnell, Lamare, Gunnigle & Lavelle, 2010; Colling & Mellahi, 2009; Tarique & Schuler, 2009) this is, however, not investigated within the public sector context.

Since previous research has mainly focused on TM processes within the private sector there is a need to widen the scope to include the public sector. In addition this is something that is of importance for the public sector as well since, as pointed out above, there is a need to fill key positions within the public sector as well due to demographic challenges (SKL, 2012b) and in order to compete with the private sector. To better understand the process and how it is performed within the public sector in Sweden it is of interest to take other involved individuals view into consideration. Since organisations worldwide have come to realise that knowledge, skills and abilities of core employees represent a major source of the internal competitive advantages practices such as TM is an important subject for the agenda. Therefore, the questions regarding how and why the public sector in Sweden perform TM is therefore vital to explore further.

1.2 Research purpose

Given the current focus on the importance of TM in order to meet future demands and gain competitive advantages (McDonnell, et al., 2010; Colling & Mellahi, 2009; Tarique & Schuler, 2009) and rather limited research on TM within a public sector context (McDonnell, et al., 2010; Iles, Chuai & Preece, 2010) this thesis aims at increasing the understanding and knowledge about TM. Regarding previous definitions of TM where focus is on identifying employees with critical competences and develop these employees in order to stay competitive within the future (McDonnell et al., 2010), and due to the paradigm shift from bureaucratic public administration towards NPM (Hood, 1991) the purpose of this thesis is to explore how and why an organisation within the public sector in Sweden perform TM.

Furthermore the purpose is also to understand the individuals involved in the TM program perception of it.

This thesis is based on previous research in the field of Talent Management with focus on HR such as Colling and Mellahi (2009) and Lombardo and Eichinger (2000). When seeking answer to the purpose of this thesis several contributions to existing research field are made. Firstly, theoretical implications contribute to the understanding of how Talent Management is performed within the public sector. Secondly, this thesis contributes to managerial implications regarding different characteristics of high potentials which Lombardo and Eichinger (2000) investigated and high potentials view of their career opportunities that Dries and Pepermans (2007) investigated. The results of this research will improve our understanding of TM within the public sector in Sweden and different individuals' roles within this process, which can provide manager with an increased understanding of the process and their employees.

The mentioned purposes have resulted in the following research questions:

- *Why does an organisation within the public sector in Sweden perform TM?*
- *How does an organisation within the public sector in Sweden perform TM?*
- *What are the roles of involved individuals' within the TM program?*

1.3 Thesis Disposition

Chapter 2 – Conceptual framework

This chapter contains a review of previous literature and theories around Talent Management and key methods that are vital to understand in order to investigate the subject further. This conceptual framework is the base for the analysis.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

This chapter contains the method section where the process and criteria for selecting case and data method are presented. Besides this, clarifying limitations are presented and defended along with argumentation concerning validity and reliability in this section.

Chapter 4 – Empirical Findings

This chapter contains the presentation of empirical findings emerged during the performed interviews. The empirical findings is connected to the research questions and concerns how this organisation works with this program and why they perform this program.

Chapter 5 – Analysis

This chapter contains an analysis of the conceptual framework presented in chapter two together with the empirical findings from chapter four. Within this part of the thesis some similarities and differences are discussed.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

The last chapter contains a summary of the key findings within this research. Furthermore, contributions will be presented and discussed and future recommendations will be discussed together with limitations of this research defended.

2. Conceptual framework

This section contains a description of previous research within the field of Talent Management. Furthermore, the main focus in this section is on the process of identifying and selecting talent and the recruitment process of talents. This conceptual framework will form the base for the analysis in this thesis.

2.1 The concept of Talent Management

It is generally accepted that employees are a company's most important assets. Without these individuals, there is no functioning business. This description is widely used within the Human Resource Management (HRM) literature and by effectively manage employees at the workplace it is possible for the organisation to gain competitive advantages (Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Luthans & Youssef, 2004). The definition of HRM involves different set of practices with the aim to create individual and workforce performance. One HRM practice, Talent Management (TM), is a concept which has gained increasingly interest during the past few years both from researchers and practitioners and they all agree upon the opinion that there is a strong lack of consistency with regard to the definition and how organisations perform TM (MCDonnell et al., 2010; Iles, et al, 2010, Lewis & Heckman, 2006; Woollard, 2010; Collings & Mellahi, 2009).

As a result of previous researchers' differing in their views of the concept of TM it is of interest to understand the different perspectives. In order to provide an overview of the research agenda Lewis and Heckman (2006) identified three themes within the TM research, which explains different views of this phenomenon. Research within the field of TM within the public sector in Sweden hasn't been done before which makes it interesting to view different themes of TM in order to understand the studied organisation.

The first research theme indicates that TM is a collection of typical HRM practices and functions where the main focus is on managing people, which covers succession planning, career planning, learning and development as well as recruitment and selection. These activities are important for every employee within the organisation (Lewis & Heckman, 2006; Woollard, 2010). Researchers such as Colling and Mellahi (2009) expressed critique towards this definition of TM. Their critique involves the argumentation that TM is just another re-branding of old HR-activities. In this way it would be to reinvent the wheel all over again when viewing TM in the light of this first theme.

The second research theme of TM concerns the focus on talent pools and flow of human resources through the organisation. These activities concern TM-practices, which handle work force movement between positions within the organisation. Although this theme concerns regular HR-activities such as staffing, training, succession planning and development of an employee the main focus is on the employees needs in order for them to develop further (Lewis & Heckman, 2006). This process concern how organisations drive performance and develop employees. It is vital that these TM processes are focusing on attracting, retaining and developing talented employees, which can be very challenging for organisations (Lewis & Heckman, 2006; Woollard, 2010). There is a strong similarity between regular HR activities and these TM activities and they are therefore not necessary to distinguish

between since they are practices which HR have been doing for a long time (Colling & Mellahi, 2009).

The third theme concerns TM with the main focus on maximising the amount of high performers within the organisation. These high performers are categorised as “A”-performers and are valued as top performers (top-talent, high potentials, high flyers) and employees categorised as “B” or “C”-performers are valued as low or under-performers and the goal is to eliminate these employees and replace them A-players (Lewis & Heckman, 2006). Huselid, Beatty & Becker (2005) states, “... *a great work force is made up by great people*” (2005:1). This quote and the previous argumentation support the action regarding putting focus on top talent and on identification, development and retaining of these A-players. This focus, however, is criticised by researchers such as Huselid et al. (2005) who argues that an effective organisation needs not only A-players but also B and C-players in order to achieve competitive advantages. Furthermore, according to Colling and Melliah (2009) the goal should not only be to have A-players within the organisation and it is on these grounds a fourth theme within the TM research has risen.

The fourth theme that Collings and Melliah (2009) identified sets focus on the key positions rather in the organisation than solely on the A-performers. The focus is therefore on the identification of key positions that have specific value for the organisation’s competitive advantages and are crucial for the future. Furthermore, it is only when organisations have identified key positions possible to fully explore the internal high potential employees and it can be viewed as the starting point for the creation of a talent pool where these talented employees are grouped. To make it possible to identify talented employees that fit into key positions, the organisation’s HR-architecture is important in order to locate the talent and fill the position with the “right employees”. Besides this, focus is also on employee’s motivation and commitment towards the organisation in order to secure that these employees stays within the organisation since they are seen as future key players. In order to understand what the organisation needs for the future the organisations external and internal environment are of importance to understand.

Since the internal and external environment puts demand on the organisation to react. This can be explained by Stahl’s (2007) *Demand and Supply gap model*. This model concerns rising demand and declining supply. Firstly, the *rising demand* contains demands from the external environment in which the organisation works (such as customers, suppliers, internal employees) which puts higher pressure on specific abilities. Secondly, *declining demand* includes internal environment such as demographic changes and higher demands from employees who value work-life balance. Furthermore, the global society has created increased job mobility and a more flexible workforce. The challenges put on organisations to face this internal pressure leads to questions regarding the quality of the identified high potentials and if there are enough people identified to handle the demand from internal stakeholders and demographic changes (ibid).

Although there are several identified research themes within the field of TM where the main focus are shown to be on identifying employees with critical competences and identify positions that are vital for the organisation to have in the future. Since this brings challenges for organisations due to several reasons e.g. external and

internal demand on organisation in order to adjust and react. These challenges bring focus on strategies that organisations use when performing TM.

2.2 A Talent Management strategy

The complex and rapidly changing environment with challenges concerning how to value human capital, identifying key positions and finding high potential employees to fill these positions have put pressure on organisations in order to remain competitive and to keep developing employees. Identification of talent and the continuous work with the development of these employees is necessary, as an effect of e.g. demographic changes and higher demand from customers (Tarique & Schuler, 2010). In order to handle these mentioned challenges it is vital to understand the strategy that organisations can use in their work with TM.

The fourth theme of TM presented in the previous section by Colling and Mellahi (2009) exemplifies one strategy of TM where focus is on identifying key positions within the organisation, which brings several outcomes for the organisation. This process involves several steps and is presented in the figure below (Figure, 1).

The first step within this TM strategy is to identify pivotal or key positions. These key positions have a strategic value for the organisation and are therefore in focus due to its purpose, to reach the organisational goals and to reach competitive advantages. These positions are identified by the organisation as crucial positions for the future (ibid). In order to identify these employees both internal and external needs to be considered since they are influencing the organisation (Stahl, 2007).

The second step within this TM strategy is to secure the previously mentioned key positions being filled within the future which leads to the definition of a talent pools. The main idea with a talent pool is that it should consist of talented employees that are identified to have the qualities that the organisation has identified as key competences (step 1). When individual that have the required qualities are identified as talents, by the organisation, they are put in a talent pool (Colling & Mellahi, 2009).

These two steps within the TM strategy puts focus on the HR-architecture as well as management. In order to support this TM strategy the focus for HR and management is on increasing the opportunities to create the talent pool, identifying talented employees and keep them committed and motivated towards the organisation as a way to ensure that they want to stay within the organisation (ibid). In this way the efforts made within the identification of key positions and talented employees suited for these positions will influence the firms' performance, the outcome.

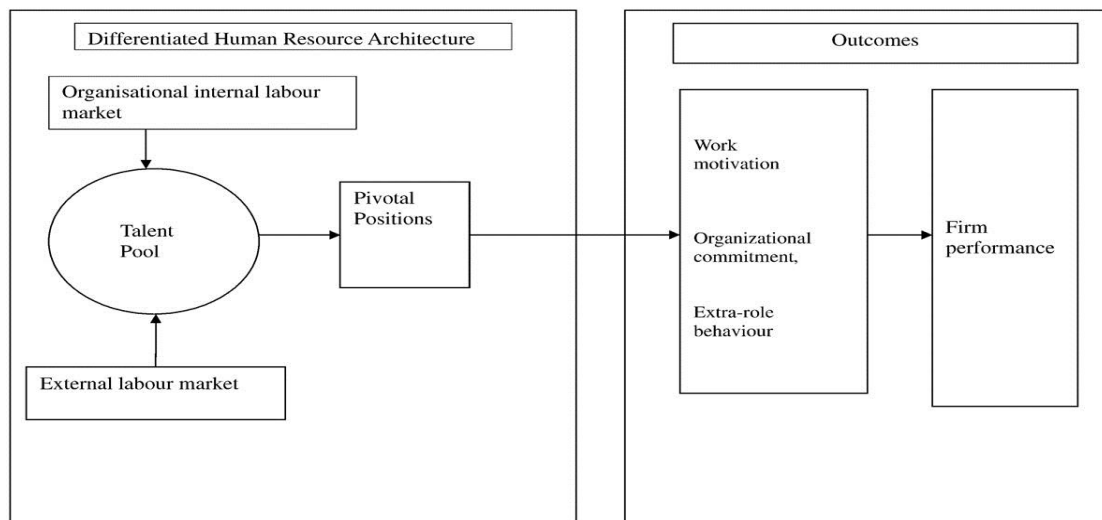


Figure 1. A theoretical model of strategic talent management (Colling & Mellahi, 2009).

The outcome of the previously mentioned two steps within the figure above (Figure 1) is described in the right column. The wanted outcome within this TM strategy is to create positive outcomes for the individual as well as firm performance. The individual factors in this figure are work-motivation, organisational commitment and extra-role behaviour (ibid). The first factor, *work-motivation*, is based on the AMO-framework presented by Boxall and Purcell (2008). The AMO-framework explains the performance of employees as a result of their individual ability, motivation and opportunity to perform. The figure above (Figure 1) suggests a higher level of individual performance as an effect of identifying key positions and high potential employees and placing these individuals at key positions. The factor, organisational commitment, is a result when high potential employees perceive that their personal beliefs are linked and connected with the organisational goals. The factor, extra-role behaviour, concerns the match of key position with a high potential employee might lead to increased commitment and reinforced behaviour according to Colling and Melliah (2009). Previously mentioned three factors works together or by themselves when affecting the organisational performance (ibid). Consequences of misplacing individuals can be costly for organisation since talents which are aimed at A-positions requires high investments regarding their development (Lepak & Snell's, 1999, 2001).

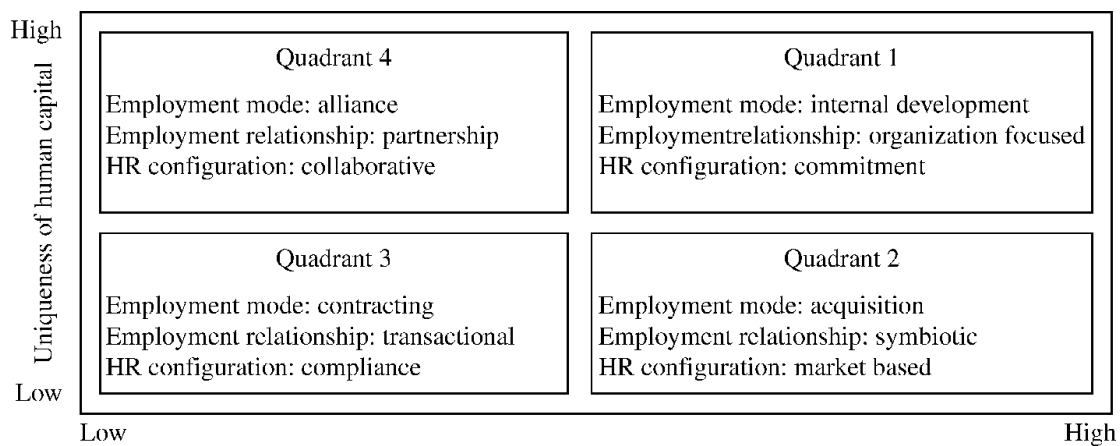
Previous sections have described the creation of a TM strategy (Figure 1), which includes the identification and creation of a Talent Pool in order to fill key positions. The aim with the described TM strategy is to affect the organisational performance. Even though this outcome can be different for between organisations, since it can be various aims with the strategy, the model is vital for this research to understand. The model provides with a theoretical explanation of a TM strategy which we further can understand when performing this research within the public sector in Sweden. It is, however, also important to understand the selection of talents in order to further understand where organisations locate their talent.

2.3 Selection of Talent

In the introduction of this section in the paper human capital is described as the most important asset for an organisation. In order to cherish the internal human capital is vital for organisations to locate and select their talent since they can be spread through

the organisation. Lepak and Snell (1999) describe a model (Figure 2) of different human capital characteristics. The model is based on the resource-based view (RBV) and consists of four quadrants. These four quadrants are based on the value of *human capital* and *level of uniqueness* which can be measured in high and low. *Knowledge-based employment, Job-based employment, contractual work arrangement and alliance/partnership segment* are the four quadrants that statues different kinds of value for the organisation. When understanding how organisations locate their internal talents and the reason why organisation puts certain focus on specific employees can be understood by this model. The model have previously been used by researchers investigating private sector (Colling and Mellahi, 2009; McDonnell, et al, 2010) and it is therefore interesting to understand this model in a Swedish public sector context.

The first quadrant, *Knowledge based employment*, characterise skilled and talented human capital that are seen as valuable since they are “one of a kind”. They are crucial for the organisation since they can contribute to the strategic objective and therefore focus should be set on these knowledge workers (Lepak & Snell, 1999; McDonnell, et al. 2010). These workers are the next generation of leaders as they have unique skills, which are important for the organisation (Stahl, 2007; Colling and Melliah, 2009). According to McDonnell et al. (2010) these jobs can range from analyst to client executive to chemist to R&D staff. Employees within this quadrant require HRM activities that concerns attracting, retaining and developing activities in order to reach the organisational strategic goals (Tarique & Schuler, 2010). Individuals located in this quadrant are valued as unique for the organisational outcome and is therefore often valued as core competencies. These employees are highly valued by the organisation and often difficult to replace.



Source: Lepak and Snell (1999)
Figure 2

The second quadrant, *Job-based employment*, characterises the human capital that have strategic value for the organisation but that is not unique. Individuals located in this quadrant are easily transferred and easy to find on the labour market, which makes them less attractive unless it is valued as a core competence. These competences can be found in jobs such as accountant (Lepak & Snell, 1999; McDonnell et al, 2010). According to McDonnell et al. (2010) individuals within this quadrant is often performing in positions as accountants which is a highly valuable

competence for the organisation, however, not unique for the firm since the organisation can easily find replacer for this individual.

The third quadrant, *contractual work arrangement*, characterises the human capital with low uniqueness and low stakeholder value for the firm. These positions are often the most obvious choice to outsource and candidates that match this quadrant are therefore seldom identified as talents (Lepak & Snell, 1999; McDonnell et al, 2010). In order to select and locate talents these quadrant can be viewed as not that valuable when locating talent.

The fourth quadrant, *Alliance/partnership segment*, is characterised by unique human capital through special skills that works best in a partnership where both parties can gain from each other's services and they are therefore most likely to be external consultants with expert knowledge and not that important to employ internally (Lepak & Snell, 1999; McDonnell et al, 2010). Individuals within this quadrant have unique skills, however, their value for the organisation is limited.

This section has brought up parts concerning the selection and location of talent and the focus is on what the organisation needs. The location and selection of talent are indicates that high potentials are preferably within the first quadrant. Although the research made by Lepak & Snell (1999) is criticised by researchers such as e.g. Boxall and Purcell (2008) regarding the core positions and core competence since this is something organisations have a hard time to define themselves. Further focus will be on high potential characteristics, which brings several focuses for Human resource as well.

2.4 Talent characteristics

The TM strategy, which Colling and Mellahi (2009) described, is focusing on specific key positions. When the focus is set it is vital to understand how to locate and select talent. Previous sections have described the location of talent within an organisation and show which individuals that can be seen as unique and important for the organisation (Lepak and Snell, 1999). When the knowledge regarding the TM strategy and locating and selection of talent is explored it is vital for the organisation to investigate what characteristics that represent talent. It is when these characteristics are explored possible to create a talent pool and in order for the organisation to further develop these individuals. Lepak and Snell (1999) are focusing on the level of uniqueness and human capital in order for the selection and localisation of talent to be rather clear. If we then turn to another model (Figure 3) described by Lombardo and Eichinger (2000) who are not solely focusing on level of uniqueness and value for the organisation but on different characteristics of high potentials. It is these characteristics that make it possible for the organisation to further develop these individuals and to understand their needs.

Lombardo and Eichinger (2000) describe four different characteristics of learning agility regarding high potentials. The learning agility can be a way to measure the ability to lead others and how these individuals deal with change. This model describes different HR investments in measuring and further developing talent. These four factors of learning agility are measured in a scale where the learning agility is rated. In order for the individual to be considered a candidate for the talent pool they

needs to be “rated” high on all factors of learning agility. In relation to Lepack and Snell (1999) these individuals would be located in the first quadrant with high level of uniqueness and high value of human capital.

Firstly, the *people agility*, individuals that have a high score in this factor also have high self-awareness and enjoy giving and taking constructive feedback since it can lead to personal development. Another characteristic is that they appear to be interested in helping others and they are open to different opinions if it brings different views to the table. They enjoy new problems and the challenges that it might bring and this is something that develops their abilities further (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2000). This characteristic is in line with Dries and Pepermans (2012) definition of *analytic skills*. This characteristic shows the ability to transform decision making into problem solving. This quadrant is characterised by the urge to be open, to appreciate and use feedback as a way to develop themselves further and they have the ability to solve problems.

Second, the *result agility*, individuals that have a high score on this factor are very result oriented, focused on performance and handles innovation and change well (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2000). This characteristic is in line with Dries and Pepermans (2012) definition of the *drive*. It includes abilities to be result oriented, dedicated to the work and willingness to make sacrifices for the organisation.

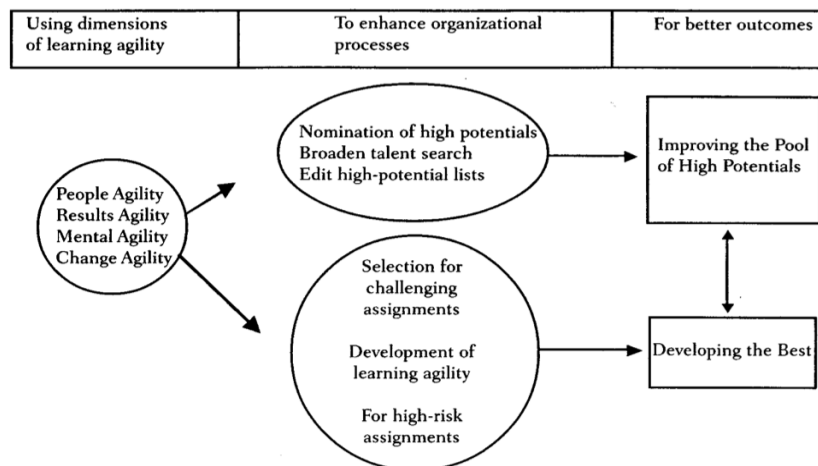


FIGURE 1. HR investments in measuring and developing potential.

Figure 3: *HR Investments in measuring and developing potential* (Lombardo and Eichinger, 2000)

Thirdly, the *mental agility*, individuals that are ranked high in this factor tend to like new things and the learning and personal development it might bring with it. They have strong analytical skills and enjoy going far in order to seek the answer. They are structured in the way of presenting ideas to others (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2000). Dries and Pepermans (2012) describe the characteristics of *learning agility* as qualities that consists of factors such as willingness to learn new things, emotional intelligence and ability to adopt and learn from previous experiences.

Lastly, the *change agility*, individuals that have a high score in this factor are eager to change things to make it better, are innovative and interested and strive to reach improvements through leadership (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2000). This is in line with Dries and Pepermans (2012) description of the *emergent leadership*. Where individuals are described as eager to enter leadership roles and have high external perception.

In order for organisations to gain an understanding of their talents this brings several focus areas for HR in order to improve the pool of high potentials. Performance and potential are often criteria used when reviewing and selecting talent into a talent pool. Mäkelä, Björkman and Ehrnrooth (2010) describe the final decision when it comes to Talent pools. These decisions are usually performed on talent review meetings and/or performance appraisals.

During performance appraisals it is mostly about past performances which are evaluated and graded (ibid). Through reviews of previous performance records and considering performance appraisals, HR plays an important role within this process. In addition to the four factors of learning agility it is important to take into account employees rating in these factors (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2000). Within the talent review meetings focus is on the potential that the individual have in order to reach higher within the future. Key positions that have been identified by the organisation should match the potential within the specific individual.

In the figure above (Figure 3) by Lombardo and Eichinger (2000) the grading of learning agility possible to use this information on e.g. talent reviews where talents are discussed. The first path concerns how the individuals are ranked within the learning agility factors. If employees are considered to have the learning agility that the organisation wishes for, this leads to a nomination to the list of high potential.

The second path concerns the focus on selection of challenging assignments for the individual and the ability to develop learning agility. The role of HR within this path is to take part in the creation of development plans, in order for the individual to develop further. The focus in these development plans is on the individuals' ability to change and adjust from previous learning experiences and in this way raise his/hers potential (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2000). This second path described in the above figure (figure 3) is suited to be used during performance appraisals since focus is on development and actions which can be taken in the future.

When individuals have high on all factors of learning agility and have been either put on the high potential list or assigned challenging assignment this brings outcome for the organisation. This outcome brings either focus on developing the best employees or more quality in the list of high potential (ibid). In this way the organisation identifies internal high potentials, which in turn lead to the outcome of an improved pool of high potential.

Within this section of the thesis different important characteristics have been presented which increases the understanding these individuals. Focus has also been on performance and potential where the former focus on past performance and the later on potential that the individual have. The role of HR within this process is to identify and continuously develop these individuals. Since all processes concerning TM also

concerns human capital it is both vital to understand individual's characteristics and what the outcome might be of a talent.

2.5 The effects of a Talent Pool

Today, some large organisations are focusing on their top players while eliminating low performers. Various researchers that have brought up descriptions of different characteristics those top players (high potential employees) should have (Lepak & Snell, 1999; Huselid et al., 2005; Dries & Pepermans, 2012; Lombardo & Eichinger, 2000). Even though researchers have shown that an increased amount of organisations in the private sector are using TM it is of interest to understand what effect it might bring for the organisation.

It is, however, argued that it is neither desirable nor effective to solely focus on the A-players within an organisation, since this is a waste of resources. In order for organisations to be more effective and meet future challenges it is important that focus is on various individuals. It is not effective to only have A-players on every position within the organisation since this would be a negative effect for the organisation (Collings and Mellahi, 2009). This is negative for the organisation in terms of costs as identifying and developing top talent can be very costly. This statement is in line with Huselid et al. (2005) who argues that the effective organisation have not only A-players but also B and C-players, which is necessary in order to achieve competitive advantages. The starting point, however, is on the identification of A-positions, key positions, vital to the organisation.

In accordance with Lepak and Snell's (1999) definition of the characteristics of human capital, A-players can be viewed in the quadrant of *knowledge-based employment* where they are seen as the unique and valuable. Huselid et al. (2005) describes A-position most likely to be filled by A-players and a position that has a direct influence on the business strategy. Individuals within these positions deliver highly valuable outcome and are often described as high potential.

B-position is positions that have an indirect influence on the business strategy but provides impact when supporting A-players or has strategic impact but low power to impact on their own (Huselid et al., 2005). These positions can be viewed in the *job-based quadrant*, where the individuals within this position have strategic value for the organisation but they are not unique and more likely to act supportive towards A-players (Lepak & Snell's, 1999).

C-positions may be needed for the firm but have little power and low strategic value. These positions don't necessarily need to be within the organisation rather it is possible to outsource or eliminate these positions (Huselid et al. (2005). These positions are in line with Lepak and Snell's (1999) description of *contractual work arrangement*, where the employees are easy to replace and individuals that don't add much value for the organisation.

The consequences of misplacing individuals can bring negative effects on the organisations regarding e.g. increased costs since talents requires high investments regarding their development (Lepak and Snell's, 1999), and it is therefore important to place right individuals at right place from the start. Although, identification of talent can bring different outcome for the organisation it is vital to understand the

public sector and their main challenges. Since previous researchers have investigated TM in a private sector context it is of interest to understand how the public sector in Sweden is constructed and what changes the public sector has faced. Furthermore, this is vital since in order to understand how and why TM can be used within the public sector in Sweden.

2.6 Public sector in Sweden and NPM

In Sweden the public sector is divided into three main actors: state, municipalities and counties. It is the parliament and the government that makes this division (Stadsdelskontoret, 2011). There are 290 municipalities and 20 counties within the public sector in Sweden. Within these municipalities and counties there are units working to serve the general public in various ways. These tax-funded units consist of healthcare, eldercare, childcare, education, defence, public transport and infrastructure and are financial supported through taxes and government grants. It is, however, up to the municipality themselves to decide upon the size of the tax and distribute the finances through the municipality. The public sector is a politically driven organisation and inhabitants in each municipality vote in local elections for political parties to govern the municipality in a four-year period. During the past few years there has been an increased trend towards more privatisation of “old” public sector areas such as healthcare, schools and eldercare in Sweden (Gothenburg, 1a, 2013).

During the past decades the public sector in Sweden has been involved in a range of changes e.g. restructuring and the merging of municipalities. During the time of 1952-1974 the municipalities in Sweden changed from 2500 to 275 as an effect of the mergers. One reason for this is mentioned to be the need to adjust to the business community and to the high concentration of inhabitants in specific areas. A few years later between 1970-1980 a central tool was introduced. This tool aimed at governing public sector budgets with the focus on long-time plans. During 1980-1990 discussions regarding different ideas of management where a hot topic and several private organisations performed as role models when the public sector tried to adapt their management practices. These practices included different models to control the outcome and measure performance, such as provider model and result government. The main focus was on creating a public sector that could be competitive. The new style of management is to be more horizontal and less hierarchical with a customer focus (Almqvist, 2006). The concept that is used to describe the two past decade’s transitions within the public sector is new public management (NPM). The reason for NPM is mentioned to the need for the public sector to change in order to catch up with the private sector and to meet the demand from customers. This transition is something that makes the public and private sector more similar when it comes to setting goals, measuring results and management processes (Hood, 1991). Previous sections have showed TM strategies, the location of talent and the selection and further development of these chosen talents. It is this view on TM and NPM that provides a base for this research in order to investigate how and why the public sector in Sweden performs TM.

2.7 Theoretical summary

This second chapter contributes with a collected view on the research field of TM and where it is today. Since it is clearly different views on TM where some researchers

argue that TM is critical to the firm's success, being able to give a competitive edge through identification, development and redeployment of talented employees. Other argues that TM is more than HRM, leadership development initiatives and succession planning. It is the collective approach to attract, retaining and developing talent within the organisation for future benefits. Or that it is just a re-branding of regular HR activities.

Although these various views on the concept of TM a pattern is shown in the conceptual framework. This pattern indicates that focus is on establishing a talent pool. For organisations it is important that the starting point is on critical positions and what competences are needed for these positions in order to stay competitive. It is also described to be important to follow up this process in order to increase individuals' motivation, organisational commitment and performance.

The identification and selection of individuals are focusing on specific characteristics that are important for these individuals to have in order to match the organisations goals. It is therefore of importance to understand high potentials goals for the future and perception of the TM process in order to meet their expectations. It is, however, not desirable to only focus on the A-players since other players are vital for the organisational success. But A-players are more likely to be suited for the talent pool according to previous existing research. In order to understand the specific individuals it is also of interest to understand the public sector and the changes that have brought another focus during the past two decades.

During the past two decades the public sector in Sweden has been involved in a range of changes e.g. restructuring of merging municipalities together. Today the public sectors management style is more horizontal and less hierarchical with a customer focus, more business-oriented is a concept that is used to describe the two past decade's transitions within the public sector and are also mentioned as new public management (NPM). NPM is mentioned to be the effect of the public sectors need of change in order to catch up with the private sector. It is in this way the public sector has become more like the private sector regarding management practices, goal settings and measuring result. Through an increased understanding of how and why organisations within the public sector perform TM it is possible to explore the phenomena within this specific context. It is also of interest to view challenges that the public sector are facing in the future and if previous research also is applicable on the public sector in Sweden.

3. Methodology

This section of the thesis describes the method for collecting data and how the data was analysed. This case study approach explores the phenomena of TM within the public sector.

3.1 Research Approach

The main purpose of this thesis is to explore the phenomenon of TM within the public sector and answering the research questions regarding *how* and *why* it is performed and what different individuals' roles are within the TM program. Since previous research in the field of TM is non-existent within a public sector context, this research takes an exploratory approach (cf. Mills, Durepos & Wiebe, 2010). In order to increase the understanding of the topic and broaden the scope a qualitative method will be used in order to expand the insight about how TM is performed within the public sector in Sweden (Bryman, 2011).

Since this research is not only focusing on exploring the phenomenon but also on how and why TM is performed within the public sector this makes this research descriptive. A descriptive method seeks to understand the phenomenon in order to describe it. This research explores the phenomena of TM within the public sector in Sweden. The intention was not, however, to generalize or to explain causal relationships but to show how the public sector faces these new practices such as TM and to be representative for this specific population.

Through the use of a strategy that focuses on exploring the phenomenon further it is natural to use a case study approach. Previous research within this field lacks the focus of the complete TM process and holistic view on one specific case. Other limitations within these previous studies are also visible since they are not including actual high potentials, which make this case an interesting one. It is also even more interesting to follow one specific case and especially within the public sector in Sweden.

3.2 Research Design

3.2.1 Case study

Case studies can be combined with an explorative and descriptive approach and makes it possible to gain a holistic view and capture the reality. Besides, when the research questions aims at *how* and *why* this approach is typically appropriate (Yin, 2007) which is the case for this research. This research includes one specific case since it aims at investigating a rather unknown area (Eisenhardt, 1999). This research aims at improving the understanding of this new phenomenon. This case moves away from the normative viewpoint, that previous researchers within this area have already done, and use a descriptive case study method (Hakim, 2008). A case study can be more flexible than e.g. strict qualitative or quantitative methods as it provides a description of one or more cases. In order for a case to be selected they need to meet required criteria, which are vital since they provides the research with a description of a specific phenomenon (Bryman, 2011).

3.2.2 Case Selection

Since the main purpose with this thesis is to investigate *how* and *why* public sector in Sweden performs TM and different individuals' role within a TM program, the first criteria concerns the need of an organisation within the public sector in Sweden. The second criteria concern the fact that the organisations needed for this case study perform some sort of TM program. In order to capture the phenomenon within this case study it is vital to include various individuals, connected to the TM program such as HR, managers and high potentials. In order gain increased insight into how and why the public sector in Sweden performs TM an organisation that meets these criteria is needed. These criteria are of importance since it is through studying an organisation within the public sector in Sweden, which has a TM strategy, possible to investigate the phenomena within this specific context. In order to cover different angles it is vital to interview individuals in different roles within the TM program. In this way it is possible to gain insight about different individuals' view of the TM program.

3.2.3 The case

By examining webpages of different municipalities it was possible to investigate whether TM programs were performed within these organisations. In order to meet the above outlined criteria regarding the case selection it was natural to select one organisation within the public sector in Sweden and more specifically the municipality of Gothenburg City, which matched the criteria due to several reasons. Firstly, this municipality serves half a million inhabitants with services such as healthcare, childcare, education, defence, public transport and infrastructure. This municipality have approximately 48 600 employees (Gothenburg City, 1a). Secondly, within this municipality there is a program that aims at identifying employees with competence and driving forces for the future that have the ability and interest to enter a managerial position within the future. Through a program named "*Managers of tomorrow*" the municipality of Gothenburg City have worked since 2006 with identifying and developing of employees that have the ability and interest in becoming managers. The program has approximately 70 participants every year. Thirdly, although the municipality of Gothenburg hasn't defined TM as a concept, their program "*Managers of Tomorrow*" has been identified as a TM program within this research and will be referred to as TM program through the rest of the thesis.

3.3 Data Collection

3.3.1 Secondary data

Secondary data such as corporate documents and guidelines regarding the program have mainly been gathered through the organisations webpage and other electronic sources. These sources have served as a complement to the understanding of the process and supported the information collected through the interviews. Public document regarding inhabitants, employees, managers and how the public sector in general and in Gothenburg City works have made it possible to gain background information about the organisation and worked as a support when understanding the organisation. Furthermore, previous research within the TM field has provided with a conceptual framework regarding the existing research literature.

3.3.2 Primary data

Since this case study aims at the whole process selection criteria for the informants were that they were part of the current TM program or had previously taken part in

the TM program *"Managers of tomorrow"*. In order for this research to cover the whole process it was vital that primary data were collected through interviews with informants at all levels of this process. In order to meet these criteria the informants needed to be working at local or central HR, working as area-manager, or had previously taken part in the program. When informants were chosen for this research they were selected based on these criteria and a targeted selection was used (Bryman, 2011). Through this approach it was possible to view the phenomena from different angles and understand individuals on different levels and their view of the program. With this sample it is possible to gain an extension of the limited research that exists (Eisenhardt, 1999) within this field.

In order to provide with HR:s role within this TM program HR-managers were selected. Area-managers were selected since they are all managers that employ new managers, they work within the same sector (healthcare) and they are in the position to observe and identify potential new candidates for the TM program. These candidates participated in the program between the years of 2009 and 2012. Some of these candidates entered a managerial position after the program and some did not. Two informants declined the invitation to take part in an interview.

Table 1: Informants

Area of expertise	Position within the organisation	Assigned title within the empirical findings	Assigned number
HR- development	Central HR-manager	Central HR-manager	3
HR-development	Central HR-manager	Central HR-manager	4
HR-assessment	Central HR-manager	Central HR-manager	14
HR- recruitment, retaining, development	Local HR-manager	Local HR-manager	1
HR- recruitment, retaining and developing	Local HR-manager	Local HR-manager	2
Health care	Area Manager	Area Manager	5
Health care	Area Manager	Area Manager	6
Health care	Area Manager	Area Manager	7
Health care	Nurse	Candidate	11
Health care	Project coordinator	Candidate	12
Health care	Physiotherapist	Candidate	13
Health care	Manager	Candidate	8
Health care	Manager	Candidate	9
Health care	Manager	Candidate	10

The empirical data was collected through interviews with individuals at both local HR and central HR, at managerial level and at employee level all within the municipality

of Gothenburg City. All interviews were face-to-face and were fourteen (14) in total and are described in the table above (Table 1).

Interview guide

The interview guide was inspired by a previous literature on the field. Since this previous research is rather limited the interview guide was rather flexible covering main areas in order for themes to emerge during the interview process. Due to the semi-structured character of the interview guide it is according to Bryman (2011) accepted to make adjustments along the way. The interview guide was, however, used to make sure that all areas were covered during the interviews and when needed new questions were added. This process extended the original themes in the first interview guide into the final edition. Three interview guides were made (Appendix, 1, Appendix, 2., Appendix 3) since the research aims at interviewing three different target groups. They do, however, cover the same themes.

A short presentation of the author of the thesis was sent out to the respondents including a short description of the purpose before the interview (Appendix, 4). This was done as a way to minimise uncertainty and suspiciousness towards the researcher, and as a way to increase trust and increase their openness and willingness to share their perception. However, two pilot interviews were made with other master thesis students in order to test the interview guide and to make possible adjustments. In this way adjustments could be done before the time for the first interview.

3.3.3 The interview process

Interview preparations were made in accordance with Kvale's (1996) criteria for a successful interviewer. The interviewer prepared before the interview during pilot-interviews and possible follow up questions was written down and tested. The pilot interview was also a way to test the interview guide and to make adjustments where something was unclear. The adjusted interview-guide was used when conducting the fourteen (14) interviews. In order to make the informants comfortable and in the mood for sharing with the researcher the researcher opened up with a description of the purpose of the interview. The researcher also explained the anonymity of the interview and that it was not possible to identify specific individuals within the thesis.

The interviews were semi-structured which means a rather flexible and open interview where the order of the interview questions is allowed to differ between interviews and also that the interview guide was tailored slightly in order to fit the informants (Bryman, 2011). This used method increases the flexibility, in contrast to strict structured interviews. The purpose with the semi-structured interviews was to create an open environment that would increase the informants' willingness to share their perception and experiences of the process.

All interviews lasted for approximately 35-70 minutes. The interviews were held in meeting rooms in or around the informant's offices. All interviews were recorded with a recording device and transcribed the same or the next day (Kvale, 1996). During the performed interviews a recording device was used in order for the interviewer to be fully concentrated on the dynamic between the informant and the interviewer. In this way no interruptions was made. The use of a recorder made it possible to adjust the interview to the informant and fully focus on them. In this way the interview was more spontaneous. This is in accordance with Kvale's (1996)

description of the advantages gained with an audio recorder during the interviews. The interview questions were not sent to the informants before the interviews in order to increase trustworthy answers and for the informant to answer honestly and there was no need for the participants to prepare before the interviews.

3.4 Presentation and analysis of the data

In order to perform this research an abductive approach has been applied which is a combination of an inductive and a deductive approach. A deductive approach focuses on the relationship between theory and practice through hypothesis testing and/or practical observation. The inductive approach is very well suited when it comes to exploratory research such as this one. An inductive approach is, however, not focusing on existing literature rather on only revealing themes from data in which can create theory. With this information I argue for an abductive approach (Bryman, 2011). This abductive approach is preferable within this kind of research since previous research, although it have been rather limited, have provided with the frame for the interview guide and in that way the data collection. There is, however, not a specific theory that is tested through this thesis but individuals view on the phenomena that creates the themes and answer within this thesis. The collection of data has been an on-going process where reflections along the way have been necessary in order to fully understand the data and the researchers own reflections have been of importance during this process in order to collect needed data (ibid).

The data analysis process is inspired by Saunders et al. (2009) and Creswell (2009). Several steps have been followed in order to code and analyse the data. Firstly, the interviews have been recorded and the transcribed, word by word. This procedure has been performed during the same or the day after the time for the interview. The second step involves the phase where all transcribed material has been read through in order to make sense of the data and reflect upon its main message. The third step within this process is the coding. During this process the transcribed material and audio-files have been listen on and transcription read through several times. Open coding has been used and it is from this process a range of codes have emerged. Within these codes it was visible that certain themes was representative for the interviews and described a picture of the TM program in the studied organisation (Eisenhardt, 1999). These themes are presented in the empirical findings and quotes that represent the main themes are presented along with the description of the informants' view and description of the phenomena. All transcriptions were given a number and these numbers are presented after each quote, and in the section 3.3.2 (Table 1). All informants have contributed to the general understanding of how this program is performed within this organisation (cf. Creswell, 2009). In order to show the picture of the TM process that emerged during the data collection the empirical findings are shown in a chronological way. The emerged themes are further discussed and analysed within the analysis section. It is the conceptual framework that has been used when analysing the empirical findings in the analysis section.

3.5 Research limitations and quality of the study

This case study provides data from individuals on different levels within the organisations. These individuals have different roles within the TM program and shows in a descriptive and explorative way how the program is performed within the public sector in Gothenburg City. The gathered data provides with individuals view on the phenomena during this qualitative research. The performed case study included

a relatively low number of informants, however, several actions to secure this limitation was made. There are several researchers such as Bryman (2011) that argues for the limitations in the possibility to generalise qualitative research. This is, however, not relevant for this case study since it doesn't aim at doing these kinds of generalising statements. In order to strengthen the reliability within this case study several actions have been taken. An extensive methodology section has been created through the research in order to increase the possibility to replicate the study. The emerged codes and themes have been re-checked when looking back at the raw data several times. Pilot interviews were made and a more robust interview guide was created through changes where it was obvious that the informant didn't understand the questions in an accurate way. All these actions were taken in order to strengthen the external reliability. In order to raise the internal reliability with this research the interviews were audited and transcribed within the same or the day after the interview. All audio files have been saved and used again when transforming quotes into English. In these way errors due to language barriers is overcome when the researchers used the audio files repeatedly when transforming the language. In this way it was possible to adjust the language on the quotes but not change the content of it. The goal with these actions aims at increasing the internal reliability, which concerns the correctness of the collected data (ibid.).

To make sure that this research investigates what it aims at investigating two steps concerning validity explained by Yin (2007) have been followed. The first concerns validity regarding the purpose of the study. In other words, does this research investigate what it intended to investigate. The second step is validity concerning the reason why this research includes specific individuals to investigate this purpose. In order to strengthen the internal validity of this case study focus has been on the subjectivity. In order to strengthen the subjectivity the audio files have been used several times in order to straighten out uncertainty both during the empirical findings section and through the analysis section. In this way the language implications could be overcome since the researcher could listen to the recorded interview and secure the content of the translated quote when transforming it from Swedish to English (Bryman, 2011; Yin, 2007).

3.6 Ethical considerations

Since this research includes individuals it is important to consider the ethical aspect to minimise ethical dilemmas. In order to handle ethical dilemmas in a proactive way all participants were informed about the project and what the process looked like. A short presentation was first sent out to the informants to open up for questions and to eliminate uncertainty before the actual interviews. In this first information letter the individuals was also informed that it was voluntary to participate. An agreement was made after each interview regarding the confidentiality regarding the information. On all interviews the interviewer informed the informants that it would not be possible to identify specific individuals, and within this thesis the informant's quotes are coded with category and number. In addition, the informants were at every interview given the question if they approved that the session was recorded. If they had not given their approval to record the sessions the interviewer would have had to rely on the written notes, which could have limited the research (Science council, 2012).

4. Empirical findings

In this section of the thesis data emerged from the interviews is presented and describe. Focus is on how the municipality of Gothenburg perform the program “Managers of Tomorrow” a program which is identified as a TM program within this thesis. In order to explain and connect to the research aim a presentation of the empirical findings is made as a way to show how Gothenburg city perform this program. This involves different individuals’ roles within the process. These interviewed individuals in this research are described as Central HR-manager, Local HR-manager, area-manager and candidate. The program, however, is mentioned as a TM program through this section of the thesis.

4.1 The case

The city of Gothenburg is an organisation with both municipal districts and companies. Overall, the city has a turnover of 34 billion and employs nearly 48 600 people. This municipality serves half a million inhabitants with services such as healthcare, childcare, education, defence, public transport and infrastructure and are divided into ten districts (Gothenburg City, 1a)¹. During 2006 the municipality created a program with the name “*Manager of Tomorrow*” for employees within Gothenburg city, a TM program with the aim to create a Talent pool. According to internal documents and information at the official webpage the program “*Managers of Tomorrow*” is called a navigation program and will hereafter be referred to as a TM program through this thesis. This TM program aims at identifying existing employees who have the ability to become managers within the future and individuals who have interest in leadership. This TM program contains of several seminars, coaching and to practically observe one manager during ten days and stretches over one year’s from September to May (Corporate document, 1). The TM program gathers about 70 participants every year. During interviews with both central and local HR-managers, information regarding the structure of this TM program was given. The candidate have the possibility to reflect upon his/hers leadership platform and what aim and goal this individual have for the future and in his/her role as a potential new leader. During the TM program there are several coaching sessions with professional coaches with focus on career planning and to support these individuals to reflect upon ways to develop further and coaching tools to use as a leader. The TM program also contains of theoretical parts such as labour law and wage settings. In the end of the TM program the candidates are performing observations of a manager. This means that the candidates are observing one manager in their daily work during ten day, which is a way for the candidates to gain brief insight into the managerial work in action.

4.2 Purpose for a TM program within the municipality of Gothenburg?

In this section focus will be on the purpose for the studied organisation to work with a TM program such as “*Managers of Tomorrow*”, in order to understand the phenomena within this specific context.

Central and local HR-managers contributed with information regarding the content of the TM program and it is of interest to review the reasons why the public sector uses this program. According to internal documentation the main purpose of the TM

¹ Örgryte-Härlanda, Östra Göteborg, Västra Hisingen, Västra Göteborg, Norra Hisingen, Majorna-Linné, Lundby, Centrum, Askim-Frölunda-Högsbo och Angered

program is to identify employees with potential and interest in becoming managers. This information is in line with different informants' view of the TM program, where the main reason is a way to identify employees with the right abilities to be manager within the municipality. Since there is predicted to be high pressure on attracting new managers in the future, as an effect of demographic changes. The purpose is explained by one local HR-manager in the following way: *"We need to take care of employees within the municipality who want to develop themselves and move towards the managerial profession, but also because the municipality will eventually be facing really big retirements"* (2). Even though there are several reasons for conducting this TM program such as this one, several informants mention that it is a TM program with focus on an opportunity for individuals to test if leadership is something for them. Both local HR-manager central HR-manager and two area-managers, however, mention the main goal with this TM program is that as many candidates as possible finish the TM program. It is also desired that these candidates have both the interest and ability to start working as managers, since there is a great deal of resources put into them. All candidates state that the program is focusing on providing candidates the opportunity to test if they want to be managers and also a way for the municipality to test if they are appropriate for it. This is supported by local and central HR-managers and also by area-managers. Great focus, however, is on attracting and identifying employees with the right abilities. One local HR-manager exemplified this in the following way: *"Well, there are a large amount of managers retiring at once... Since we have a high average age of managers we have to take action and make sure that there are people who can take over managerial roles within the future. This means finding these people who have qualities for this kind of jobs"* (2).

The demand on identifying new potential managers within the municipality is strong since a high amount of retirements are expected in the next few years. This is something that have brought increased focus on this process and is exemplified with this statement from one central HR-manager: *"One-fifth of the managers will be retiring in five years and we have 562 managers under the age of 65, so we need to keep on building on what we want and to encourage people to stay in the municipality and that there are career paths to take (3)"*. Besides the high amounts of retirements several informants mentions the program to be a way for competence inventory and a way to strengthen employee's knowledge and understanding of the organisation.

There is a range of challenges that the municipality stands before in order to serve the purpose of this program. One challenge is how to attract employees internally to apply for a program such as this TM program. One candidate perceived this as particularly challenging: *"I don't think it is so attractive to be manager here within the municipality. I don't think it is the case that you study several years at the university and think that... I want to be a manager within the public sector"* (1). Three of the candidates that have taken part of the TM program describe the interest in managerial positions within the municipality to be low since the employer is not that attractive. In order to increase the interest and awareness of a TM program such as *"Managers of Tomorrow"* the focus is set on HR and how they perform the "marketing" of a program such as this one. Central HR has an information day every year concerning the program. During this day, employees can join and listen to the director of staffing and the director of the municipality and get information about the program. All area-managers mention that the main source of information about the program is on the municipality's intranet but not much from other sources. One area-

manager exemplifies it like this: *“Except the information on the intranet there isn’t much information about the program, but I think that the employees find it in some way. I don’t know if the employees can apply for the program themselves or if it needs to pass by their managers”* (5). This lack of interest in internal management roles and scarce information puts a higher demand on the recruitment process. This leads on to result regarding the recruitment process since it plays a key role in this process.

4.3 The recruitment process of the TM program

Within the municipality of Gothenburg the recruitment process for the TM program includes several steps. The recruitment process consists of four main steps: Identification, selection, evaluation and final selection of candidates. In order to provide a thorough description of the identification step it will be described from HR-managers perspective, area-manager’s perspective and the candidate perspective.

4.3.1 Identification

In order to show the result in an accurate way this section will be presented from different individuals roles within this process. Although the candidates themselves apply for the program in the end all actors’ roles are presented within this section.

4.3.1.1 The role of HR within the identification process

There are, however, responsibilities for HR within this process as well. One HR-manager on central level exemplifies it as follows: *“Our main role is to create a good content for the program... it is important that we strive to reach the main goals with the program... other responsibilities concern the creation of a manageable group size of the final list with candidates”* (3). In order to adjust the program and reach higher quality within the TM program the informant at central HR mentions that they are working with evaluations written by previous candidates from the program and finally prepare material for the HR-board. The HR-board has the final say concerning the program together with a program council and handles the suggestions emerged from central HR (Central HR-manager). Central HR-managers describes that they have a preparatory responsibility towards these two groups and are expected to bring forward suggestion about the content of the TM program and to handle evaluations that have emerged from the program. Another area of responsibility concerning central HR is to create the checklist for the TM program. This checklist contains of criteria that managers can use when identifying potential candidates for the TM program and can be used at performance appraisals and during interviews. Central HR is also responsible for the creation of the interview guide that shall be used during the first interview. Both the checklist and the interview guide are based on Gothenburg city’s leadership criteria, described further down, and are available at the official organisational webpage.

	Operational level	Strategically level
Individual leadership	Influence others	
	Responsiveness	
	Social self-assurance	
	Ability to change	
	Result oriented	
	Analytic skill	
	Holistic view	
Formal leadership	Employers responsibility	
	Internal and external communication	
	Law and economy	
	Operational Management	

Figure 4. Gothenburg City's leadership criteria (Gothenburg, 1b, 2013). Translated into English.

Focus on these leadership criteria is on personal leadership abilities on operational and strategic level. The formal leadership abilities (the yellow boxes), however, are not included when identifying employees for this TM program. The leadership criteria that are used are, as mentioned above, the foundation for the checklist and for the interview guide and shall reflect the individual's abilities and why they apply for the TM program. One central HR-manager exemplifies this as follows: *"We want the candidates to be sure that they want to become managers within the municipality of Gothenburg in the future. Preferably they know this before the program starts, but this is not the case today"* (3). However all informants mentions that this is a TM program where candidates take part in the program and test if they are willing to become managers afterwards. According to one local HR-manager: *"The program 'Manager of Tomorrow' is a program where individuals can test if they are suited as leaders //...// but I think that it shall be clear from the municipality that we think of these candidates that apply for the program as potential managers"*(2).

Although this is a TM program where individuals can test if they are suited to be managers it is different opinions regarding this. According one informant at central HR it is of importance to find employees that really know that they want to be leaders, already before they gets accepted to the program and mentions that it is as a substantial amount of resources put into the program for each participant. One Central HR-representative exemplifies this: *"It is a little too big investment for employees to realize that this was not for me"* (3).

Local HR-managers responsibility within the identification process to the TM program is described by the local HR-managers as an encouraging and informing role. They inform managers about the program and encourage them to look for potential candidates that might be suited for the program. This is described as an important responsibility since it can increase managers' knowledge and understanding of the TM program, which in turn might result in an increased amount of applicants. Both of the interviewed local HR representatives describe this being done via the intranet but another effective way is to encourage managers to be aware of the program and the dates for the applications to be handed in, explained by one local HR-manager. All local HR-managers also mention that it is in their role to encourage manager to use the checklist (the one that central HR has created). One local HR-manager exemplifies how they encourage managers: *"It is good to encourage managers to bring the subject up on a performance appraisal"* (1). Further local HR- managers

explains that it is at these meetings managers can use checklists as a support when identifying potential candidates for the TM program. The purpose of the checklist is to be a support tool for managers when identifying potential candidates for a TM program such as *“Managers of Tomorrow”*. According to all local HR-managers it is important that managers have knowledge about the program and its selection criteria. One local HR-manager explains the following: *“HR sends out information to managers and encourages them to identify and encourage potential employees to apply for this program”* (2). Lastly, local HR-managers have responsibility to gather all applications and to make the first selection.

4.3.1.2 The role of area-managers within the identification process

According to all area-managers, their responsibility is to encourage employees that have the qualities to be managers within the municipality of Gothenburg, to apply for the TM program. A common thought by all area-managers is that sometimes it is all about planting something in the employees' minds. This is exemplified by one area-manager in the following way: *“When I see a potential out in the organisation I talk to the relevant unit manager so that this manager can talk to the employee and encourage her/him to apply for the program. Because we will need managers within the future, it is clear. So it is important that we keep on working on it. But it is a program where it is about testing. Is this something for me? (5)”*. Two of three area-managers mention that this can start something within the employees mind and mentions that it can be of fear that the employee hasn't considered applying for this TM program herself/himself and therefore it might be important to push them in the right direction. One area-manager mentions that: *“I hear many employees saying to me...it was my manager that told me to apply. We talked about this during my performance appraisal”* (7). Furthermore, all area-managers mention the importance for managers to understand what really motivates and pushes employees. However it is Gothenburg city's leadership criteria that are mentioned as the most important criteria when identifying employees for this TM program.

The candidates mentioned different reasons for applying for the TM program. Either they have heard or seen something about this program or felt inspired and decides to apply. Or, as it was for most of the candidates where they explain that the reason why they applied for the program was because their managers, at that time, gave them a “push” and encouraged them to apply. Several of the candidates were told by their managers that they had qualities and abilities to be a manager themselves or at least apply for the TM program and test. As one candidate exemplified: *“Previously my manager told me that I should apply for the program. She thought that I had the potential to become a leader... but at this time I wasn't interested (9)”*. This candidate hadn't thought about applying for the TM program before her manager encouraged her and she applied for the program further on and is working as a manager today. Five candidates mention that they hadn't thought about the program and the possibility to apply for it before their manager brought it up and encouraged them to apply for it. In either way it is the employees themselves that send in the application for the TM program.

In summary the identification phase concerns three different actors. Firstly, Central HR-managers has the responsibility to design the checklist and interview guide. Local HR-managers responsibility is to encourage and inform managers about the program

and to make the first selection. Area-managers' responsibility concerns the identification and encouraging of employees with potential to apply for the program. The candidates need to apply for the program themselves. This is something that they are entitled to do without recommendations from their manager, even though it is the most common way. When candidates have sent in their applications it is time for the next phase in the recruitment process, the selection.

4.3.2 Selection of potential candidates

Local HR-managers is responsible for this phase of the recruitment process concerning the TM program. This includes collecting applications, interviewing and selecting candidates for the next step, within their specific local district. When local HR-managers have gathered and read through applications they look for specific criteria to be met in order to call the applicant for a first interview. There are two main criteria that need to be filled in order for employees to pass on to the interview:

- The employee has been working within the municipality for 3-5 years.
- The employee answers to the demand on Gothenburg city's leadership criteria (Figure 4).

These above criteria are the same through the municipality of Gothenburg however there are other selection criteria that each local district have chosen to add.

- The criteria concerning a university education are a criterion that some of the local districts have added. The local districts covered within this research, have added this criterion on top of the central criteria.

According to all informants this is a criterion that they agree upon being good and the reason for adding such a criterion is exemplified by on local HR-manager: *"The parts that include analytical ability and being able to view the whole picture are easier if you have studied at the university"* (2). Although this criterion is decided within each local district one candidate comment the added criteria in the following way: *"I think the demand on a university degree is critical for how well the individual handles the managerial position within the future. And I don't think it is fair to let individuals perform the program without having a university degree since they will get a hard time finding a position as a manager because of they lack a university degree"* (10). All informants agreed upon this criterion being good however two informants uphold that the added criteria can have a negative effect as well. According to these informants it can affect specific work groups that don't have many employees with a university education, such as in eldercare. These two informants mention that it can result in a lower amount of applicants from these specific work groups. One local HR-manager exemplifies this in the following way: *"Previous years there hasn't been a criterion to have a university degree //...// in order to minimize the risk to miss good potential when excluding employees without university degree. But what we have realized when we advertise for a managerial position within the municipality of Gothenburg we always require university degree. And then it becomes a bit tricky when we let people without a university degree take part in the program and when they are finished and ready to apply for positions they are not able to apply for a single one of them since they are not qualified... And it is like fooling them into*

something” (1). Although there might be negative effects, the criterion is described as good anyway. In one interview with an area-manager the following comment was made in relation to the requirements of a university education: “We have one employee in our department, who have all these abilities, but she hasn’t studied at the university, but then I have told her manager to encourage her to think about it and maybe study a little. At least 60 university credit points” (5). Additionally, one local HR-manager mentions that it is also important to have an interest in leadership. One informant at local level HR means that it is important to have this interest in order to be selected. How the candidates reason about the leadership role is of importance during the selection process. One local HR-manager exemplifies this in the following way: “It is important to have some idea or thought why you want to be a manager or able to explain what in the managerial work you find interesting. If this candidate can’t explain this he/she is far away from being a potential candidate and will not be identified as potential or to be a candidate for the program” (2). This view is in line with how one candidate exemplifies the criteria: “That you are interested and that you are a subject for management positions and to be a manager. That the individual have the abilities as a person” (11).

Candidates that have met the criteria mentioned above are selected for an interview. The interviews are described by the informants in slightly different ways. One local HR-manager described that in their district it is the HR-manager that have the first interview alone with the candidate. Another local HR-manager describe that in their district one HR-manager together with the area-manager have the first interview. Candidates that meet the criteria’s are selected by HR within the specific districts and are sent to an assessment centre where the candidates are tested and evaluated.

4.3.3 Evaluation of Talent

Candidates that have met the previous selection criteria hand have been interviewed by local HR-manager (in some cases together with area-managers) and further on been selected by local HR-managers are passed on to this next step in the recruitment process. This step involves testing and evaluation of candidates where they spend half a day at the assessment centre. The setup during this day is that the candidates get specific exercises to perform during this day, which includes personality, and logic testing as well as a situational based exercise. One candidate exemplifies one test in the following way: *“The test concerning logical thinking included a test where for example we got to fold a cardboard box in a logical way” (10). The situational based exercise is described as a play or theatre where the candidate himself/herself where supposed to play the starring role in a play. The exercise is described by one candidate as a play reflecting one day as a manager where the candidate plays the manager. The candidates are given specific assignments during this play, which they are trying to handle in the best way possible. The focus is on how they act in this situation and which managerial skills that becomes visible. One interviewed candidate describes this case to be similar to the university entrance exam. Another interviewed candidate exemplifies this assessment exercise in the following way: “The main actor had to sit at a desk and act during one specific situation. I think the mission concerned that we would be organizing a bike event. It is an artificial situation, but a mission which we might face as managers”(10). Meanwhile the candidates are performing this exercise they are observed by observers at the assessment centre. These observers are writing notes regarding how candidates handle this specific situation. After this case the observers writes down their collected thoughts and an*

evaluation is made. Evaluations, after this performed play, are based on Gothenburg city's leadership criteria. The original amount of criteria is seven but when testing candidates for the TM program only five of these seven criteria are used. These criteria are: social self-assurance, ability to affect others, responsiveness, goals and results orientation and analytical skills. The main goal is that the candidates have competences in all of them. The observers perform a collective opinion of each candidate in the end of this day, which is presented to the candidate. One previous participant explains this as: *"During the situational based cases we were tested based on the competence criteria's and afterwards we got to meet behaviourist and psychologists to talk through and analyse the result. Then we got to know if we had strength and competencies or development areas"* (8). In the end of the day when the candidates get their results presented separately they will also get the information of where their competences, in regard to the leadership criteria, and if they have development areas. Depending on the outcome of the result the candidates gets a recommendation to proceed or a non-recommendation. It is the candidates existing competence level that is measured in a three-point scale to measure the competence areas of development and strength. In order for the candidate to get a recommendation they must have competences in all leadership criteria. One interviewed candidate exemplifies the assessment in this way: *"It was really good and I had to think a lot and it went in a furious pace //...// we had to lead and motivate why we acted in the way we did"* (11). Another candidate exemplifies her experience as follows: *"I will never forget the assessment day //...// to gain awareness of your flaws. It's been really enjoyable to perform the assessments"*(8). The result is handed over from the assessment centre to the local HR-manager that comply the material for the final selection.

4.3.4 Final selection

When candidates have performed the assessment centre evaluations are handed over from the assessment centre to local HR-managers. This is the last step in the recruitment process of candidates to the TM program. In this final selection, local HR-managers handle the recommendations and non-recommendations from the assessment centre. One local HR-manager describes this in the following way: *"Candidates that comes from the assessment centre with a recommendation it is most often nothing strange, then they will proceed in the process and perform the program"* (1). But before these candidates' are approved as candidates their references are checked. In this process it is the candidate's managers that give references to local HR-managers. Candidates that are not recommended from the assessment centre are most often denied to perform the program. However, during one interview with local HR-managers it is explained that exceptions can be made: *"It can be the case that the individual is not recommended by the assessment centre, can they still be a candidate? And in some cases they can. For example if their managers really think that it is a rising star and that he/she shall be a candidate"* (1). And since the executive board within the municipality have the last say in the decision making process it is up to them to take this decision. Local HR-managers needs to present the candidates, which are appropriate to take part in the program for the executive board. This is explained by one HR-manager in the following way: *"It is the executive board that makes the final decision"* (3). In summary it is local HR-managers that gather the results from the assessment centre and collect references. The last step is to present it to the executive board that will make the final decision regarding which candidates shall perform the program. And those who get approved will take part in the program.

4.4 Different actors view on the program

When the candidates have been approved in all the above steps they are ready to take part in the program. The case was briefly described in the introduction of the methodology chapter and will now be presented together with the candidates own perception of it. The program consists of two semesters, one during the fall and one during the spring where there is one day each month when the candidates are scheduled for seminars. The programs consist of different parts, which are described, briefly in the case description above. Firstly, the candidates are given the possibility to reflect upon his/hers leadership platform and what the aims are for this individual. One candidate describes the main personal goal for applying for this program: *“The primary goal was to develop myself since I felt that I had more to give”* (11). Another candidate describes this part of the program in the following way: *“A way to reflect upon the abilities you have and the abilities that are important to have as a manager within the municipality of Gothenburg and to take advantage of the best in you to become someone and learn how to not do specific things”* (13). Secondly, the program consists of career planning and coaching where focus is on possible paths to go in order to reach ones individual goals. Thirdly, the theoretical parts such as labour law and wage setting are discussed. Since three of the interviewed candidates have entered a managerial position after the program they have also performed the program for new managers within the municipality. They describe that these two programs are somewhat similar in the setup however that the TM program are lighter. One interviewed candidate exemplifies this in the following way: *“My opinion of the program is that it was very simplified. Some parts gave me a lot. But sometimes I felt very frustrated since some parts where on a very strategic level and it isn’t that kind of a manager that we become after this program”* (8). Additionally, candidates perform ten days of observations, which includes the observation of a manager within the municipality. Candidates are given instructions to choose a manager in another business area and another industry. All candidates that performed the observation days were positive about it. This is exemplified by one candidate in the following way: *“This was really funny and a good experience and the manager was very skilled... and I think it was fun for him as well since I asked many questions and sometimes he really had to think for a while before answering”* (13). During the TM program candidates are educated during seminars and practical exercises. What has changed in recent years is that the participants also have to read a leadership book and write a summary about it. And with this description of the program and candidates perception of it we will now turn to the section after the program.

4.5 What happens to identified candidates?

The above description mentions the content and purpose with the TM program, which makes it natural to present the time after the TM program. When the program is finished it is up to the candidate to apply for available managerial positions within the municipality of Gothenburg. Four of the six candidates described the situations after the program as a bit frustrating and a bit strange that the municipality doesn’t follow up what happens to the candidates although all candidates understand that it is their own responsibility to apply for positions themselves. One candidate exemplifies the time after the program in the following way: *“After we have gone through the program... They have put resources on you... but when it is over you are on your own. It is hard”* (10). One local HR-manager means that it is unfortunate that the

follow up is non-existing and highlight the need for feedback and follow up on the candidates that have taken part in the program. *“In the best of worlds it would be of interest to perform an individual plan for the future on these employees a sort of succession plan //...// There is no effort from HR to follow up these candidates. Except for last year were there was a follow up gathering with candidates from the year before including seminar and discussion concerning the future”* (2). Some interviewed candidates mention the advantages of meetings after the program where individuals can share experience and take advantage of each other’s contacts. When candidates are in the middle of the program and finished they are eager to start but if nothing happens afterwards it ends with the program. One area-manager exemplifies her responsibility in the following way: *“We have a responsibility. If a candidate has gone through the TM program then they shall at least come on an interview for the position they apply for. There’s a reason we send people there and they have joined the program”* (5). However three of the candidates explain the lack of experiences within the field of leadership as problematic for them when applying for managerial positions. One candidate exemplifies this with an answer he got when applying for a managerial position: *“You don’t have any experience of being a manager, so I have chosen to proceed with another candidate”* (11). However as one area-manager describes: *“Someone has thought that these candidates have been promising, they have gone through assessment and the education so they must be interesting, otherwise something is wrong”* (6).

Area-manager and local HR-managers described the TM program as something positive to have in a resume when applying for new positions. One local HR-manager describes that it would be great if it would possible to interview all applicants with this program in their curriculum vitae but most managerial positions requires extensive experience and this is something that these candidates often lack. However if there are managerial positions that are valued as more light it is most certain important to use the internal candidates that have been identified as managerial potential and gone through the assessment centre and several interviews.

Three of six of the candidates are working as managers today and three are not. Of these three candidates that are not working as managers today all of them have applied for managerial positions and one have been called to an interview. The other two candidates have not been called for a single interview or even heard feedback from the responsible manager. This can be exemplified with one previous candidate’s statement: *“I have applied for positions; I haven’t been that persistent //...// but I didn’t hear anything”* (13). One of the interviewed candidates has applied for positions but has got the answer that he didn’t have the qualifications such as previous experience of leadership.

In interviews with area- managers the common perception of the program and the candidates is positive but they have rather limited knowledge regarding what happens to the candidates. One area-manager explains in the following way her perception of the process after the program: *“I think that the candidate and his/hers manager has a discussion regarding what to do next. But besides from that we are not good at taking care of these candidates”* (7). Another area-manager exemplifies it as follows: *“These employees have potential to be manager so it is really good if we can use these employees”* (7). However one interviewed candidate describes that contact has been made with his local HR-manager in order to gain support in this matter: *“I*

contacted the HR-manager last year, and after a month I got reply that she hadn't forgotten about me. This was in November and I haven't heard anything since then" (11).

Three candidates are working as managers within the municipality today. All of these candidates had either previous experiences with leadership positions or got a managerial position during the program within their working district. The other three candidates didn't have any previous experiences with leadership nor had a managerial position during the program and none of them are working as managers today. However, both HR-manager and area-managers mention that the municipality needs to nurture these employees. One area-manager exemplifies this in the following way: *"These employees have potential to be manager so it would be really good if we could use these employees" (7).* Another area-manager exemplifies this in the following way: *"I think we have to take responsibility. If we have a candidate that has gone through the program they shall at least come on interviews. There is a reason why we send people to that program" (5).* All interviewed manager's mentions that they want to interview individuals that apply for a managerial position that have performed the TM program *"Managers of tomorrow"*. The reason is mentioned to be that it is considered to be positive to have this TM program within a CV when applying for managerial positions. One area-manager describes her strategy as follows: *"When we had a re-organisation last year our strategy was to interview all individuals that applied for the position, with the TM program in their CV" (5).* Another area-manager explains her view in the following way: *"If I see applicants that have applied for a position that have taken part in the program. I would really like to interview this person. Since these employees have gone through the assessment centre and got recommendations" (7).* The interviewed candidates mention that their view is positive regarding having the TM program in CV, however they don't know, but they hope that this is the case.

4.6 Pool of candidates

When the program first started, and until the year of 2012, the municipality of Gothenburg had a database where all managers' resumes were gathered in a pool. Within this database it was possible to view managers' CV's within the municipality as well as CV's for candidates of the TM program. In these database candidates CV's were put as a way to make these candidates visible and as a way for recruiting managers to use as tool when searching for new managers. This database was taken offline during 2012. One previous participant describes her perception of the database as following: *"When I took part in the program I was told that all candidates CVs were going to be saved in a database afterwards. In this way we could be internally recruited for different positions. I don't know how it works in this way today" (10).* The reason for putting this CV database offline was according to one Central HR-manager an effect of low usage through the municipality, which in the end gives the candidates false hope since hardly anyone was using the database. Too few searches were made in the database and it was therefore mentioned by this Central HR-manager to be: *"Bad-will" (4).* However, as one area-manager express the difficulties to find these candidates now: *"We don't know which employees that have performed the program and we don't know where those people are" (6).* Furthermore, as another area-manager mention: *"There has been a lot of discussions concerning a bank/pool with people that have taken part in the program. It can be good to use when there is a*

temporary position that needs to be filled...maybe these candidates can fill these position. That is something we have been talking about a lot (7). Three candidates mention the advantage of being given the possibility to test their leadership on a temporary position since this is a way to test own abilities and also for the municipality to perform competence inventory. However the support after the program is rather limited and a common view with informants is that it is an investment in these employees during the selection process and the TM program. One area-manager describes the support to candidates in the following way: *“We are not good at that, we need to get better. There is some form of mentor program within the municipality but it is not that known //...// but I think about supporting these employees with a mentor, an older person with experience, but we don’t” (5).* All informants mention the difficulties for candidates after the program, especially for candidates that lack previous leadership experience. Several candidates express the positives aspect with the program but highlight that it can be difficult even for new manager. One candidate explains a suggestion which is in line with what several area-managers have mentioned during the interviews: *“I think that mentors for new manager would have been a great thing to put resources in since it is hard to get out there” (10).*

Within these empirical findings the recruitment process of candidates to the TM program within the municipality is described and different views of individuals are presented. In summary there is a positive attitude towards the TM program and its aim. It is, however, unclear what happens after the program and since the database were put off-line it is not possible to track old candidates. The results show, however, that managers have inspired a high amount of employees to apply for the program although the candidates express the lack of support after performing the TM program.

5. Analysis

This section analyses the empirical findings together with the conceptual framework. The purpose of this program is consistent with how scholars define the purpose with such a TM program.

5.1 Why does the public sector of Gothenburg use TM?

It is argued by researchers such as e.g. Almqvist (2006) that the past two decades have been an eventful time for the public sector. This includes the view on NPM where the public sector are changing and leaving the former administrative era behind and turning towards a more business-like manner and adapt to private sector practices in order to adjust to the changing environment and to be competitive. If we now turn to previous research within the field of TM, it is only focusing on the private sector. In order to understand *why* an organisation within the public sector performs TM this section will discuss the concept of TM within the studied organisation.

In the empirical findings it is clear that this organisation works with identification of employees that sought after individuals with abilities and interest to become managers. These employees are chosen through a selection process where they in the end, if they are suitable, are identified as potential future leaders. This definition is consistent with the one made by researchers such as e.g. Boxall and Purcell (2008), Luthans and Youssef (2004) who also describes the TM practices which includes the identification and development of employees with critical competences for future success.

Both the internal documents and the interviewed informants make it clear that this TM program is an effect of a long-term initiative. This initiative concerns the need for the identification of employees with the interest in leadership and right competencies in order to fill managerial positions for the future due to demographic changes. Descriptions of TM practices made by several scholars are focusing on private sector and mainly on private sector. Falconer (1997) emphasises the need for public sector to adapt the changing environment and apply some private sector practices. The identified TM process, within this research, can be viewed as an attempt to partly adjust to more business like practices and adapt them from the private sector. Some informant mentions that this can be a way to perform competence inventory. These actions are seen as necessary to invest in and as a way to face future challenges within the municipality.

Since the large amount of retirements is becoming a more crucial challenge it is even more important to focus on TM within the public sector. According to Colling and Mellahi (2009) it is important that organisations have the ability to identify the individuals within the organisation that have key and critical competences needed to face the future. In order to view this case within the public sector it is necessary to understand why this organisation performs TM.

Previous scholars such as Lewis and Heckman (2006) and Colling and Mellahi (2009) have described views on TM processes. Within these views different purposes are shown, which can be illustrated in this studied case. Firstly, it is the effort to focus on potential managers, previous scholar mentions them as talents, and it is revealed within the empirical findings that there are two main reasons for a TM program such

as the studied one. One purpose explored within the empirical findings is to put focus on the identification of internal human capital suited for future managerial positions and to increase the interest within the topic. The other purpose is to support competence inventory within the municipality. All informants explain that since there is a high average age within the municipality there is a need to meet these demographic changes with internal human capital. One effort is to put resources in a TM program in order to meet these future demands. This view is focusing on the abilities of the individual's in order to handle future challenges and it is the managerial positions which are identified as crucial for the future. Colling and Mellahis (2009) describe the purpose with TM to be focusing on the most important positions within an organisation. This focus on position is something that becomes evident within the empirical findings as well where main focus is on managerial positions, which are seen as key positions that are crucial for the organisation. Focus is set on the organisations key positions, and not primarily only on organisations A-players. This way of reasoning regarding talent is supported by Huselid et al. (2005) who argue that it is not desirable to strive for maximising the amount of "A"-players within the organisation and in the same way eliminate "B" and "C" players. This is in line with the studied case where critical positions are identified since managers with high average age today govern these positions. However, since the main purpose, described in the above paragraph, is to react to demographic changes and as an effect they identify potential candidates for a TM program, an evident link can be drawn to research regarding the fourth theme explained by Colling and Mellahi (2009) where the first step within this recruitment process puts focus on important positions and it is crucial to identify key positions. Looking at the empirical data identified key positions are managerial positions within the municipality of Gothenburg. When key positions are identified, the foundation for the talent pool is created.

Regarding why for the public sector perform TM it is visible that there are similarities to what previous research on TM within private sector have shown. There are several views on TM and the conceptual framework has concluded these in different paths the reason for this organisation is to fill key positions within the future. The explained purposes for this case study to perform TM are similar to what Colling and Mellahi (2009) explain as talent pools. If we also view this statement in the light of NPM the purpose of performing TM can also be an effect of following the market. If the customer and employees demands this change the public sector has no choice to deny but to transform. How the recruitment process of potential candidates is performed is analysed within the coming section.

5.2 The recruitment of talent within the municipality of Gothenburg

In previous research it is explained by Mäkelä et al. (2010) that the recruitment of talent is most often performed during talent reviews and/or performance appraisals. The former are the most common one since it is focusing on potential and not solely on past performance. In these cases it is most often up to HR and line managers to decide if this employee is a high potential employee. This research emerges from private sector organisations this picture will represent the private sector in this theme. The recruitment process within the studied case involves different actors such as central HR-managers, local HR-managers, area-managers and candidates. It is, however, up to the employee herself/himself to apply to this TM program, which indicates employees' own responsibility in this process. When viewing this theme it is visible that the recruitment process of candidates to the TM within the studied case is

based on the individuals' willingness to apply for such a program and contradicts to what previous literature within the private sector describes the recruitment process.

5.2.1 The identification process of candidates

In previous research Mellahi (2009) describes a certain focus within their model regarding HR investments in TM process. The focus on that part of the model is set on the identification of candidates for key positions. Within this process it is vital to consider both internal and external labour market in order to attract and identify the employees for these positions. Although the demand is not crucial at the time of the search, analysis of the current workforce predicts a future demand on managers within the public sector in Gothenburg City. It can therefore be argued that the public sector performs their TM with the main focus on future demands and is therefore having proactive focus.

The recruitment process of potential candidates is presented as a TM strategy by Colling and Mellahi (2009). This strategy puts focus on the HR architecture. In order to support this TM strategy focus is set on HR as a way to increase the output. The informants describe HR as having an important role within the recruitment process since they convey information to managers and employees within the organisation. It is evident in the empirical findings that Central HR department puts together a checklist that shall be a tool when identifying employees in the organisation that are suitable for the TM program. However it is rather unclear how managers use this checklist since no such information was shared during the performed interviews. It can be argued that the HR department plays a key role within the TM strategy within this studied case as well. Although there are criteria used when selecting candidates these are just used when doing the selection and assessment since the final decisions are made by the HR-board. In this way similarities can be drawn to talent reviews in private sector detected in previous research. It can however be argued that the aim with the program are somewhat different. Although, all informants states that it is a program where the candidates can test if they have the ability to become managers within the future. This contradicts TM literature regarding the investment made on high potentials and how important it is to identify the right people.

All managers defined important characteristics for managers to have which was in accordance with the content of the checklist. This checklist concerns seven characteristics, which are based on the leadership criteria defined by the city of Gothenburg (Figure 4). This indicates that the criteria for selecting candidates are the same throughout the municipality. Lombardo and Eichinger (2000) describe different factors of learning agility in which organisations should put focus on when identifying potential talents. The first factor, *people agility*, includes abilities where individuals have the capacity to listen to others, have the strength to affect others and explain and at the same time show a clear interest in others opinions. This described factor is in line with three (Influence others, Responsiveness, Social Self-assurance) of the seven leadership criteria, which the checklist is built upon (Figure, 4). Lombardo and Eichinger (2000) describe the second factor, *result agility*, and fourth factor, *change agility*. The first of these factors focus on abilities such aiming at good results where focus is on performance to reach change and innovation. The second of these factors focus on abilities to be innovative, strive to improve and change through their leadership. These two described factors are in line with the empirical findings regarding the criteria ability to change and result oriented (Figure 5). Within the

figure below (Figure 5) the left column represents Gothenburg city's leadership criteria in which relates to the explained model. Within the empirical findings it is shown to be important to have the ability to view the whole picture and analytical skills in which individuals use previous experience in order to understand the bigger picture. These abilities are described by Lombardo and Eichinger (2000) as *mental agility*, where it is desirable find individuals that have these qualities. Since these criteria are built upon Gothenburg City's leadership criteria this strengthen what the theoretical framework indicates. The theoretical framework indicates several themes of TM where one is focusing on identification of key positions and the creation of a talent pool. This description of the characteristics indicate that the studied organisation focus on a talent pool with focus on key positions which they need to fill within the coming future. Regarding the figure below (figure 5) it can be argued that this theoretical framework needs to be tested in order to revise it further.

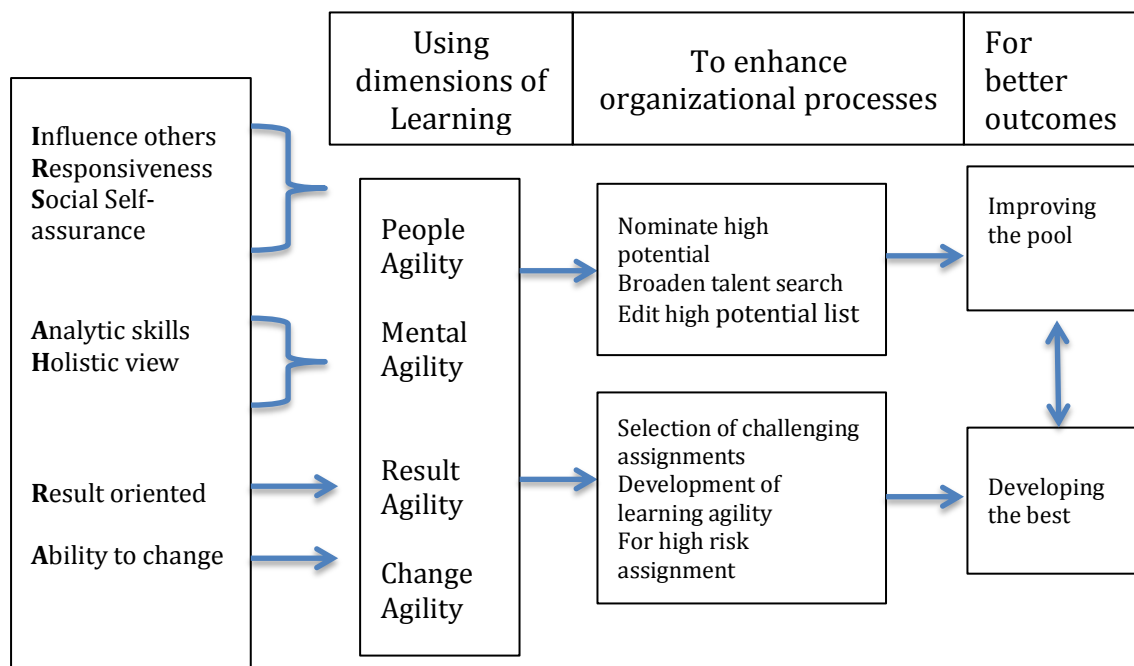


Figure 5: Modified version of Lombardo and Eichingers (2000) version of HR investments in measuring and developing potential together with Gothenburg city's leadership criteria.

It is visible within the empirical findings that local HR shall encourage managers to be aware of the criteria (described above) and to consider if they have any employees that fit into these leadership criteria required for applying for the TM program. The purpose with the created checklist is to provide a tool to help managers, which is available on the intranet. Even though it is the employee himself that in the end has to apply for the program it is often the managers' ability to influence employees that results in these employees applies for the program. This becomes evident in the empirical findings from interviews made with candidates of this program where most of the candidates applied for the program after their manager in some way brought it up. This is something that shows the role of HRM, which is in line with previous researchers such as Colling and Mellahi (2009), Lombardo and Eichinger (2000) and Lepack and Snell (1999). This is shown in the empirical findings when Central HR creates the checklist and interview guide, local HR inform and encourage managers to look for potential candidates and in turn encourage them to apply to the program in

those cases where they meet the demands. When candidates have sent in their applications it is time for the next phase in the recruitment process, the selection. This indicates the need for both manager and HR to work together on encouraging employees to these kinds of development programs. Organisations need to identify and locate the need of the organisation and further identify employees that can be suited for these key positions within the future.

5.2.2 The selection

Lepak and Snell (1999) and McDonnell et al. (2010) describe the way of locating talents using human capital characteristics. Within their description of value of human capital and level of uniqueness it is *knowledge-based employment* that characterise the important talents. These talents have a high level of uniqueness and high level of value for the organisation, which makes them vital for the organisation to identify. Within the empirical findings it is evident that the criteria for the TM program are based on the checklist involving Gothenburg City's leadership criteria and in that way their abilities instead of their performance. In this case it is rather their abilities and previous experiences that are desired. However, if the managerial positions within the municipality are identified to have high strategic value and the abilities required are of high level of uniqueness it can be argued that this model fits with the characteristics used when selecting employees for this TM program. Important to consider is that the empirical findings rather shows the important characteristics connected to the position and not connected to specific talents. This result indicates that previous focus on talent pools made by Colling and Mellahi (2009) are also applicable at the public sector in Sweden.

It is Gothenburg city's leadership criteria that are measured on individual and a strategic level. In the empirical findings it is described that it is local HR that handles this selection. The leadership criteria are the base for the next step within this process. According to Lombardo and Eichinger (2000) it is the level of learning agility that HR shall take into consideration when selecting talents. By reviewing these different factors of learning agility, which are shown in the empirical findings to match the leadership criteria, the employees that have these abilities are selected for an interview with HR. It is evident from the empirical results that the interview-guide is used during selection interviews with HR. This interview-guide is based on the leadership criteria and employees that meet these criteria are selected for the next step in this process. This process concerns the evaluation of candidates where they are tested during one half-day at the assessment centre. According to the empirical findings the tests that are performed during this day is also based on the leadership criteria, although only five out of seven criteria are tested during this day. This assessment finishes with a recommendation or a non-recommendation for the employee, judging if they are fit to take part of the program. Before being fully accepted, however, the references for each of the candidates are checked. HR contacts the responsible manager who gives references. If the references are good the candidates are presented to the executive board who have the final say in the decision making process. It is also revealed within the empirical findings that exceptions can be made, although it is very rare. One representative mentions that there have been times where managers have been determined and persuasive that a certain candidate should take part in the TM program. This is a contradiction to factors of characteristics described by Lombardo and Lombardo and Eichinger (2000) regarding

candidates that have high scores within these different learning agilities. And according to their model of learning agility these employees would not be chosen if they are not valued high in all characteristics of learning agility. It can, however, be the limitations within the model that doesn't consider individuals own interpretations and expectations. Lepak and Snell (1999, 2001) and McDonnell et al. (2010) described different characteristics and level of uniqueness which also indicate that these managers who choose specific individuals even though they are not meeting Gothenburg City's leadership criteria are contradicting to previous research. Within the empirical findings this can indicate that personal opinions and feelings might affect who get selected. This is only described by a few informants and can be considered quite uncommon, it can show potential deviation within this process, which is not in line with the aim of the talent pool.

5.2.3 Talent pools

The aim with the investigated TM program is to fill managerial positions within the coming future and a way for the organisation to increase the interest in leadership and make competence inventory. The need to put effort in such is described as important and the future needs are predicted to be high. The investigated TM program focuses on identifying candidates for their talent pool in order to have these identified potential candidates when the future demand are here. This is a way to proactively work to meet future demands. These empirical finding are in line with the previously described research on talent pools made by e.g. Colling and Mellahi (2009). The main basis for the talent pool have been described several time and includes the need to identify potential employees with right qualities to become managers.

It is interesting when analysing the studied case since it is rather unclear regarding what happens to the individuals after the program. These individuals are identified as having met the leadership criteria and are identified as having the potential to becoming managers within the future. They are evaluated and recommended by a range of professionals within the municipality, yet it isn't clear what happens to these employees after they have taken part in the TM program. The purpose is clear: to identify employees that have the interest and the abilities to become managers within the future. It is revealed within the empirical findings that of the interviewed talents half of this group started to work as managers after the program. All of these candidates that started to work as managers after the program either started to work as manager within their local district or they entered a managerial position at the same time they performed the program. The other half of this group of informants, that didn't start to work as managers, didn't have previous experience of leadership or help from their home organisation after the program. All of these candidates, however, had applied for positions. Some of them had been called on interview some of them had not. This shows that previous experience of leadership or help from the home organisation is important for these identified candidates when applying and entering a managerial position within the municipality. It is explained in the empirical findings that individual can take part in the TM program and test if leadership is something for them. There is still a question, however, regarding the use of the talent pool for this organisation. It can therefore be argued to be a discrepancy since a lot of resources are put into these employees and the "selection" for the program can be considered as rather straight forward where candidates should have all these competences when applying. According to Lombardo and Eichinger (2000), Colling

and Mellahi (2009) and Dries and Peperman (2012) it is the identification and further development of these high potential employees that leads to competitive advantages and firm performance. This is not evident within the studied case since these candidates are performing the TM program and afterwards the municipality doesn't know what happens to them, they are on their own. When the program was initiated in 2006 the intention was to gather these candidates in a database together with other managers within the municipality with the aim to use it when the need for internal recruitments was coming. This initiative is supported by the previously explained talent pool but was put down during 2012 due to low usage. When viewing this in relation to the conceptual framework it can be considered as a TM program, which is not considering developing these employees further in order to fill the mentioned purpose. Employees are identified and selected using a rather strict process and developed through the program. This development process ends when the program does. This indicates the goals for this organisation to be somewhat uncertain how this TM program serves its purpose. It can be viewed as an unfinished process and in that way an uncompleted TM process.

Furthermore, since organisations of today are working in a competitive environment there are also challenges affecting the public sector. These challenges concerns e.g. pressure as an effect of more privatised organisations and a demanding workforce. It is important to understand the challenges the public sector is facing in order to be prepared for the future, as a way to start building their talent pool. This is in line with previous researchers e.g. Lewis and Heckman (2006), Stahl (2007) and Tarique and Schuler (2009) who describes the importance of internal human capital in order to gain competitive advantages.

In summary this analysis shows that previous literature within the TM field in private sector has large similarities regarding the way that the studied organisation performed TM in the public sector. There are, however, also contradictions. The largest contradiction between the conceptual framework and the studied organisation is that the studied organisation argues that they are in need of finding employees that have the potential to become managers within the future. Although it is somewhat contradictory since the studied organisation doesn't know where the employees goes after the program. Within previous literature one important aspect of performance appraisals and to continuously develop individuals and the result of using a talent pool can lead to firm performance. Since interviewed candidates express loneliness after such a program we can assume that this is also contradictory to the theoretical framework. They are however focusing on identifying these employees through an extensive process, which is similar to a regular recruitment process for new managers and in that way they perform TM. It might be the case that NPM have brought the public sector towards a more competitive attitude in order to meet the demand from customers on organisations in order to react adjust. Either way it is visible that TM is important and also performed within the public sector in Sweden.

6. Conclusion

This section of the thesis describes the main points revealed within this research. Furthermore, it is clear that this thesis has had implications for both HR and managers and these are presented below followed by suggestions for future research and limitations.

6.1 Concluding remarks

Within this research the purpose was to investigate how and why the public sector performs talent management. Further focus was on the purpose for an organisation within this sector for performing such a program. This research is rather unusual since the previous research area are under investigated which makes this one especially unique for the public sector. In this way the research provides with several contributions to the research field.

This thesis contributes to an understanding of how the public sector performs TM and the reason for this organisation to do this. The challenges are described to be the high demand for managers within a near future, which have created this need to perform TM. Existing research within this area are applicable on the public sector as well and it can be viewed that there are similarities within previous research and how this organisation identify talent and the purpose for doing so. However the main differences are on the time after the TM program. Within the studied case the focus is on one program and the candidate will hopefully apply for managerial positions in the future. This is somewhat out of the organisations control since there is clearly a lack of follow-ups and feedback afterwards. It also contributes to the understanding of the challenges that this sector is facing in the future. This brings contribution to the NPM field as well regarding how the public sector adjusts to private sector practices if we consider TM as a practice emerged from the private sector and adapted by the public sector.

Even though demographic changes alone are not the reasons for putting effort in a TM program it is explained as the main reason for the studied organisation. All firms are facing challenges and this is something that puts pressure on organisations to react, in some ways proactively. This study emphasise how this organisation within the public sector works with the identification, selection and development of future leaders. This exploratory research contributes with the explanation of *how* and *why* this TM practice is performed within the public sector.

In order to reach the goal of a TM program such as this one it is of importance for organisations to work with the whole process. There is a clear lack of feedback after a performed program such as the studied one with is also affecting the end result of such a program.

6.2 Research contributions

6.2.1 Managerial implications

There are several contributions to managers found in this research. Firstly I would say that the managerial implications would be on how TM can be used within the public sector. These implications concern the importance of communicating with employees regarding future plans and to work with the development in order for them to be

stimulated and stay within the organisation. Managers can have meetings with the candidates after a performed program, which are focusing on their future. In this way the employee feel appreciated and valued and the organisation catches the potential manager and tries to discuss possible paths for the future. Managerial responsibilities such as performance appraisals concerning the individual's future and succession planning can be of importance for managers in order to react.

It is also important to highlight that almost all interviewed candidates applied for the program after their manager has encouraged them to apply. This is an effective according to the studied case, to increase candidates' awareness and interest within in this program and leadership in general. These explained implications can provide managers with an understanding of how TM can be performed within the public sector and their role within this process.

6.2.2 HR implications

There are also contributions for HR within this research since it provides with an understanding HR-managers role within this program. Their way of acting within the TM program is thoroughly described. This implication concerns the role of HR to encourage managers to identify potential candidates. HR is also a key player when it comes to the selection criteria within the studied organisation, which are used when viewing candidates' abilities to become managers. Some researchers criticise the field of TM through the argument that it is just a re-branding of regular HR practices. Therefore, it is of importance to view this concept within an organisation that doesn't use the definition TM explicitly. The ways they work with this TM process, however, is similar to what previous researcher have described as TM within the private sector. It is also visible that it can be of importance for HR as well as for managers to communicate with employees in order to meet their expectations and avoid misunderstandings, which can have negative effects on the organisation.

6.2.3 Implications on existing research

It is visible that the public sector is facing challenges in the future in which they need to react to. This organisation is working with the identification, selection and development of selected employees. This contributes to the existing literature regarding talent pools described by Colling and Mellahi (2009) however it also shows that there is something missing in this process since the measuring of the result is non-existent. Selected candidates for the TM program within the studied case are chosen since they have the managerial skills required and seen as suited for managerial positions contributes to Lombardo and Eichingers (2000) definition of different characteristics that high potentials shall have in order to be identified. Since the studied organisations leadership criteria partly matches the Lombardo and Eichingers (2000) it is interesting to investigate this further but this research provides a first test when investigate this model in practice. This organisations TM process, however, ends with the program and the individuals are after this program applying for positions by themselves.

6.4 Suggestions for future research

Since this exploratory research is the first within this area it is a recommendation for further research within this field. During this case study several themes have emerged which shows how this organisation performs TM. Additionally, it would be interesting to investigate NPM and the relation between the public sector and private

sector within the TM field further. Suggestions for future research would also be to make a longitudinal study. This would be an interesting case where researchers can follow the development over time. In this way an understanding of the candidates' goals and ambition can be discussed together with their perceived support. In this way TM can be further explored and understood both from an organisational and individual perspective. Further suggestions would be to continue doing research within the field of TM in the public sector in order to increase understanding of why organisations focus on these kinds of practices. It can also be interesting to investigate what have happened to individuals that have decided to leave the municipality after such a program and investigate the reason behind it.

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1. Appendix Interview guide HR

Background

- Can you describe your area of expertise within this organisation? (Work tasks, responsibilities)
- How long have you worked for this organization?
- Can you describe your organization (size and responsibilities)?
- What did you do before you started working at your current position?

Leadership Program

- How would you describe the program “*managers of tomorrow*”?
- How was it created?
- What is the purpose of the program?
- What is your view on the program?
- Can you describe your role within the program? Is it possible to exemplify?
- Can you describe the recruitment process of candidates to the program?
- What qualities are important in those who want to join the program?
- What happens after a performed program?
- What is your opinion of having this program in the resumes of your applicants?
- Is there anything you want to change within the program, why? Can you give examples?

2. Appendix Interview guide Candidates

Background

- Can you describe your area of expertise within this organisation? (Work tasks, responsibilities)
- How long have you worked for this organization?

Leadership Program

- How would you describe the program “*managers of tomorrow*”?
- Why did you apply for the program?
- What expectations did you have on the program? What goals did you have before?
- What is the purpose of the program? Can you with your own words describe the program?
- What is your view on the program? What do you think of it?
- Do you know which criteria candidates are selected on?
- Can you describe your role within the program? Is it possible to exemplify?
- What happens after the program, can you describe?
- What qualities are important in those who want to join the program?
- What happens after a performed program?
- What is your opinion of having this program in your resume?
- Is there anything you want to change within the program, why? Can you give examples?

3. Appendix Interview guide Managers

Background

- Can you describe your area of expertise within this organisation? (Work tasks, responsibilities)
- How long have you worked for this organization?
- Can you describe your organization (size and responsibilities)?
- What did you do before you started working at your current position?
- Can you describe your last hiring? What criteria were important?

Leadership Program

- How would you describe the program “*managers of tomorrow*”?
- How was it created?
- What is the purpose of the program?
- How do you identify potential employees for the program? Which criteria are of importance?
- What is your view on the program? What do you think of it?
- Can you describe your role within the program? Is it possible to exemplify?
- Can you describe the recruitment process of candidates to the program?
- What qualities are important in those who want to join the program?
- What happens after a performed program?
- What is your opinion of having this program in the resumes of your applicants?
- Is there anything you want to change within the program, why? Can you give examples?

4. Appendix Cover Letter

Hello!

My name is Erika Thiel foldt and I'm study the master program in Human Resources Management at the University of Gothenburg. During this spring I'm writing my master thesis within work science with the main focus on Human Resource Management.

The purpose of my thesis is to examine how the municipality is working to identify leaders and different actors perception of one specific leadership program.

Furthermore, the aim is also to find out goals and motivations of those who have passed the program "*managers of tomorrow*". Since you are important part of this program and for this study I would ask you to join me for an interview that will last for about 60 minutes.

My intention is to perform 16 interviews with both men and women who will be a contribution to the empirical basis of my study.

The study is anonymous, which means that it is not possible to derive specific individuals within the thesis. The interviews will be conducted at your workplace.

Sincerely
Erika Thiel foldt