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Master Thesis

Zooming in on everyday work life of two Supply Chain Managers

Towards a better understanding of supply chain managers' practices

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Abstract

Purpose: Since limited efforts have been made when trying to understand and identify what managers do when managing the supply chain, the purpose of this research is to move towards a better understanding of Supply Chain Manager's practices. By using different methods than previously conducted research, a practice-based approach is going to be used when trying to answer, identify and to zoom in on the activities and "doings" of Supply Chain Managers' daily practices. The aim is to take a step towards the creating of a new picture of Supply Chain Manager as a practice, but also to investigate the importance of sensemaking, sensegiving and knowledge in the daily activities that contribute to the practices, along with comparing previous managerial research with the empirical findings.

Methodology: This study is based on a qualitative abductive approach with a multiple case study design, with a starting point in micro-ethnography using shadowing as the main choice of method and semi-structured interviews together with document analysis as complement.

Findings and results: An extensive amount of numerous activities, doings and practices was identified for the supply chain managers to accomplish their daily work. The key recurring accomplishments of practices, categorized into meetings, desk work and tours, are summarized and presented. The results discussed how supply chain managers act as an ambassador in a high paced fragmented environment with overlapping practices, when constantly sharing information, knowledge and experiences while working into the future in retrospective understanding. Finally, previously conducted managerial research still gets support from the findings in this thesis.

Value: One important contribution in the study was the strength and the advantages of using practice theory and a practice-based approach when conducting research of practices. This approach allowed another contribution to be made, to take a step towards a better understanding of Supply Chain Managers' practices.

Keywords: Practice theory, practice-based approach, practice, supply chain manager, shadowing

Preface

I would like to thank and turn all my gratitude to “Robin” and “Marie”, which not only made it possible for this thesis to be conducted but also had the courage, curiosity and patience of having me shadowing them for almost two weeks each. So thank you both, for an adventure that I never will forget. My girlfriend should not go by unnoticed and should get some extra credits listening to my confusing thoughts, my revelations and, at some times, my complaints. She has contributed to this thesis by her everyday support that made me complete this final chapter of my time at Lund University, Campus Helsingborg. Finally, I would like to thank my tutor Klas Hjort who critically question my thoughts and challenged me. But most of all helped me to perform and guided me in the right direction when I was a bit lost.

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Anders Thulin

Table of Contents

1 Introduction

This introductory chapter presents the thesis background and the phenomenon that the study will treat. Furthermore, the research questions and the purpose will be presented, finishing with an outline of the conducted research.

1.1 Background

Since the 1980s the interest in supply chain management has gradually increased when organizations discovered how collaborative relationships both beyond and within their organization was beneficial (Lummus & Vokurka, 1999). Among educators, researcher and logistics managers, Supply Chain Management (later also termed SCM) has remained an important topic (Larson & Halldorsson, 2004). Scientific journals have been created dedicated to SCM, but also entire programmes and degrees of SCM have been created where the interest of research has moved towards SCM. One of many definitions of supply chain management, that captures the essences, is by The Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals (CSCMP):

> "Supply Chain Management encompasses the planning and management of all activities involved in sourcing and procurement, conversion, and all logistics management activities. Importantly, is also includes coordination and collaboration with channel partners, which can be suppliers, intermediaries, third-party service providers, and customers. In essence, Supply Chain Management integrates supply and demand management within and across companies." (CSCMP, 2015).

Lummus & Vokurka (1999) emphasize how authors in an attempt to define supply chains further defines the concept of supply chain management due to how the supply chain, not the organizations, compete with each other. Due to the challenges and its complexity, Lambert et al. (1998:2) claims that: *"It is a lot easier to write a definition of logistics or of supply chain management than it is to implement that definition."*. Lambert et al. (1998:4) continues by addressing how there has been little or limited effort of trying to identify what managers must do when managing the supply chain successfully. It is from these previously limited efforts to identify what managers do the starting point of the thesis begins, but does not stop.

Stefan Tengblad (2012) have investigated and discussed previous managerial research, but also more recently conducted research, in a way to contribute to the way towards a practice theory in management research. Much of previous conducted management research has relied on diaries from managers, interviews or even surveys when trying to capture what happens in the activities of everyday work life – the practice of managers.

Näslund (2002) argues how there is a need of qualitative case study research when studying logistics in order to escape the limitations of a quantitative approach. There is a fundamental problem with quantitative research, a positivistic approach fails to capture what people do and does only rely on what people think and say they do (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994). However, Näslund (2002) does not criticize the use of quantitative research in logistics, rather a necessary development in the field. A following problem of this is how everyone just keeps doing the same research as everyone else. In an attempt to escape doing the same research as everyone else. This thesis will move into this gap while trying to explore and to contribute with a new and better understanding of supply chain managers' practices by using a different approach than used before – a practice-based approach.

A practice-based approach using practice theory seems like a natural choice when trying to capture the activities and practices of everyday work life of managers. The basics in this approach is emphasized by how the units of analysis, when trying to understand organizational phenomena, are the practices, not the practitioners (Nicolini, 2012). Mintzberg (2009:9) argues at the same time how: *"[M]anaging is neither a science nor a profession; it is a practice, learned primarily through experience, and rooted in context."*. Ontological assumptions and methodological choices coexist in practice theory and must work together, and it is for this reason why someone conducting research of work practices cannot only rely on either interviews or surveys when trying to understand work practice (Nicolini, 2012). Shadowing as an alternative to observation (Czarniawska, 2007) in micro-ethnography, is an appropriate choice of method when using a practice-based approach and doing studies of practices. The advantages of shadowing are how one more easily overcomes the limitations of time and space that otherwise frames the observation, and that the researcher has the ability to access situations that otherwise not should have been studied (Alvehus, 2013).

Similar studies have been conducted before where focus has been on the practice, but in other research areas. Whittington (1996), when he studied strategy as practice, had an interest of the activities and the actions when developing a strategy, and termed it as strategizing. Whereas the interest was within the talk, the meetings, the documents and the handling of numerical data when trying to understand strategy work.

It will be difficult when trying to find journals or articles that investigate and conduct studies of how the *practices* of supply chain managers are accomplished. The easy answer to this is that there are none, not that has zoomed in and captured the daily practices of a supply chain manager. The most appropriate way to approach this better understanding of supply chain manager's practices is by shadow supply chain managers and by using a practice theory approach to zoom in on the activities that creates the practices.

1.2 Research question

The research question is an extension of the more traditional question: "What do managers do?", which has been asked many times since the beginning of the last century. Instead of once again quantify what managers do, I will try to understand how they do the things they do. Why they do what they do is not investigated in depth in this research, in addition to get an answer to that question one can read Hales (1999) study *Why do managers do what they do? Reconciling Evidence and Theory in Accounts of Managerial Work*, which discuss this somewhat complex question in itself.

Because of what seems as undeniable an overwhelming task to be responsible for the Supply Chain Management, if it contains planning and management of *ALL* activities that involve sourcing and procurement and *ALL* logistics management activities as well, two questions emerged:

The first research question in this thesis is:
How and through which activities and "doings", does a Supply Chain Manager accomplish their practices on a daily basis?

The second research question, in addition to the first question, is a somewhat given question that concerns this type of research:
What does it really mean to be a Supply Chain Manager in practice?

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this research is to move towards a better understanding of Supply Chain Managers' practices by using different methods than previously conducted research. More specifically, by using a practice-based approach when trying to answer, identify and to zoom in on the activities and "doings" of practices. A step will be taken towards creating a new picture of Supply Chain Manager as a practice.

The answers and the findings from the first research question will also help to investigate how a practice-based approach may contribute while moving towards the practices. The findings also allows the second question to be answered by compare previous managerial research with the findings, but also by investigating the importance of sensemaking, sensegiving and knowledge in the daily activities that contribute to the practices.

1.4 Outline of the Thesis

Chapter 2 – Practice Theory and Managerial Work

This chapter presents the theoretical framework that later works as the foundation of the analysis of the empirical findings. Practice theory is presented and advantages of using this theory-method approach is discussed; previous conducted studies of managerial work is investigated; the process of sensemaking and sensegiving is presented, and its importance in organizations; and finally, how the two distinctions of implicit and explicit knowledge interacts with each other and how knowledge is shared. The chapter ends in a summary that captures what have been learned so far.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

In this chapter the methodological approach of the thesis is presented, by presenting and discussing the case study research with micro-ethnography together with the contexts, cases and units of analysis; the research design and choice of methods; how the data was analyzed; and, implications that emerged during the conducting of the empirical material together with concluding reflections.

Chapter 4 – Case Descriptions and Findings – Zooming In

This chapter contains a presentation of the empirical findings, the chain of evidence, from Robin's case in Company A and Marie's case in Company B.

Chapter 5 – Results and Discussion – Zooming Out

In the following chapter the empirical findings are processed and analyzed using the chosen theoretical framework, answering the research questions along with fulfilling the purpose of the thesis. The usage of practice theory is discussed together with a summary of the findings and an analysis and discussion of what it means to be a supply chain manager in practice is conducted.

Chapter 6 – Conclusions and Recommendations for Further Research

In this final chapter a summary of the research is made with some concluding remarks together with recommendations for further research.

2 Practice Theory and Managerial Work

This chapter argues why the specific theoretical framework is chosen, which will later be used to analyze the empirical findings. Before presenting the methods used in the thesis, one must start to understand why the methods where chosen. This chapter investigates and discusses: what practice theory means and how it can be used; managerial work; sensemaking and sensegiving; and finally, knowledge.

2.1 What is practice theory?

Practice theory has evolved from previous research while trying to capture the essence of social science. Sociology, anthropology and connected subfields have paid a greater focus on "practices" as the main object of studies during the last decades (Rouse, 2007). During the past 20 years the concept of practice in research and studies of knowing, learning and organization has returned (Corradi et al., 2010). Key theorists that have used a practice-based approach in their studies includes Ludwig Wittgenstein, Martin Heidegger, Pierre Bourdieu, Anthony Giddens and Michael Foucault, mentioning a few.

Both Anthony Giddens and Pierre Bourdieu that are prominent sociologists are often referred to as practice theorists (Rouse, 2007), where they address practices with a focus on structures and systems by questioning actions of individuals and how these actions actually was "*building-blocks of social phenomena*" (Schatzki, 2001a:10). Michael Foucault, which was a cultural theorist, put a focus on practices by emphasizing that when speaking of practice it is a way to illustrate language as: "*discursive activity in opposition to structuralist, semiotic, and poststructuralist conceptions of it as structure, system, or abstract discourse*" (Schatzki, 2001a:10). Because of the different approaches and angel of incidence, one cannot present a unified or fully formed practice theory. It is therefore, as Nicolini (2012) address, important to see and use practice theory as a method-theory package.

In an attempt to put words and label of various organizational phenomena, a practice lens for interpretation and reinterpretation has been used. Corradi et al. (2010) address this return of interest of practice concept as the "bandwagon of practice-based studies", but at the same time emphasizes how the institutionalization of practice-approached studies lack a united, or shared, approach on where the bandwagon is headed. Therefore, Schatzki (2001a) emphasizes just as Corradi et al. (2010) how it is not shocking why there is not a unified practice theory due to the many different paths of thinking while conducting a practice-based study.

2.1.1 "Practice" and "practices" in practice theory

Even though a practice theory approach better allows researchers to understand practices, one needs to be careful to not only pay focus on the vocabulary and the linguistically thoughts. Despite this, researchers when using a practice idiom have mostly employed linguistically beliefs, conceptual shared relations between participants in a specific shared practice and by the vocabulary when identifying practices (Rouse, 2007). Feldman & Orlikowski (2011) emphasize how artefacts, such as technology as one example, whose outcomes and operation are neither given a priori or are fixed, does constantly temporarily occur through the interaction with humans in practice.

Three dimensions that explain practices and contribute to the shape of it as patterns of activities are: first, meanings and representations; second, consisting of technologies, objects, and material culture; and finally the third, representation of activities and "doings" but also embodied competences (Magaudda, 2011). In line with Magaudda (2011), Corradi et al. (2010:277) also formulates three dimensions which the concept of practice is built around:

(1) *"the set of interconnected activities that, if socially recognized as a way of ordering, stabilize collective action and the common orientation"*;

(2) *"the sense-making process that supports the accountability of a shared way of doing things and which allows the continuous negotiation /…/ of the meanings of a practice by its practitioners"*;

(3) *"the social effects generated by a practice in connection with other social practices. This is the dimension of the reproduction of practice that answers the question as to what doing the practice does."*

The word "practice" in practice theory is important to understand and discuss, and because of this Reckwitz (2002) argues that it needs a separation between "practice" and "practices". In the Swedish language the differences between the words are more distinct – *praxis* and *praktik*. It is the same in the German language – *praxis* and *praktiken*. Reckwitz describe the differences as:

> "'Practice' (Praxis) in the singular represents merely an emphatic term to describe the whole of human action (in contrast to 'theory' and mere thinking). 'Practices' in the sense of the theory of social practices, however, is something else. A 'practice' (Praktik) is a routinized type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to

> one other: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, ‘things’ and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge.” (Reckwitz, 2002:249)

Instead of focusing on any detailed efforts at defining practices, which Reckwitz (2002) did when discussing the differences between “practice” and “practices” (or *praxis* and *praktik/praktiken*), Nicolini (2012:219) argues how he, when talking about practices, is referring to “practicing” as a “real-time doing and saying” in a specific time and in a specific place. Nicolini (2012) address practice and the process within the practice as the way to investigate and study the activities of the practitioners. He argues how the metaphor of sight, a practice lens, is a way to investigate and understand situations of practical reasoning but also to better understand the conditional nature of the organizational rationality (Nicolini, 2012).

2.1.2 The advantages of a practice theory-approach

The advantage of using practice theory is to be able to better investigate and understand social issues and phenomena, social practice. Nicolini (2012), however, argues how social practices as a term actually says the same thing twice. He states that, by definition, practices are in fact social and how it is only at this level normativity, meaning and morality can be maintained. Practice theories are basically ontological projects which is trying to create and provide new ways and new vocabulary to explain the world with explicit “units of analysis”, which according to Nicolini (2012) is practices. Schatzki (2001b) also defines practice as “*a set of actions*” and explains actions in a more generally way as *“the actions that compose a practice are either bodily doings and sayings or actions that these doings and sayings constitute. By ‘bodily doings and sayings’ /…/ actions that people directly perform bodily and not by way of doing something else.”* (Schatzki, 2001b:56). In the same way that practice theory lack a unified and single approach, practices can very much been looked at and be interpreted in different ways. Therefore, practices can have different meanings depending on the discourse.

A dualism between theory/action, body/mind, social/material and actor/system is often used when trying to describe the social world we live in. Feldman & Orlikowski (2011) addresses how dualism, in practice theory, should be rejected when trying to theorize. Both Nicolini (2012) and Feldman & Orlikowski (2011) address the advantages of a practice-based understanding and view, how it offers a cure to some unsolved problems when trying to portray the world in terms of complex dualism.

2.1.3 Zooming in and out while using practice theory

By now, one might wonder why even bother using a practice theory and how it can help one to better understand practices. Very much alike, Reckwitz (2002) asks critically, "what are the effects of practice theory?". He claims that practice theory is handicapped in the way that it yet has not presented a theoretical system, due to this one should not expect to find a *grand theory* but instead heuristic outcomes to practice theory. Nevertheless, a practice theory helps us to better approach the understanding of the social world, or as Reckwitz (2002) address it, by better understand our position as human beings and give meaning in a social world.

The camera metaphor of "zooming in and out", which Nicolini (2012) uses, is not only a good explanation of practice-based studies, but is also an effective tool while using practice theory. The reason why to zoom in and out is to help and enrich our understanding, by switching theoretical lenses this zooming in and out can be achieved (Nicolini, 2012). Zooming in depends on one's focus on the practices. The reason to zoom out is to better understand the practices in a wider context, both in space and time, due to how activities never occur in some kind of isolation and to understand different associations between practices and study the effects of these (Nicolini, 2012).

In a way to summarize the advantages of zooming in and out, zooming in is good when making sense of the practice in a specific place and zooming out is good when trying to understand practices and their connections. It is important to understand how, when approaching practice, one must broaden one's senses. Something Nicolini (2012:223) emphasizes as: *"[z]ooming in is not obtained by putting the practice under an ideal microscope but rather by expanding the number of tools in our bag of tricks"*.

Due to the lack of a united practice theory and the many different paths of thinking the idea of practice theory as a method-theory "package" (Nicolini, 2012) is an excellent explanation how to approach it. There is no fully developed, universal or single practice theory and should in fact be looked upon as both method and theory at the same time. In order to use practice theory, one needs appropriate methods that supports the practice observed with theories that supports and helps to explain the world as we sees it, in order to create new theories and understandings.

2.2 Managerial work

Much research can be found in the area of management, managing and managerial work. Even though some of the literature used in the following section might look outdated, just by judging when the articles and books were published, they very much still treat the topic of management in a relevant way. Mintzberg (2009) emphasize this by claiming that managers have different problems and issues as times moves forward but that does not mean that they are managing differently, the job in itself do not change. With to much focus on the present, *"terribly up-to-date can get in the way"* and we get to hypnotized by the present making us forget and be biased by what we already know (Mintzberg, 2009:13).

Mintzberg (2009) emphasize how there is this common picture of managers that they make great decisions, have grand thoughts and have systematical plans for the future. Due to this the folklore thinks that *"the managers is a reflective, systematic planner"* but the facts are that *"study after study shown that (a) managers work at unrelenting pace; (b) their activities are typically characterized by brevity, variety, fragmentation, and discontinuity; and (c) they are strongly oriented to action."* (Mintzberg, 2009:19).

Managers engage in various activities, but Hales (1999) address some central activities all or most managers appear to engage in, such as: being a figurehead; representative for some kind of work unit; spreading and monitoring information; networking both within and outside the organization; oversee work such as scheduling and planning work; allocating resources such as money, people and various material and equipment; human resource management such as recruitment, appraisal and training; solving problems and taking care of disturbance in the work flow; innovating work and processes relating to the managers' specialism or professionalism but also to the unit and its work.

During a five-week observation of executive's work, Mintzberg (1980) concluded and presented a distribution of different activities during a workday. He found out how the manager occupied the day with activities such as; desk work, tours, unscheduled meetings, scheduled meeting and making telephone calls. Hales (1999:338), in his study, narrowed it down into four activities that take particular greater amount of time and effort: *"day-to-day management of people; management of information; day-to-day monitoring and maintenance of work processes; and non-managerial work",* which he put greater emphasis on the managers preoccupation on the people who carries out the "maintenance" of the work systems. Tengblad (2006) relate critical to Mintzberg's (1980) study when comparing his finding with Mintzberg's, claiming how managerial work differs in *"much larger workload, a contact pattern to a larger degree oriented towards subordinates in group-settings, a greater emphasis on giving information, and less preoccupation with administrative work"* (Tengblad, 2006:1437). However, he could conclude from his empirical findings that older practices and new work-practices, combined, are both complex and context-specific.

As argued previously, Mintzberg (2009) characterized the activities performed by the managers as "brevity, variety and fragmentation" when trying to describe their work. Hales (1999) develops this argument by a deeper and more detailed description of what characterize managers work:

> "According to the evidence, this work is characterized by: short, interrupted and fragmented activities; a need to react to events, problems and requirements of others; a preoccupation with the exigent, ad hoc and unforeseen, rather than the planned; a tendency for activities to be embedded in others rather than undertaken separately; a high level of verbal interaction, often face-to-face; a degree of tension, pressure and conflict in seeking to juggle competing demands; and a degree of choice and negotiation over the nature and boundaries of the managerial job and how it is undertaken." (Hales, 1999:338)

Tengblad (2006:1451) concluded how many of Mintzberg's (1980) propositions of managerial work still receive supports, such as: *"managerial work consists of great quantities of work conducted at an unrelenting pace", "telephone and unscheduled meetings are mainly used for brief contacts between persons that know each other", "the scheduled meetings consume more time of the manager than any other medium"* and *"tours can give valuable information but the manager spends little time on them",* to mention a few.

Tengblad (2006) concluded, among other things, two important theoretical generalizations; how practices of managerial work do not radically transform but gradually develops over time, and how managerial work is a paradoxical phenomenon and much more complex than previously acknowledged.

Mintzberg (1980) addressed ten different working roles that a manager usually takes, some with empirical support and other more hypothetical, such as: a leader; a figurehead; the liaison; a monitor; a disseminator; a spokesman; an entrepreneur; a disturbance handler; a resource allocator; finally, as a negotiator. Mintzberg (1980) emphasized just how being a figurehead and lead negotiations are some of the "housekeeping" duties they must perform.

2.3 Sensemaking & Sensegiving

Weick et al. (2005) address how studies of sensemaking are useful in organizational studies and how it fills several gaps, where sometimes very small actions and activities of the sensemaking processes can have great consequences. Hellgren & Löwstedt (1997) and Weick (1995) argue how sensemaking should be understood as a process and how the most distinctive feature in sensemaking is the retroactive perspective. In order to understand what one think, one thinks back on what one has said (Weick, 1995). Even if some plans and decisions lies in the future, Hellgren & Löwstedt (1997) argues how the meaning of these activities is mainly constructed in retrospect.

Sensemaking is about turning circumstances into a situation that is somewhat tangible, which later is expressed in words with the purpose of working as a springboard into action. *"The concept of sensemaking highlights the action, activity, and creating that lays down the traces that are interpreted and the reinterpreted"* (Weick, 1995:13). Due to this, sensemaking is an ongoing retroactive development of reasonable images that rationalize what people do (Weick et al., 2005). Weick wrote, *"How can I know what I think until I see what I say?"* (Weick, 1995:12) when trying to explain organizational sensemaking.

There is also an interest in how reasonableness over accuracy is driven in sensemaking. It is only needed a certain understanding of what needs to be done, but not more, in order to continue with a project. Reasonableness and adequacy overcomes accuracy (Weick, 1995).

Sensemaking in itself means to create meaning of creation; how and what the actors create; why they create; and, what effects it gives (Weick, 1995). Whereas sensemaking is placed in a frame of reference that gives meaning to recurring processes of assumptions, explanations and revelations of the sequences of events (Hellgren & Löwstedt, 1997). Sensemaking is thus about actions and a dialog which goes in a cycle instead of a linear sequence.

The questions of "what is going on?" emerge retroactively through previous experiences and in a dialog with other people that act in a bigger social group. When the next question "now then?" is asked, the answer emerges in assumptions about the future which gets clearer meanwhile it is developed in actions (Weick et al., 2005). A form of learning in organizations is based on to draw conclusions of the history, what happened in the past, which creates routines that governing the behaviour (Levitt & March, 1988). They continue by addressing how routines and perceptions changes as a direct result of the organizations experience, by learning from your own mistakes, in that way the organization is ever changing into new, better, routines as they are discovered.

In order to make sense of something, there must be something to make sense of. Sensemaking is what constructs and enables creating of meaning. However, interpretation is a process in sensemaking, but it is important to notice how sensemaking and interpretations are not working as synonyms (Weick, 1995). Hence, the concept of sensemaking is valuable since it illustrating the invention prior the interpretation. Interpretation is more disconnected and passive than sensemaking, where sensemaking starts before the interpretation (Weick, 1995). Sensemaking is all about the processes, the activities, something that also interpretations is about – where interpretation often explains the product, the outcome itself. It is more common to hear how someone makes an interpretation of something, rather than how someone makes sensemaking of something (Weick, 1995). Weick continues how the concept of sensemaking thereof emphasizes activities, actions and the creation that establishes the patterns that is interpreted and reinterpreted, which makes sensemaking about the understanding of how people make to understand their already made decisions (Weick, 1995). Further, Thomas et al. (1993) address how sensemaking also include, in addition to interpretation and associated response, a kind of business intelligence.

In contrast to sensemaking, Rouleau (2005) highlights the importance of sensegiving and how it differs from sensemaking when focusing on managers. Sensemaking has to do with how the managers interpret, understands and create meaning for themselves with the information found around them. Sensegiving on the other hand aims at the managers' attempt to influence and affect the outcome by communicate their thoughts in order to create support from others (Rouleau, 2005). Maitlis (2005), just as Rouleau (2005), argues how sensegiving has its purpose to affect others in an attempt to influence their perception in a specific issue.

It is pointed out by Rouleau (2005) how sensemaking and sensegiving consist of more than a clear pattern from the top managers and how there then is a constant revision through daily experiences from the actors. It is possible to discern a mutual process between action and cognition that runs in a cycle with the purpose to understand and influence, something Gioia & Chittipeddi (1991) most simply explains as sensemaking and sensegiving. Understanding can be connected with sensemaking, cognition, and whereas influencing can be connected with sensegiving, action.

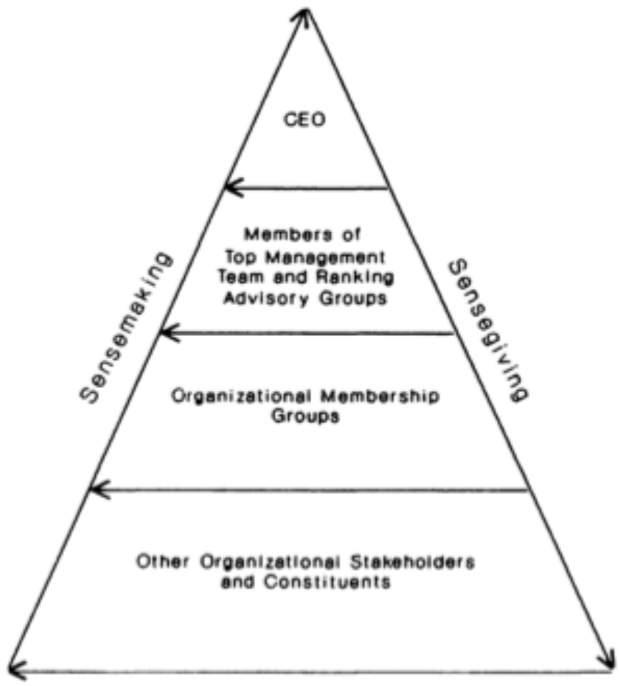

Figure 1: Sensemaking and sensegiving in organization (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991:443)

This can be understood through figure 1, which shows how the management team can be looked upon as architects and supervisors in an organizational change. Where the creation of meaning goes upwards in the organization, and where giving meaning goes down in the organization, during the interpretation of a new vision for the institution as important processes when managing changes (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991).

2.4 Explicit and Implicit Knowledge

Nonaka (1994) argues how individuals fundamentally create knowledge, which makes it impossible for organizations to create knowledge without individuals. Knowledge must be shared between colleagues in order to get out as much as possible from the intellectual capital within the organization, regardless the size of the organization the knowledge sharing is of great importance (Swart & Kinnie, 2003).

Knowledge can most easily be divided and categorized between explicit and implicit knowledge. Explicit knowledge according to Nonaka (1994) is that knowledge that can be transferred and expressed in formal and systematic language, such as words or numbers. Implicit knowledge on the other hand is somewhat of a personal quality, which is heavily rooted in actions, commitment and participation in a specific context (Nonaka, 1994).

Implicit, individual, knowledge is thus considerable harder to imitate than explicit knowledge, which can be caught in manuals or documents (von Krogh et al., 2000). Levitt & March (1988) follows the same track and argues how conclusions from previous experiences are recorded through documents, files, standardized processes and textbooks. Knowledge from experiences, regardless if it is explicit or implicit, is recorded in what Levitt & March (1988) call an organizational memory.

Nonaka (1994) argues how there is an interaction between explicit and implicit knowledge where these are transformed between each other, in which the central in creation of new knowledge is the dynamic interaction between the transformation of explicit and implicit knowledge. Cook & Brown (1999), in contrast to Nonaka (1994), claims how explicit and implicit knowledge are two separate distinctions that is not a variant of the other, in which one type of knowledge works when the other does not – nor can one type of knowledge transform into the other. Explicit knowledge can, however, work as support when obtaining implicit knowledge; in which implicit knowledge is created through own experiences by performing an activity oneself. Hence, one kind of knowledge is not hidden in the other at the focus how knowledge is generated (Cook & Brown, 1999). On the other hand, problems can emerge in the creation of new knowledge if one does not succeed to create a dialog between the different forms of knowledge (Nonaka, 1994). There is therefore a difficulty, even at those claiming to be experts, when trying to explain how the implicit knowledge is used explicit (Cook & Brown, 1999).

Managing consist of a great amount of implicit knowledge, knowledge that is hard to get access to. Mintzberg (2009) argues how this is the reason why the practice has to be absorbed and learned through direct experience learned on the job, which can be through mentorship.

He continues that it is not easy to transfer knowledge from one managerial job to another, due to much knowledge is developed in a specific context.

The master-apprentice-relationship is one example of how new knowledge is being generated, something Alvehus (2012) argues must consist of transparency as well as openness in order to create an efficient knowledge exchange. The apprentice new knowledge is generated through the interaction with the master, which uses his or her already existing knowledge, something that on the surface often is experienced as a form of transfer of knowledge (Cook & Brown, 1999).

2.5 Summary –What we have learned so far

Practice theory has evolved from previous research trying to capture the essence of social science. There is not a unified practice theory due to the many ways of thinking. However, it explains different dimensions of practices and its patterns of activities and the process when investigating and study the activities of the practitioners. Advantages of a practice theory approach are presented and how it can be used to understand practices, and how zooming in and out is an effective tool while using practice theory. Finally, practice theory should be viewed as a method-theory package, a toolkit, when conducting research of everyday doings.

Previous research of managerial work has been treated, discussing what other researchers have concluded when trying to understand what managers do. Folklores and actual facts has been set against each other, explaining various central activities most managers appear to engage in, what characterizes managers' work, and some critical comparisons between new and older empirical findings of practices.

The processes of sensemaking and sensegiving have been presented, discussing the importance of how ongoing retroactive development of reasonable images rationalize what people do. How we work ourselves into an understanding of already made decisions, to understand and create meaning with information found around us. Sensemaking emphasizes on the activities, actions and the creation and the patterns that is interpreted and reinterpreted. But also how reasonableness overcomes accuracy in order to continue with a project or situation. Sensegiving on the other hand is about the managers' attempt to influence and affect the outcome through interactions and communicating with others to gain support in specific issues.

Finally, the importance of sharing knowledge in organization was treated. How knowledge is divided between implicit and explicit knowledge, and how these two forms of knowledge interact with each other. That explicit knowledge can help and support obtaining implicit knowledge through own experiences. Implicit knowledge is also heavily connected with managing, which makes it hard to get access to. Last, the master-apprentice-relationship as a form to transfer knowledge was discussed.

3 Methodology

The following chapter presents the methodological approach being used, it also discusses, argues and presents how using case study combined with micro-ethnography and shadowing contributes to using a practice-based approach. Initially the case study is presented, describing the two cases, followed by how the empirical data was collected, with a continuous reflection and discussion of the different chosen methods, which is relevant for the purpose and aim of the thesis.

3.1 Scientific and disciplinary approach

The thesis has a qualitative abductive approach and a multiple case study design with a starting point in micro-ethnography with shadowing instead of observation combined with semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The case study design fits the criteria of a *longitudinal* design, which typical form is ethnography and qualitative interviews; and a *comparative* design, which typical form also is ethnography and qualitative interviews with the difference to focusing on two or more cases: and at the same time as a *case study* design, which typical form is in-depth intensive study of a case with ethnography and qualitative interviews (Bryman, 2012).

Because of this, ethnography rejects positivism when trying to see the social research as a scientific method that tries to test different hypotheses using quantitative measures (Näslund, 2002). As mentioned in the introductory chapter, Atkinson & Hammersley (1994) stated how there is a fundamental problem with a positivistic approach, how it fails to capture what people do and does only rely on what people think and say they do.

Just as Reckwitz (2002) emphasize, when using practice theory one should not expect to find a *grand theory* but instead heuristic outcomes to practice theory. This is in line with what I am trying to achieve, I do therefore not claim to find any *grand theory*. Instead my goal is to contribute with new understandings of supply chain managers' practices.

3.2 Case Study Research with Micro-Ethnography

I have in the thesis conducted research on two companies located in the southwest of Sweden, where I shadowed one Supply Chain Manager and one Operation Manager (which also is responsible for the supply chain). Since I am interested to understand and contribute with knowledge of supply chain managers as a practice but also *how* and *why* they perform the activities they do, it was of great value to get access to two experienced managers in order to better be able to fulfill the purpose of the thesis. A case study design is a preferred method when trying to answer the question *why* or *how* (Yin, 2009), but also when trying to understand a social phenomenon in-depth. Or as Bryman (2012) argues, to provide an in-depth illumination of a case where the focus is on the object of interest.

3.2.1 The contexts, the cases and the units of analysis

The two managers and their companies will be made anonymous during the research and because of this I have therefore used the following pseudonyms:

- Company A with **Robin** the Supply Chain/Purchasing manager
- Company B with **Marie** the Operation/Supply Chain manager

Due to the interest of the practices of supply chain managers the value of the analysis of the empirical data is not affected by using pseudonyms. Even if it is preferable to have similar companies the thesis focus on the managers, in addition to this there is no additional value to use the real names of the companies or the managers.

The Contexts

Both Company A and Company B are process and manufacturing companies, namely they own their supply chains – from production to end customer. Both companies and their managers are responsible for the supply chain management of their respective companies. The structure, however, in the companies differs. Robin in Company A charge for supplies, purchasing and logistics in addition to the supply chain. While Marie in Company B charge for customer service, order fulfillment, distribution and warehouse in addition to the supply chain.

The two companies differ in turnover and amount of employees. Company A has turnover of around 750 million € with 1 700 employees and 2 600 customers in 75 different countries. Company B has a turnover of around 2,4 billion € with 15 000 employees in 88 different countries. The Nordic part of the company, and the part I had access to, has a turnover of about 700 million with approximately 250 employees.

Company A produces products for different process industries, which they sell on a global market, whereas the majority of the products produced are being exported to countries around the world. Company A is in some form of a final phase. The company has had several financial good years, where the market they export to has also gone very well. Forcing Company A to grow and expand their organization in order to keep up. According to Robin and if one follow a reasonable business cycle, he believes they are coming to an end of that cycle – maybe not right now, but maybe in a couple of years. Due to this, Company A will most likely be starting to focus on creating better efficiency and be implementing a more cost focus perspective. When that happens the company will have some new focus areas in addition to their core competence and main production area. Ever since the financial crash back in 2008 and 2009, their R&D have put a full focus on finding new areas that may expand their business in order to create a safety and stability for the future.

Company B has a big part of their operation that works with distance trade, but also having own stores and franchise stores. The company has approximately 16-17 campaigns during one year that constantly is overlapping each other. The Nordic headquarter is placed in Helsingborg together with the warehouse, which makes all the distribution going out from Helsingborg to the Nordic countries and Estonia. The last couple of years have been a bit rough for Company B, facing new emerging competitions, forcing them to make cost efficient changes in the organization and reorganize the structure a little bit. The company is about to close one store in Sweden after this summer, however, despite of this the company's goal is to grow and expand making them aim for new collaborations and increase focus on selected markets – knowing how it is not a quick fix and how it is not something that happens over one night. The biggest change, and challenge, Company B is facing in the future is the investment in e-commerce.

The Cases

The two managers are the cases, not the companies, in this research and because of this it can be of interest to know something about their backgrounds, experiences, titles and remits:

Robin is in his early 40's and has been in Company A for about 16 years and it is the only company he has worked in since he graduated, whereas he has an educational background from Lund University as an engineer. He has the title *Supply Chain Manager, Region Europe*, he has eight employees that reports directly to him, whereas he reports to one manager above him. He is on the one hand responsible for the supply chain, which includes: order handling, freight procurement, production planning, warehousing and offloading. And on the other hand purchasing, which includes: strategic and operational procurement, but also the storage operation. Before his role as the Supply Chain Manager, which he has had since 2009, he had various logistics positions within Company A.

Marie is in her early 50's and has been in Company B for about 20 years and has worked with logistics and planning the whole time. Since 2008 she got responsible for the supply chain, where logistics was included together with sales connection and warehousing. Her role has later evolved into Operation Manager, which she has had since 2½ years ago, where the whole distribution and customer service also was included. She has the title *Operation Manager* and is responsible for two middle managers and five employees, whereas she reports to one manager (the CEO for Nordic) above her. Her educational background is economics in high school plus one year of postsecondary, in addition to that she got a MBA in logistics while she worked in Company B. Besides that she is very much self-taught with practical experience.

The units of analysis

Yin (2009:30) emphasizes how a general tentative guide how to define the units of analysis *"is related to the way you have defined your initial research question"*. The units of analysis is what I have analyzed in the thesis and it was the same in both Company A and B, to capture and investigate the supply chain managers everyday work life and their actions, activities and practices while trying understand how and why the managers do the things they do. To concretize it: the units of analysis have been the practices, through which activities and "doings" a supply chain manager accomplishes their practices on a daily basis.

3.2.2 Micro-ethnography

To be able to capture and understand the complex phenomena of organizations and managers, choosing surveys as method is fare from an appropriate choice. The researcher should instead spend time near the logistics, supply chain and managers in action and in the organizations, or as Näslund (2002:328) puts it: *"Only by being out 'in the real world' can we gather first-hand information to develop knowledge and gain extreme relevance."*.

Micro-ethnography differs from the more traditional ethnography by choosing to only follow a specific individual. But also, instead of a period of six month or more one follow the individual during a shorter period, for example, a day, a week, two weeks and so on (Alvehus, 2013). Micro-ethnography helps to understand and describe practice when based on both discursive and non-discursive practices, and it lets one observe the "accomplishment of a practice" (Nicolini, 2012). To understand the problems, the organizations and possible problems in the organizations, time needs to be spent within the organizations (Näslund, 2002).

Ethnographic case studies can be defined, according to Näslund (2002), as action research depending on the level of participation. He stresses that action research does not settle to just remain as an observer "outside the subject of investigation" but to participate more actively within the project, which will be discussed in the section *shadowing instead of observation*.

3.3 Research Design – Collection of data

According to Bryman (2011) a qualitative approach is to prefer when trying to understand the actors in a specific time and place and how they interpret their actions and their social world. In this case, the actors' interpretation of their actions is not enough in order to answer the purpose and aim of the research conducted. It is with the actors' interpretations the previous gap of understanding for the practice lies. Therefore, a practice theory approach is applied when conducting this research in order to capture the activities that support the practices.

Trots (2005) argue how a qualitative approach analyzes the relation between human beings in comparison to a quantitative approach which analyze the relation between variables. Because of this, in order to understand and contribute with knowledge of supply chain managers as a practice but also *how* and *why* they perform the activities they do, and not be locked into already predetermined quantitative variables that Trost (2005) emphasize, a qualitative approach is more suitable when answering the purpose and aim of the thesis.

The thesis is based on an abductive approach, which means a continuous switch between theoretical hypotheses and empirical material (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008). By using an abductive approach an understanding of the reality, or underlying patterns, is created as the switch between empirical data and theoretical framework allows interpretation and reinterpretation of the empirical and theoretical material. Because of this, the thesis is based on empirical findings, induction, as the same time as theoretical conceptions, deduction, is not rejected but works complementary to create understanding (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008).

Before I started conducting the empirical data through shadowing, semi-structured interviews and document analysis I had two separate meetings with both Robin and Marie. During these meetings some practical issues together with the purpose of the research was discussed. These meetings also gave me the opportunity to let them know who I was since I was going to follow them around for almost two weeks.

3.3.1 Shadowing instead of observation

In order to contribute with knowledge and a better understanding of supply chain managers as a practice but also *how* and *why* they perform the activities they do. I need to be out in the field, with the managers, observing their everyday work life. Shadowing has been used in early management studies, Czarniawska (2007) emphasize how Mintzberg used the term "a structured observation" for the methodology while he shadowed managers. One important aspect of shadowing is how: *"An observer can never know better than an actor; a stranger cannot say more about any culture than a native, but observers and strangers can see different things than actors and natives can."* Czarniawska (2007:21).

The total amounts of time spend out in field shadowing and conducting empirical material was approximately 130-140 hours, 18 days, over a six-week period. Starting on the 16th of March and ended on the 24th of April, with nine days each on Company A and Company B spread out during this time. Due to some meetings and situations where I could not participate the amount of hours dropped from 144 hours (18 days) down to approximately 130-140 hours. In addition to this I did not shadowed what happened before or after working hours, even though they clearly worked from home during the shadowing.

While conducting the shadowing on the companies I used a pen and a notepad, due to the ever-changing situations that did not allow me to use a computer on the run. In addition to handwritten notes, a Dictaphone was used to record our discussions and the managers' reflections and thoughts after meetings or some emerging events. At the end of each day I transcribed my notes and my recordings when it still was fresh in my mind, not risking missing anything or forgetting important experiences, thoughts or reflections.

The technique of shadowing allows the researcher to follow selected people, to move with them, when studying their life and ways of work (Czarniawska, 2007). The advantages of shadowing can also be describe as follow:

> "By following practitioners, researchers can thus attain an insider's view of the patterns of relationship, the different perspectives among co-participants – who is who and who knows what – the interest at stake, and how these different perspectives, usually sustained by specific discourses, are worked together, aligned, or played against each other, so creating differential power positions in the field." Nicolini (2012:222)

Czarniawska (2007) argues that observers are better to see alternatives and distinguish between them, where actors are not able to do this while they acting – their ability to see alternatives will only be during their reflection when not acting. As previously argued, the advantages of shadowing are how one more easily overcomes the limitations of time and space that otherwise frames the observation, and that the researcher has the ability to access situations that otherwise not should have been studied (Alvehus, 2013).

By using the technique of shadowing, Czarniawska (2007:58) emphasize the gains as; *"a way of doing research that mirrors the mobility of contemporary life"* and how it *"offers a unique opportunity for self-observation and self-knowledge."* During the shadowing, one will integrate with the one that is shadowed and discuss feelings, experiences and interpretations of different situations, before and after a meeting for example (Alvehus, 2013). Something I tried taking advantage of during the shadowing, to interact and discuss with the manager when the time allowed me to. The themes of the discussions, a kind of "live interviews", were connected with reflections and questions that emerged during the shadowing that day. These short "live interviews" could last between 5 to 20 minutes and was a way to collect the manager's spontaneous reflection of a situation that had occur. They took place sometimes in close connection to the event that raised questions in my head or at the end of the day when the manager had time.

An important aspect of shadowing is to not act as a fly on the wall but instead act as a responsible individual that show both sympathy and respect to others in the chosen context (Czarniawska, 2007). This is and was an important aspect while conducting my study, I constantly showed people around me respect. There was occasion when employees wanted to talk to the managers' alone, performance reviews or board meetings I could not attend to. By showing the people respect and understanding of these situations they started more quickly accept my presence and by having my around, they understood how I was not a burden that was going to be in the way.

One of the fundamental problems with observations is the so-called observer effect. According to Alvehus (2013), this effect consist of how the observer, in one way or another, affects what is going on and makes the observation less representable. I considered this dilemma but did not experience that it affected the results. Czarniawska (2007) emphasize how there sometimes can be trouble blending in. This on the other hand, was more of an issue on Company B the first two, three days since the vast majority are women at Company B.

The critique of how the individual that is shadowed, and the encountered others, should set up a show or stage and maintain a special performance is according to Czarniawska (2007) highly unlikely due to that they have often more important things on the agenda and on their minds. Just as Czarniawska (2007) experienced shadowing, the managers I shadowed and the people in their surroundings quickly forgot having me around. I was of course not invisible to the people around me, but after some quick questions about what I was doing and some small talk the people focused on their work again letting me go back to be a “shadow”. The curiosity of me as shadow disappeared pretty quickly. Something more interesting was how both the managers, after three or four days, began to forget that I was shadowing them. They could quickly walk away, keeping it hard to follow, and while I quickly followed them again they could say: “Ha! Sorry! I totally forgot having you around and that I did not tell you where I was going.”

Czarniawska (2007:18) address how subjectivity versus objectivity of the material and validity of the data are problematic terms. She claims that it is only people with awareness that are able to have opinions and to construct knowledge, which makes subjectivity a necessity for somewhat kind of knowing. Czarniawska (2007) continuous how objectivity, when she speak about other authors, think of “neutrality” or “avoiding idiosyncratic views and opinions”, but also how objectivity is both desirable and obvious if one see objectivity as a way to use objects to collect information.

3.3.2 Semi-structured Interviews

Interviews was used a complement to shadowing, as a way to get better understanding and insights from the two managers. To create insights of what the actors do in practice the empirical collection of data must be on the actors that figures in the selected context. An understanding of the actors, the managers in this case, and what they do in practice, how they reason, how they act, is therefore essential in relation to the current problem posed.

Through interviews with the managers I could get better insights of the relation of practices, which occurs in the actors environment (Eriksson-Zetterquist & Ahrne, 2011). With the help of semi-structured interviews, my understanding as a researcher in the specific context can gain benefits to understand how the different actors interpreters a specific situation. As Bryman (2011) argue, interviews can help to understand what the respondent experiencing as important concerning their interpretation of events, actions, patterns and behaviors.

With semi-structured interviews, where the interview consists of specific themes, the thoughts of the respondent can be understood (Bryman, 2011). The respondent can also contribute with meaning to a theme that emerge as important that the interviewer has the possibility to ask follow-up questions to get a deeper understanding around the theme, but also make sure that the interview sticks to its point and fulfills the purpose (Silverman, 2010). By using themes, it opens up for the respondent to formulate him or her more freely, which creates a higher degree of freedom compared to a quantitative interview methodology (Bryman, 2011).

And the end of my micro-ethnography I prepared an interview guide (Appendix 4) with themes created from the shadowing – things I have experienced, thoughts from different situations and reflections along the way. Both managers were aware that I planned a semi-structured interview at the end of my time in the company in order to summon and wrap up loose ends. This also gave both Robin and Marie an opportunity to give me their thoughts, inputs and reflections of the things I found interesting and wanted to put more focus on in my research.

The interview at Company A took place 2015-04-24 and lasted for 1 hour and 10 minutes, and the interview at Company B took place 2015-04-21 and lasted for 1 hour and 20 minutes. Both interviews were later transcribed in order to make the categorizing and analysis easier to conduct.

3.3.3 Document analysis

Before using documents one should consider if, the documents that are being used in a document analysis are relevant for the specific subject of the researcher (Bryman, 2012). However, using a document analysis may work as a suitable complementary to other sources of data, something Bryman (2012) addresses how other sources is needed to help the objectivity of the analysis and to create a own reality of the empirical findings.

Because of this I used PowerPoint-presentations describing the companies as a whole and the job descriptions from both the companies, which I was assigned with. I used this material as a complement to the shadowing, which was the main method of collecting data, and besides doing semi-structured interviews. The information from these different documents was used to create a better understanding of the contexts the two different companies are in, but also better describing the cases and the units of analysis.

However, one should also take into consideration to be critical about the documents, as they should not be treated as an absolute truth, but should be interpreted and analyzed from what they are suppose to accomplish (Bryman, 2012), a complementary source to the empirical findings.

3.3.4 Four criteria that evaluates the research design quality

According to Yin (2009) there are four design qualities, or criteria, that evaluates the research designs quality; which consist of construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability.

The construct validity tries to identify *"correct operational measures for the concepts being studied"* (Yin, 2009:40). While conducting the empirical material, I have shadowed two different managers in two different companies. In order to get a better saturation and stronger case, a multi-case design above a single-case design are likely to be stronger. Yin (2009) argue how even a "two-case" design is stronger compared to a single-case study and how it is a worthy objective. The point of doing several case studies is not to increase the statistical generalization; it is rather to expand the possible interpretations that can be made (Alvehus, 2013). It also helps me as a researcher to improve theory building, at the same time a case study design play an important role in the "relation to understanding of causality" (Bryman, 2012).

Since I do not try to find or establish causal relationships, where certain conditions are supposed to lead to other conditions (Yin, 2009), the internal validity is not an issue. While using a practice theory approach, dualism should be rejected making the internal validity counterproductive when investigating supply chain managers practices.

A common critique against case studies is the extent to which it is possible to make empirical generalizations from the findings. Bryman (2012) emphasize this critique and the discussion of external validity or generalizability, and how the findings can be used or applied in a generally way to other cases. My answer to this is the same as his, that it cannot. This is not the purpose of this kind of research design, to try to generalize (Bryman, 2012). However, an important point with a specific case, or cases, is how to investigate the particular case's specific conditions (Alvehus, 2013). With a comparative design one is studying two cases that is contrasting each other when using all most identical methods; *"It embodies the logic of comparison, in that it implies that we can understand social phenomena better when they are compared in relation to two or more meaningfully contrasting cases or situations"* (Bryman, 2012:72). The major advantages of a comparative design are not only the ability to distinguishing features and characteristics of multiple cases but also how it assists one's contrasting findings and theoretical reflections (Bryman, 2012). The problem I am facing as a researcher with a case study design is not to draw conclusions that shall be generalized but how I engage a theoretical reasoning. Or as Bryman (2012:71) puts it: *"The crucial question is not whether the findings can be generalized to a wider universe but how well the researcher generates theory out of the findings."*, which also can be seen as analytic generalization (Bryman, 2012; Yin, 2009).

In its place of processing reliability, which is far more suitable in quantitative research, both Alvehus (2013) and Bryman (2012) emphasize how it is more or less impossible to get the exact same results during an observation or and interview. Instead, the validity of the research is better and more suitable to focus on. Validity is answering the question if the researcher conducts the research he or she intends to do, which I dare to claim I do in my research.

Finally, Bryman (2012) address the concept of trustworthiness, which together with transparency is fare more suitable in this case than reliability. In the end, the research conducted in this thesis has its goal to be trustworthy. Svensson & Ahrne (2011) emphasize how trustworthiness is especially important while conducting qualitative research. Through triangulation and transparency one can increase the trustworthiness. Transparency aims at trying to clarify the research process and triangulation aims at using different method in order to better capture a more “correct”, objective or true description of the same phenomena (Svensson & Ahrne, 2011), which my different approaches of collecting data has done.

3.4 How to analyze the data

After the 18 days of shadowing was ended and both semi-structured interviews were conducted, everything was transcribed before starting to categorize and analyze what later would be presented in chapter 4 – Case Descriptions and Findings. In order to answer the research questions and the purpose of the thesis the findings was analyzed by applying the theoretical framework to the empirical findings to analyze it and get the results of the research.

Since the interest was in the activities, “doings” and practices of the supply chain managers, the analysis had its base in practice theory, which pervaded the categorization of the findings. The zooming in and zooming out has been one of the main tools used when making sense and analyzed the empirical material: during the shadowing I zoomed in, which resulted in the findings; and I zoomed out when trying to make sense of it all in when trying to reach the results and discussion.

Previously conducted managerial studies was used as inspiration for the categorization when zooming in on activities making them the practices in order to identify new activities and “doings” that otherwise would have stayed hidden, but also as a way to make the findings more understandable for the readers of this thesis.

3.5 Implications and Reflections

Being able to say that everything went just perfect, how the empirical collection was a smooth sailing would very much to lie. Things did not go exactly as planned, but close enough.

I have formerly argued how problems with previous managerial research has used diaries, surveys or interviews when trying to capture what managers do and then analyze their findings how and why the managers do as they do. The problem of that is how one risk analyzing the interpretation of what managers do and not necessarily what they actually do. A critique when doing a micro-ethnography with shadowing may very well be how the problem remains, that the interpretation will be the researchers instead of the managers. However, when using a practice theory approach the researcher interprets the findings through the help of the theoretical framework, and not only by the researchers own interpretations of the findings.

Reading and answering e-mails is a big part of the manager's daily work. This is something I did not take part of. I did not read the emails and because of this I did not always know how the managers prepared themselves through the information that sometimes was sent to them. In a similar way, I could not observe what was going on after working hours when they worked from home – reading and answering e-mails or prepared PowerPoint-presentations. And even if we decided what time I was going to be at the office, both managers had sometimes already been at the office for some time when I arrived. However, even if I had a high ambition to not miss a single second during the shadowing, I can most likely pose that I did not miss any crucial moments coming to the office a little while after the managers.

Although my initial plan and ambition was to shadow the two managers ten days each, in total of 20 days, unforeseen events decreased the amount of empirical material. The biggest problem was to fit, and create a working combination, of the two managers' schedules. However, considering the limited amount of time, 18 days of shadowing turned out to be a good amount of empirical material which created a saturation of data.

A potential issue or implication of how the data may be claimed to be less accurate is due to how I shadowed Marie on many Wednesdays. It would of course been preferable if there was an equal amount of different days during the shadowing – for example, two Mondays, two Tuesdays and so on, in order to capture the practices and activities on different days and weeks. This occurred in Robin's case as well, how some weekdays was shadowed more often than others.

Another limitation was how it was more or less impossible to capture all and everything that was going on around me, which makes it inevitable that certain events and things will pass you unnoticed without having a chance to capture it in words in your field notes.

4 Case Descriptions and Findings – Zooming In

In the following chapter the empirical findings, the chain of evidence, together with descriptions of the cases will be presented. What the different practices are during a workday, how the manager act, why the act as they do and which activities and "doings" the practices consist of.

Both Robin and Marie, and their roles as Supply Chain Manager and Operation Manager, may very well be looked upon as a practice in itself. However, in order to better understand what they do, but also how and why they do the things they do, their practice as a manager needs to be broken down and zoomed in to smaller practices and its activities, actions and doings. Then, and only then, can one contribute with further knowledge and understandings towards what the practice of a Supply Chain Manager really looks like.

Mintzberg (2009) argues how managing in itself is a practice, which makes everything a manager does some kind of activity. However, when zooming in on these activities, new actions and activities lies "hidden", making the activities the practices which each has a set of actions and activities. Therefore, in order to make some sense of it all and with inspiration from Mintzberg (1980), by zooming in on what he categorized managerial work as *activities* will work as practices when presenting the empirical findings of how the practices may look like for supply chain managers.

4.1 Company A – Robin

4.1.1 Job Description and challenges

Robin, as the Supply Chain Manager at Company A, according to his job description has a principle role to ensure that Region Europe has a Supply Chain organization that is set up and functioning in order to meet customer demands. He is also responsible for Supply Chain Management in Region Europe, which includes order-handling, planning, shipping, warehouse and dispatch and purchasing. Robin has direct management of the Supply Chain organization in Sweden and coordinating for the region he is responsible for. In addition to the general, and overall, nature of his job he has a long list of additional essential duties (see Appendix 1). The different practices, and its findings, that will be described below have all a common purpose, to fulfill Robin's responsibilities that are emphasized in his job description.

His department's most important tasks are bringing order to the planning by improving the different supporting systems to make them more sophisticated. In the long run, it is about navigating forward by looking in the rear view mirror in order to adapt more quickly for the future.

Something that always comes back is how Robin is constantly trying to adapt the supply-apparatus to meet the demand from the market. Due to this, one of his main roles are to always make sure how there is enough thoughts and ideas of what the future might bring. But also creating the right conditions for his colleague and employees, that they think correctly and get the proper guidance at the same time as overlooking all the projects and all the activities that is going on.

4.1.2 Meetings

The practice that takes by far the greatest place and amount of time of Robin's workday are the meetings, the many meetings. However, the purpose and character of the different meetings may differ substantially. During the nine days of shadowing, Robin did at least have one to two meetings a day, but as much as five to six meetings. The character and purpose of the meetings can be found in Appendix 3.1.

Recurring artifacts during the meetings were: computers, smartphones and notepads. Using their ERP and Qlickview to collect data, which almost every time was compiled in Excel to create statistical material and spreadsheets. Whereas the presentation usually consisted of PowerPoint-presentation presented on big TV monitors or projectors: presenting figures, table, graphs, statistics and KPI:s with some concluding sentences to explain the meaning of what was presented.

Throughout the shadowing, regardless of the type of meeting, Robin showed good spirit and was constantly accommodating his colleagues. He protects his employees and trusts them, trying to create an autonomous situation where not every decision or information needs to be lift to the top, to Robin's manager, in order to move forward in some specific questions and situations. The only distinctive situation where Robin put his foot down was during the meeting when a colleague presented the development of a planning application. Robin made it clear how he is the one that should worry about the profitability and that the colleague should focus on the details of the application. Making it clear where the priorities were. However, the meetings had otherwise, in general, a good and easygoing atmosphere with the exception when addressing various serious topics.

An overall role Robin plays in the meetings and the discussions, with the exception of meetings with other managers or executive managers, is to give affirmation to the colleagues. Many of Robin's colleagues are often seeking his approval and have a personal craving to get some kind of confirmation to how they think is correct. Robin does not like to micro-manage every colleague and has the ambition that they dare to think for them selves and make their own decisions. He tries to create mutual and fundamental values by sharing his own values and thoughts during the meetings, allowing Robin to trust the judgment of his employees and colleagues that they make good and accurate decisions that are in the interest of the company. However, at the same time he question ideas and guides he colleagues when they are not "thinking correctly". In order to give suitable, correct and plausible answers to the colleagues he constantly share his extensive knowledge, due to the many years at the company, when supporting the meetings.

> "The fact is that I do not know better than my strategic buyers what they should focus on in the moment… in generally. Then it can of course be exceptions which I have appeared in a context where I have received input that I actually can describe that we must change ourselves… we have to do like this... But in general, they are much better at setting a goal, what it is I should do. They tell me so I can say 'Yes that's right! Or, a bit more like this then it will be better.'" (Robin, 2015 – own translation)

It is not unusual that Robin already knows what he wants from a meeting, making the meeting an opportunity to create a chain of evidence that will supports his, and sometime his colleagues, already made decision. In the meeting with the Optimization of the production in South America he could "feel" approximately how much money they potentially could save to change the setup, before he and the CFO (Region Europe) even created a cost calculation. Robin felt how this problem was a bit of an easy fix as he used well-proven methods, due to how he had done similar cost calculations before. Robin has reflected on that he looks back on what he has done in order to make decision on what to do, claiming how it is important in some way, to use a relevant part of *"this we have done, this went wrong, I understand and we will try again to learn from..."*. However, he believes that they often have a pretty clear picture of what they want, a mental picture of *"we want to do this and we know roughly why"* before they create evidence and facts supporting their arguments.

During the majority of the meetings, Robin is the one that is responsible to keep the meeting moving forward. At the same time he usually lets the colleague conduct the discussion and present their thoughts, challenges, problems or general information, while he sits back and listens, absorbs the information and analyze what is saying. He answers the questions that emerge, sharing his reflections and experiences to help the colleagues to proceed forward. When he does not have an answer to bring, he writes down what the colleagues and employees asked him in order to further investigate the matter himself or find the right person that has the answer.

In the group meetings where there are more than five to six persons Robin often has a more "passive" role, trying to make the other colleagues speak and conduct the discussion. However, when Robin has meetings of the more intimate character, Robin and another colleague or manager, he is more "involved" in the meetings, which then consist of much faster, more intense and frequent discussions. On some occasions Robin takes the role, acts as, a supervisor, making sure that the things that are said are said in a correct way, that the colleagues do not jump to any conclusions without taking the bigger picture into consideration.

Regardless the character of the meeting Robin often clarifies and concretizes what previously has been said to make things more explicit and clear, questioning ideas and seeking clarifications. Robin's role during the meetings is both to give and to collect information. Robin emphasizes how it is important to share information between each other. *"Everyone should have the information and it should not be like… that you only get what you are 'entitled' to, just in that area. Everyone will do a better job if everyone has information. That is why it is everyone's duty to communicate to each other ... the relevant information."*. The reconciliation meetings is a great opportunity for Robin to brief his employees with information that comes from the top, the executive management team, but also to collect information which problems the company is facing – making notes during the meetings which he later types into his computer.

Robin does, on recurring occasions, emphasize the importance to take the bigger picture into account, reminding the colleagues to have a holistic and overall perspective when trying to make decisions – highlighting what the impacts and consequences might be otherwise. A recurring phenomenon was how reasonable and plausible assessments and evaluations took place, in order to move forward in the discussions during the majority of the meetings. If the decisions concluded from a meeting seemed reasonable and plausible, Robin could feel satisfied as a way to have fulfilled the purpose of the meeting.

Logical assessments, reasonableness and plausible assumptions are something Robin finds very important. Even though Company A have a lot of systems, like Qlickview, that can tell Robin and his colleagues a lot. It is important and very easy to get a fast overview and a feeling of something, especially when it comes to quantities and numbers. Robin argues how people question the reasonableness to little, emphasizing on an example how his colleague should have question some more during the presentation of the new planning application:

> “It is a bit like this with [Colleague X] and what he announced yesterday. This with presenting... I felt that it is amazing this picture but then immediately I felt, but wait, ‘what's this for numbers?’ So... How can... [Colleague X] had not really thought about that. That ought to be the first thing if we now have a system that will be on the verge of release. Have we checked that this graph shows something that is relevant? A little bit like, how were you thinking for yourself there? Why did you not think of that?” (Robin, 2015 – own translation)

The reason that Robin can say this is because of his own experiences of previous working and handling the details in the systems, due to his long time on the company.

During the meetings Robin is constantly checking his Outlook, glancing on emails, sometimes answering them quickly or open Qlickview to check some information and figures – but often, after checking Qlickview, he does not necessarily answer the email. He just want to know what is happening, and evaluate how important the email might be. During longer meetings, especially on the executive management team meetings, when Robin is not responsible to lead the meeting he uses this time to work and answer emails.

A fascinating feature of Robin is how he always manage to follow the discussion and being able to give a correct and direct answer when asked during meetings, even if he, the second before, was answering an email. Never during the nine days has he replied with the sentence, "What? Excuse me, can you take that last part again..?", instead he constantly multi-tasks with one ear focused on what everyone is saying at the meetings.

Even during long meetings or seminars and workshops that last almost the entire day – a long cohesive practice with different activities – Robin constantly interrupt the practice by checking his emails, look at his calendar, work in the ERP and Qlickview and receiving phone calls. During these unfragmented days and long cohesive practices where Robin is not "disturbed" by employees or other unforeseen events, he constantly create small fragments of other activities that is connected with other practices than the one he carries out for the moment. He interrupts himself by doing several things at the same time, most likely by trying to keep track of the situation by doing many things at once.

Robin likes these ever changing activities and running around in high pace which meetings as a practice brings, something that makes the first couple of weeks after a holiday feel strange when everything is so much calmer. Robin emphasizes how *"it is not that often I get the feeling of, 'I wonder what I will do now?'"*. When asking him how he would describe an "ordinary" day he explained it as:

> "I am pretty controlled by that fact that it is a lot of things that is going on and that many people want my attention, if one can explain it like that. It is very often running from one meeting to the other, and like 'now should we think about this and now we should think about that'. And there in between trying to capture, 'OK, what is it that I have heard? What do I need to do?'. And then try to find the individual which I would like to, 'you should look at this, and this is what you need to do', and try to do this in between [the meetings]… it is… it is somewhat of a balancing act." (Robin, 2015 – own translation)

Since Robin often is running from one meeting to the other with little time to spare, it is often some information gets lost on the way, due to how there seldom is a clear end to what he is doing. Not allowing him to stop and collect his thoughts. However, the meetings are one of his main sources when collecting information of what is happening around him, something he refers to as *"having his radar out"* by paying attention to, *"What we talk about? How does it affect me? How does it affect any of my people and processes? What should I do to correct it? Understand the consequences and understand the development"*.

4.1.3 Desk work

In Robin's case there is very little of "traditional" desk work, when he sits in his chair, at his table, in his office. Robin has two offices in two different buildings which is located next to each other. Where Robin, during the shadowing, spends his time pretty evenly distributed between the two offices. Even if he does not spend much time in his offices, he is always "available" to his colleagues and employees, due to he is always online in the systems. The long meetings work for Robin as "calm" moments, allowing him to answer emails and work with the ERP.

The most common activities and actions when Robin is conducting desk work are: using Outlook – answering emails; Qlickview – to analyze numerical data from the ERP; checking the ERP for information; compile and read different reports and presentations; create PowerPoint's; make phone calls – both from his phone and through Lync; and finally, using other support systems and applications. Robin's colleagues and his department are highly dependent of the ERP and different support systems. He on the other hand, believes that he could manage and navigate quite well without the systems due to his extensive experience and "gut feeling".

The main purpose of the activities during desk work is to collect, analyze, interpret and compile materials, information and statistics – which eventually, the majority of the times, ends up in an Excel spreadsheet. Just as he sometimes "translate" the information so it should be easier to understand for his colleagues and employees, he also translate other reports (e.g. inventory report from Finance) to his own "language", sorting out the most important information for him. Due to this, compiling lists, mostly in Excel, scan and analyze statistics and numerical data was extremely common during the shadowing. Robin is constantly translating the numerical data so it can be much clearer and easy to understand in presentations or in reports. He is turning raw-data and transforms it with the help of his knowledge and experiences to sometime make it more concise and understandable for everyone that should take part of the material.

The mornings and the late afternoons, the first and last 30 minutes of the day, is usually the time when Robin has the opportunity to work in Outlook and answering emails and catch up the things he has not had the time to do during the day – in one of his offices. Unless there is a meeting or another activity early in the morning, grapping a cup of coffee and reading emails is somewhat of a morning routine for Robin. Occasionally there are some time slots before and after meetings, allowing Robin to have a "calm" moment and reading emails. The things he catch up varies, but could for example be sending material (various reports and documents), collect information from Qlickview or the ERP, or just take part of reports and documents that needs to be read. During Friday mornings or late afternoons he usually attests invoices and manage his weekly travel expenses.

Since reading, both incoming and outgoing, emails was not observed during the shadowing, the exact purpose of each email is not known. He has difficult to assess how many emails he gets on a daily basis. However, he reads emails all the time, everywhere, and during meetings. Robin often sort his Outlook, dragging the emails to different folders in order to maintain and keep everything tidy and organized. When it comes to PowerPoint-presentation he has, during the shadowing, prepared the majority of the presentation at home making him only to adjust and add the final material and figures at his office. Robin did often finalize the PowerPoint-presentations only short moments prior to the meetings where he will present them. Usually by adding information that he compiled from Qlickview; numerical data, statistics and KPI:s, such as inventory levels, safety stock levels and costs.

There is a constant changing between activities, a constant multi-tasking: watching his emails, checking the phone, checking the Lync, there are almost never any long moments without checking his emails – almost like a compulsive behavior, just in order to keep himself updated of what is going on in the company.

Due to how the majority of Robin's time consists of different meetings and tours (which will be covered in the next paragraph) there is not much room left for him to sit down, nice and quite, to perform this practice. Making him performing most of the desk work on the run, but especially during the meetings and sometimes at home.

During the meeting of the presentation when his colleague was showing the development of a new planning application, was the only time Robin was indirectly told to close his computer and pay full focus to the presentation – the colleague did close the top of his laptop in a semi-comic but yet serious way to make Robin understand he should not look at emails at the same time.

Much of his time during desk work is to check and double check information in Qlickview, even if he gets many reports send to him via emails, he does always want to create his own opinion of the situation. Due to the amount of information that constantly is send to him, and passing him, he skim through and fast-reads reports and emails in order to form a quick understanding of what is going on.

Just as with the meetings, many of Robin's phone calls is to share information, discuss problems and potential solutions, give the caller some quick help, ask Robin about his interpretation of data in the ERP, but also to seek support and confirmation from him. During the nine days of shadowing, none of the phone calls lasted longer than ten minutes. They were short and concise conversation that often only called for Robin to confirm the other persons thoughts and questions. One could usually hear Robin say: *"Yes, absolutely!"*, *"That sounds reasonable, it is about feeling and assessment."* and, *"Then it is settled!"*.

4.1.4 Tours

The tours are the moments between the meetings and the "desk work" when Robin talk to his employees, colleagues and other managers – a way to keep himself updated, collect information around him but at the same time support the people around him by sharing his knowledge and experiences when needed. During the tours Robin asks a lot of questions, like *"How is everything going?"*, *"What happened here?"*, *"Did the problem get solved?"*, and so on. The tours works as a complement to meetings, enable Robin to brief and share information in a quick manner instead of sit down and discuss issues for a longer time. He is very humorous and raises the morale on his tours, try to take the time for his colleagues and employees even if he has an extremely tight schedule. The colleagues are fast to catch Robin and ask him some quick questions when they see him on his tours, due to his otherwise tight schedule.

On his tours in the hallways and the building he gets questions to look up and check things, to find information and get back to his colleagues. Most of the times he can provide the colleagues and employees straight up answers by sharing his knowledge and experiences. For example when Robin gave the answers, when the logistics planning group wondered how he manage to create an Excel sheet that sorted out possible affected products, by going back and look at old Excel sheets and see the coding in order to create new, similar, lists.

Even though Robin is not the direct manager of the logistics planning team he makes many tours to this group. Most of the times he only wants to check in and see how everything is going, in order to quickly exchange information with the people in the group. But also discuss various issues that involve the planning of the products, safety stocks, and delivery reliability but also to help put the priorities straight when needed.

Some of the tours have a clear purpose, to find a specific person and discuss a problem. Other tours are just to receive updates what is going on in the organization. However, some tours end up in unplanned, short, "meetings" whereas the purpose has been to conclude earlier discussions or emerging problems to find a way towards a solution. The balance between tours, discussion and meetings are many times vague.

The CFO (Region Europe) and the Logistics manager are the two persons Robin usually ends up with during his tours, discussing and share his thoughts. They are his allies, friends, which he absolutely trusts. Due to this, they are the ones he turns to when he needs to discuss issues or needs help to find a solution to a problem. They are also the ones that Robin, more openly and honestly, discusses the employees, staffing, wages and similar conversation areas.

On one of the tours, while showing me around, Robin found an error on some labels in the warehouse – an extra letter. Due to how he cares much about details he called three different colleagues to find out where this problem came from. After some time he found the problem, a missing space between two letters in their ERP. Robin created an Excel spreadsheet and filtered out every possible article affected and distributed the information by email to the ones responsible, making them the new owners of the problem. However, this emerging issue that was found out by a coincidence was not fully settled until later during the shadowing. Robin wanted to go to the bottom with the problem, wondering why no one has reacted to this before – making some colleagues backtrack the problem to find, and narrow down, when it all started.

Robin sees himself little as a support-person helping his colleagues to make sure that all the processes works, saying: *"It is not the idea that I should work with something like that, it is them. I am more like a moderator, more the kind of... coaching activities."*. In line with this, Robin thinks being an ambassador both internal and external is probably one of his most important main tasks, it is according to him included in the role as a manager.

> "Internal it is very muck like… to be an ambassador: this is good, this is important, this should be done... It is a lot: 'Yes, but what do the executive management team think?' I am a part of that team. I must of course in the daily work tell what we think is important, what it is we should give priority to, what is it that we should invest in. Then the word ambassador works very well, to be involved and lobbying and ensure that, this, this is what we want." (Robin, 2015 – own translation)

4.1.5 Emerging, and other, practices

On recurring occasions colleagues, catches Robin just for a few seconds, asking him questions, share problems or information, in order for Robin to follow up and find an answer and then come back to the colleagues.

A strategic purchaser from his group once caught Robin to get his expertise knowledge of how to, both technical and practical, solve a problem of a shipping to North America. In this particular situation, Robin came with some pointers but ended up recommending his colleague to talk to another person with better knowledge in that area. Often when Robin feels, or knows, if someone else is more suited to solve the problem he connects his colleagues with the person with the possible solution.

Colleagues sometimes catches Robin directly after the meetings have ended to ask him questions about a problem or thoughts they have. Once again the situation often only requires Robin to approve and confirm the colleague's thoughts before finalizing their decisions. Robin does on some occasion do the same thing around, catch colleagues that runs past his office and ask for clarification regarding emails or previous conducted discussions and meetings. The five to ten minutes before and after meetings is the time when Robin's colleagues has the opportunity to quickly discuss and ask him questions, hoping he can respond with some short and concise answer.

When Robin is in his office, and not in a meeting, the colleagues seizes the opportunity to catch him to discuss thoughts, issues, get confirmation, how the progress in different areas are going, and what is said on a higher level in some specific questions (what they discuss in the executive management team). In these situations, Robin is always straightforward and honest, to the degree he can in order to still keep the trust from his managers and the CEO, to help his colleagues and provide information to straight out question marks.

Emerging discussion at the coffee machine happens from time to time making Robin share his extensive knowledge and experiences on the company to answer questions of more general topics. On one occasion, a colleague presented some ideas to improve the work process making Robin respond how they already had thought about it in the past and how it was not profitable. This discussion may most likely be an effect of how the company is not very good, in general, to talk about and share the company's strategy further down in the organization, something Robin thinks is odd.

Robin coaches and supports the CFO (Region Europe), due to she is new on her post, and helps her in different situations: which people in the company she should talk to in order to get correct information; information about different forecasts; collect information from the Qlickview; and sometimes just to make her calm before presenting information to the executive CFO since Robin is well familiar with the different processes.

In order to manage all these different activities and practices, Robin often checks his calendar to plan what he needs to have done and when: *"I create... trying to create should I say... space in the workday... /.../ I try to be open to be able to act on what is happening. I know that the workday is that... unpredictable that you have to be prepared to... Then, to respond to emails and manage invoices that are something I cannot predict, it just happens. So this is something I need to work more actively with."*

4.2 Company B - Marie

4.2.1 Job Description and challenges

Marie, as the Operation Manager at Company B, according to her job description has an overall responsibility to strengthen the company's position as one of the leading companies [within their industry] on the Nordic and Finnish-Estonian market; to develop the Operation-organization according to the company's business plan, strategies, priorities and vision; and to develop and managing the staff. In addition to the general, and overall, nature of her job she has a long list of additional essential duties (see Appendix 2). The different practices, and its findings, that will be described below have all a common purpose, to fulfill Marie's responsibilities that are emphasized in her job description.

Her department's most important tasks are to keep the logistics- and supply chain-apparatus moving forward smoothly on a daily basis. Marie thinks, personally, that one of her most important tasks for Company B is how she is a part of the executive management team, and as a member should contribute by moving the company towards the company's vision that is set up according to the structures and the decisions that are made. Then, of course, all of her additional duties as well.

Challenges that always come back are her different roles, to be both the department manager of the supply chain-group and at the same time work as a specialist in that same group, doing the same tasks as the group is doing. Another recurring struggle is the one between the operational and the strategic role that comes when Supply Chain Manager is a part of her role as an Operation Manager. Marie's role as the Operation Manager is, according to her, one step over her role as the Supply Chain Manager, as she then focus more on the entire organization and not only on the supply chain. Otherwise, apart from the different roles, recurring challenges are often connected with organizational changes, the supply chain and every upcoming campaign, problems with forecasts, but besides that, just to keep everything running on a daily basis.

4.2.2 Meetings

During the nine days of shadowing the amount of meetings shifted, from zero to three to four meetings a day, with somewhat of a recurring focus on different staffing agencies. The purpose and the character of the different meetings differed (see Appendix 3.2).

Recurring artifacts during the meetings were: computers, calendar, paper piles (printed excel list with statistical data), and campaign sheets. Using the ERP during meetings to check forecasts, statistics and products. The majority of meetings were actually without a PowerPoint-presentation, but when PowerPoint was used it often consisted of bullet points with information, figures, tables, charts, statistics, KPI:s and concluding sentences to sum up the meaning of the slide.

An overall role Marie has during the meetings and the discussions is to keep track of what is happening around her and in the company. Due to hear curiosity she tries to collect as much information as she can during every meeting, with the ambition to really understand what is happening. Even if Marie tries to both share and collect as much information she can during the different meetings, much information gets lost on the way. *"I do know that we may not get all the information, it is unfortunately but that is the case. The information sometimes takes very strange ways. Then of course, I am at many different places so I get the information, but it comes from the wrong direction."*. Marie contributes with a critical approach and thinking during the meetings, asking straightforward questions in order to clarify and reduce the risk of misunderstandings. Because of this, she is not afraid to ask many questions in order to really get a clear picture of issues at hand – questioning other colleagues' thoughts and decisions. Something Marie argues has to do with honesty and values:

> "Honesty is not about just to tell you what I think of you, that is not honesty. But honesty is perhaps daring to question for example… Dare to find out things, tell you things. When things are happening. Not personally, no personal stuff, but about what we are doing here. What is it, so that we can get better, and that we can improve. And it is crucial. We are of course trying, everyone who works here, and above all the management group is trying to have this with us all the time." (Marie, 2015 – own translation)

A recurring activity was providing current situation analysis to her colleagues, due to how she has an overall and deep understanding of what is going on in the company. On some occasion Marie also try to inspirer her employees to find better and more effective solutions so they can save time and energy from what they are doing on a daily basis.

Regardless of the type of meeting, Marie showed good spirit and always respected her employees' and colleagues' thoughts, questions and answers. She tries to be a role model, live as she learns, to be an ambassador both internal and external. One of the most important tasks Marie sees as an ambassador is the sharing of information:

> "It is quite impossible otherwise to work towards the same goal if one does not get information, how it [the information] falls down. It must get down. And that is where the company fails many times, because all of a sudden the information comes from the bottom to the top. So if one has taken some strange decisions along the way and it is not consistent with where we are going, then it is very important that it comes from the right direction and down. And this can definitely be improved, but an ambassador, yes, it seems to me that I am. And we are quite good at it on an executive management team level, to all be ambassadors, both internally and externally, as well." (Marie, 2015 – own translation)

As important how the information should go downwards in a correct manner, Marie emphasizes how she also brings information upwards during the executive management meetings: *"It is not so much that should go from the bottom to the top as it is from top to bottom. If we take care of top-to-bottom well, it will not be as much on the contrary because then they know what applies and how it should be, and so on. Then of course, if it comes ideas and things, we will pick those things up and take with us."*.

During the monthly supply chain meeting with her group was the only time during the shadowing as Marie put her foot down after a discussion trying to inspire and help her employees to find more effective ways to carry out their work. When the colleagues did not really understand and "liked" the new situation, Marie told them, in a somewhat calm and polite manner, how they just have to like the situation and make the correct priorities. Marie tries to avoid to *"coach them and point with the whole hand saying, 'do this, do that'. But as you may notice, I need to manage [three employees names] a little bit"*. Her ambition is by sharing the information they should have the proper tools to make their own decisions. Due to her many years at the company she sometimes expects too much from her colleagues going, *"Christ! You have to think about that to!"*, which she is aware of is maybe not that easy for everyone – to see the bigger picture.

She is usually the one that is responsible to keep the meetings moving forward, but at the same time the one that "stop" some meetings to emphasize the importance to look at the bigger picture. Depending on the character of the meeting and its purpose, Marie takes different roles – from being actively the one that move the meeting forward to a passive role when she adds comments to share her knowledge and experiences.

One of the most important meetings is the one where they discuss upcoming campaigns, which Marie emphasizes how she almost never misses one of these meetings. During the shadowing Marie was a bit semi-passive in the meeting, she was not the one that owned it. She listened to her colleagues' discussion and broke into the discussion from time to time in order to specify and clarify the topics being discussed, but also questioning some of the products that would be included in the campaign. Marie did also share her experiences, knowledge and information about the inventory but also how the bigger picture at the moment looked like. Marie's role in the meeting is to some extent to supervise the colleagues' discussion and reasoning, so it does not go out of control where they do not consider the logistical parts. Due to past events, where the Market-department did not take into account the stock levels and made bad decisions that put the logistics group in a difficult position to solve the supply. She highlights the importance to keep track of the volumes and the quantities when planning the upcoming campaigns. Due to these meetings Marie can easier understand potential upcoming problems with future campaigns and how to faster find a solution, but also to understand how people think about the campaigns making the forecast a little bit easier to conduct and manage.

A contributing factor which allows Marie to make more reasonable assessments is due to a tight collaboration with Finance, whereas Marie often clarifies and provides information to the controllers why some figures looks like they do. At the same time, this kind of meeting is an opportunity for Marie to keep the bigger picture updated.

The meetings with the Warehouse Manager are a little different. Marie and the Warehouse Manager has a very good and tight relationship, and are one of the managers, during the shadowing which she could share all her information with – unlike some meetings with her employees. Most of the times Marie is the one sharing her experiences and knowledge, due to her many years at the company, but in the discussions with the Warehouse Manager she is eager to receive information and knowledge from him – due to he has been as long, if not longer on the company as Marie.

The weekly risk assessment meeting is a kind of reconciliation meeting to give Marie information about different problems with the products, but also to give a status update on various issues. During these meetings Marie takes the roll as a supervisor and double checks information in their different ERP:s in order to identify what is going on and be able to take appropriate decisions. This is also the time when Marie delegates which employee is responsible for each problem to solve the coming days, if possible. She provides the colleagues with information by checking the forecast and the ERP, making decisions how to solve problems and analyze the risks for going out of stock.

During the meetings with here logistics and supply chain group Marie is the one that do the talking most of the time, presenting different PowerPoint-presentations showing different results, statistics, forecasts, important information, news in the company, potential future challenges and opportunities. Marie is somewhat tactical when distributing, or not distributing, information to her colleagues. This is also a part of Marie's role of being an ambassador, separating *"nice to have"* information and *"need to have"* information: *"Some people have a tendency to want to know things that are 'nice to have' not 'need to have'. 'Nice to have' is something you can get in a small portion, but many times the 'nice to have' information works as an incredibly energy thief. Because you are collecting so very much information and then you do not have enough knowledge, what will you do with that information?"*. Even if she knows a possible future solution to a problem, she can wait to share it, because it is important to choose the right time and situation before providing all the information. But also making sure that everything is in place before saying anything rash.

Because of Marie's expertise in the ERP, due to her long experience of working with it, she has a good understanding of how it works and shares her knowledge with other colleagues during meetings. Since she has experienced many different scenarios during her time on the company, Marie is able to paint up good examples of how potential problems may look like when discussing future changes. This also helps her when arguing for her cause. This was especially shown when Marie was trying to motivate and help her colleagues and employees on how to be more proactive and to streamline some activities.

The meetings with the different staffing agencies had a slightly different character, due to how the staffing is needed for the Warehouse, Marie was only supporting the Warehouse Manager in the meetings, by contribute with her knowledge and experience when describing how the company's work process looks like.

4.2.3 Desk work

It is hard to say how much time Marie spends on meetings and on desk work, however during the shadowing she spent almost an equal amount of time on them both. The meetings combined with the desk work is how Marie collect the majority of her information. By analyzing the numbers and the data from the ERP Marie is able to get a good picture, however: *"It is also a little bit like, the numbers says a lot, but it can of course be underlying factors that cannot be distinguished from a number. And then you have to have a meeting, in any case have a communication with people to take in information so you do not make any wrong decision."*. On recurring occasion it was revealed how Marie had worked an hour or two at home, answering emails. Most of the days Marie was already at her office, which she had been for a while when I arrived. One of the days she arrived two hours before me. During the nine days of shadowing each day started and ended with Marie checking her Outlook, skimming through, reading and answering some emails. Due to the high amount of emails, Marie often answers in a very short and concise manner to keep down the time spent on answering and reading emails. Marie often reads "old" emails to refresh her memory, making Outlook work as an information and knowledge bank.

Marie sits in a landscape with five other colleagues, her employees, the logistics group. There is a good and easygoing atmosphere in the landscape with mutual respect and understanding for each other. She has actively chosen to sit in the landscape to avoid the loneliness the management comes with, and how it is important to reduce the risk to be interpreted to sit on some high horses. This setup opens up for the colleagues to ask quick questions to Marie, but at the same time it allows Marie to make quick checks to get a fast update of how things are going. Questions that arise are often quick thoughts and concerns from the colleagues, seeking approval and confirmation from Marie. Most of the times Marie can provide the colleagues with fast, short and concise answers by providing reasonable assumptions allowing the colleagues to carry on their activity. Marie emphasize how there is a lot going on in the landscape but how she enjoys her role as Supply Chain Manager to always being involved in the short "meetings". *"That is somewhat a 'typical' day. A lot of things happen, persons are* *trying to pull and catch me all the time. It is very rare that I sit still, and do the same thing.”*. Marie emphasizes how there is not *“one day alike the other as it changes all the time”*, despite this there is a pattern – when looking at the weeks. Mondays is the executive management team-day, Tuesdays is somewhat of the supply chain-day, Wednesdays is a middle day when nothings usually is planned, Thursday is often the same with the exception of doing forecasts. *“There is a kind of structure. Some days some things are done.”*.

The most common activities and actions when Marie is conducting desk work are: work in the main ERP and the supporting systems – placing orders, collect information, create forecast; using Outlook – answering emails; using Excel – to analyze numerical data from the ERP, from emails and from their mutual hard drive; revise and create PowerPoint’s; make phone calls. There is a constant shifting between different ERP:s, Excel and Outlook, whereas Excel usually consist of very long lists of different article numbers and statistics. The main, and recurring, activities during desk work is to collect, analyze, interpret and compile materials, information and statistics from the ERP systems, Excel lists and from their main hard drive.

Marie’s desk work practice is largely based on compiling and “wash”/filter, but also to create, Excel spreadsheet that will work as documentation further on. Some of the reports and lists are less advanced to compile (copy and paste), which on the other hand demands putting the correct information on the right place in the documents. She works very systematic and methodical when working with Excel sheets. Since they are using many different systems at once there is often a lot of manual work; import and add products in their ERP. Some of the orders and documents she creates are later being saved on their mutual hard drive.

Marie’s daily routine is to: check the incoming mails (physical mails, not emails) through one of the systems; the packing and the resources on the warehouse; and, that they have enough staff. Another daily routine, which is connected with the one above, is how Marie looks at their Recycle Statistics and ask her self three question: *“(1) Did we get in the amount we thought? (2) Did we pack the amount we planned? (3) Are there any troubles or problems?”*.

Marie has multiple Excel lists, with different contents, opened at the same time. The same goes with the ERP systems (the have one main ERP system and then another one as a planning/supply tool). There is a constant shifting between the ERP, Excel and Outlook, making Marie work at a high pace in the ERP.

One of the main, overall, purpose for Marie is to keep the stock balance in check and not have too little products and not building overstock – which many time is a fine line.

Forecasting is a big part of Marie's desk work. However, this operational activity of creating forecast is something Marie really enjoys, even if the activity is somewhat repetitively many times. Forecasting is a recurring activity – collect and interpret figures from the ERP and "transfer" to Excel; calculate, analyze and reflect if it looks reasonable enough so the forecast can be sent out to relevant parts of the organization. To simplify the process somewhat it is about find an article in the ERP; export it to Excel; analyze, calculate and sort it; paste into the forecast list that is another Excel sheet and finally import to the ERP. Sometimes Marie needs to hunt down information, mailing colleagues, before being able to complete the forecast and make a correct assessment. When asked, how she is able to do the assessment, she replies how she looks at the previous years forecast but also making educated guesses: *"It may be reasonable that results will be either this or that".* Marie emphasized once how "logic" is very important when one is dealing with logistics, that plausible and reasonable assessments are key. *"As we conduct many tests, and we do not change anything in the actual campaign and so on, instead we conduct test. So, we are looking back very much on what we have done."*. Marie emphasized it further by saying:

> "You should look in the rearview mirror, but it is important that you look into the large window forward, it is important to keep that in mind. One important thing is to remember what happened, it should still be the large window that you are looking through in front of you and the small rearview mirror when looking back. If you look the opposite, in a small window in front and a large back, then you will never get ahead. Then you never dare take that little risk that you may have to do in certain situations in order to get success and move forward. And reach the finish line." (Marie, 2015 – own translation)

Reasonableness goes before accuracy to some extent when Marie works with the forecast. When she is doing a forecast, she is looking much on the history and then adds some news and then removes what has been deleted. Asking questions like, *"Is this reasonable that the customer will buy for this?"* which is important to have that kind of feeling when doing forecast, otherwise one will never finish. *"So it is very much a mindset of reasonableness.*

Because we cannot go down in every small detail, instead here you have to think whether it is reasonable or not. In which I can find it very much in the daily - what is reasonable?"

Many of Marie's colleagues swing by her office place providing her with information and updates of different issues. Sometimes just to inform her or get some affirmation and confirmation that they took the right decision, and sometimes to get a solution how to solve a problem. Because of how Marie is interrupted quite often at her desk, she needs to backtrack what she has done to get back on track again. However, when trying to find answers to problems that emerge she sometimes backtracks which decisions that previously have been made in order to solve the issue. There is a high amount of information that is constantly passing Marie, through: emails, phone calls, meetings and her colleagues. Due to this, much of her time consist of delegate and make sure that her colleagues and employees are aware of what needs to be done and prioritized.

Many of Marie's phone calls is about trying to give quick answers in order to solve emerging problems. But also to: share information; discuss different issues and potential solutions; get help from other colleagues when she does not know the answers; questioning decisions that have been presented from meetings or emails; and double check information.

When Marie created the PowerPoint-presentation for the monthly supply chain meeting she finalized the presentation a half an hour before the meeting. She copy pasted much of the presentation, compiling important information from other presentations that came from the executive management team and then quick-studying previous presentation to be able to present the material for her colleagues and employees – with five minutes to spare before the meeting started.

There has been a standardization of the packing of the products in order to cut costs and give a more luxury impression, but also to avoid unnecessary adjustments in the production. Due to this Marie needed to filter out which products that would be affected in the standardization. During this occasion she used an Excel spreadsheet to filter out the products and "clean" the list so it will be easier to understand. However, the list never got complete since she was in need of some knowledge from her colleague that was sick during that occasion.

4.2.4 Tours

Since Marie is working in a landscape with all of here employees, the amount of tours was quite low during the shadowing. Many of Marie's tours started after she had pondered for a while and got a craving to hunt down an answer. If she did not got hold of the person by phone she went by the person's office instead. When there is something that is a little bit complicated to explain in an email, Marie goes away to talk to the specific colleague. Or if she believes there will be a discussion following the question or answer.

Marie's tours had the majority of times a clear purpose, to collect information regarding different issues in order for her to move forward in what she is doing, but also to secure that she has an accurate overall picture of the situation. Due to this, some of the tours ended up in short spontaneous meetings, discussing issues that had emerged.

One of her tours had the purpose to get control of all the products that they have in their showroom. To solve the issue she ordered an inventory, bringing people from the warehouse (due to a slow day in the warehouse) up in the office to start the inventory. She supported her colleagues by walking through exactly which products needed to be in the inventory, providing list of the article numbers and showing them how the scanning process worked. On one other of the tours she went to one of the controllers, when Marie was searching for a correct cost center to be able to track the transaction later on – so this matter would not become a later problem.

When Marie makes her tours through the hallway, colleagues often catches her to ask some quick questions: to look up and check things; to find information; or only to take part of her knowledge and experience in the matter.

4.2.5 Emerging, and other, practices

An overall part as Marie plays is, as a stop sign, someone that says: "Wait!", forcing her colleagues to reflect and think of the consequences of their decisions. Something not everyone does. On recurring occasions, she poses the questions why the balance, the quantities and some of the forecast spontaneous looks strange in the systems – when trying to make sure that they have the correct amount to satisfy the demand. Marie many times acts as a "fixer", guides and helps her colleagues to solve various things, which occasionally does not feel as if it is her direct duties. However, she is affected in the long run of her employees' performances and result making it logic to help out, even if it takes time from other activities.

Since Marie has her workplace in a landscape, questions from colleagues are never far away. However, there is a balance between "incoming" question from colleagues and "outgoing" questions from Marie herself to her colleagues. Many of the question is about if her colleagues have thought correctly, asking for confirmation from Marie. Marie is always polite to her colleague and does her best to accommodate them. Only on one or two occasions she told her colleagues and employees that she did not have the time at the moment and how they have to look at it later on instead.

Due to that she gets many questions from her colleagues and employees during the days she write down a lot of notes, reminders so she hopefully will not forget it later on. On some occasion the questions succeeded each other, making one conversion barely end until the next one begun. In order to save some time Marie once suggested a colleague to check, and backtrack, how they have done before by looking at a similar product in order to create an own understanding how to solve a problem. One part of Marie's practices and activities is to make sure that her colleagues and employees are up to date with some situations but also to secure that they know what to do when potential situations may emerge.

On recurring occasions, Marie emphasizes the importance for her colleagues to look at the bigger picture and trying to understand the consequences of one's decisions – when her colleagues, for example, wanted to use two thirds of the quantity of a product. Marie tries to avoid having small quantities left in the warehouse that later is difficult to get rid of. Due to her long experience and knowledge in the company she also emphasize how one cannot generalize the products and how there needs to be a balance in the supply/the stock and inventories. Otherwise they will build an overstock. Marie is constantly thinking about holding the costs down.

During one of the days the network broke down, prevented Marie from using the Internet, the Outlook, their ERPs and to reach their mutual hard drive. She became quite "handicapped" when the systems were failing, showing how dependent she is of the systems and the support of information they provide. It became particular clear during this issues how Marie has great knowledge but at the same time analyze, reflect and create understanding from statistics and information in the systems which she later transform into the correct information in order to answer colleagues questions and come with possible solutions.

Early in the shadowing Marie conducted an experiment, trying to order some products from their web shop in order to get a feeling if it was complicated and why they had problems in the system with this kind of orders – like a mystery shopper. She was trying to find where the problem of e-orders was; making most of them fall into a list that needs to be manually managed, taking unnecessary time. After some time, halfway through the shadowing, Marie together with IT found that the problem was how the matchmaking-process worked. This issue recurred throughout the shadowing, without a totally clear solution. The problem was delegated to the IT-department, which after instructions from Marie started to investigate where the problem was, and later was going to present possible solutions for Marie to consider.

Since some of the employees in her group had been sick Marie had to do some of their work as well, activities such as invoices she normally not do. Due to this, despite her experience, she needed some help from a colleague to fix errors on the invoices and get the correct cost centers and accounts.

Marie did usually, the majority of the day, work in different systems, had some planned meetings, some unplanned short spontaneous meetings, few phone calls, time spent on creating orders, compiling different lists, double checking different products in their ERP in order to make potential decisions and to make corrections and changes.

5 Results and Discussion – Zooming Out

In this chapter the empirical findings will be analyzed with the help of the chosen theoretical framework and discussed, in order to answer the two research questions along with fulfilling the purpose of the thesis.

5.1 The usage of practice theory and summary of the findings

The advantages of having used a practice theory have been to better investigate and understand the supply chain manager as social phenomena and a social practice. Zooming in has enabled, as Nicolini (2012) emphasizes, making sense of the practices in a specific place, by focusing on practices as explicit units of analysis. But also by being able to reject a complex dualism (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011) in the findings, since the activities and practices many times occurred both independently and dependently of one another.

After having used a different approach than previously conducted research a step towards filling a part of the existing gap is taken, which practice theory contributes with. The different dimensions of practices, such as: the set of actions, the patterns of activities, the embodied competences, the technology and objects, how the activities interconnect, usage of background knowledge, the process of sensemaking and how the practices are reproduced (Schatzki, 2001b; Reckwitz, 2002; Magaudda, 2011; Corradi et al., 2010), have all been possible to captured, but also how they have been used and produced, due to using a practice-based approach when tackle the accomplishment of daily practices.

The first step towards a better understanding of Supply Chain Manager's practices, and to contribute to a new picture, is to answer the first research question: *How and through which activities and "doings, does a supply chain manager accomplish their practices on a daily basis?* The answer to this question is all the findings in chapter 4, but in an attempt to further concretize the answer it has been further summarized below in key recurring activities and "doings".

A summary of the key recurring accomplishments of practices on a daily basis in both cases:

Meetings:

- Recurring artifacts used: computers, smartphones, notepads, and physical papers. ERP systems, Qlickview, Outlook, Excel, PowerPoint – in order to present KPI:s, tables, figures, graphs, statistics, make concluding remarks, check forecasts, statistics and products.
- Give accommodation, affirmation, and confirmation to colleagues and employees. Set priorities straight. Sharing own and company's values in order to create autonomy in order to make the employees and colleagues dare to make own decisions. Show good spirit and respect to the employees and colleagues.
- Share and collect information during meetings, by questioning colleagues' and employees' thoughts and decisions. Collect information of different problems and challenges through meetings, (desk work and tours). Constantly update the overall knowledge of what is happening in the company, in order to make correct, reasonable, decisions that take the bigger picture into account.
- Delegate work between and to the employees and colleagues. Find better and more effective solutions to save time and energy, by inspire the colleagues. Provide a form of current situation analysis to colleagues, due to a good overall and deep understanding of the organization.
- Be responsible to move meetings forward, make presentations, passing information along from the executive management team. Make sure that the employees and colleagues have the proper tools to conduct their work and be able to make correct decisions. Listen, absorb and analyze information from colleagues and employees, during meetings. Sharing own reflections, experiences and knowledge to help.
- Clarify, concretize, questioning ideas, seeking clarifications, collect information, share information. Constantly checking emails, check and double check information, keep updated, constantly multi-tasking. Trying to keep the information intact and not losing anything.
- Make plausible and reasonable assessments and evaluations, consider impacts and consequences if one does not take the bigger picture into account.

Desk work:

- Answering emails, analyze numerical data from the ERP, check, compile and read different reports and presentations, create presentations, make and receive phone calls.
- By collecting, analyze, interpret and compile materials, information and statistics help “translating” and simplify the information. Place orders, create forecasts, and collect various information. Constantly shifting between ERP, Qlickview, Excel and Outlook while systematic and methodical work with compiling Excel sheets, which later works as some kind of documentation. Send and distribute materials and information by email.
- Skim through, fast-read reports and emails. Use Outlook and “old” emails as an information and knowledge bank. Backtrack what have happened before, when trying to solve problems.
- Create a daily interpretation of how the workflow is going with incoming and outgoing orders, by checking the ERP.

Tours:

- Use tours as a complement to meetings, by talking to colleagues, employees, other managers; quick spontaneous short meetings and discussions. Keep colleagues and employees updated, collect information; support the people in the company by sharing knowledge and experiences. Answering questions, find solutions, help make decisions, discuss organizational matters – staffing, employees, wages and so on.
- Find possible solutions to emerging problems by talking to colleagues and employees, but also through own experiences. Bring the right colleagues together; help to network.
- Act as an ambassador, internal and external, share information and be involved and by lobbying. Conducting coaching and supporting activities, act as a role model. Act as a “fixer”: guide and help colleagues to solve various issues. Sometimes act as a supervisor; make sure that the colleagues do not jump to any conclusions without thinking of the bigger picture. Stop meetings; invite to reflections before make any decisions.
- Make sure that colleagues and employees are up to date in different situations; make sure how they may solve emerging problems. Emphasize on the importance to take the bigger picture into consideration and try to have a holistic approach while working.

- Use the supporting systems (ERP, Qlickview, Excel) to analyze, reflect and create understanding from different statistical documents and information, in order to later provide correct information to help colleagues to solve problems and answer their questions.

Using another approach than practice theory would not justify focusing on practices while conducting research that claims to investigate what happens in practice. Using practice theory as a way to approach the cases and units of analysis, has made is possible to claim how this thesis has moved towards a better understanding of the practices of supply chain managers.

To see practices (praktik/praktiken) as Reckwitz (2002) addressed it, how it should be a routinized type of behaviour consisting of several elements, including background knowledge in form of understanding, know-how and both bodily and mental activities. All these patterns of activities have been shown in the case descriptions and findings, while the most recurring activity in both Robin's and Marie's cases, were the mutual and common feature how they both use their extensive experiences and previous knowledge when conducting the different activities and "doings" to accomplish their daily practices – as a routinized behaviour to achieve their practices. But also simply by being good fellow human beings that respects and genuine helps their colleagues and employees in order to create the right conditions by giving the proper guidance, information and knowledge and work towards the company's vision.

If one should zoom out further and use Magaudda's (2011) three dimensions to explain Robin's and Marie's role as Supply Chain Manager and Operation Manager as a practice in itself (Mintzberg, 2009): first, they create meaning and representation by their extensive knowledge and experiences in their context; second, they use technology, objects and material such as supporting systems to collect and compile information to build on their existing knowledge; finally the third, they use activities such as meetings, desk work and tours to share their embodied competences to fulfill their purposes that is explained in their job descriptions and by regularly emphasize how the bigger picture should be taken into account.

Both Robin and Marie used different supporting systems to further support their knowledge and to collect information. Due to this the ERP, Qlickview, Excel and Outlook became integrated as an activity when accomplishing their daily practices, which Feldman & Orlikowski (2011) addressed how technologies as objects and artifacts being used as an activity in practice only has a meaning through temporarily interactions with humans in practice.

Regardless of one sees the Supply Chain Manager as a practice in itself or, as done in the Findings, categorize the activities from previous research in order to investigate them as practices to see new activities and "doings", does not change the fact how a supply chain manager uses numerous different activities and "doings" when trying to accomplish their practices on a daily basis.

In addition to answering the first research question, important contributions have been made how practice theory and a practice-based approach enabled the findings to be made. The rest of this chapter contains a discussion of the results of what it really means to be a supply chain manager in practice.

5.2 Supply Chain Manager in practice

All the different activities and "doings" in the Findings, give a heuristic answer to the first research question, which in turn open ups for further results and discussion. In order to give an answer to the second research question a new discussion must be conducted, which also means how this question first will be answered at the end of the this chapter.

5.2.1 Fragmented workdays with overlapping activities and practices

After having zoomed in on the different activities making them the practices in order to see the activities and "doings" in more detail there is a need of zooming out again. The job descriptions of both Robin and Marie (see chapter 4.1.1, 4.2.1 and Appendix 1, 2) are at least as overwhelming as the definition of CSCMP (2015) in the introduction.

Nicolini (2012) emphasizes how activities never occur in some kind of isolation, which makes it important to understand how different activities that create the practices affects the wider context. The findings were categorized in order to make any sense of what was going on during the shadowing. However, the meetings, the desk work, the tours, making phone calls, using Outlook, Qlickview and Excel, they all were constantly overlapping each other and sometimes happened at once. Due to this, the line between the different practices and activities are many times vague, which makes it confusing to know where things starts and ends. All these different actions that creates the everyday practices is needed for the practice of a supply chain manager to fulfill its purpose, by its purpose it is to fulfill their job descriptions.

The expression of an "ordinary" day is difficult to apply when trying to describe what Robin and Marie does on a daily basis. Each of the nine days when shadowing Robin has consisted of many different activities and practices that constantly was overlapping each other. Each day was heavily booked with different practices, activities and "doings". The most frequent practice during the whole shadowing was the meetings, which took most of Robin's time. The same goes for Marie, activities and practices constantly overlapping each other, with different persons trying to catch her all the time, making it hard for her to do the same thing for a longer period. Marie has a constant struggle with her different titles and roles as both Operation and Supply Chain Manager at the same time as, one day is not the other like due to how some practices emerge.

The workdays can be fragmented in different ways. In Robin's case the meetings makes his day fragmented, but in Marie's case the desk work combined with meetings makes her day fragmented. Many of the things Robin does on meetings (e.g. sharing information, gathering information, emphasize holistic approaches, etc.), Marie does during desk work, due to working in a landscape. It is seldom that one practice at a time is treated; it is a continuous shifting between different practices and activities while sharing information, knowledge and experiences. Tengblad (2006) address this how new managerial practices have a much larger workload, greater focus on sharing information and less preoccupation with administrative work. Combined with brevity, variety, discontinuity and fragmentation (Mintzberg, 2009), it almost becomes a necessity for activities and practices to overlap each other in order for Robin and Marie to accomplish their workdays.

The folklore how managers is a reflective and systematic planner (Mintzberg, 2009) is something both Robin and Marie seem to strive for, but due to the high pace and ever changing activities that constantly overlaps each other there is no time to be reflective and systematic. Because of this, Mintzberg (2009) has a valid point when highlighting how the activities of managers typically are characterized by brevity, variety and both fragmentation and discontinuity.

Robin tries to create space in his workday by trying to manage his calendar so it allows unpredictable situations and issues to happen, even though some things cannot be changed as they just happens. Robin is controlled by the fact that he has so many meetings each day, making him adapt the rest of the days between the meetings.

Just as Tengblad (2006) emphasizes that tours can give valuable information but how the managers spend little them on them, may not necessarily be true in these cases. Robin went on tours as often his tight schedule allowed him to, making it hard to roam around on tours all the time. For Marie, sitting in a landscape with her employees did not make her take so many tours due to the accessibility to her employees and colleagues, making her act among this valuable information.

The constant "availability" through the different supporting systems and by email and phone, affect the accomplishment of the daily practices by making them fragmented. At the same time, it is their job to be available and by providing information and making decision that solves emerging problems. Even when the workdays were not fragmented, for example during a workshop, the long cohesive practice which consist of different activities is then interrupted by themselves, by checking emails, answering emails, some quick look in Qlickview, some quick work in the ERP, receive phone calls. The line blurs out between meetings and desk work, a constant multi-tasking with the purpose to keep being updated and collect information, at all the time.

Managerial work consists of a great amount of work at an unrelenting pace, scheduled meeting that consume most of the time, and how unplanned meeting and phone calls are mainly used for brief contacts (Mintzberg, 1980; Tengblad, 2006). Both Robin and Marie did usually, have some scheduled meetings, some unplanned spontaneous meetings, discussion through tours, some phone calls, working in different systems, answering and reading emails, double checking information and compiling different documents, make different decisions, give affirmation and confirmation, and share their knowledge and experience to colleagues and employees. Even the "calm" moments for Robin and Marie works as an opportunity for others to catch them and ask them things, seeking some form of affirmation or confirmation. Both Robin and Marie tries to make the most of these "calm" moments, which can be one of the main reasons why they make the decision to work at home, after working hours, since then they are able to create their own “calm” moments in an otherwise fragmented and high paced environment.

In both Robin’s and Marie’s case the fragmented workday with high pace, many meetings and constant interruptions are constantly present. It very much seems how it is inevitable for a manager to not have a fragmented workday with overlapping practices, even during the calmest moments. The fragmented activities and practices usually do not necessarily take to much time from Robin or Marie, since it often is connected to sharing their own experiences or knowledge. However, it still does not change the fact how the workdays are pervaded by fragmentation and sometimes an unrelenting pace.

Hales (1999:338) managed to capture the essence of what characterize managers’ work in his detailed description, claiming it to include: short, interrupted and fragmented activities; a tendency for activities to be embedded in others rather than undertaken separately; a need to react to events, problems and requirements of others; a preoccupation with the urgent, ad hoc and unforeseen, rather than the planned; and a high level of verbal interaction, often face-to-face. His detailed description still receives support according to the findings in both Robin and Marie’s accomplishment of their daily practices.

This fragmented workday with unrelenting pace exposed some additional area of interest, how there is a pattern of non-patterns and how Robin and Marie’s role as an ambassador really is important for a Supply Chain Manager in practice.

The pattern of non-pattern

Due to this fragmented workdays the patterns of activities many times just merge together, which creates a form of **pattern of non-pattern**. This refers to how there is a pattern of different activities, “doings”, and practices, since practices consist and are shaped by a pattern of activities (Magaudda, 2011; Corradi et al., 2010). However, the same sequence of activities or practices does not happen exactly in the same sequence or pattern each time, it differ. Nicolini (2012) argues how zooming out makes it possible to understand and follow different associations between practices and the effects of these, which reveals a form of pattern when zooming out and looking at Robin and Marie’s calendar, which is harder to see in the daily practices. It is significantly easier to find patterns of the activities and actions within the different practices, than it is to find patterns of the practices. By only conclude that there is pattern because of recurring meetings, tours and desk work on the schedule is not satisfactory enough, one has to look on the purposes of the different practices, then the non-pattern starts to become visible.

An ambassador

In these fragmented workdays they also take the role as a: role model, moderator, coach, "fixer", supervisor, guide, but most of all, as **an ambassador**. Acting as an ambassador is probably one of the most important main tasks according to both Robin and Marie; to focus on what is important, what one should give priority to, being involved and lobbying to ensure that the things they want is done, and ensure how everyone has the same information, making sharing information as a main task as an ambassador. Mintzberg (1980) addressed ten different working roles that a manager usually takes, but none of them was described as an ambassador.

This figurehead "doing" by acting as an ambassador, internal and external, by sharing information and be involved is somewhat the doing of "housekeeping" duties they must perform (Mintzberg, 1980). Acting as an ambassador also serves as, due the high paced and fragmented environment that has been address several times, a way to save and create time. Both Robin and Marie tries to make their colleagues and employees more autonomous by sharing information so they get the proper tools to make their own decisions, or by sharing values and knowledge so the colleagues and employees always try to make what is the best for the company.

5.2.2 The importance of sensemaking and sharing of knowledge in practice

A practice-based approach enables one to investigate the second dimension of which, Corradi et al. (2010) address practices being built around, the sensemaking process of practices; the continuous negotiation how a shared way of doing things and the meaning of practices for their practitioners. But also to take part of the managers sharing of implicit knowledge, which is somewhat of a personal quality heavily rooted in action and participation in specific contexts (Nonaka, 1994).

Sensemaking & Sensegiving

Sensemaking resembles to practice theory in the sense how it also emphasizes on patterns of the activities, actions, but also on the creation. Sensemaking focus on looking at the interpretation and reinterpretation and the understanding of how people understand their already made decision (Weick, 1995).

Due to the high paced fragmented workdays, with a high amount of information passing through, Robin and Marie are trying to make sense and interpret the information that is passing them. Robin did on recurring occasions “translate” information in order to make it easier to understand for his colleagues and employees, which can be perceived as turning circumstances into somewhat more tangible when expressing it in words to help others to action – what sensemaking is all about (Weick, 1995).

A recurring phenomenon during the shadowing was the importance of reasonableness, and doing reasonable assessments, while making decision on a daily basis. Hence, Weick et al. (2005) stress just how sensemaking is an ongoing retroactive development of reasonable images that rationalize what people do. This occurred and took many different forms during the shadowing. Both Robin and Marie navigate, to some extent, by looking in the rearview mirror in order to adapt and make decision for the future. Something Marie emphasizes how it is important to remember what has happened and been done before.

Reasonable and plausible assessments and evaluations took place very often. Logical assessments, reasonableness and plausible assumptions are according to Robin and Marie very important on a daily basis. Logic is important when dealing with logistics, making plausible and reasonable assessments key when sometimes being forced to making educated guesses – e.g. while working with forecast. Due to how much information is accessible through different supporting systems, like Qlickview, it is important to have the feeling if the data is correct, if it is reasonable. Just because the systems “tell” Robin or Marie something does not mean it is true.

Reasonableness and adequacy overcomes accuracy (Weick, 1995), which makes how there only needs a certain understanding in order to continue with a project or activity. The reasonableness did often overcome the accuracy when making decisions. This was especially clear, and happened distinctly on repeated occasions, if something seemed reasonable enough it was adequate to be satisfying prior to making a decision and to fulfill the purpose of the meeting – *if* things seemed reasonable enough. Reasonable over accuracy goes to some extend for Marie as well when doing forecasts, since it is impossible to consider every possible aspect, consequence or detail. Often asking: “Is it reasonable or not?”, which has become a recurring thought as a way to manage the fragmented and high paced workday since there is not the amount of time to pause and be systematic and reflective in every single decision. Reasonableness, reasonable assessments, overcomes accuracy in a high paced environment.

The retroactive perspective (Hellgren & Löwstedt, 1997; Weick, 1995, Weick et al., 2005) was often present for Robin and Marie. They could easily claim to “know” what they want from a specific situation, that they did “know” what was going to happen, by looking back on what they have done they decide how to tackle the emerging issue or situation, and if everything turns out as they “knew” from the beginning they can then say how it went as planned, claiming to know what the results was going to be. However, the meaning of the activities used, is often mainly constructed in retrospect (Hellgren & Löwstedt, 1997). Even if Robin did not see it for himself he did on recurring occasions applied a sensemaking approach. The creation of evidence during Robin’s Optimization of the production in South America-meeting is a good example of this. There was an already made decision before the meeting, making the meeting be about finding arguments and proof that supported their already made decision, creating understanding of the already made decisions (Weick, 1995), by using methods by looking back of what he previously had done. This is also highly relevant when Marie is working with forecasting, by looking back on what they have done before she make decisions for the coming campaign. *“How can I know what I think until I see what I say?”* (Weick, 1995:12) explains how they cannot be sure of what will happen until they see the results. Hence, making the retroactive perspective to some extent always present.

Sensemaking and sensegiving is an important process in information sharing. Regardless of the character or purpose of the meetings, both Robin and Marie’s roles are to give and collect information. Sharing information is crucial, to give sense and communicate thoughts to create support from others and to influence and affect them (Rouleau, 2005; Maitlis, 2005), which in turn makes everyone doing a better job when having the correct information. Marie addressed how it is quite impossible otherwise, if information is not shared, to work towards the same goal.

Figure 1 (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991) explains the process that is going on in both cases. How they create understanding and make sense of what happens around them during meetings, tours or desk work, a cognitive process, and how they at the same time tries to influence and give sense to the colleagues and employees into action – from decision made in the executive management team. Tengblad (2006) emphasized tours to be an effect way to get valuable information; tours can also be as effective for the sensegiving process, by influence and affect other people.

Nevertheless, there are some differences between Robin and Marie when it comes to create understanding, the sensemaking process, while gathering information and the sensegiving process, sharing information. Robin tells the executive management team how things are, giving them sense and influencing them to a high extent. Marie, on the other hand, is saying how this should not be necessary if the sensegiving, top to bottom, is handled correctly – influence and get enough support from the employees. As treated earlier, Robin tries to create mutual and fundamental values by sharing his own thoughts and values during the meetings, which is a part of the sensegiving process by trying to affect and influence (Rouleau, 2005; Maitlis, 2005). Then of course, ideas and things from the colleagues and employees are lifted to the top in Marie's case as well. Marie's role as an ambassador is also to know when not to give sense, influence, the colleagues and employees – making it as important to choose when to share information and separate "nice to have" from "need to have". This cycle of creating and giving meaning is explained by Gioia & Chittipeddi (1991) as the managers acting as architects or supervisors, something that has occurred during meetings – especially as supervisors.

Knowledge

Managing consist of a great amount of implicit knowledge, which Mintzberg (2009) argues is hard tog get access to and is mainly absorbed through learning and direct experiences learned on the job. According to Cook & Brown (1991) it is difficult trying to explain how the implicit knowledge should be used explicit.

Implicit knowledge through skills and experience is tightly connected with sensemaking, when one looks back at what one has done – own past experiences. Something that is important in order for Robin and Marie to make quick decisions, know how to solve problems, and when they should be aware of things that can go wrong.

The campaign meetings for Marie is also a good example of this, to stop the colleagues and employees when they are not considering all the aspects, and to more easy be able to know which decision to make later on by thinking back on the decisions made on the meeting.

Due to how one form of knowledge cannot be transformed into the other there is an importance in creating a dialog between the different forms of knowledge, in order to create new knowledge (Nonaka, 1994). Robin and Marie are constantly sharing their experiences and knowledge in the meetings, during tours, at the desk work, answering emails or phone calls. When they do this, they use their implicit knowledge and make it explicit as they are sharing it. Which in turn supports the colleagues and employees to create their own implicit knowledge with their help, which Cook & Brown (1999) argues as creating own experiences by performing the activities themselves. It is therefore; both Robin and Marie mainly support the colleagues and employees so they can create their own implicit knowledge through own experiences.

In order to make sense of something there must be something to make sense of (Weick, 1995). Interpretation works as a process in sensemaking, whereas sensemaking is prior to the interpretation. Robin and Marie make sense by looking back on previous experiences, using their implicit knowledge (Nonaka, 1994), before they interpret something in order to support, share and use it as their explicit knowledge (Cook & Brown, 1999). This interpretation and sensemaking is displayed and results in clarifying and share their implicit knowledge through; documents, manuals, different recordings, files or standardized processes (von Krogh et al., 2000; Levitt & March, 1988), such as PowerPoint-presentations, Excel sheets, emails or physical papers when presenting KPI:s, table, figures, graphs or statistics.

By drawing conclusion of their history, what did work and what did not, routines creates what influence their behaviour as a form of organizational learning (Levitt & March, 1988). By learning from their own mistakes, they constantly help the organization when sharing their experience by creating better, and new, routines as they are discovered, which also is a part of the organizational learning that gets recorded in an organizational memory (Levitt & March, 1988) – the managers. Drawing conclusion from their pasts is also connected with what Weick et al. (2005) address in the questions: “what is going on?” – which emerge retroactively through previous experiences in a dialog with other persons; and “now then?” – which its answer emerge in assumptions about the future which gets clearer meanwhile it is developed in actions (Weick et al., 2005). Because of this Robin's and Marie's interpretation of different issues, situations or problems, explains the outcomes and the results how they solve the different issues, situations or problems through experiences as it develops in actions.

Swart & Kinnie (2003) address the importance to share knowledge to make the most of the intellectual capital within the organization, which is one of the main activities of both Robin and Marie – to share their experiences and knowledge. Learning from mistakes develops the routines that advance the organizational learning (Levitt & March, 1988) which in turn increase the intellectual capital within the organization. Due to this, the consequence to share their extensive knowledge and experiences is of great importance when helping the colleagues and employees.

The master-apprentice-relationship (Alvehus, 2012) and transfer of knowledge (Cook & Brown, 1999) is very much connected with the different roles Robin and Marie take while accomplishing their daily practices (act as coach, "fixer", supervisor, guide or ambassador). The different meetings and tours that Robin and Marie conduct consist of a somewhat master-apprentice-relationship while trying to transfer their knowledge. Hence, the colleagues and employees constantly interacts with Robin and Marie, the masters, making them use theirs already existing knowledge in order to pass over and generate new knowledge to the colleagues and employees, the apprentices – translating implicit knowledge to explicit knowledge through actions on a daily basis.

5.3 Fulfilling the purpose

The activities Hales (1999) lists as central activities most managers engage in are still very much accurate when it comes to both Robin and Marie and their activities and "doings", such as: being some kind of figurehead; responsible for a work unit; monitoring and spreading information; networking; allocating resources; solving problems and manage the work flow; and to some kind innovate work and processes relating to their specialism. However, oversee work such as scheduling and planning work was the most recurring of the activities and practices. Due to this, Mintzberg (2009) has a valid point when claiming how the managers do not manage so much differently, even if the issues and problems change as the time moves forward.

The second and final step in this thesis to move towards a better understanding of Supply Chain Manager's practices, and contribute to a new picture, is to answer the second research question: *What does it really mean to be a Supply Chain Manager in practice?*

The theoretical generalizations that can be made from Robin's and Marie's cases are how a Supply Chain Manager is someone that:

- Is an ambassador that gather, share and "bargains" with information;
- always consider the bigger picture, different impacts and consequences;
- multi-tasks in an environment of merging activities and practices that creates a pattern of non-pattern;
- transfer his or hers implicit knowledge and makes it explicit through sharing of information, especially in meetings and during tours, but some times at the desk work;
- uses sensemaking to look back on what they have done in order to move forward in a high paced and fragmented environment, at the same time as sensegiving is used to influence colleagues and employees during interactions;
- make reasonable assessments, assumptions and interpretations;
- constantly be the "go to person" that should have the answer and the solution to different questions and problems in this fragmented high paced environment, which in turn is the main reason behind the importance of reasonableness over accuracy.

It many times came down to how both Robin and Marie occupied themselves with day-to-day management of: people, information, monitoring and maintenance of work processes (Hales, 1999) to accomplish their activities, "doings" and practices.

Yesterday is not that different from today

Supply Chain Managers do not live in a unique bubble with special practices, activities and "doings". However, the competences, experiences, knowledge and information differ due to the context the managers work in. Hence, the purposes with the activities and practices may very well contrast in comparison to other managers in their contexts.

Previously conducted managerial research (Mintzberg, 1980; Mintzberg, 2009; Hales, 1999; Tengblad, 2006) and how managers accomplish their practices through different activities is surprisingly accurate even today when looking at two Supply Chain Managers. On the other hand one should not be hypnotized by "terrible up-to-date" research that make us forget what we already know (Mintzberg, 2009), even when conducting contemporary managerial research.

Managerial work practices gradually develop instead of radically transform according to Tengblad (2006). Together with how Mintzberg (2009) claims that the job in itself does not change, instead how the problems may be different along side with the issues, previously conducted research shows that Robin and Marie may not necessarily manage differently. This thesis has allowed to, not only capturing the different practices, but also *how* the two Supply Chain Managers accomplished the activities and "doing" in the practices.

Even if previous research still supports and shows that many practices and activities are quite accurate in these cases as well, the contribution is still how a practice-based approach has enable one to see *how* they did as they did. Since there is a gap in previous research of supply chain manager and what they do to accomplish their practices, it is hard to conclude any theoretical generalizations if it has developed or transformed since this thesis only tries to contribute to move towards a better understanding of supply chain managers' practices. Something it hopefully has done.

6 Conclusions and Recommendations for Further Research

In this final chapter the research will be summarized with some concluding remarks together with recommendations for further research.

The interest of zooming in on everyday work life of two Supply Chain Managers originating in the lack of journals or research that investigates the practices of supply chain managers. It also started as an extension of the traditional question "what do managers do?", when a focus was moved to *how* they do the things they do.

There have been an increasing interest towards studies of supply chain management, but most research has focused on quantitative studies when it comes to logistics where previously conducted research resembles what already have been done. Since there have been limited efforts when trying to identify what managers must do when managing the supply chain, this master thesis had a starting point in escaping this same doings and to move into this existing gap in managerial research when wanting to approach and understand Supply Chain Managers.

An attempt was made to move into the gap by using different methods than previously conducted research while trying to understand how managers accomplish their practices on a daily basis, but also investigating what it means to be a Supply Chain Manager in practice. The purpose of this research was to move towards a better understanding of Supply Chain Manager's practices by using a practice-based approach when trying to take a step towards creating a new picture of Supply Chain Manager as a practice.

The findings showed an extensive amount of various activities, doings and practices that a supply chain manager needs to accomplish during a workday, which was summarized into key recurring accomplishments of practices in the categorization; meetings, desk work and tours. One important contribution in addition to the findings was the strength of using practice theory and a practice-based approach. This approach did not only make it possible to claim how the practices as units of analysis was investigated, it also enabled one to zoom in and out when analyzing and making sense of the research conducted.

The results discussed, showed how a supply chain manager in practice navigates in a high paced fragmented environment with overlapping and merging practice that works as a pattern of non-pattern. At the same time they act as an ambassador that constantly shares information together with their experiences and knowledge, making reasonable assessments and interpretations by looking back on what they have done in order to move forward. Finally, the results showed how many practices and activities that have been characterized in previously conducted managerial research still get some support in this thesis, but how the practice-based approach in this study enable one to see *how* they did as they did.

Both research questions along with the purpose of this thesis have been answered and fulfilled when trying to move towards a better understanding of Supply Chain Managers' practices. The significance of the findings and results in the thesis has contributed to one of the first brush strokes of a new picture of Supply Chain Managers in practice.

Limitations throughout the research was how the content of the managers emails was not observed or taken part of, nor was every single activity and practice observed due to the managers sometimes came to the office earlier or worked from home.

Suggestion for further research is to conduct similar research but in new contexts and expand the time spend in the field. In a combination of backtracking the managers knowledge by following their career path backwards to get a feeling and understanding how and where they have created their gut feeling and implicit knowledge and do shadowing of each step – expanding the range of the micro-ethnography. Further research should keep explore and take advantage of the strengths and possibilities practice theory and a practice-based approach brings, the ability to zoom in and zoom out. In addition to the somewhat high demanded recommendation for further research, it should be investigated if they really do manage all the activities in the supply chain, as some definitions seem to claim supply chain managers do.

Practice theory and the use of a practice-based approach in research should continue to be explored while studying activities and practices in logistics. In the end, how can we otherwise know what we think until we see what we say? (Inspired from Weick, 1995).

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Interviews

2015-04-21 Marie

2015-04-24 Robin

Appendix

In this part, different documents and additional information is presented in a more in-depth and extensive matter, which has been discussed in the thesis.

1 Robin's job description – additional duties

Additional essential duties, responsibilities and authorities:

- Responsible for ensuring that internal directives and rules are followed – laws regarding occupational health, safety and environment. Responsible for having required permits and certifications in place.
- People management – including assigning work, leading and managing work, ensure that the employees have access to information necessary, skill development and appraisals.
- Responsible for the supply chain strategy formation and execution within Region Europe and other regions that is connected with the production and supplying.
- Ensure that Supply Chain KPI:s are met and take actions when needed.
- Ensure capacity situation so it can handle the requirements from customer and regions.
- Secure sourcing from suppliers and that they follow the requirements, secure efficient support systems and its implementation.
- Responsible for Inventory management, secure a good balance between cost and availability – set to targets.
- Identify cost and material opportunities and drive new saving initiatives.
- Run supplier development projects together with other key functions within the group.
- Defend and meet the code of conduct of the company.
- Ensure supply chain cope with environmental and safety regulations.
- Responsible for raw-material cost and timely supply, and to optimize raw-material and product availability including stuck turns.

2 Marie's job description – additional duties

The main tasks, additional essential duties, responsibilities and authorities:

- Have staff responsibility, recruit, train, develop, mentor and inspire employees.
- Be responsible for Operation Organization (Logistics, MFF, Customer service, Distribution, Inventory, Sales Condition) development.
- Be involved in the budget process.
- Be involved in strategic decisions.
- Actively work in the Executive Group and have a holistic view of the entire business
- Actively work across departmental boundaries in the business to create a holistic approach.
- Be responsible for long- and short-term forecast/simulation in accordance with the Group's routines.
- Be responsible for the ordering of the premier, according to the Group's routines.
- Ensure that products and premier are available for production at the right time, in the right amount and at the right quality.
- Be responsible for the analysis of ongoing campaigns and take action if necessary.
- Be responsible for the potential product/premium problems, and how they are solved in accordance with the Group's routines.
- Be responsible for order forecasting after pilot mailing.
- Be responsible for the product table is updated.
- Ensure that each mailing has the correct programmed terms of sale.
- Share knowledge and experience with colleagues and take responsibility for their own development

3 Character and purpose of the meetings

3.1 Robin

Character of the meetings (what):	Purpose of the meetings (why):
Quick spontaneous meetings	Providing confirmation to colleagues, share thoughts, information and knowledge
Unplanned meetings due to problems encountered	Find solutions
Executive management team meeting	Follow up and plan ahead - strategy
Optimization of the production in South America	Reduce costs
Evaluation of suppliers	Feedback for improvement
Sustainability	Information
Meetings with individual colleagues	Present ideas and access Robin's knowledge
Meeting with stakeholders	Potential future collaborations
Internal meetings	To get a better understanding what happens inside the company
Monthly reconciliation meeting	Emphasize potential problems and challenges
Meeting with the Finance Department	Create consensus on inventory valuation and amortization
Meeting with the CFO (Region Europe)	Create a presentation for the board
Telephone meetings	Potential future collaborations
Meeting with Purchasing and Product Managers	Discuss problems and challenges, create time tables and solutions
Lunch meetings	Potential future collaboration
Weekly reconciliation meeting with the purchasers	Get an update, discuss problems, share information
Weekly reconciliation meeting with head of the storage	Get an update, discuss problems, share information
Presentation from colleagues	Show the development of a planning application
Business Review, global meeting with Asia, South and North America, Europe	Allow the other global offices present and explain their KPI:s and to brief the executive management team
Treasury and purchasing meeting	Discuss risks, the economy, indexes, power usage, and so on.
Short meetings at the HQ	Present future investments and projects

3.2 Marie

Character of the meetings (what):	Purpose of the meetings (why):
Quick spontaneous meetings	Providing confirmation to colleagues; share thoughts, information and knowledge
Unplanned meetings due to problems encountered	Find solutions
Weekly risk assessment meeting with the logistics group	Discuss risks, issues and challenges with products, campaigns
Meeting with the Warehouse Manager	Get an update, discuss various issues, share information, staffing
Meeting with the IT-department	Share information, get an update of different changes in the system, potential improvements, troubleshooting
Meeting with stakeholders	Potential collaborations
Meeting with colleagues	Discuss thoughts, feelings and information with Marie
Weekly meeting with the Warehouse Manager	Plan ahead, discuss group targets and bonuses, staffing issues, share thoughts, changes in campaigns, economic issues, forecasts, potential future changes
Meeting with other managers	Discuss group targets, share thoughts and information
Meeting with Finance	Reconciliation of budget and orders, speculating about the future
Decision meeting for upcoming campaigns	Discuss future campaigns, the material that will be sent out, share information, possible issues and solutions, the stock
Meeting with staffing agency x 5	Discuss different offers in order to make a decision
Monthly supply chain meeting with logistics group	Discuss forecasts, statistics, and results; to brief from the executive management team, share information
Meeting with Finance, quarterly financial statements	Discuss amortization, Marie share her knowledge and provide information, why there is overstock

4 Template: Semi-structured interview – example questions

This is only an example of the interview guide, which shows the overall themes that have been treated during the interviews. Since I used a semi-structured interview, a discussion regarding the overall central themes was conducted, which could vary a little bit between the two interviews. Sometimes the respondents themselves touched upon, and discussed, the intended themes without having to ask the questions. All the information from the conducted interviews was not used in the thesis, but it contributed to an overall understanding while analyzing the empirical material.

General:

- Describe yourself briefly; who you are and what you do?
    - What is your background?
    - How long have you been in the company?
- In which context is the company at the moment? – What is going on, where have you been and where are you heading?
- What are your most important tasks? And your Department's main task?
- What do you do? How would you describe your work? How would you describe a "typical" day for you?
- What are the most frequent "problems"/challenges you face?
- How do you look upon the difference between logistics and supply chain management?
    - What is the logistics for you?
    - What is supply chain for you?

Fragmented workdays:

It can occasionally be high pace and rapidly shifting tasks with many "small-meetings" with colleagues.

- Do you feel that it is easy to miss any information or that things disappear?
- How do you collect information? From which places do you collect most of the information to get control of the situation?
- How important are the supporting systems such as your ERP etc.?

The importance of reasonableness:

"Logical assessments", "Reasonableness" and "reasonable assumptions" have come up several times, which seems as important.

- If you would try to explain the meaning of it, what would you say?
- Have you ever thought that you look back on what you've done to make decisions on what to do?

The pattern of non-pattern:

In addition to some daily routines, it is not entirely clear to see patterns in your daily work life.

- How do you look upon that statement?
    - Are there patterns if you zoom out? Per week? Per month?

Supply Chain Manager in practice:

- How do you look upon your own knowledge in Supply and Logistics? Where did you get the majority of your knowledge?
- How do you learn new things?
- Would you see yourself as an Ambassador internally in the company?
    - Or as a guide? A coach?
- How do you look upon your role to give and receive information, and share the information?