The search for leadership!
How leadership contributes to breaking through impasses in urban development projects

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In the available theory and by the experts, the importance of leadership is confirmed. Nevertheless, the answer to the question: “what is leadership in urban area development projects?” is not provided.

Based on available theories, leadership is defined in a network approach and leadership is researched around a very relevant moment in the process: a moment of impasse.

By using the eight archetypes of Kets de Vries and theories on innovation and institutionalization, five profiles are selected which might contribute to breaking through impasse in urban development projects (theoretical model, left). Since the context of the impasse is important, the analysis framework (right) is constituted to structure and order information from the cases.

The theoretical model is empirically tested in the practice of urban area development. By using a qualitative case study research, an understanding of leadership in urban development projects is created. This method enables to include many variables and to perform in-depth research; however it provides limited grounds to generalize on.

For each case, four steps are made which are shown in the image on the right.

Problem statement
There is not enough knowledge about leadership in urban area development to order to indicate how leadership could be used to respond to current contextual changes.

Leadership is: Leadership as a shared, collective process in which complementary leadership profiles are interrelated within networks, whose effectiveness determines the success of the organization within different contexts.

Impasse is: a.o. implications of economic crisis put pressure on the parties

Progression in urban development project

Main Question
How can leadership contribute to breaking through the impasse in an urban area development project?

Theoretical model
Leadership profiles in a network
The profiles: Change catalyst, Communicator, Strategist, Processor, Coach

Breaking through the impasse

Step 1 Preparation - Documents
Step 2 Gathering data - Interviews
Step 3 Analyzing data - Coding - Ratings
Step 4 Synthesizing - Configuration - Interpretation

Case 1
In the first case (top) three parties result in an impasse situation when they are renegotiating the terms of a framework agreement that they signed in 2005. The arrangements on the large scale urban development are not realistic anymore and it takes the parties several years to break through this impasse. In the second case (below) several attempts have been made by the involved actors to break through the impasse. This impasse is an example of a complex legal construction in which the parties find themselves tangled up when the circumstances change. Up to this moment, the parties have not figured out a way to break through this impasse.

Case 2

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:
The two cases that are examined in this research illustrate that the theoretical proposition cannot be confirmed completely. With the following alterations (left), the five profiles could match the situation of urban development projects better. Further research is recommended in three directions (right); public leadership (position of the alderman), network leadership (multiple relations) and individual characteristics.