Talent Management

A qualitative study on how the idea is practiced
and diffused within two different organizations

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Abstract

Purpose – The aim for this thesis is to broaden the understanding for how the idea of TM is spread and translated within two organizations in the consulting and commercial banking industry. The main purpose has been divided into three questions:

1) Why are Talent Management ideas implemented in the organizations?
2) How are Talent Management ideas adopted and spread in the organizations?
3) How are Talent Management ideas translated into local practice?

Method/ Approach - The thesis is based on a qualitative study in order to investigate how the two investigated organizations adopt, translate and implement new management ideas into their operations. The current idea that is being investigated is Talent Management, which can be seen as a typical trend of the 2000s. The study is qualitative in its nature and based on information received from subjective interview statements. The theoretical framework addresses organizational change, institutional theory and translation theory.

Findings - The study has been able to show that Talent Management is something that both investigated organizations are working with actively, but labeled under different names. The results also show that the companies practice TM differently, with the Consulting firm offering a more comprehensive and horizontal approach that include all employees and the Bank with a more selecting and exclusive approach only affecting key persons.

Research limitations - The study is limited to only investigate how the idea of TM is diffused and practiced within the commercial banking and consulting industry. The qualitative research is limited to interviews held at Swedish consulting firm and a Swedish bank. The study cannot prove that the entire industries are working with TM in the ways presented; it may only serve as a general assessment.

Originality/value - The originality and the intended value of this study rests on the fact that it presents new knowledge in understanding how the idea of TM is adopted and translated within organizations in the commercial banking and consulting industry. The discussion presented in this study may engender a continued debate on the TM process in the research area.

Key Words - Talent Management, Institutional theory, Organizational Change, Translation Theory, Consulting firm, Commercial Bank

Content

1. Introduction

This chapter presents an introduction to the concept of Talent Management and outlines the problem background forming the basis for this study.

The interest in Talent Management (TM) has gained enormous momentum during recent years and the talent-term is today liberally used by HR managers and in recruitment contexts worldwide. TM is however not a concept that only affects HR departments or specialized management researchers, no, TM affects the whole society. In business magazines headlines like "The full list of Sweden's 101 Super Talents" (Veckans affärer, 2013) are used and when examining job ads, "Talented" is a frequently recurrent word to describe what companies are looking for. The talent terminology has even found foothold in the academic world, with talent network associations such as Swedish 4P and Nova recruiting selected students at universities to team up with talents from the business world (4Potentials, 2014, Nova Sverige, 2014).

TM can be seen as a buzzword of the 2000's, but for many organizations it is more to the concept that just being trendy (Ambjörn, 2014). As globalization constantly increases and the shift towards knowledge-based economies continues, companies must deal with an increasingly intense competition for employees (Schuler, Jackson & Tarique, 2011). The downturns in the economy and the financial crisis have also fuelled the concept's popularity. According to McDonnell (2011), the talent issue is becoming increasingly pressing due to the fact that the organizational ability to turn the economic downturn is depending on the performance of the organization's employees. The long-term success of a company, McDonnell (2011) argues, is depending on the critical component of having competent and motivated personnel. Bolander, Asplund & Werr (2014), also argue that the employees of future successful organizations must possess the ability to move the company forward when market conditions are changing.

Even though unemployment rates are high world wide, many organizations are although struggling when it comes to finding, and taking care of, talented employees (Cappelli, 2008).

The claim for skilled labor could be perceived as an absolute must for a future survival in the market, especially in the knowledge-intensive companies that this thesis focuses on. Due to the knowledge demand in these industries, the competition for manpower is exceptionally high and market actors are fighting to employ the most skilled and competent individuals (Bolander, Asplund & Werr 2014). It is obvious that companies active in these sectors have to be able to recruit, motivate and develop its talented employees in order to stay profitable. According to Devine & Syrett (2014) talented personnel are also short in supply, which leads to companies fighting over the best competences.

The battle for specialized and skilled leaders is also becoming tougher and in order to be profitable, companies are in need of competent and skilled employees in order for them to differentiate themselves from competitors. The competition for labor, however, is strong and to succeed in future managers need to be able to identify skilled persons and attract them into an employment. Once the person is hired, managers need to keep talented employees motivated and satisfied in order for them to retain within the organization. This is the challenge called Talent Management (Wikström & Martin, 2012).

There are several opinions presented in the debate of TM - some espouse the concept and other rejects it completely - and the researchers have not yet agreed on a settled meaning of the term. The debate is a hot topic in several medias and while scientists continues to debate, the TM idea is further spread throughout the business world. Even though TM in several media and books is described as an important must for company survival, there is however a big question mark linked to the concept: What does TM really mean? A well-established definition of the term is still absent.

1.1 Problem background

A problem with TM could be that the concept is loose defined and that several different definitions of the term exist. Another potential problem could be the fact that organizations are practicing the idea in very different ways, which could potentially lead to confusion and misunderstanding of the concept. Organizations that apply the TM concept into their business often also do not sufficiently clarify the intentions of working with it. This may lead to questionable processes with results that are hard to measure (Lewis & Heckman, 2006). Sometimes, companies even try to accomplish several conflicting objectives throughout one

single TM process. The results then often become an implemented process that does not contribute to the company success (TLNT, 2012).

Many companies implement the idea of TM in their business in hope of increasing their profitability, but it can become problematic to work with a concept that you lack a full understanding of. Therefore, it is interesting to investigate the concept of TM a bit further: Why are companies are implementing the idea of TM? What is the reason for this? And, how are these companies handling the idea? Having these questions in mind, this study aims to investigate how ideas about TM are spread, translated and implemented within two different organizations. The thesis has taken a focus on how ideas are compiled in practice, rather than analyzing the fancy words that encircles the concept. The aim is look beyond the name of the practice, and instead attempt to understand how the investigated organizations are actually discussing and managing talent.

The topic is highly relevant since it aims to understand how, and why, companies are affected by the diffusion of new management ideas launched in the market and how these are established in companies. The specific spreading of the somewhat trendy idea of TM is interesting since an increasing number of companies show an interest in recruiting and retaining what they call "talent". Some companies even perceive TM as an important part of their business strategy, assigning it a possibility to affect the company's future profitability, and this study will try to understand why this is happening.

2. Purpose

This section present the research purpose followed by a short section explaining the disposition of the thesis.

Since the interest in TM has intensified during the last years, this thesis will attempt to understand how and why TM practices are applied in the Swedish commercial banking- and consulting industries. In the absence of specific research on TM in these industries, the aim is also to explore which dimensions that help the idea of TM to diffuse into and within companies in these sectors. The research objective of this study is to investigate the idea of TM; how it is being practiced; how it spreads; how companies adapt to the idea and why they implement it into their organization. By analyzing these questions, this study will hopefully lead to a result that can contribute to a broader question on how companies deal with new management ideas. The purpose has been divided into three specific aims:

1) Why are Talent Management ideas implemented in the organizations?
2) How are Talent Management ideas adopted and spread in the organizations?
3) How are Talent Management ideas translated into local practice?

The thesis is based on a study made at two Swedish organizations, a consulting firm and a bank. The aim is to understand how the investigated organizations are discussing and handling talents. The thesis therefore emphasizes on investigating how the organizations are working with recruiting, developing and retaining people that are perceives as skilled – no matter what the companies are calling the concept.

The prospect of the research is that it will generate a useful analysis that can be helpful in the future work life of business managers. The topic is interesting for present and future managers who wish to develop and deepen their understanding for how TM ideas - and the change that comes with them - are spread between people and organizations. The presented connection between the idea of TM and translation theory could also be related to a wider debate on how companies manage organizational change and of how management ideas are handled.

The originality and the intended value of this study rests on the fact that this study presents deeper knowledge in understanding how the idea of TM is practiced and transferred to and within a company active in the consulting and commercial banking business. The discussion presented in this study may engender a continued debate on the TM process in the research area.

2.1 Disposition

The thesis is structured as follows: The next chapter presents previous research on the idea of TM and its practice. A chapter containing the theoretical frame of reference of this study is following it, presenting theories that will form the basic structure for the empirical analysis. After that, the method and approach to the research is being presented, explaining the decisions that have been taken during the writing of this study. The method chapter is important in order for the reader to understand how the primary and secondary data have been selected and handled. Following this, the empirical data of the study is presented: explaining the information about the informants and their interview statements needed to fulfill the purpose of the study. The empirical data will then be analyzed based on the theories presented in the chapter of theoretical frame of reference in order for the thesis to provide answers to the research questions. All information given in the thesis is then finally discussed in a chapter of discussion and conclusion.

3. Previous research

Before going deeper into the analysis of TM and its diffusion, an investigation of the term is required in order for the reader to understand what the concept represents. In this chapter, a number of present perceptions on TM will be presented.

3.1 History

Historically, it can be argued that organizations have been practicing the concept of TM for a significant period of time but under different names and labels (Galagan, 2008). Trainee programmes, employee ranking systems, assessment centers and personal coaching are all examples of different types of TM practices who have had success in the field of organizational science during the 20th century. According to Cappelli (2008) the TM concept can be seen as a trend that follows certain cycles of up- and downfalls in the economy. Cappelli (2008) claims that TM practices gain emerging or increasing popularity, depending on the economic stability in a company.

The concept of talent could be defined in many different ways such as intellectual capital, competence, capacity, human resource or other terms (Boudreau & Ramstad, 2007). What clearly can be stated though is the fact that TM is originated in Human Resource Management (Lewis & Heckman, 2006) and based on ideas about human capital as an important organizational resource. The connection between HR development and company effectiveness was established in the 1970's (Schein, 1976), but it was not until the 1990's that the concept of TM had its breakthrough. The term was first launched in 1997 by McKinsey & Company publishing a study called "The War for Talent" (McKinsey Quarterly, 1998) revealing that the talent question is a strategic business challenge and an important driver for company success. A few years later, three McKinsey employees also published a book with the same title, presenting a new approach towards talent management (Michaels, Handfield-Jones & Axelrod, 2001). In this book the authors argue that companies are fighting a war for recruiting leadership talents, and that the winner is the organization that succeeds in attracting, developing and retaining the most talented leaders (Michaels, Handfield-Jones & Axelrod, 2001). They also reflect over the fact that TM could be seen as identifying human capital as a strategic important component in creating company value. This book, along with the previous

study with the same title, can be seen as the start of what today constitutes the ideas regarding TM.

3.2 Current debate

Even though TM today is a popular term used in millions of different businesses and industries worldwide, there are several different definitions of the concept presented. The idea of TM of today has therefore led to somewhat of a debate. A selection of some of the strongest voices in this debate will now be presented.

TM can be perceived as a beneficial process that can, if it is being used right, bring great success to an organization. The Swedish writers Wikström & Martin (2012) for example defines TM in their book *Talent Management i praktiken* (Talent Management in practice) as the way a company structure itself in order to attract, develop and keep the right kind of employee within the company. Claiming that TM is the modern version of HR, these authors even go as far as calling TM the "the other side" of a company's business strategy - that is, an argument for adopting TM practices into a strategy component.

In contradiction to this, Lewis & Heckman (2006) instead present a more critical view on TM. In their paper *"Talent Management: A critical review"* TM, and the engagement of the term, is questioned with the argument that the term is very loose defined. The authors reflects on the lack of data that supports the practice of TM - which could mean that organizations are adopting an idea whose definition and meaning they are not entirely sure about. Lewis & Heckman (2006) has also presented three general concepts of TM, describing different approaches to how TM can be handled. The first one (Lewis &Hackman, 2006) targets the HRM area and focuses on the selection and recruitment of employees and career development as key concepts to explain how companies are working with TM. Lewis & Heckman (2006) here argue that TM is a renewed version of HRM, rather than a new and astonishing topic for research. They basically describe TM as new concept explaining the same matter as earlier HRM practices. The authors criticize this approach to TM, meaning that TM here is only a way of remaking older HRM-practices (Lewis &Hackman, 2006).

The second explanation to the idea given by Lewis & Heckman (2006) is regarding TM as management models for personnel organization. Dimensions such as employee skills, the

company's ability to grow and the supply and demand relationship of the workforce are debated as possible attributes in such models. In this conception, TM is here perceived as pretty much equal to a standard workforce planning similar to the standard HRM planning. Lewis & Heckman (2006) also criticize this approach since they mean that the mentioned TM-practices here is unnecessary, due to the fact that they do not contribute to an deeper understanding for the HR workforce planning function.

In their third conception to TM, Lewis & Heckman (2006) concentrates on the term "talent" and how it is being captured, developed and rewarded within an organization. In their paper they publish views on how managers tend to reward their employees differently, depending on employees' perceived talent level. For example, Lewis & Heckman (2006) here claim that talented employees seem to be much more invested in, and that these people also get more rewarded than a regular employee. At the same time the authors have found that some companies are working in contradiction to this, arguing that all employees are of equal value but then in spite of this, are favoring "talented" employees. Claiming that this approach to TM is the most tricky and problematic one, Lewis & Heckman (2006: 141) highlights the contradiction in this approach since they in their study have found that many companies are behaving in this inconsistent way.

Collings & Mellahi (2009) presents an additional view on TM related to Lewis and Heckman's rather critical perspective. These researchers have studied a number of literature bases and previous research on TM and in their paper "*Strategic talent management: A review and research agenda*", Collings & Mellahi (2009) present arguments for distinguishing key people in organizations. They launch the idea of Strategic Talent Management (STM), a way of integrating the TM process into the business strategy in a similar way that Wikström & Martin (2012) discusses. By developing certain processes for distinguishing high performing individuals within organizations, Collings & Mellahi (2009) claim that companies applying STM will find it easier to establish competitive advantages for the future. By identifying important key persons with the right skills, these people can then be helpful in contributing to the company's competitiveness. Collings & Mellahi (2009) in their paper also discuss the importance of developing strategies for how to retain talent within companies, serving them challenges and development opportunities in order for employees to be happy and stay in the company. According to Collings & Mellahi (2009), these talents play an important role for the companies future success, ant therefore the practice of STM is of great value for an

organization.

The idea of TM has created curiosity even in Sweden, which has led to a number of studies on the subject. Swedish researchers Bolander, Asplund & Werr (2014) for example have presented a study on how TM is done practice, investigating how Swedish organizations work with the TM concept. Bolander, Asplund & Werr have identified three different approaches within TM, but in comparison to Lewis & Heckman (2006) they are not critical towards the usage of the concept. The three main tracks found through empirical data and presented in their paper are the humanistic, the competitive and the entrepreneurial view.

The first main track presented by Bolander and her colleagues (2014) is the humanistic perspective. This view on TM is, according to the authors, the most common TM practice in Swedish companies and is mainly explaining talent as a human trait that can be acquired. Companies working with this TM approach tend to strive for ensuring that all employee efforts are visible, not only the efforts made by talents. The common view on talent here is that all people are treated as if they have some sort of talent (2014). Bolander, Asplund & Werr's humanistic approach to TM is therefore focusing on a broader base of employees, rather than just focusing on a few chosen individuals. The interviewed companies also showed a tendency for wanting to avoid the usage of the word "talent", instead naming the concept other things such as competence and potential. The interviewed companies identified as using this type of TM approach claimed that they had adopted the idea of TM since they wished to take care of the potential within the organization in an egalitarian way. The TM practice in these companies was aimed at making sure that everybody in the staff was looked after and attended to. (Bolander, Asplund and Werr 2014)

Bolander, Asplund and Werr's (2014) second main track of TM, the competitive approach, focuses on talent as a congenital capability that is transferable between individuals. Firms who have adapted this style of TM mainly recruit talented people externally and motivate talented personnel by educating them in exclusive programmes for internal development. Talents are in these firms perceived as the future leaders of the company and the main focus is therefore to promote these potential leaders into a vertical, hierarchical development. This approach offers a more exclusive view on TM, seeing it as a distinctive and unique quality that only certain people possess. Talent here, according to Bolander and her fellow researchers (2014), is a sort of survival of the fittest, a sorting factor in determining the

capacity of staff. Companies who are working after this approach also show a great interest in these personnel differences and claim that is meaningful for the company. This competitive approach to TM is showing on a more ideal image of talent, aiming for companies to work with an objective and neutral recruitment process, only searching for the most qualitative individuals to become future employees. Bolander, Asplund & Werr (2014) also claim that these companies usually follow formal kinds of assessment models, with specific categorization methods for placing the right people in the right jobs. The categorization and sometimes even raking of the employees are by many interviewed companies in the study perceived as an important part of the TM process. Companies that practiced TM in a competitive way explained the interviews that the TM practice often is tied to a business development plan or a strategic goal in the organization. TM in these firms often was implemented in order to create a central succession process, closely linked to some sort of leadership pathway. (Bolander, Asplund & Werr 2014)

The third and final approach that Bolander, Asplund & Werr (2014) have identified is the entrepreneurial view on TM. This view, just like the humanistic one, believes in an ability to acquit talent. The focus here is although to motivate employees, rather than developing certain abilities to work. Organizations that worked with this TM approach presented a rather pragmatic and inclusive view on the concept, according to Bolander, Asplund & Werr's (2014) study. Pragmatic in the way that an employee, if he/she proved to be ambitious and well-performing could be "branded" as a talent, and including in the way that all employees could be seen as talents since companies working with this approach did not spend time on identifying talents within its organizations. By working with this approach, companies let their employees identify themselves as talents, or as entrepreneurs, responsible for their own development. When employees demonstrate this type of will to evolve and improve, the company then grants these persons by challenging them with new triggering, tasks and opportunities. The identification process for talents here is therefore more informal rather than structured and formal. A talent in these organizations is defined as a person who takes responsibility for his/her own development and that have been successful in the tasks assigned to them. TM practices in companies working with the entrepreneurial approach were adopted since the firm wished for their employees to take their own initiatives for professional development. (Bolander, Asplund & Werr 2014)

3.3 Summary of previous research

The presented research above will be helpful when answering the research questions of this study. When analyzing the presented arguments, one can see that TM can be viewed from different point of perspectives. An important thread that can be identified in previous research results is although the fact that the idea of TM is rather urgent and is something that is happening right now in the society. Enterprises are screaming out their need for talented people and no matter if they have adopted the humanistic, competitive and entrepreneurial concept the definition of TM still remains quite unclear. Lewis & Heckman's (2006) presented arguments of the concept as unnecessary and way to fuzzy therefore open up to a discussion of how theories of translation and diffusion of ideas may help to explain the use of TM. Since there are so many different types of definitions and practices for performing TM, it is also interesting to examine how TM is affected by its local context. It could also be interesting to investigate of companies get a hold of the idea, and what components of it that is being imitated from one organization to another. Because why is it that companies are adopting this idea, even though the practice of TM looks so different depending on the organizational context? Also, which dimensions is it that inspires companies to bring in the idea, and what is it they want to achieve by doing it? Hopefully, the below presented theories of organizational change, translation and institutionalism can become helpful when trying to answer these questions.

4. Theoretical frame of reference

The theoretical framework for this study includes organizational change, institutional theory, and translation theory and these will be used when investigating the idea of Talent Management. The presented theories will provide useful tools for answering the research questions of this study.

4.1 Introduction

An organization can be defined as a collection of individuals working towards a common goal (Ahrne & Papakostas, 2002). Organizations can also be characterized as being bounded towards the surrounding environment, and can be controlled and compared to other organizations. When new organizations are created, new boundaries are also crafted which creates problems for information to flow free within and between enterprises.

Initially, a short presentation of theories on organizational change will therefore be provided, explaining how ideas can be handled within an enterprise. Information about institutional theory has then been added, in order to get a wider perspective on how companies are affected by stakeholders and environments. Following this, the translation theory is presented, to give a micro perspective on how ideas are handled in a local context.

4.2 Organizational change

Throughout the last decade hundreds of theories on the term organizational change has been presented, but despite the multiple publications presented in the area the research front still does not stand united when it comes to an absolute definition of the term (Dawson, 2007). Even in the year of 2014, we therefore do not have a specific definition on what the term "change" really means. A simple explanation for this could be that change is a very broad term (Dawson, 2007). Change can also be hard to investigate on a solitude basis, since it is often influence by other dimensions. Change can therefore be perceived as contextual (Røvik, 2008).

Despite the confusion around the concept, change could although be argued to have a major impact on an organization (Ahrne & Papakostas, 2002). According to Ahrne & Papakostas (2002), all organizations are affected by change but it is the human interactions within them

that create the rules for if, and how, change will be accepted. They also highlight the fact that no change takes place over night and that any desired change within an organization requires time to adapt. Change is by Ahrne & Papakostas (2002) described as a combination of two parallel processes: the process of renewal and the process of inertia. Inertia is, in their book, explained as organizations' unwillingness to change. The authors claim that it is through the inertia of old companies that new organizations, and ideas, can flourish.

Ahrne & Papakostas (2002) also discuss organizational defense strategies of both conscious and unconscious nature, arguing that there is a natural resistance to change since mankind seeks stability. Change, from this perspective, is believed to be something negative for an enterprise since it potentially could danger a company's safety zone. Ahrne & Papakostas (2002) here explain change as something being equal to a threat or a non-wished opportunity, making people feel uncomfortable since it forces them into behaving and thinking in new ways. This phenomenon may be explained by the fact that some companies have developed a resistance towards change (Bovey & Hede, 2001). Resistance in these organizations occurs when individuals in the company, or the organization as a whole, tend to strive against organizational change rather than towards it.

4.3 Institutional theory

Institutional theory is a theory that presents arguments aiming to explain why companies sometimes do not behave as rational as they may be supposed to. Instead of rationality, the theory instead target different dimensions affecting organizational behavior such as social norms, the external environment, the human factor and the impact of trendy ideas that passes (Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2009). The theory assumes that organizations have to adapt to certain formal and informal rules that affect how companies are run. The formal rules can easily transform and change, but the informal ones are stiffer. Even though formal rules change, the informal ones can still survive, according to Eriksson-Zetterquist (2009). Especially the informal rules have also great impact on mankind and often form the foundation of organizational culture. In a situation where informal rules and formal rules are contradictive, informal rules can even create resistance to the implementation of new formal rules (North, 1993). It could therefore be argued that informal change should be implemented before formal rules, in order to avoid problems with implementing change in an organization (Burns & Scapens, 2000).

4.4 New institutional theory

The new institutional theory is, according to Meyer & Rowan (1977), claiming that organizations act rational in order to be perceived as legitimate by their environment. In 1977, the authors presented an article addressing the phenomenon of decoupling between an organization's formal structure and its actual behavior. The authors wanted to highlight the fact that there is a big difference between what organizations say they do and what they actually do and claim that an organization's rational behavior is in fact decoupled within the organization in order for it to actually work (Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

The process of decoupling takes place since all organizations are encountered with external pressure. The pressure consists of opinions and demands that the society directs towards companies, requiring them to behave in a certain way. This external pressure from customers, shareholders, the government and other interest groups have, according to Meyer & Rowan, big impact on how and why companies act like they do. The argument of legitimacy has therefore become an important factor in the debate on organizational analysis since it explains the complex relationship of companies wanting to live up to stakeholder requests. If demands are not complied, there is a risk that the company will be boycotted and abandoned by customers and even employees. In order to be profitable, companies must therefore keep their stakeholders pleased by acting like they are requested to - that is, to act legitimate. Company behavior could also be explained by prevailing informal rules within an organization, according to Meyer & Rowan (1977).

Meyer & Rowan (1977) have labeled the consultancy-based -ideas as "myths", describing them as something that looks good on the paper but does not work in real life. They also argue that the implementation, that is the actual execution of these ideas, often to not become more than just empty promises on a paper. Meyer & Rowan (1977) even have launched their own term for this behavior and call it organizational "ceremonies", since they form more of a ceremony rather than something concrete and business related. These ceremonies are depending on the organization's industry and context, and the ceremonial pressure can thus vary between different companies and industries (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Meyer & Rowan insists in their paper that organizations must try to resist and ignore these ceremonial demands in order to be profitable.

4.5 Scandinavian institutional theory & Translation theory

The new institutional theory may be criticized due to the fact that it describes institutionalization as a very rigid and static process, explaining the institutionalization process as diffusion (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). The Scandinavian Institutional Theory is inspired by both the New Institutional Theory and the Translation Theory, and describes the process of institutionalization as translation (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996). The theory focuses on investigating the actual process rather than the results of it (Czarniawska & Sevón, 1996). The Scandinavian School also differs from the New institutional theory since it considers change and stability to be institutional norms (Czarniawska & Sevón, 1996).

Organizations can change by searching for inspiration in other practices and surroundings and by picking up ideas from other times and places. In order for an inspirational idea to transform into organizational practice, the organization must first translate it into its new local context (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996). The translation theory investigates what organizations actually do with the different ideas that bring change into their enterprise – that is, how the ideas are translated in order to fit their new context. It could also be perceived as a theory that aims to explain why change is implemented within an organization (Czarniawska, 2005).

Latour (1986) argues that a translation of an idea takes place when the idea is put in a context and then further spread, given that the receiver of the idea finds it interesting. Czarniawska & Joerges (1996) presents a model describing how the process of institutionalization takes place. They have named the model "travels of ideas" and describe how an idea - or an institution – is disembedded from its previous context, set free and then embedded in a new context. The authors refer to the process as if the idea is travelling in time and space, and then translated in order to fit its new surroundings (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996). The authors also claim that an idea can change and adopt depending on the occasion in which it occurs in and how the organization interprets and implements it. When the idea is interpret and diffused between humans – then a change is generated (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996). The theory emphasizes the importance of the human involvement in the diffusion of ideas and claims that no organizations are capable of changing themselves. Due to the fact that different receivers interpret an idea differently the idea can be enriched and evolve (Czarniawska, 2005).

According to Røvik (2008), the ability to translate and interpret a new idea is necessary for an organization in order for the idea to be able create a concrete and useful practice in its new context. Just like Czarniawska & Joerges, Røvik (2008) argues that an idea needs to be translated, or interpret, in order for it become successful in its new environment. For example, even if the Bank has been very successful using a certain management idea the Consulting firm can almost never copy paste this very idea in detail since it needs to be adjusted into its new surroundings. Røvik (2008) describes this situation of knowledge transfer as decontextualization and contextualization of ideas. Decontextualization is the process where an idea is picked out of is surrounding, taking away the context form it. The idea is after that translated, and packaged, into a new surrounding or organization, which is called contextualization (Røvik, 2008).

Czarniawska & Joerges (1996) explain that an idea cannot be disembedded from its context until it is taken for granted within this context. When the idea has settled within an organization, it can thereafter be disconnected and further spread throughout time and space. Room for free interpretation and action could therefore be seen as important dimensions for implementing new ideas into an organization (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996).

4.6 Isomorphism

Erlingsdottír & Lindberg (2005) have studied how ideas are translated and have found additional effects than can occur when ideas are travelling. The authors present three different processes that could serve as an explanation to how ideas are reproduced. Theses processes, or institutional concepts, are isomorphism, isopraxism and isonymism. This study will focus on isomorphism and isopraxism.

Isomorphism could be defined as a "constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). According to Erlingsdottír & Lindberg (2005), isomorphism often occur when organizations seek uniformity with institutions that they are dependent on, or with institutions that they would like to be associated with. In simple terms isomorphism can be explained as the way that businesses tend to copy each other, creating a business world that is becoming more and more homogeneous (Erlingsdottír & Lindberg, 2005). Erlingsdottír & Lindberg

(2005) also claim that ideas that are driven by isomorphism are often translated into rituals instead of becoming new practice within an organization. The authors claim that these ideas are often muted or "buffered" and do not affect the daily work in an organization.

According to DiMaggio & Powell (1983), two types of isomorphism exist: competitive and institutional. The authors claim that organizations do not only fight over customers and resources, they also compete in gaining legitimacy and political power. The organizational legitimacy and power is needed in order for a company to gain economic proficiency, they argue. DiMaggio & Powell (1983) explain that organizations are becoming increasingly homogeneous, due to the fact that they all strive for the approval of other organizations. The pressure from society, as described by Meyer & Rowan (1977), does not only come from people but from other organizations too, due to prevailing institutions in the business world.

Meyer & Rowan (1977) also claim that organizations tend to imitate each other, since it is often the easiest way to find inspiration for operational improvement. For example, if one company succeeds with a way of working - then its competitors may wish to work in this way too. By imitating another company structures, for example, organizations hope to gain legitimacy in the eyes of their stakeholders. DiMaggio & Powell (1991) has contributed to this debate by investigating how new organizational ideas, or trends, are adopted and applied into different companies in order for the organizations to be perceived as legitimate. In their study, they also criticize the prevailing isomorphism in the business world, claiming that all businesses and organizations act and look the same. The authors claim that isomorphism could occur due to a lack of proficient managers, or by a lack of innovation within an organization. DiMaggio & Powell (1991) also argue that all ideas implemented in the business world, throughout the world, have their origins in a limited number of major consulting firms. Since all businesses and enterprises find their inspiration in the same sources, the future life of business and trade will not be very creative and innovative, they argue. This is similar to the presented idea of myths, launched by Meyer & Rowan (1977).

Isopraxism is the scientific term for imitative behavior and could serve as another dimension of translating the process of institutionalization. This term is also about imitation, and explains how human beings tend to imitate each other, according to the Greek *iso* for "same" and *praxis* for "behavior". The term is originated in scientific studies of animal behavior but can also be applied on humans in order to understand how and why we tend to copy and

mimic each other. Isopraxism also takes place in the business world and occur when ideas are transformed and created into homogeneous practices (Erlingsdottír, 1999). This institutional concept therefore differs from isomorphism, since isomorphism only lets the idea become a ritual and not an actual practice. Through translation, isopraxism creates working practices and organizational forms that are becoming increasingly more similar to each other. The idea is here spread by organizations copying each other's practices, rather than just looking at what other organizations do "on paper". (Erlingsdottír & Lindberg, 2005)

Another dimension of translating organizational ideas in a local context could be what Sahlin-Andersson (1996) describes as "imitating by editing success". Sahlin-Andersson (1996) reflects over organizational imitation and explains that companies tend to imitate other companies that have been successful in the market. The author ads that organizational ideas and practices tend to be "edited" when imitated, in order to fit their new surroundings. Further on, Sahlin-Andersson (1996) explains that change implies further editing, and describes how new organizational identities are created due to the translation process of the company's local context.

Another dimension to isomorphism could be constituted by the term automorphism (Schwartz, 1997). The concept of automorphism has its origin in mathematics and could be defined as if a mathematical system would copy itself, preserving the given structure. In the end of the 90's, Schwartz (1997) investigated how companies handled pressure. The author found that organizations, who find themselves in a rather new situation and without being affected by institutional arrangements, tend to repeat the organizational behavior of what they normally do. The organization's behavior then often becomes a repetition of historical behavior that previously has shown to be successful. According to Schwartz (1997), automorphism occurs when companies have no other organizations but themselves to copy. In cases like this, the organizational behavior is founded in previous experiences, rather than imitating other organizations. A possible explanation for automorphism could be that this behavior serves as a safety when companies are facing new demands. (Schwartz, 1997)

4.7 Summary of theories

The presented theories above aim to explain how, and why, companies practice the idea of TM. Some theories also aim to explain the diffusion and possible translation of the idea. The first theory of organizational change provides a background to how change can be handled in the business world, and the two theories following it aims to explain how change is handled from different perspectives.

The institutional theory offers a macro perspective on change, investigating the society as a whole and the prevailing institutions that affect an organization. Following this, the new institutional theory aims to give an explanation to why companies tend to be so similar. This theory also explains how social movements and trends in industries and sector can have impact on a single organization. Institutional studies are often based on quantitative investigations. The term isomorphism can be helpful when trying to understand why companies handle ideas in certain ways. Automorphism in its turn can help the reader in investigating how organizations handle pressure, and to understand the reasons for organizations to repeat the same work ways as in the past. The term isopraxism is following, aiming to explain how practices in different companies are becoming increasingly similar.

Scandinavian institutional theory with its focus on translation of ideas can be helpful in trying to understand why change is taking place within an organization. The theory provides the reader with a micro perspective on how changes, and new ideas, are handled in a local practice. Considering the translation effect of an idea, this could help the reader in understanding why organizations are different. Ideas are handled and understood differently due to the interpretation factor and therefore organizations may evolve in different ways. Translation studies are often based on qualitative investigation in local practices.

5. Methodology

This chapter describes the study's selected method and the search for primary and secondary data. This is followed by an explanation of the ethical considerations that the study has taken into account. Finally the limitations of this thesis are presented.

5.1 Research method

5.1.1 Abductive process

This thesis is based on the method of abduction, which is a combination of deduction and induction. Deduction is a traditional method starting off by formulating a theoretical framework and defining hypothesizes which are tested in reality by observations. In the method of induction is the process the same, but instead it starts with empirical data and ends with a theoretical framework (Jacobsen, 2002). Abduction is useful when developing new research in the sense that it serves as a combination of method, theory and empirical data (Jacobsen, 2002). The method could also be seen as if it is strengthening the objectivity of the study since it is a combination of these three components.

This thesis is based on a combination of earlier studies on TM and theories regarding organizational change, translation and institutionalism. Together with the empirical findings these will these be analyzed further down in the thesis. No conclusions in this study have been reached without having legit support from the earlier studies or the theoretical frame of reference.

5.1.2 Qualitative method

Bryman & Bell (2011) describes in their book "Business Research methods" the possible limitations and opportunities that are given when using a qualitative research method, in this case interviews. The authors describe this method as a good way in collecting data for describing social processes and practices, which is the aim of this study. By using a qualitative method, they argue that the researcher can gain a wider understanding and get a clearer overview of a topic. Another reason for choosing a qualitative method for this study is the fact that it allows the researcher to be free and flexible when investigating the collected data. This means that the researcher can change his research purpose or make other

adjustments while writing the thesis. Bryman & Bell (2011) also argue that the qualitative method mainly focuses on a smaller number of informants, and therefore it is important that the interviewees have practical experiences in the studied topic. By taking this into consideration, the natural choice for this study was to use a qualitative method since it would provide material that could be helpful in answering the research objective.

5.2 Primary data

The primary data was data gathered by the researchers themselves with the intention to illustrate a specific problem, according to Jacobsen (2002). This research is based on primary data through interviews with a total amount of four informants at two different companies. Before the interviews, the informants were well informed about the purpose of the study and that the study was aimed at comparing the two different companies and their two different industries. All informants were asked if they wanted to receive the interview questions before the interview was held, and for those who were interested the document was sent out a few days in advance. The informants were interviewed one person at a time and on different days in order for the researchers to not be affected by earlier interview answers, which also helped the researchers to clear and re-set their minds. This contributed to having the informants explaining their own perceptions without being affected by others respondents from the same company. Personal interviews face-to-face with the respondents were organized in order for the researchers to communicate under relaxed forms. According to Bryman & Bell (2011), a face-to-face interview may also give the informant a greater confidence in the researchers and may lead to that the informant gives deeper information, which was perceived as a positive effect when selecting this method.

5.2.1 Formulation of interview questions

The interviews and its questions were, according to Bryman & Bell (2011), semi-structured with a selection of four question themes. This type of interview gave the researchers flexibility during the interview since questions could be asked in different orders, and in different ways, depending on the respondents. The semi-structured interviews and questions also contributed to an open and free flowing dialogue between the interviewee and the researchers. The four question themes were formulated in order to provide possible answers for answering the research purpose:

1: Talent Management in general

This theme of questions was chosen since it was hoped to provide information on how the Bank and the Consulting firm practiced TM in their local context. When asking questions in this theme, the researchers focused on gaining the informants' perspective on talent and their personal experiences of how talent is being managed within their organization. Questions regarding a potential strategy for TM were also included in this theme in order for the researchers to find out if the organizations had any specific goals with implementing the idea of TM. The researchers were also looking for words that can be seen as synonymous with talent, such as competence or expertise.

2: Attracting, recruiting, motivating & retaining talents

The second question theme was inspired by Wikström & Martin's (2012) definition of TM as attracting, recruiting and motivating/retaining talented employees. Questions where therefore asked on how, or if, the organizations work with these concepts, in order to gain a wider view of how TM was practiced or if there were practices that was not labeled as TM but could be considered as one anyway. The ability to attract, recruit and motivate talented personnel can be perceived as an important component in the practice of TM, and therefore the researchers decided to formulate the questions after these three concepts. While asking questions on this theme, the researchers also listened for information of possible development plans and educational possibilities within the organizations.

3: Talent & Key personnel

This theme was included since the researchers wanted to find out how the organizations pointed out possible talents within the organization, according to Collings & Mellahi's emphasis of the concept (2009). The aim was especially to reveal if any type of elitist selection methods took place, or if all employees were treated equally when it came to development opportunities and professional advancement. These questions also aim to investigate who is working with TM and under what positions and hierarchical level TM was discussed. This question theme was inspired by the three different approaches to TM presented in Bolander, Asplund & Werr's (2014) study.

4: Implementation of ideas

The forth and final question theme is regarding the implementation of change and the translation of new ideas. The questions address the topic of idea diffusion and focused on how

ideas and change are being handled within the two organizations. These questions where hoped to provide information that could be analyzed using the theories for translation and institutionalism.

When formulating interview questions, the researchers aimed to avoid leading and partial questions since they wished to obtain completely impartial interview answers. The researchers also prepared follow-up-questions to each broad question topic, as they wanted to minimize the risk of having to supplement the interview answers later on. Most of the questions asked were open in their nature in order for the interviewee to feel free to explain their every day practice of TM using their own words and expressions. The researchers also aimed at being neutral during the interviewed, as described by Bryman & Bell (2011), since they did not wish to reflect personal opinions and attitudes in front of the interviewee.

The questions were designed with the aim to get the interviewee to feel comfortable and started therefore off easier by asking the person about his/her position in the organization and about daily work task. The aim was to begin the interviews in a relaxed and calm manner, which the researchers found worked well during their interviews. A template of the interview questions, the so-called Interview Guide, can be found in the appendix in the end of the thesis.

5.2.2 Selection of organizations

When selecting the companies suitable for the case studies, the researchers wanted to investigate companies working in a knowledge intensive business environment. They also wanted to meet with companies that had a larger amount of employees, because they believed that such firms had a greater need to develop potential strategies for their employees. The companies that were selected for the study did not necessarily need to work with an explicit strategy for TM. The researchers although found it important that the organizations showed an interest in working with talent/competent employees and personnel development. This information was found on the investigated organizations' websites.

The original intention of the study was to investigate how companies in the consulting industry worked with TM in practice, but since it was difficult to get hold of informants in this sector the study found another focus. The researchers therefore contacted the Bank, since the organization offered an opportunity to compare the different industries with each other. The study therefore developed into being a comparative study, focusing on finding possible

differences between the practices of TM in the two investigated organizations.

Both industries were found interesting to investigate since they are both knowledge based and depending on the competence of their employees. The study was limited into interviewing informants from two different companies in these two different industries, in order for the researchers to be able to do a clear comparison of the organizations and how they practiced the idea of TM. The consulting firm was found through an internet search, but was interesting for the researchers since the firm communicated several specific personnel policies on their website. The Bank was contacted through a personal contact, and was considered to be a suitable participant in the study since the organization was known to practice certain personnel strategies take could be interpret as TM, too. By choosing these two organizations, it gives the researches the opportunity to discover both similarities and differences between how the idea of TM has been translated and spread within the organizations.

5.2.3 Selection of respondents

Once the contact with the two organizations was established, the selection of informants was to be made. The researchers explained to the companies what kind of employees they would like to interview: One manager with leader responsibilities, one person with HR responsibility and one person working on a lower hierarchical position. After discussing with the companies, it was decided that two persons at the Bank and two persons at the Consulting firm would serve as informants for this study. The decision was based on the fact that the researchers wanted to retain a width in the data and to obtain different views from within the company. Interviews were then arranged with an HR Coordinator and a Branch Manager at the Bank and a Team Manager and a Senior Consultant from the Consulting firm. Since the objective of the study was to find out how the idea of Talent Management is being adopted, translated and spread within a company, and why it was implemented, it was required to meet with several employees with different work tasks and hierarchical positions. These four persons felt like a legit numbers of respondents given the limited timetable for this thesis.

5.3 Ethical considerations

A decision to anonymize the investigated companies in this thesis has been made in order for the reader to not be affected by a certain company name or by perceptions connected to a brand. The companies will therefore be addressed to as "The Consulting firm" and "The

Bank" in the following analysis. The interviewees' names, age, gender and other personal attributes have also been neutralized in order to protect the informants from any potential harm. The respondents of this study have the right to not be identified in the result of this thesis.

The ethical considerations in this thesis are also based on the recommendations from Bryman & Bell (2011) and the Swedish research council (Svenska Vetenskapsrådet, 2014). The council states the importance of what is good research manner (from the Swedish "god forskningssed"). Bryman & Bell (2011) have developed five different principles that one should take into account when anonymizing participating companies in this research. These principles have been taken into account by the researchers when writing this thesis. The first principle is about information; the respondents in this research were clearly informed about the purpose of the study. All participants were also informed, and seemed to understand, their role as an informant. The execution of the interviews occurred without frictions or problems between the researchers and the respondents. The collaboration was perceived as well working. The second principle, explained by Bryman & Bell (2011) is about explaining that the participation of the study is voluntary. Both companies were therefore informed about the fact that their participation was voluntary and that the respondents had the right to terminate their participation if they would have liked. The third principle (Bryman & Bell, 2011) is about confidentiality. All respondents were therefore informed about the fact that what their personal information, such as name, age, gender etcetera was handled with the highest confidentiality. This is why all respondents are referred to their title and not their actual name in this study. The forth and fifth principles (Bryman & Bell, 2011) are concerning the fact that all information received during the interviews has only been used in order to answer the research purpose of this study. No misleading information has been given to the participating organizations in the study.

5.4 Secondary data

Secondary data is according to Jacobsen (2002) information that the researcher collects from other sources than his/ her own. When searching for secondary material that could function as a supplement for the empirical data, the researchers aimed at finding theories and previous research that could be helpful in analyzing the research purpose. These findings would serve as analytic tools in order to answer the research questions. Jacobsen (2002) also claim that the

usage of secondary data in combination with primary data gives the most reliable information, and therefore the researchers of this study chose to collect secondary data too. The secondary data forming the foundation for this thesis has been found through investigating and searching through University of Gothenburg's library search engines and databases. The researchers did several searches using the same key words as in the interview question themes. Thus, searches for terms such as talent, talent management, institutional theory, translation, organizational change and isomorphism were conducted. The researchers then sorted out relevant papers and publications forming the secondary data for this study. The larger part of the search result consisted of books and not of scientific articles, which has resulted in the fact that most of the secondary data is based on these books. In general, the most cited publications in a specific topic were chosen, since the researchers wanted to gain a reliable foundation of theories. Some publications were also selected since they had been published recently, or since they provided new perspectives on a certain research topic.

5.4.1 Finding previous research

By reading through previous papers, books and essays on the subject of TM, the researchers established a view of the on-going debate on the topic. To find suitable previous research on the subject, the researchers searched for material in both search engines and management magazines in order to find publications on the subject.

DiMaggio & Powell's (1983) paper was chosen since it had been cited in several other studies. The paper by Lewis & Heckman (2006) was also considered to be a reliable source since it is one of the most quoted papers about TM. It also felt like a good complement to the other books and papers that had a more positive view on the subject. The paper by Bolander, Asplund & Werr (2014), which serve as an opposite of Lewis & Heckman's (2006) perspective, was found to be an interesting source since the study is published recently, contributing to fresh material on how Swedish organizations practice the idea of TM. This paper also presents a model of three different approaches towards TM, which the researches felt confident in using.

Material from recently published books on the subject was also included in the section of previous research, among them Wikström & Martin's (2012) book. Wikström & Martin are both Swedish authors with practical experience from the consulting industry, and therefore their book has been studied in the writing of this thesis.

5.4.2 Finding theoretical frame of reference

When searching for material that could function as a supplement for the interview empirical data, the researchers aimed at finding theories that could explain the concepts presented in the empirical data. Theories regarding organizational change, institutional theory and translation were selected since they were thought to contribute with arguments to answer the research objective. These theories are aimed at explaining the reasons behind why organizations choses to work with TM, and how they work with it. The theories about organizational change and translation may also explain how companies are handling new ideas.

5.5 Interpretation analysis

The interpretation of this study is based on a hermeneutic perspective (Bryman & Bell, 2011), which means that the result of the study is based on the informants' interview statements. The interview statements were interpreted after guidance from the four question themes. Since all interviews were recorded, the researchers were able to go back and listen through the interviews searching for key words expressed by the informants. The key words were based on the same themes as the interview questions:

1: Talent Management in general
Possible personnel strategies, the view of talent, how talent is handled within the organization, possible other words for talent

2: Attracting, recruiting, motivating & retaining talents
Employer branding, motivational dimensions, satisfaction, surveys, development, education

3: Talent & Key personnel
Possible selection of key employees, elitism, equality, programmes, competence

4: Implementation of ideas
Managing change, how new ideas are handled, the attitude towards change, who decides on change, where does the change come from, possible pressure from internal or external parties

After listening through all interviews, the researchers summarized each respondent's statements by writing down key words and specific citations from their interviews. This was done according to Bryman & Bell's (2011) instructions for coding. The interview statements were then compared, first by comparing the different views within the organization and after that by comparing to the other business. This material has formed the foundation for the empirical data in this study. The analysis of the data was then analyzed in two steps; by finding similarities and dissimilarities in the empirical data and then by merging the empirical data with the theoretical frame of reference.

5.5.1 Criticism of primary data

When using primary data, the arguments of validity and reliability have to be considered. One dimension that could be criticized is the fact that the interviews were held in Swedish, even though this thesis is written in English. This could have caused problems with the translation – and interpretation – of the interview statements, since the respondents' answers may have been misunderstood or improperly translated. When analyzing the empirical data, the researchers have also considered the fact that important key words could have one meaning in Swedish but a different when translated into English. An example of this could be the meaning of the words "competence" and "talent". These words have been directly translated from Swedish to English in this study, even though the interpretation of these words could be different in the two languages. (Bryman & Bell, 2011)

Another argument that can be presented as a criticism of the study is the fact that the study's respondents may not be completely impartial. They work for the organization that they are being interviewed about, and therefore it may be a risk that their responses sometimes become slightly embellished. The interviewees presented images may not be the same as the reality, according to the argument of decoupling (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). This behavior of respondents trying to protect their organization is also discussed by Bryman & Bell (2011). It must therefore be considered that the interview statements in this study may be partial, since the respondents tend to protect their organization. Another problem that can be associated with the method of interviews could be that the respondents do not want to, or do not think they are able to, tell the researchers about everything in their everyday work life. This situation occurs since employees are often dependent and loyal to their employer. By asking questions that explains how the particular person acted in a situation etcetera, the researchers may avoid this situation (Bryman & Bell (2011). The fact that the researchers

only get to hear one side of a story could also be seen as a critical component in this study. Other perspectives may be prevailing, which the researchers then lack information about.

5.6 Limitations

Due to the fact that the research has been conducted under a limited time period, the theoretical framework of this study has been limited to only cover the a selection of theories. These theories have been chosen in order to answer the research questions of this study. The secondary data has been limited to the above described, and the authors of this thesis are well aware of the fact that there are other theories presented in the topic.

The study is limited to only investigate how, and why, the idea of TM is diffused and practiced within the two different organizations. The qualitative method in this study is limited to four interviews held at a Swedish consulting firm and a Swedish bank. The study cannot prove that entire industries are working with TM in the ways presented in this study, but this thesis can contribute as a component to a broader question of how companies and industries are practicing the idea of TM.

6. Empirical data

In the following chapter a presentation on the two studied organizations and a summary of the interview statements will be given. The chapter intends to present the primary data forming the basis for this study.

6.1 Information about the respondents

6.1.1 The Bank

The first organization investigated in this study is a Swedish bank founded in the 19th century. The bank is a major actor in the Swedish banking industry and provides services such as commercial banking, retail and insurance. The organization has an extensive number of branches spread across several countries and approximately 10 000+ employees worldwide. On the company's website there is no outspoken strategy presented for how the Bank works with recruitment or perceived "talent". Instead, the reader can find information about the Bank's overall approach to its personnel, since the website is claiming that the Bank's fundamental human outlook is about respect for individuals and based on trust. Another presented goal for the Bank, according to their website, is to be an equal employer giving their employees the same possibilities towards developing themselves on a professional level.

The first employee that was interviewed for this study works as Branch Manager in a medium-sized bank branch located in a small Swedish town. The person describes his/her job as very varied since the person is working with both leadership in the office, managerial decisions and more practical tasks such as customer meetings. The Branch Manager explains that the branch is practically run as a separate company and that he/she has the profit responsibility for this office. This person shows a big interest in what is happening outside of the bank, for example by reading newspapers and meeting with customers in order to understand what his/her branch must deliver in order for them to be satisfied. Further on, the Branch Manager explains that all the branches have as their first priority to understand and follow demands of their customer. This branch for example, has adapted their opening hours after suggestions delivered from their customers.

The second Bank employee participating in this study works as HR Coordinator at the Bank's regional head quarters in a medium-sized Swedish city. This person has been working in the bank since the mid 90's and has during his/her career tried on working at several different branches and on different positions. The HR Coordinator is currently working in the HR department with responsibility for recruitment of summer interns and student trainees. The person is and also handling other HR issues for the branches in the region. The person describes the job as if he/she is working with "attracting, recruiting and rehabilitation" of the Bank's employees. Attracting as in working with employer branding, participating in student fairs and visiting schools; recruiting as in arranging interviews with candidates and rehabilitation as in motivating existing personnel.

6.1.2 The Consulting firm

The other investigated company in this study is a Consulting firm within the management and IT area that operates in several Swedish medium-sized cities. The company has less than 50 employees and offers key competence in the area of renewal and change operations. The firm was founded in the 90's, but its management-consulting department has only been active for a few years. The services performed by the management consultants include strategy, business process management, change management and business development. Their colleagues in the IT-consulting department are specialized in developing and integrating information systems for the firm's costumers. According to the company website, TM is not a clearly spoken objective for the firm, or at least the website does not mention anything about this, but it is stated that the firm has two employees responsible for recruitment. The website although declare that the organization has two personnel strategies for managing their employees.

Two employees from the Consulting Firm have participated as respondents in this study. The first person is working in the top-level management of the firm as Team Manager for the management consultants in the firm. This person specializes in consulting issues within the field of strategy and business development. The respondent has been employed in the firm for about a year and mainly works with consulting and leadership decisions. The Team Manager also has the recruiting responsibility for the management-consulting department in the firm. The person is based in the firm's head quarters but due to his/her work effort, he/she also spends a considered amount of time visiting the other branches.

The second employee in this company works as Senior Consultant at the Management consulting department at the firm's head quarters. He/she is relatively new in the firm and explains that he/she was attracted by the fact that the management consulting division of this company is relatively new, and that he/she therefore will be a part of evolving this department. This person was employed since he/she, apart from being an experienced consultant, has a great interest in working with recruitment and personnel questions. The Senior Consultant will, in this new work role, have the responsibility for these areas and will also work with developing present personnel strategies within the firm. During his/her interview, this person emphasizes the importance of TM and states that this is something that he/she will develop in the firm.

6.2 Interview statements

In the following section, a description and explanation of the interview statements is to be made. The chapter is intended to summarize the informants' answers.

Question 1. Why are Talent Management ideas implemented in the organizations?

As explained above, the concept of TM is loose defined (Lewis & Heckman, 2006). Companies somehow adopt the idea and implement it in their businesses, some without having a proper picture of what the concept could possibly lead to. This question aims to explain the dimensions that have caused the companies to implement the idea of TM.

In order to understand the investigated organizations' view of TM, the definition of the term first had to be defined. Both companies present an updated view on TM and explain the concept in similar terms as a way of working in order for the company to recruit and retain skilled workers within the company. All respondents argue that TM has something to do with knowledge, skills and competence:

"Talent Management is to take advantage of the perceived talent within a company"

/Branch Manager, Bank

"Talent Management is about letting all employees cultivate their talent by encouraging education and competence development at the work place. For me, the idea of Talent Management is about developing what you are good at and to put together a good team"

/Team Manager, Consulting Firm

When asked how their company uses the concept of TM, the researchers could see a clear pattern that all respondents tend to avoid to the specific word "talent" in their answers. All respondents claim that the organization they work for do not explicitly work with the concept of TM, but when describing their personnel policies is it obvious that some sort of TM idea has been implemented in the organizations. This due to the fact that both the Bank and the Consulting firm describe that they have clear strategies for leadership and competence, which can be interpreted as typical TM practices.

Both organizations explain that the labor market, and the need for skilled personnel, is an important dimension to why they have introduced strategies for managing their employees. In the case of the Bank, the organization has developed two different types of programmes in order to recruit and develop employees. The programmes are named the "Student Trainee Programme" and the "Leadership Programme" and these will be further explained in Question 3. The Bank explains that they decided to launch the employee programmes in order to be first - before the competitors – when it comes to hiring talent. The Branch Manager and the HR Coordinator explains that the Bank has seen that the market is getting tougher and that hiring talented people at young ages is a requirement in order to become successful. They also explain that the Bank's board had been looking at competitors in order to figure out how they worked with attracting and recruiting talented personnel. The Bank's board found that several of the other Swedish banks offer trainee or graduate programmes - and therefore the Bank decided to launch its own programme.

"Several other banks had developed some sort of Graduate Programme. The Bank had tried out this type of programme before but it did not really work since the students that were submitted to the programme were too old. Our CEO therefore decided to do it in our own way and to design the Student Trainee Programme as a programme for recruiting and developing younger students, not graduates"

/Branch Manager, Bank

The main reason for implementing the Student Trainee Programme is that the Bank did not wish to stand out from other actors on the market in a negative way, the Branch Manager explains. The lack of not having a programme when the competitors have it would not be positive for the Bank, the person continues. The HR Coordinator also reflects over the fact that trainee programmes are becoming increasingly common in pretty much all knowledge-based industries. Therefore, the person argues, the Bank felt a pressure from the society to launch a trainee programme of their own:

"The banking industry has gone from being seen as something fancy and superior into being a somewhat boring and perhaps too traditional industry. I believe that all commercial banks - with this Bank included – are struggling in attracting new, young employees. It is as if our industry has been outcompeted by more trendy companies such as the clothing industry or the automobile business. Young academics do not dream of being bankers nowadays, they are attracted by more innovative industries. Turning this trend around is a huge mission for us, and I think that the launch of the Student Trainee Programme may be a step in the right direction for this, since it makes the Bank a little more trendy"

/HR Coordinator, Bank

The Consulting firm also argue that the need for competent employees is one of the main reasons to why the firm decided to implement their personnel strategies. This implementation can indirect be seen as an implementation of the idea of TM. The strategies have been named the Employee Satisfaction-strategy and Employee Development-strategy. These strategies will also be further described in Question 3. The Consulting firm emphasizes that it is important to take care of competence/talent, that their employees feel happy at work and that everyone are given the opportunity to advance within the organization. This, the Senior Consultant explains, was the main reason for the firm to introduce their personnel strategies. Both consultants have worked at other consulting firms earlier in their careers, and these persons can therefore be considered as if they have experience in what it takes to motivate employees to stay. Both respondents are very clear about the fact that it is very important that when the firm hires a new employee - they hire the person with a goal of keeping him/her for a longer period of time. The Senior Consultant explains that the firm has implemented their personnel strategies in order for their employees to flourish and to become the very best he/she possibly can be. The education of their employees is done in order to satisfy the firm's customers – and in the long run – this is crucial in order for the organization to be successful:

"Our strategies for Employee Development and Employee Satisfaction are extremely important for us. I feel as if it is a prevailing norm in the industry stating how a consultant should behave and which competencies that we ought to possess. It is almost as if the society indirectly requires us to be superheroes who knows and handles everything, but the fact is that no one can possess all these qualities. (...) However, our profession and especially our customers demand that we have this type of competence. (...) The business is all about combining the best possible teams with a mix of experiences and competence – and in order to do so you have to allow each person to develop and cultivate their own talent"

/Senior Consultant, Consulting Firm

The consultants explain that in order to grow and to become successful in the market you must have the right employees. Therefore, the growth requires an implementation of TM practices within the firm. This is due to the fact that they must develop their business and to be attractive for customers and possible future employees. The Team Manager explains that it is all about creating a buzz, which is a creating a company image that attracts both employees and customers. In order to do this, the firm must develop the best possible talent.

"The consulting industry is a knowledge-based industry; it is all about competence. The industry is about networking, to keep up with the competitors and to work with the latest ideas (..) Our main goal is to satisfy our customers' needs. Our firm is assumed to be an organization that applies ideas and trends quickly, since we also sell these ideas to our customers. By actively working with TM, even if we do not use this name, we gain the proper competence that is needed in this industry"

/Team Manager, Consulting Firm

In the Consulting firm, the senior consultants have the main responsibility for key account clients. These consultants are required to constantly check with the customer if they are satisfied with the firm's services and employees. If not, the company must change in order to fulfill the customer's needs, the Team Manager explains. It can therefore be stated that companies not only in the commercial banking but also in the management consulting industry are very much affected by customer demands.

Question 2. How are Talent Management ideas adopted and spread in the organizations?

When describing how new ideas enter their company, all respondents have a hard time explaining where new ideas has its origin. Respondents from both companies explain that it depends on the situation and that ideas may be brought in unintentionally.

The Branch Manager at the Bank claim that new ideas that enter the Bank usually come from suggestions from the Bank's customers. Ideas for change are often spread from customers to branch employees, through regional head quarters and then - if the ideas are particularly good - they may even reach the Bank's management board. A few years ago, for example, the Bank launched a new type of private account, allowing customers to deposit both SEK (Swedish Krona) and EUR (Euro) into the same account. This had never happened before even though several Branch Managers had been asking about this account solution for years. It was not until the idea reached the Bank's Management Board that a decision could be made, though. The Branch Manager explains that the company has a rather slow approach to change, since the information has to be dwelled a number of times before a decision can be reached. The person explains the introduction process of change in the organization as the following:

"Since the Bank is active in a tradition-based industry, it is important for the Bank's employees to submit credibility and trust among their customers. The Bank must behave like a bank - otherwise our customers may leave us. I will feel as though my employees can sometimes be afraid to trying something new, by fear of compromising the customer's trust in the Bank. Sometimes, I think that this deeply rooted behavior of the Bank staff can have negative influence on the organization since it does not allow the Bank to change quickly enough"

/Branch Manager, Bank

The Branch Manager also mention the phenomenon of inertia when discussing changes in the organization. The person argues that the rather traditional foundation of the Bank can be an explanation for this inert behavior, since customers and stakeholders have a certain image of how the Bank should act. The Branch Manager argues for example that the Bank sometimes tends to avoid taking too drastic change decisions, since the Bank does not know how the

customers will respond.

When it comes to the specific HR related ideas, or in this case the idea of TM, it has been received in different ways within the organization. The HR Coordinator explains that the fundamental personnel strategy, consisting of a certain working model that all employees must follow, has been implemented in the Bank since ages. Even though this person has been working in the bank for over 20 years, the HR Coordinator cannot explain the origin of this model. It has clearly been successful though, since we are still working with it, the person says. When it comes to the Student Trainee Programme, however, this is a new idea that was implemented in the Bank a few years ago. The idea originally came from the Bank's branches, demanding a new strategy for hiring summer interns. Several Branch Managers was disappointed over the fact that the summer employees did not stay in the bank for more than a few years, and the employees at the branches found it both exhausting and expensive to educate new personnel each year. After a time, the complaints then reached the board of the Bank. The HR Coordinator explains it like this:

"Our CEO interpret the idea as if the Bank had a need for hiring people earlier in life, in order for us to become successful in the future. The CEO had come to the conclusion that the people who were hired for summer jobs were simply too old to be able to learn enough during their first years at the Bank. This led to a situation where student employees graduated before they had had the time to develop a full professional capacity. This also resulted in young employees - the future of the Bank - abandoning their employment which caused enormous recruiting costs"

/HR Coordinator, Bank

The HR Coordinator continues by explaining that the CEO of the Bank therefore took the decision to launch the Student Trainee Programme, in order to secure future generations of Bank employees. The Branch Manager explains that the Student Trainee Programme was developed after investigating how other banks had designed their programmes. An analysis was done on which components that ought to be successful in the Bank's local context too, and thereafter the Student Trainee Programme was composed. The programme, the Branch Manager explains, was developed by "picking the best parts" from other programmes existing in the market. The Bank was, for example, inspired by dimensions such a trainee network meetings, paying for the students' course literature and allowing students to early take a

leading role within the organization. The person explains that it was not one specific competitor that served as inspiration for the Bank but that the organization investigated several graduate programmes present in the market.

According to the HR Coordinator, the idea of the Student Trainee Programme is exceptionally rare within the Bank since it is a centralized strategy. The Bank usually works in a decentralized way, with the branches taking their own decisions. The design of the Student Trainee Programme is however an exception since the design of it is very similar no matter which branch you are visiting. The Programme has been designed by the Bank's board and has been implemented throughout the Swedish bank branches with help from the regional HR departments. When the idea was implemented a few years ago, the HR personnel where visiting all branches informing about the programme, what it meant and how it was going to affect the daily work at the office. When asked how the Student Trainee Programme was received among the organization, the Branch Manager explains that the decision caused a certain resistance during the implementation process. Some co-workers had a hard time understanding how, and why, such young students was hired in the Bank and claimed that the programme would only mean a lot of extra work for the existing employees. On the other hand, some employees were instead very positive and looked forward to welcoming new, young people into the organization.

When investigating how the idea is adopted and spread within the Consulting firm, an entirely different situation is presented. The Team Manager at the Consulting firm discloses that the management board of the firm is very much inspired of what other organizations are practicing. By looking at what others are doing well and bad, the firm can develop and improve he/she claims. As an example, the Team Manager describes a recent situation when another consulting firm implemented a new strategy for structuring the personnel. The new system worked very well in the other company and therefore the Team Manager decided that he/she wanted to learn about the experiences that the company had gained by working with this practice. The Team Manager then met with the CEO of the other firm, in order to learn more and to receive information on what the Consulting firm should consider before implementing the strategy themselves. Further on the person explains:

"This is often how it is done in this business. We see that a concept has been successful in another firm, by looking at results and proficiency. If the concept seems to fit our firm too, we often decide to try it out ourselves"

/Team Manager, Consulting Firm

The Senior Consultant explains that ideas are often implemented at the Consulting firm after having another company trying them out first. If a concept seems to be working well, then the idea may be implemented at the Consulting firm, too. The Team Manager further explains that ideas "travel fast" in the consulting industry, and news of successful concepts are often spread quickly. Information about this, the Team Manager argues, is often gained trough the firm's business network or by industry meetings. The Senior Consultant also argues that the idea of working with talent, or competence in their case, comes from external pressure from the industry that the firm is active in. The Team Manager explains that it is important to keep up with the industry, especially since the firm is in a high growth phase. As explained by the Team Manager, the company look at the way other organizations around them works and then pick ideas from the most successful and those firms that resemble their own company. The Team Manager however states that all concepts are only implemented if they are believed to create an increased value for the firm's customers.

Question 3. How are Talent Management ideas translated into local practice?

As a reminder - TM can be defined as how a company works with attracting, recruiting and retaining competent personnel, according to Wikström & Martin (2012). This section will now present if, and how, the investigated companies are working with these concepts.

Attracting

When it comes to attracting new and competent employees, the Bank for example offers a Student Trainee Programme for university students to attend in order for them to develop in the Bank while studying at university. This programme is, according to the HR Coordinator, an important strategy for the Bank since the organization need to hire people at young age and educate them internally. The programme in his/her region has about 200 applicants each year, and approximately 4-8 of these young men and women are hired as trainees in the region every year. The competition is fierce, the HR Coordinator explains, but the Bank wants to be certain that the persons they hire will have the right personality and a desire to learn and grow

within the organization. The Student Trainee Programme is mostly marketed at high schools with bank employees touring regional schools to spread information about the programme and to meet talented and driven students. The Bank has also, according to the Branch Manager, increasingly emphasized their appearance in social medias to market the Student Trainee Programme. When it comes to promoting the Bank towards other possible personnel groups, such as summer employees and staff for more senior roles, the Bank does not put a lot of effort into this. The Branch Manager explains this behavior as a strategy from the Bank's side, since they want people to take their own initiative into an employment:

"If people want to work at the Bank, then they must take their own initiative for this. We do not recruit by headhunting or by stealing employees from our competitors – people themselves must show an interest in us by for example sending in an application through our website"

/Branch Manager, Bank

The Branch Manager also explains that the Bank very seldom hire senior personnel. The explanation to this, according to this person, is that most people who are working at the Bank have worked there their entire life. If a senior role becomes free, such as for example his role as Branch Manager, the Bank often fills this role by recruiting internally. The fact that the Bank would start looking for external candidates is rather unlikely, the Branch Manager says. The HR Coordinator however explains that the Bank works with employer branding and mentions student fairs and career days as important channels for this. The Bank thus shows that it primarily markets itself towards talent through the Student Trainee Programme, and that it is done at an early stage in order to recruit young people.

When comparing the Bank's approach with the Consulting firm's view of how to attract talent, one can see that the firms are working with very different approaches. According to the Team Manager at the Consulting firm, the practice of attracting staff from competitive firms is nothing unusual. The person explains that switching jobs between competitive firms is very common in this business, and that the behavior is often driven by the fact that the employee sees the new firm as more of a challenged. The Senior Consultant also explains that it is often a larger amount of responsibility and the professional networks that make employees jump between different employers. They both argue that this is not something unusual in this industry, and that employees may tend to leave their employer for another if the new company

offers a more specialized role for example. The Team Manager also explains that the firm does not market themselves externally at all. They do not publish job ads or similar- instead they try to attract and recruit talented people through their business network. The Senior Consultant explains it like this:

"Being an attractive employer is about offering the employees the opportunity to grow and develop within the company"

/Senior Consultant, Consulting Firm

These thoughts will be deeper investigated under the headline "Motivating & Retaining" further down.

Recruiting

When discussing strategies for recruitment, both companies describe a rather complex process of how candidates are tested before they are accepted into the employees in the organization.

When selecting potential candidates to become Student Trainees, the Bank's HR department is mainly focusing on parameters such as a personal drive, a desire to learn and develop, social skills and the right mind-set, the HR Coordinator explains. The Student Trainees are selected throughout an extensive interview process with both individual and group interviews, focusing on the candidates' personalities. The only to parameters that actually have to be fulfilled is the fact that the person needs to have been accepted to a University programme and that he/she is living within the geographical area. The rest is all about the personality and the fact that the person's must be seen as suitable future employees. Or, as the Branch Manager explains it:

"The Student Trainees are very important for the future of our company. Our recruitment focus lies in finding young people who have the ability to learn and acquire the right skills needed in order for the Bank to be future successful. All students who are hired as Student Trainees are intended to become future managers within our organization"

/Branch Manager, Bank

When asked about recruitment activities, one can see that the Consulting firm has another approach than the Bank. Only the best and most skilled consultants are accepted into the

company, and therefore the firm only recruits experienced consultants that have previous knowledge from the industry. The Team Manager explains that hiring graduates directly from Universities is hard, since these people require a lot of time and resources in order to get acquainted with the firm and understand the industry. Therefore, the company has developed a policy to only hire more senior people – a policy that so far has been successful since the company is constantly growing. The recruitment process is here, just like in the Bank, quite extensive. A candidate is interviewed several times and by several people before deciding whether he/she fits into the team.

Motivating & Retaining

An important component of the TM-practice, besides attracting and recruiting talented people, is the challenge of keeping these people and their knowledge within the company.

When interviewed on this topic, the Bank employees declare that their employer puts great trust in its employees, and that the personnel themselves a required to take responsibility for their development within the organization. Development is here considered to be an important factor in keeping employees satisfied and happy within the organization.

The HR Coordinator explains a certain model for personnel and branch development, putting the customer's needs in the center. This specific model describes the intended development that a bank employee is supposed to gain within a year.

According to the HR Coordinator, the model is applied by all employees and branches within the organization and offers a clear image of the development curve for the individual. The model also presents factors such as which areas that the employee need to progress in, in order to develop within the company. Once you have gained the experienced and knowledge of the first section of the model, then you can move into the next section, the HR Coordinator explains. When asked who, whom, that has the responsibility for employee development the person answers that it is the employee himself/ herself who is responsible for this, adding:

"During the yearly appraisals, an action plan between employee and a manager is set on what the persons current job situation looks like, what he/she needs to improve and what the future looks like for this person within the Bank. The action plan is very individual and depends on the persons own desire to evolve in combination with the underlying needs of the Bank"

/HR Coordinator, Bank

It can also be stated that the Consulting firm work with TM in order to retain and motivate too, but with a different approach. In their case, the Team Manager describes their personnel strategy as divided up into two different concepts: Employee development and Employee satisfaction. The first concept, Employee development, is about developing and educating the Consulting firm's co-workers. During the interview, the Senior Consultant expresses a concern when it comes to the knowledge diffusion, and the sharing of expertise, within the company:

"The biggest challenge for us as consultants is to figure out how to share competence with each other, since we often do not know about all the knowledge that our colleagues possess. It is incredibly difficult to transfer knowledge between individuals in this industry because everyone is so specialized"

/Senior Consultant, Consulting Firm

The Senior Consultant argues that consultants often possess loads of specialist competence, but that it can be difficult for an employer to diffuse this knowledge from one person to his/her colleagues. By using the strategy for Employee development though, employees are ought to learn and deepen their competence by attending the firm's so called Competence events. The Team Manager explains that the company started to organize these events since the staff expressed a need for a platform where ideas and information could be spread more easily. To improve the knowledge dissemination within the organization, the Management team therefore began to organize Competence events. The Team Manager here adds that employees can come up with suggestions on topics that they would like to discuss, and if the idea appeals to the co-workers then an event will be arranged. These activities are, according to the Team Manager, an important meeting point between employees from different departments and branches in the organization and are often arranged by an employee with specialist knowledge in a certain topic. Sometimes, the firm also invites external lecturers in

order for the firm's personnel to develop and deepen their knowledge. These events are though, as the person explains, not mandatory but totally optional for the staff. The Team Manager also adds that education is expensive and that the firm has limited resources when it comes to hiring external lecturers and coaches. The Team Manager also reflects over the importance of having all employees actively participate in discussions on the firm's intranet, their blog and so on. He describes it as if not all employees have shown an interest in these portals yet, but that he hopes that they will gain momentum as the enterprise is growing.

The second concept that the Consulting firm has implemented, which also indicates that the company actually has translated TM into in practice, is the concept of Employee satisfaction. The company started working with this personnel approach since the CEO of the firm saw a need for measuring staff's satisfaction at work. Since a few years back, the management team now measures this annually by letting their employees fill out a survey and attend to appraisals. The survey addresses issues such as how the employee like his/her job, how they experience the relationship with their boss, the relationship with colleagues, his/her view on personal development, if he/she feel like they have achieved a balance between personal life and work life and similar topics. The survey is answered anonymously by all employees in order for the answers to be analyzed by the managers. The Manager of each department is responsible for handing out and collecting the surveys. The firm have been working with this Employee satisfaction-measures for a few years, the Team Manager explains and adds that if an employee do not seem to be happy at the workplace, then another meeting with his/ her boss will be arranged in an attempt to solve the problem. The Senior Consultant describes the work method in a similar way, saying that it is important to improve any dissatisfaction among staff by communicating about the perceived problem. The person also adds that the company places great emphasis in helping and supporting employees who do not feel comfortable in the workplace. If someone does not feel comfortable, the person says, that it is of great interest for the company to solve this. This also has to do with the cost of recruitment, the Senior Consultant explains:

"We cannot have a situation where employees are leaving us due to dissatisfaction at work. Recruitment processes are very expensive, and instead of hiring new people replacing the current ones we must work on retaining employees and their skills within the firm"

/Senior Consultant, Consulting Firm

Until recently, the Consulting firm has not had any specific HR department taking care of employee needs but now the Senior Consultant interviewed in this study has been hired in order to develop these strategies. The person will have the responsibility for HR and competence issues and expresses during the interview that the company will have a clearer focus on TM practices in the future. In this part of the job, he/she will also co-operate with the two employees that are responsible for recruitment in the firm. The Senior Consultant also explains that he/she wants to develop new strategies for the receiving and managing new recruits and strategies for how to handle unhappy employees. A goal for the person is also to develop a separate HR department in the firm with employees working exclusively with HR- and talent related issues.

6.3 Summary of empirical data

The empirical data has shown that both organizations are depending on skilled labor. Both the Bank and the Consulting firm explain that they have a need for competent and skilled personnel in order to be successful in the market. The requirement of competent employees may be seen as one reason for the companies to implement the idea of TM. It is although clear that none of the organizations wishes to label their personnel strategies as "Talent Management", since the strategies have gotten other names. Both companies use the word competence instead of talent. The Bank has chosen to develop a Student Trainee Programme and a Leadership Programme as their way of working with the idea, while the Consulting firm instead has chosen to develop strategies for developing employee competence and measuring employee satisfaction. The Bank has focused on the recruiting part of TM and express the importance of hiring the talented employees before their competitors do, while the respondents from the Consulting firm express how retaining and motivating their employees/talents is more important than focusing on recruiting. The Consulting firm explain that it is very important to develop each talent in order to create the best possible team and thereby satisfy their customers.

Organizational change, such as implementing the idea of TM, is in the Bank handled with inertia. Decisions about change, in this organization, is taken by the Bank's management board and then implemented down into each branch unit. Ideas for change are although often presented by the Bank's branches since they "pick up" ideas from customers. These ideas are then presented for the board. The respondents at the Bank claim that the Bank is much

affected by what other actors in the market are doing, and that the Bank does not wish to be seen as different from their competitors in a negative way. The Consulting firm on the other hand explain that organizational change is something that the firm's board perceive as an absolute must in order to survive in the consulting industry. Ideas in this organization are often presented by the board and then spread throughout the different branches and departments. The respondents from the firm emphasizes that the organization's behavior is very much affected by their customers opinions and demands.

7. Analysis

This chapter provides an analysis of the empirical data, forming the actual result of the research study. The analysis aims to explain the practices of TM, the diffusion of the idea and possible reasons for implementing it by using concepts from the theoretical framework and previous studies.

In order to answer the research questions of the study, a presentation of the research results and an analysis based on the theoretical framework is presented below. The research questions of the study are:

1) Why are Talent Management ideas implemented in the organizations?
2) How are Talent Management ideas adopted and spread in the organizations?
3) How are Talent Management ideas translated into local practice?

Question 1. Why are Talent Management ideas implemented in the organizations?

None of the investigated organizations wish to label their personnel strategies as "Talent Management". When investigating how the companies are working with attracting, motivating and retaining personnel – it could although be stated that the organizations have somehow adopted the idea of TM and implemented it into their business. This is due to the fact that both organizations are working with managing talent, even though the term has not been added into their business strategies.

Institutional theory can be helpful when trying to explain why the companies have implemented the idea, since the theory is focusing on explaining organizational behavior as an effect of institutional norms (Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2009). When applying this theory onto the Bank and the Consulting firm, it can clearly be concluded that both companies are affected by prevailing institutions in the society (Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2009). The Bank for example, active in a rather traditional industry, must behave in a certain way in order for the customers to want to remain. The employees also reflects over the fact that the Bank "must behave like a bank", which may be interpreted as if "a Bank" has become an institution (Eriksson-

Zetterquist, 2009) with certain demands on how to behave and not behave in the society. This aim to behave correctly as a bank addresses the search for legitimacy (Meyer & Rowan, 1977) as an important explanation as to why the Bank and its employees behave the way the do. It could therefore be argued that the Bank adopts certain concepts in order for its stakeholders to perceive the organization as legitimate (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). The concept of TM could be an example of an idea that the Bank has implemented in order for its stakeholders to be satisfied with the organization. It could also be the other way around; that the Bank avoids implementing new ideas in order to gain legitimacy. The Bank's management board does not easily adopt new trends or try new things, due to the fact that the organization does not wish to be different from other actors in the industry. Once again, the "being a bank"-argument can be seen as steering the organization into avoiding standing out in the industry. The rather cautious attitude towards change (Ahrne & Papakostas, 2002) can be explain by the fact that the organization is afraid of how the customers, and other stakeholders, will react if new practices are implemented.

As mentioned, the idea of TM in the Bank has been implemented through the development of the Student Trainee Programme. Trainee programmes could perhaps be seen as a prevailing institution (Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2009) in today's society. The programme was launched since the Bank's CEO had seen a need for hiring students at a young age. The CEO wished to develop a trainee programme since many of the other Swedish banks offered some sort of Graduate programme. The Student Trainee Programme may have been implemented since it gives the Bank legitimacy in the industry (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). The implementation of the Student Trainee Programme could also be perceived as an example of isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Erlingsdottír & Lindberg, 2005) since the Bank, by developing the programme, started to behave like other Swedish banks.

It can be stated that the Bank was inspired by other organizations when developing the Student Trainee Programme, since they decided to look at how other organizations had developed their programmes. A selection of successful dimensions was selected, and that the Bank then decided to combine these components into their own programme. It could therefore be argued that the Student Trainee Programme is a translation and an imitation of previous successful trainee programmes, similar to what Sahlin-Andersson (1996) describes as imitating by editing success. The idea of TM could be seen as if it had already been edited by other banks – in order to fit the industry - and that the Bank then edited it again in by adapting

it into their context (Sahlin-Andersson, 1996).

The Consulting firm is also affected by opinions and demands from the society, which according to Eriksson-Zetterquist (2009) sometime can create institutions. As consultants they are expected to be creative, competent and innovative – and in the long run they must also be able to reproduce and spread new organizational ideas like the ones Czarniawska & Joerges (1996) describes. The respondents also said that the business role is very much affected by prejudices and norms (Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2009) for how a consultant is supposed to be, and that people tend to believe that consultants are "superheroes" having knowledge of pretty much everything. It could be argued that the service of "consulting" creates an institution of on its own. This institution – that is, the society's expectation on the firm to know everything – has caused the firm into developing certain personnel strategies in order to gain legitimacy (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). The constant hunt for new knowledge and competence, for example by arranging Competence events, could be interpret as one example of this. When investigating the empirical data, it could although be argued that the demand of companies having competent personnel is not something that is specific for the consulting industry. The respondents claim that all customers and stakeholders are expecting smart and professional services, otherwise they would not pay for it. The though competition in the market also put an extra pressure on the consultants to live up to their role as "superheroes". The introduction of Employee Development and Employee satisfaction-strategies could be seen as a behavior for living up to the image of being these heroes. The implementation of the TM idea here could therefore be perceived as coming from pressure of customers, and not directly from the industry.

The Consulting firm also explain that the organization has an open mind for new ideas and processes of change (Ahrne & Papakostas, 2002). This could also be seen as another dimension for why the firm has implemented the idea of TM. According to its informants, the Firm does not offer any special resistance (Bovey & Hede, 2001) towards change. Therefore it could be argued that the organization was open and curious of trying the concept of TM, due to the fact that they must be in this industry. The Senior Consultant certifies this by explaining that the practice of TM will become increasingly important for the organization in the future since the firm is growing and more staff will be required. This could also be seen as a sign of isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). This due to the fact that the firm, just like actors in all knowledge based industries, are aiming to find a solution of the problem of

having few people possessing the competence that the company is looking for (Schuler, Jackson & Tarique, 2011). The hunt for skilled personnel – and the similar organizational behavior that follows it - could here be argued to be somewhat of a broad trend affecting all industries, and not being something specific for this industry.

Question 2. How are Talent Management ideas adopted and spread in the organizations?

When investigating how the idea of TM is adopted and spread in the companies, it can be stated the organizations are handling change in different way. The Bank is acting in a resistant way (Bovey & Hede, 2001) when it comes to change, which could be explained by the fact that the organization is active in the rather traditional Swedish banking industry. It sometimes takes time to get through key decisions in the organization, which can be seen as if the organization is dealing with change slowly. When talking about change in the Bank it can be argued that the organization fit into the profile of what Ahrne & Papakostas (2002) calls inertia. As described before it is not until the proposition of change reaches the management board that the Bank starts considering making changes. One example of this inertia is the implementation of the Student Trainee Programme, which could be seen as a central strategy for practicing TM. The decision for implementation was taken by the Bank's CEO who saw a need of recruiting talented employees in an early stage before competitors. Even though the Bank's branches detected the problem earlier, it was not until it reached the CEO and the management board that a decision could be made. After the decision was taken, a central strategy for the programme was designed and then it was further on implemented in the Bank's branches. Each branch then translated (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996) the programme into their own version, in order for it to fit in their local context. It is although only small adjustments that are being made to the Programme, since it is a central strategy. This process of adapting the programme into a specific branch is done in order to satisfy the branches specific needs.

When investigating the implementation process of change within the different Bank branches, it could although be stated that the branches do not put up as much resistance to change as the organization as a whole does (Bovey & Hede, 2001). This is explained by the fact that the Bank's branches sometimes take their own decisions for smaller changes without consulting

the management board. Local practices are often developed in order to satisfy customers, since the branch personnel are working more closely to the customers and have a deeper understanding for what the branch and its customers need. For example, the Student Trainee Programme is a centrally developed practice that forces all branches to work in the same way, while a Leadership Programme could be developed and carried out by a single branch. Each branch manager is alone responsible for how much or little they want to develop and work with the Leadership programme and develop talented employees at the office, since they management board is not interfering in this process. This could be interpret (Czarniawska, 2005) as if central decisions are rarely met with resistance (Ahrne & Papakostas, 2002) in the branches due to the fact that local practices have already found foothold. Since the local branches are more willing to change, local practices can gain momentum here before the Bank's board even has presented a similar idea. Therefore, once a centralized strategy is being launched, the branches do not put up as much resistance towards it. It could be argued that the Bank's board is reached by new ideas much later than the branches, and that the board is also slower than the branches when it comes to embracing new ideas. This is also certified by the empirical data, since the Branch Manager claims that the branches often come up with new ideas and them "pass them forward" up through the organization until they reach the board. The practice can therefore be seen as born in a local context, and then translated and confirmed by the Bank's board (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996). The organizational change (Ahrne & Papakostas, 2002) in the Bank may therefore be seen as locally driven.

The adoption and interpretation (Czarniawska, 2005) of the TM idea at the Consulting firm is done in a totally different way from the Bank. The organization instead tends to find inspiration in competitors and other organizations when searching for new ideas and practices. Both respondents at the firm explain that this is the way the consulting industry works. The Firm has a history; described in the empirical data, of imitating successful companies' work practices. This is similar to what Erlingsdottír & Lindberg (2005) describes as isopraxism. A typical example of isopraxism in the Consulting firm could be that the firm met with another company in order to learn and understand how other this firm worked with a personnel strategy in practice. During this meeting with the CEO of the other firm, a switch of experiences took place. The Consulting firm gained information and tips on how to practice the strategy for personnel, and after a period of time the organization decided to implement the idea at the Consulting firm, too.

It could also be argued that the firms are sometimes taking decisions after patterns similar to automorphism (Schwartz, 1997). This due to the fact that both organizations claim that they sometimes implement ideas and change in a manner in which they have always done. The Bank does it by having the branches picking up new ideas, implementing them and them passing them forward to the board. Since the Bank's board is not very sensitive to trends, new ideas rarely get a foothold here first. The automorphism in this organisation is the pattern of having ideas brought from the bottom of the hierarchy – from the branches – and then up to the board. Some ideas are even translated and turned into practice before they have even reached the top. The automorphism in the Consulting firm works the other way around. In this organisation it is often the board, and the managers, who first are reached by new ideas. This can be explained by the fact that this board is open and sensitive for new ideas. The ideas are then translated and adopted into the different departments and branches. The automorphism here is the pattern of implementing ideas from the top of the hierarchy and then spreading them down through the organisation. The two different ways of implementing new ideas in the organizations show that the Bank and the Consulting firm have different ways of handling pressure. The ways, in which the idea of TM has been imposed, can therefore be seen as if it has been affected by automorphism (Schwartz, 1997). This means that the local practice – in terms of how the companies are working with strategic issues - of the organizations has impact on how the idea of TM is received and translated within the organization (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996).

Question 3. How are Talent Management ideas translated into local practice?

As mentioned in the chapter "Empirical data", both companies claim that they do not work with an explicit strategy for TM. The organization have although presented that they are working with managing talents in some ways, even if the specific concept is not mentioned in the organizations' business strategies. The TM concept can therefore be seen as if it has been implemented unconsciously in the two organizations. When applying Lewis & Heckman's (2006) theory onto the empirical material, it is obvious that the authors view on the word "talent" is very much alike the view in the investigated companies. None of the informants uses the word talent during their interviews and they all claim that their employers do not work concretely with practices labeled as TM. Lewis & Heckman (2006) claims that TM is nothing new but rather an updated version of older HRM practices, and this is similar to the

way in which the Bank and the Consulting firm are working with TM. The imposition of the TM idea has also affected the local practice in both the Bank and the Consulting firm. The idea of TM is translated into programmes/ strategies that are seen as legitimate in the industry and/or for customers (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996). It can also be argued that the TM practices are copied from other organizations' practices, according to what Erlingsdottír & Lindberg (2005) explain as isopraxism.

As explained before, translation theory can be helpful in trying to understand why change is taking place in a local practice (Latour, 1986). Considering the translation effect (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996) of an idea, this could help in understanding why the two organizations are acting differently. When applying the theory of translation onto the two investigated organizations in this study, it can be stated that they have translated the idea of TM in two separate ways given the different ways in which TM is being practiced within them. The different types of interpretations offered by the Bank and the Consulting firm can be explained by the fact that the two organizations are operating in different contexts (Czarniawska & Sevón, 1996).

In the case of the Bank, the idea of TM has here been translated (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996) into a way for recruiting talented, young employees. The Student Trainee Programme has therefore been launched, since the hiring of students is an absolute must in order for the Bank to be successful in the future. When translating the idea of TM into their organization, the Bank has focused on the recruitment part and on retaining perceived talents in the organization. A certain selection of talented people (Collings & Mellahi, 2009) is also taking place within the organization since the Bank is focusing on developing the employees that take their own initiatives for this. When investigating the Bank's usage of the TM idea, it can be stated that the organization puts a lot of responsibility on the individuals. The personnel are assumed to take their own responsibility for personal development in the company to take initiatives for attending courses and advancing in their work role. Once an employee "raises his/ her hand" and show an interest in developing within the Bank, then the employer encourage this by letting this person take courses or evolve in a leadership programme. This rather self-powered view on talented employees can be compared to what Bolander, Asplund & Werr's (2014) describes as an entrepreneurial approach towards TM. Bolander, Asplund & Werr (2014) claim that companies that work with this kind of talent strategy often await pointing out key persons until these people point out themselves. This is similar to what is

happening at the Bank, since the organization do not "choose" certain people into leadership programmes if these persons do not show an interest in it themselves.

In the Consulting firm the idea of TM has instead been translated (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996) as a concept for developing all employees and for nourishing all perceived talent within the organization. Talent here is not being perceived as something elitist or exclusive, but as something that everybody in the staff possesses. No selection of key employees, like the strategy that Collings & Mellahi (2009) describes is taking place within the organization. The introduction of the Employee Development and the Employee Satisfaction strategies could serve as an example for this. The imposition of the TM idea has also created new routines in this organization. It has lead to the development of Competence events and discussions on the intranet regarding how new ideas and trend should be handled within the firm. The idea of TM has been adapted to the firm's demand for skilled labor, which is similar to what Røvik (2008) describes as if the idea has been contextualized. The Consulting firm has done its own translation of the term TM, which is shown in the firm's focus on only hiring senior personnel and on developing the already existing knowledge of employees. TM in this firm has therefore taken more of a senior and experienced approach, since the firm does not focus on hiring students or to educate new talents like the Bank do.

The Consulting firm displays a completely different approach to TM, more similar to then one as Bolander, Asplund & Werr (2014) describes as the humanistic perspective. The informants in this company reflects on competence as a major source for company success, and explains that the firm only hires people that they think may contribute to this success. Once a competent person is hired, the firm puts great emphasis on him/her to constantly develop and learn more. Knowledge is spread through for example Competence events and intranet discussions, and the establishment of these activities shows that the organization puts great confidence in all of their employees. Therefore, this is not about selecting key individuals (Collings & Mellahi, 2009) but rather about developing the staff as a team - the one who has specialized knowledge in a subject may simply acting teachers for their colleagues. This constant knowledge development available for all employees, at all times, can be seen as a sort of humanistic strategy for TM since it allows everyone to develop, no matter if an individual takes the initiative or not. It must although be said that the Competence events are optional, and that the firm is not forcing knowledge on their employees.

It could be argued that already existing local practices within the two organizations have had an impact on how the idea of TM has been settled. The companies' values and prevailing attitudes could be seen as important dimensions in affecting the practice of TM within the organizations. The Bank explains that all employees must take their own initiatives and show an interest in learning, and these values have also affected the design of the Student Trainee Programme. Both the respondents and the Bank's website communicate reflections on having "driven" and "responsible" employees as an absolute must for the Bank, and thus it may be argued that the programme has bees inspired by this. This could serve as a possible explanation to why the Bank has developed a sort of entrepreneurial approach (Bolander, Asplund & Werr, 2014) towards the idea of TM. When it comes to the somewhat humanistic approach (Bolander, Asplund & Werr, 2014) towards TM in the Consulting firm, this could also be seen as a typical way for how the firm works in general. The Consultants explain that the company emphasizes that all employees, and all competence, is important for the firm and perhaps this has influenced the practice of TM within the organization. It could be argued that the company has chosen to develop the humanistic, or equal, approach to TM since it simply is a practice that fit well into the firm's values. In some ways, it could also be seen as if the practices of TM have been formed through isopraxism (Erlingsdottír & Lindberg, 2005) both in the Bank and at the Consulting firm, since both organizations originally have copied the idea from other companies.

8. Conclusion & Discussion

This sections aims to provide possible answers to the research questions given in the study's purpose. The chapter also presents a reflection of the research findings and possible limitations and implications for the thesis. Finally, suggestions for further research in the topic are presented.

This thesis aimed at understanding how, and why, two different organizations are translating and practicing the idea of TM. Since specific research on TM in the commercial banking and consulting industry is lacking, this study has also aimed at exploring which dimensions that help the idea of TM to spread into and within the organizations. The research questions are:

1) Why are Talent Management ideas implemented in the two companies?
2) How are Talent Management ideas adopted and spread in the organizations?
3) How are Talent Management ideas translated into local practice?

After analyzing the empirical data with help from the theoretical frame of reference and previous research, this is what can be concluded:

Question 1. Why are Talent Management ideas implemented in the organizations?

The research findings regarding the implementation of TM in the two organizations suggest that it can be explained by a combination of dimensions:

Both organizations are affected by today's society and affected by prevailing patterns and trends in their environment. Change is something that affects all organizations and is something that they have to deal with sooner or later (Ahrne & Papakostas, 2002). TM ideas can be seen as a part of a prevailing change pattern moving in the society right now, and this is a trend that has affected both organizations. The increasingly tougher labor market (Schuler, Jackson & Tarique, 2011) could also serve as an explanation to why the organizations have implemented the idea of TM. In the Bank's case, it could be explained by circumstances in the Bank's surroundings, for example the increasingly tougher competition for skilled labor. This puts pressure on the Bank in hiring the "right" personalities at a young

age so that these persons could be fostered into a career within the organization.

Another factor for implementing TM ideas are prevailing institutions and norms in the organizations' environment, which affect the organizational behavior (Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2009). Due to demands and requirements of customers and stakeholders, the organizations are expected to act in certain manners. If they do not, they may not gain legitimacy (Meyer & Rowan, 1977) in the eyes of their stakeholders. For the Bank this means a pressure from the industry, since other banks and the society as a whole expects the Bank to behave as a bank. The implementation of TM could here be seen as a way of not standing out from the crowd, since several other Swedish banks had already implemented the idea. The Consulting firm on the other hand is instead being pressured from other perspectives. In this case, it is the customers who demand the firm to behave in certain ways. The pressure from the customers – demanding competences consulting services – has lead to the implementation of TM ideas within the firm. The legitimacy here is focused on satisfying the firm's customers, rather than the industry.

In both organizations studied in this thesis, the involvement of the CEO/ Management Board of the company has also served as an important dimension for implementing TM ideas. Both organizations explain that the idea was implemented first after the idea had reached, and been approved, by the leaders of their company.

Question 2. How are Talent Management ideas adopted and spread in the organizations?

According to the research findings, the TM ideas have been adopted and spread in different ways in the two organizations. The following dimensions could serve as explanations to this:

The organizations' approach for change can be seen as an important dimension for how TM ideas have been adopted in the companies. The Bank's board offers a rather resistant (Bovey & Hede, 2001) attitude towards new ideas, which could serve as an explanation to the rather slow implementation of the idea within the organisation. The inertia (Ahrne & Papakostas, 2002) towards change has also affected the adoption of TM ideas, since the idea was not initially launched by the board but by the Bank's branches. Investigating the other organisation: the Consulting firm has adopted the idea in a more open, not very inert way.

This can be explained by the fact that the firm offers more of a curious attitude towards change and new ideas (Ahrne & Papakostas, 2002). This may be due to the fact that the firm is active in an industry that demands it to always be curious on new ideas.

The implementation of TM ideas could also be seen as an example of isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) prevailing in both industries. In the case of the Bank, the strong norms and institutions (Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2009) in the commercial banking industry has caused the bank to implement the idea, simply because all other banks have done it. The wish is not to be different in the sector, but to do like the other banks. The adoption of the TM idea in this organisation was also inspired by how other companies were practicing the idea, and this influenced the Bank into working in similar ways. The copying of other organizations' practices - the so-called isopraxism (Erlingsdottír & Lindberg, 2005) - could also serves as an explanation to how the idea of TM has been adopted in the organizations. The Consulting firm, for example, was inspired by another company's personnel strategy and decided to imitate the practice when launching it in their own organisation.

Already prevailing practices within the organizations, such as the behavior for spreading new ideas, can be perceived as having great influence on how the idea of TM has been spread. Existing patterns for how to work with certain things is something that both organizations are witnessing about. This can be seen as patterns for automorphism (Schwartz, 1997). The trend sensitivity in the organizations can for example explain why the idea has been launched so differently within the firms. In the Bank, the board is not very sensitive for new ideas. The idea of TM was instead launched through opinions from the branches. The idea started "on the floor" and spread further up in the hierarchy until it reached the board. The idea was then implemented in the organisation. The Consulting firm shows another pattern for how to implement new ideas. Here, new ideas are often first picked up by the board and then later on spread into the organizations branches and departments.

Question 3. How are Talent Management ideas translated into local practice?

Since both organizations wish to avoid the term talent, the concept has been given other names in these organizations. This may be explained by the fact that the word "talent" (In Swedish: "talang") may not be seen as attractive in Swedish, since it in a local context may be

interpret as something boastful. Therefore, the meaning of the term TM is practiced in both organizations, but under different labels (Solli, Demediuk & Sims, 2005). These new names, for example the word "competence", are instead used since they better fit the way in which the organizations discuss competent employees in a local and cultural context. The organizations have also translated (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996) the idea of TM differently, in order for it to fit the companies' values and image. The idea has been translated into programmes/strategies that are being perceived as legitimate (Meyer & Rowan, 1977) by the industry and/ or other stakeholders.

TM in the Bank has been translated into being a local practice for educating young men and women into a future leader role at the Bank. The idea in this organization is focusing on the two programmes for Student Trainees and for developing leaders. The Bank offers a competitive and selective approach to the concept, putting great trust in their employees in labeling themselves as talents. The approach could also be perceived as entrepreneurial (Bolander, Asplund & Werr, 2014). The TM strategy in this organisation can be found on all hierarchical levels, but it does not affect everybody in the personnel. TM in this organization only affects key persons (Collings & Mellahi, 2009) who become more invested in than the regular personnel. In order to be invested in, employees must first identify themselves as talents by showing an interest for professional development. The TM practices within the Bank have a focus on recruiting and developing selected persons, with less focus on motivating and retaining personnel. It may also be argued that the Bank has done its own interpretation (Czarniawska, 2005) of the meaning of TM described by Wikström & Martin (2012).

The Consulting firm instead offers a more comprehensive and humanistic approach (Bolander, Asplund & Werr, 2014) towards TM that include all employees at all levels of the organization. TM here is more of a strategic must in order for the firm to retain and develop all hired people within the organization. TM here is also designed to fit the staff of the organization, which consists of more senior and experienced personnel. The personnel in this organization do not have to identify themselves as talents since the employer believes that all employees are to be treated like this. In the Consulting firm, the idea of TM is instead about creating the best possible teams consisting of a variation of experiences and competence.

It can also be concluded that the practice of TM within the organizations have been affected by other prevailing local practices in the two companies. These local practices – formed by the organizations' values and prevailing attitudes – has impacted how the idea of TM has been settled. These behavioral patterns can be compared to automorphism (Schwartz, 1997). This could serve as an explanation to why the Bank is working with TM in a more entrepreneurial way, while the Consulting firm has implemented more of a humanistic approach towards the concept (Bolander, Asplund & Werr, 2014).

Even if the result of this study cannot serve as an indication for a general assessment of the industries it may indicate that the two organizations are handling the idea of TM differently. Therefore, it is not that strange that several different definitions of TM are presented in the market. For example, both organizations show that they do not only copy models for working with TM; they imitate practices too. This could therefore serve as an example of isopraxism (Erlingsdottír & Lindberg, 2005).

8.1 Reflection on findings

The purpose of understanding why and how the investigated organizations have adopted and translated the idea of TM has now been answered. What still remains though is the discussion of whether the idea of TM is only a popular trend, or a concept that will gain increasing importance in creating future successful organizations.

The idea of talent may be seen as a trend, or perhaps even a norm (Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2009), in today's society. The word is found everywhere; in newspapers, business magazines, sport news on the television, job ads and even in university networks. The term talent can be perceived as if it has created an institution (Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2009) of its own, since almost everyone seems to be taking about it today. Organizations must also relate to talent, no matter if they decide to follow the trend and apply the concept or if they reject it. It may even be argued that the "talent"-component in TM is the new and trendy part of the concept; and that this is the component that organizations choose to adopt. The management component on the other hand, which is the actual handling and taking care of personnel, may be similar to what Lewis & Heckman (2006) describes as older version of HRM practices. This component may therefore be perceived as if it does not offer anything new for organizations, since companies already have a way of handling their personnel.

It could also be discussed that the concept of TM could be labeled with different names depending on the context. This could be compared to the discussion held by Solli, Demediuk & Sims (2005) who claim that one word can cover several different practices. The authors also argue that similar practices can be given different names in different contexts, which seems to be the case in when investigating the two organizations in this study. No matter what label that has been put on the concept, the investigated organizations of this study have although somehow chosen to apply the concept of talent into their organizations. It could be argued that the idea of TM has been implemented in these organizations due to legitimacy reasons (Meyer & Rowan, 1977) since the programmes and strategies are looking good in the eyes of the companies' stakeholders. This may be argued due to the fact that a clear connection between the implementation of the idea and the business strategy does not really exist in the two organizations.

Even if this study shows that the organizations have not included the idea of TM into their business strategy, it could although be argued that TM is still practiced. Both companies are working with the idea as a HR issue, mainly through the Student Trainee Programme and the strategies for Employee Development and Employee Satisfaction. None of the investigated organizations have although reached the point where TM could be stated to be an independent component in the business strategy, described by Wikström & Martin (2012).

8.2 Research limitations

The general limitation of this study is the usage of material from two organizations. It is debatable whether four interview statements from two rather different companies may constitute a sufficient basis for empirical data. The fact that the study has focused on a comparison between a medium size company in the management consulting industry and an international actor in the commercial banking industry is also critical, since this can be seen as a limitation due to the fact that the research findings may not be applied to a larger population of organizations. Despite the criticism that can be given for only using four informants, this rather small population cover the need for information in terms of the degree of saturation and given the restricted timetable. It can also be discussed whether such an industry specific study may produce results that can support research in other industries.

Validity is something that will tell us how truthful this thesis is (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The study was due to time constraints limited to only investigate two companies and how they work with TM, and the degree of validity of this study is therefore discussable. Since only two organizations have been investigated, it can be difficult to ensure the validity of how TM is practiced in general in the two business industries. Since the purpose of this paper although was to only investigate the TM in these two companies, the validity of the study can be perceived as high due to the fact that the thesis can fulfill its purpose. The empirical data has been handled with great confidentiality and in good research manners, which means that the informants have been cited properly and that nothing has been added to the interview statements afterwards. Therefore, the validity of this study can be perceived as high since it reflects the reality of the two organizations in reliable way.

8.3 Research implications

The main implication of this research is the adoption of only two case studies. As a result, the findings may not be applicable to a wider population of organizations and may not work as a general rule for how the business sector works with TM. Additional research will be required to substantiate the relevance of the findings in this thesis. This could for example be research on more organizations combined with observations on how these work with TM in practice. The study also indicates that organizations tend to label the concept of TM with different names. When investigating the concept of TM, the researchers must therefore have an open mind for the fact that TM concept may occur under different names and labels. Interesting for further studies would be to do an observational study in order to be able to increase the understanding of how TM is discussed in practice.

The thesis also highlights the fact that the word talent is rarely used when companies decide to work with TM, which also states the implication of investigating how TM is done in practice. The term is hard to investigate since none of the investigated organizations in this study claim that they have adopted the idea of TM, even though the empirical date show that they – in some ways – have. It could therefore be argued that the idea of TM is tricky to investigate, due to the fact that companies may not even know that they are practicing it.

8.4 Practical implications

This study emphasizes a number of practical implications. It highlights the complex nature of institutional factors affecting the talent management process in managing, what companies want to call talented employees, in today's society. Practical implications of this study may be that for an organization who is interested in talent: its it important to be open to search for both ideas and practices that could be labeled differently but could benefit the organization´s way of looking at- and working with talents. Another implication could also be that organizations need to reflect on how open they are to ideas coming not only from outside the organization but also from within the organization, in order to pay more attention to talents.

8.5 Suggestions for further research

This thesis is, as mentioned, based on two companies in two different industries. In order to get a more correct and reliable understanding of what separates the two different industries, the study would have needed further and deeper research with several organizations active in the two industries. A suggestion for further research could be to include industry associations in the study in order to get a deeper understanding for how the idea of TM is edited in different industrial contexts. The editing of the idea could have an impact on how the idea of TM is perceived within different industries. Another suggestion for further research is to study only one of these two industries and dig deeper into each organization. This research has for example only focused on the commercial banking industry; a further research could compare the commercial banking industry with the investment banking industry, or compare different consulting firms focusing on different sectors of the market. Interesting would also be to investigate how TM is practiced in order to retain and motivate different personnel groups. A future study could for example focus on managing the talent in senior/ more experienced personnel. Another study could instead investigate how talented new employees, perhaps recent graduates, are being handled within an organization. This study may be done to see if the TM practices in these situations only become occasional activities or long-term investments in the company in order to avoid them from quitting later in their careers. A comparison of these two research areas could perhaps also constitute an interesting topic for a study.

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[May 12th 2014]

Branch Manager, Bank

[May 9th 2014]

HR Coordinator, Bank

[May 16th 2014]

10. Appendix

The following section presents the questions that were posed during the interviews with the employees at the Bank and the Consulting Firm. The interviews were held in Swedish, and therefore the following interview guide is published in this language.

10.1 Interview guide

Om informanten

- Beskriv Dig själv och Dina arbetsuppgifter
- Beskriv Din arbetsplats och organisationen

Talanghantering

- Har Du hört talas om praktiken/ idén kring Talent Management (TM) innan?
- Hur ser man på talang inom organisation X?
- Är det ordet "Talang" som används eller använder man andra begrepp?
- På vilken/vilka nivåer inom organisationshierarkin diskuteras talang?
- Vem, eller vilka, ses som talanger inom organisation X?
- Vad är det denne/ dessa personer gör som man betraktar som talangfullt?
- Har organisation X en uttalad strategi för talanger & talanghantering?

Attrahera

- Hur arbetar organisation X arbetar med att marknadsföra sig som arbetsgivare?
- Vilka resultat har man uppnått genom att marknadsföra sig på detta sätt?
- Vad var det Du lockades av hos organisation X som arbetsgivare?

Rekrytera

- Beskriv organisation X rekryteringsprocess?
- Hur gick det till när Du blev anställd inom företaget?
- Anser du att organisation X arbetar aktivt med Talent Management i rekryteringssammanhang?

Behålla & Motivera

- Hur arbetar organisation X med att ta emot och välkomna nyanställda?

- Hur arbetar man med utvecklings- och utbildningsfrågor på organisation X?

- Vem/vilka ansvarar för personalens utveckling och utbildning?

Talang & Nyckelpersoner

- Finns någon strategi för att urskilja nyckelpersoner, eller talanger, i organisation X?

- Upplever Du att det finns några för- och/ eller nackdelar med att urskilja anställda?

- Upplever Du att denna typ av selektering av personer kan ske omedvetet på XX?

Idéöverföring/ Implementering

- Hur ser den generella implementeringsprocessen ut på organisation X när man ska införa nya strategier/ arbetssätt?

- Vem/ vilka inom organisation X är det som tar beslut till förändring?

- Hur upplever Du att Din avdelning, respektive organisationen som helhet, hanterar förändring?

- Från vilket/ vilka håll brukar dessa förändringsidéer komma?

- Vilka faktorer, tror Du, bidrar till en eventuell spridning av idéer och praktiker inom organisationen?