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# Improving the ’docking’ of insights from transformative sustainability efforts:

## Findings from three public sector expeditions and related practice

Master’s thesis in Industrial Ecology

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Cover: Visual representation of the cruise ship-expedition framework. More information can be found on page 7.

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# Abstract

It is increasingly recognized that a transformational change towards sustainability is needed to address the social, ecological and economic challenges of today, as has been discussed in Agenda 2030 and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Swedish public sector has stated that they want to help lead this transition; however, it can be difficult for an organization to simultaneously deal with the conflicting goals of handling all day-to-day tasks while at the same time exploring new innovative methods and ideas in order reach the SDGs.

Many frameworks have been suggested to help organizations balance these conflicting goals, including the expedition-cruise ship framework examined in this study. Within this expedition two modes are described: the cruise ship, which has existing structures and routines, and maintains the organization without initiating risks; and the expedition, which work outside of the existing structure and instead co-create with various stakeholders to bring new insight, and learn about paths to transform the organization. The meeting place of these two modes, or the docking function, allows the sustainability-related insight from the expedition to be shared with the cruise ship. While the 'docking' has not been discussed in detail within this framework, similar concepts such as embedding and consolidation have been studied and this knowledge can be used to better understand the phenomenon and mechanism of docking.

This thesis sought ways to identify areas which can improve the docking between the cruise ship and expedition modes within the Swedish regions and municipalities. The methods that were applied in this thesis were, (1) a literature analysis, to establish an understanding of the research area, provide guidance for the interviews, (2) scoping and semi-structured interviews to collect data on how to improve the docking stage, (3) a thematic analysis which identified themes to improve docking and (4) a co-creational reflection session, which verified the results and co-created the final three areas of improvements.

Based on a rich empirical material, three main areas or improvement were chosen to be discussed in-depth. The first area was *purpose*, which highlights the need to establish, communicate and protect (1) reason why an expedition mode is needed within the organization and (2) the goal or over-arching question at the heart of the expedition. The second area of improvement related to *senior management*. Here, it was important that senior management understood and helped facilitate the two purposes previously mentioned as well as the docking process itself. A major challenge to docking occurs if there is a change in senior management, and the new management prioritizes the expedition or its insight less. The final area was *vessels for docking*, which emphasizes the role that people play in docking the insight, which has not been discussed much previously in literature. This area discussed ways to ensure that people transfer the insight from the expedition into the cruise ship.

Key Words: Swedish public sector, regions, municipalities, sustainable transition, embedding, transfer of insights, cruise ship and expedition framework, ambidexterity, learning, transformation.

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# 1. Introduction

It is increasingly recognized that a transformational change towards sustainability is needed to address the social, ecological and economic challenges of today (Elzen & Wieczorek, 2005; Holmberg & Larsson, 2018; Scoones et al., 2020). These challenges span a wide sub-section of societal needs – social challenges deal with topics such as poverty and inequality, ecological challenges cover increasing climate change, and economic challenges reckon with depleting resources. Such sustainability related challenges are often described as "wicked" in nature. While there are many ways to characterize and describe wickedness, four characteristics are: that they typically involve multiple actors, are difficult to formulate, they tend to span across disciplinary boundaries and wicked problems and their solutions are both unique, meaning no two problems are the same. (Rittel and Weber, 1973). Andersson et al. (2014) additionally describes societal challenges as complex (dynamic) and complicated (structurally) thus defining them as "wicked".

Agenda 2030 was adopted in part to address these challenges, calling for "bold and transformative steps [...] to shift the world onto a more sustainable and resilient path" (United Nations, 2015, p. 1) and aims to do so through acting on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (ibid). The goals contained in Agenda 2030 are ambitious and broad agreed upon by all 193 member countries of United Nations (UNDEP, 2017; United Nations, n.d.). These goals have a holistic approach, allowing each country to find and implement their own specific solutions to fulfill broader objectives (Agenda 2030-delegationen, 2017). This means that the approach towards achieving a sustainability challenge will vary depending on the context and the actors, inviting a richness and diversity of solutions and approach as all these countries, regions, municipalities and other actors that stand behind the Agenda are situated in different histories and backgrounds. The approach of Agenda 2030 also includes assuming a long-term perspective. These characteristics, alongside complexity, are also part of what describes a transition, increasingly recognized as a necessary step to achieve sustainability (Grin et al., 2010).

Leadership is a key aspect of the ongoing transformative change process to reach these SDGs and The Swedish public sector has already stated that they aspire to become a leader of the sustainability transition (Regeringskansliet, 2018). The public sector has worked to adapt Agenda 2030 for Sweden, ensuring that sustainable development guides all their policies (Regeringskansliet, 2020). They also regularly publish reports, analyzing the current situation and their progress towards the SDGs. Additionally, they see that a key to a successful implantation is broad participation in societal transformation, meaning that various different societal actors are needed (Regeringskansliet, 2018).

One challenge for leading this transition, is that the public sector will need to explore new ways to achieve Agenda 2030 while at the same time ensure that the public sector remains capable of upholding day-to-day obligations so that society continues to function (Holmberg. 2019). In other words, an organization cannot only focus on the long-term transitional change, but needs to maintain their current operations as well (O'Reilly III and Tushman, 2004). Holmberg (2019) explains that the short term typically involves system optimization while the long-term refers to systemic innovation (Grin et al., 2010, Rotmans et al., 2011). However, according to O'Reilly III and Tushman (2004), there are many difficulties regarding how to simultaneously focus on the short-term goal of improving current operations and the long-term goal of future innovation within an organization. Furthermore, it is also difficult for new ideas to spring forward in an impactful way in the existing systems (such systems of energy and transport) as structures (of knowledge, cultural meaning etc.) tend to resist change through various mechanisms and create a lock-in (Geels, 2005). For organizations these lock-ins can be routines for planning and execution of work as well as business models and system follow up (Holmberg, 2019).

Holmberg (2019) suggests a conceptual framework: the “Cruise ship and Expedition” to help organizations such as the public sector better balance present operations and future challenges. This concept was first raised by Holmberg and Larsson (2018), who realized that organizations could have two different but mutually needed “modes,” one directed on the present and the other the future. O’Reilly III and Tushman (2004) previously have established a similar concept called “The ambidextrous organization.” In this model, ambidexterity or equal skill with hands, represents an organization’s ability to hand short- and long-term operations simultaneously in a designated structure similar to that of cruise ship and expedition.

In the framework of Holmberg and Larsson (2019) the cruise ship mode is focused on the present, and has many “current structures, routines and budget frames” which are founded on “goals, targets, steering, controlling, measuring and following up” (p. 2). The cruise ship logic is oriented towards not taking or initiating risks, nor making sweeping changes (ibid). This is needed to make sure their daily core activities are functioning and short term needs are met. Instead, exploring innovative ways of addressing future challenges falls into the second mode, expedition. Expeditions are exploratory endeavors that have more flexibility, are focused on bringing in new insights, ideas, innovations and co-creating with various stakeholders (ibid). This mode is concentrated on experiencing, exploring and learning about how to transform, which as argued above is needed

While, both modes are necessary as discussed above, the sustainability transition calls specifically for exploring how the transition can happen centering the discussion on expeditions (Holmberg, 2019). However, at the same time as organizations see the need for change towards of Agenda 2030, they find it difficult to change as the risk may be too high or interventions too marginal. Therefore, it is useful to experiment as this creates a separate space in the organization which can assume the risk more easily and be able to explore. Holmberg (2019) writes further that the insights from a successful expedition will be brought into the main organization (the cruise ship) and failed expeditions can still provide valuable insights.

However, learning in organizations can be difficult (Argyris, 1991; Engeström & Sannino, 2010) and experimentation cannot just be made with the hope that leaning occurs, something more is needed. Within theory on expansive learning, Engeström and Sannino (2010) write that “the appearance of small-scale cycles of innovative learning does not in itself guarantee that there is an expansive cycle going on. Small cycles may remain isolated events, and the overall cycle of organizational development may become stagnant” (p.11). So, even if innovative learning happens, it does not necessarily affect the whole organization. Thus, a vital opportunity for learning about these challenges may be missed. An expedition that is sent out may be efforts in vain. To address this, they write further that the last step in a full cycle is about "consolidating its outcomes into a new stable form of practice” in the organization (ibid., p.11). Applied at the concept of cruise ship and expedition this suggests that there needs to be a function for ensuring that the insight of the new practice is incorporated into the organization. This can happen through the mechanism of embedding described as “the alignment of old and new ways of doing, organizing, and thinking to integrate them into city-regional governance patterns” (Ehnert et al., 2018, p.3). Therefore, crucial for the cruise ship mode and the expedition mode in an organization to meet and to create a function through which insights are embedded. In this thesis, the place where the expedition and cruise ship mode meet, share and learn is referred to as the docking station and those actions of embedding are consequently called "docking."

## 1.1 Aim and Research Question

To improve the public sector's ability to lead transformations, this thesis seeks to find ways to improve the docking between the cruise ship and expedition modes within the Swedish public sector at a municipal and regional level. The level of function of the docking between these two modes can influence the ability to transfer and adopt knowledge, therefore influencing the public sector's ability to engage with and lead towards the transition into a more sustainable future to achieve the SDGs. With an improved docking process, regions and municipalities may better gain insights from sustainability-related expeditions and increase their potential for transformational change, aligning with the future called for by Agenda 2030.

To fulfill this aim, we asked the following research question and sub-questions:

1. *How can the docking between the modes of cruise ship and expedition be improved in the municipalities and regions in the Swedish Public sector?*
    a. *How can the docking function be understood?*
    b. *What are some challenges to docking insights?*

To address the main research question, we asked two different sub questions in order to guide the research question. The first sub-question provides more information on how to comprehend the docking function, as well as understand how it can be characterized. The second sub-question provides insights into the challenges of docking to better understand which areas that needs to be improved.

## 1.2 Limitations

A number of limitations were added to delimit the research area. First, while expeditions can be carried out within all organizations, this specific project is only focused on the expedition-cruise ship relationship within the public sector at a local or regional level in Sweden. The national and international level will not be investigated. Second, the main focus is on sustainability-related expeditions. However, other expeditions and relevant knowledge that can contribute to the field are considered for their application to sustainability-related expeditions. Third, this report also assumes that the stakeholders who initiate and partake in expeditions are already interested in and engaged with it. Therefore, this thesis will not consider how to start an expedition, create the urgency to start an expedition or establish the need for starting one. There are indications that to improve docking methods is connected to how to start an expedition. However, the aim of this study it to identify ways to improve docking, not start expeditions.

## 1.3 Outline of Thesis Report

A brief guide to the content of this thesis is shown below:

**Chapter 2 (Theoretical Background)** describes the theory that is used to analyze and answer the research question. It also elaborates on core concepts that are found in this work such as the cruise ship and expedition logic.

**Chapter 3 (Methods)** outlines the methods, used to address the research question. It begins in the early phase of the work with the iterative process of exploration to define the research area and research question. It then describes how data was collected from stakeholder interviews, outlines how the thematic analysis was conducted and ends with the concluding process where stakeholders were invited to reflect and co-create on the preliminary results.

**Chapter 4 (Results)** presents the results obtained by the methods. This includes the updated definitions of cruise ship-expedition framework as well as results from the early phase of scoping interviews when the research area was explored. It continues with the thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews to improve docking and ends with the co-creational session with stakeholders where they reflected on the results and contributed towards main themes to focus on.

**Chapter 5 (Analysis & Discussion)** begins with the analysis of the most significant results from interview focused on improved docking. This analysis is informed by the theoretical background and input gathered from stakeholders. It also discusses the study in relation to the aim, validity, and limitations. This section concludes with a discussion on what further work that could valuably build on the findings of this study.

**Chapter 6 (Conclusions and Implications)** summarizes the study's main findings, limitations, and their implications, as well as assuming a forward-looking perspective with suggestions on how this work may be of value and how it may be continued and improved.

# 2. Theoretical Background

This chapter outlines the theoretical background that was used as orientation to position and support in answering the research question. It starts with *Wicked Systems and Sustainability* which defines the type and characteristic of the sustainability transition challenge which is greater setting for this study. Next, *Reflexive Governance* is described, which describes the need for a new way of thinking and provides strategies for approaching wicked problems. Next, since the public sector can be understood as a particular form of organization, it is important to understand its core elements, which is outlined in *Organizational Structure*. Then in *Cruise ship, Expedition and Backcasting Expeditions* the cruise ship-expedition framework as well as the formalized and applied backcasting expedition is described which is the main framework applied this thesis. Then the *Ambidextrous Organizations* framework is describe which can shed light on some essential organizational elements since it is similar to the cruise-expedition ship framework (see 2.3). Thereafter follows, *Expansive Learning* which establishes a framework for understanding how an organization behaves in and engages with learning and experimentation. As elaborated in chapter 2.5,this carries similarities to cruise ship and expedition and details more of how learning from expedition may happen. Lastly, *The Docking* establishes a framework for the function and involved mechanism through and by which insight from the expedition are brought into the cruise ship.

## 2.1 Wicked Systems and Sustainability

This section describes the 10 different properties of a wicked problem and introduces how they relate to the sustainability challenge.

Wicked problems are those that are difficult to understand and challenging to find a solution for. Rittel and Weber (1973) identified 10 distinguishing properties of a wicked problem. The first is that there is no definitive formulation for a wicked problem. In other words, it is difficult to define the problem if the context and potential solutions are unknown. The second property is that there is no definitive end to wicked problems. With math problems or checkers, it can be easy to know when the end has been reached, or when "*the* or *a* solution has been found" (p.162). But since wicked problem are dependent on the context and solution (as according to the first property), the problem can always change and so therefore there is never a clear end. The third property is that "solutions to wicked problems are not true-or-false, but good or bad" (p. 162). While normally it is possible to objectively decide if a solution is correct, or can be verified with other resources, for a wicked problem it is impossible. This is because wicked problems are evaluated by groups of people, whose opinions vary widely depending on their background, culture, ideology, etc. The fourth principle is that for wicked problems there is no immediate or ultimate test of a solution. The aftermath of a wicked solution is very difficult to know in advance and can change over time. The fifth principle is that every attempt to solve wicked problems has consequences. In other words, there is no way to try out wicked solutions without irreversible consequences. The sixth principle is that "wicked problems do not have an enumerable (or an exhaustively describable) set of potential solutions" (p. 164). Namely, it is impossible to know if all solutions have been identified and considered because there is no finite and limiting set of rules in society which dictate what can and cannot be done. Instead, it relies on the judgment and creativity of the people working on the wicked problem. The next principle, seven, is that "every wicked problem is essentially unique" (p. 164) meaning that there is at least one distinguishing property in every wicked problem, even though problems might have other similarities. The eight principle is that "every wicked problem can be considered to be a symptom of another problem" (p. 164). In non-wicked problems, there is usually a hierarchy, or different levels of problems. For example, the problem of street crime could be symptom of the higher-level problem of poverty. But for wicked problems, there are no natural levels, instead the problem can either be looked at overarchingly and systematically or in detail, meaning that all problems are symptoms of each other. The ninth property is that the discrepancy which forms wicked problems can be explained in many ways. In other words, a wicked problems can be described in various ways depending on the person. As Rittel and Weber (1973) state, "choice of explanation is arbitrary […] everybody picks that explanation of a discrepancy which fits his intentions best and which conforms to the action-prospects that are available to him" (p. 166). The final property is that the "planner has no right to be wrong," (p.167). If something goes wrong with the wicked solution, the planner is to blame and there is no leeway, forgiveness or appreciations for the attempted contribution and solution to the wicked problem.

Sustainability is often defined as a wicked problem. Sustainability-related wicked problems can include climate change, desertification and poverty, in addition to others (Blok, Gremmen, Wesselink, 2016). These problems fit all of the properties listed above. For example, they are dependent on the context they are within (second property), there is no immediate way to test a solution (fourth property) and they can be described in various ways depending on the person (ninth property) to name a few.  As a result, it means that finding sustainability solutions can be a challenge, and therefore careful consideration is needed.

## 2.2 Reflexive Governance

This section describes the reflexive governance style and introduces five strategies for how to work with sustainable development within reflexive governance.

Reflexive Governance is a governance style which strives to address contemporary challenges and wicked problems. Today, contemporary wicked problems, such as environmental and social issues, can be viewed as result of the unintended outcomes from business and governmental choices (Voß & Kemp, 2006). Voß & Kemp (2006) discuss that since business and governments often don not see themselves as part of the problem, they tend ignore the risks they create in society, such as environmental degradation, climate change, and the depletion of resources, instead of addressing the risks directly within the business or government. Voß and Kemp (2006) describe this dynamic as society "spiraling around itself, stumbling over its own feet and being busy with self-created problems - rather than progressing towards ever better mastery of the social and natural world" (p. 7). To address this, reflexive governance, which is a different governance style, is needed.

Reflexive governance is able to work with wicked problems unlike the current regime governance style. In the current style a singular problem is often identified, strong system boundaries are defined, specialized knowledge is applied, and the result often searches or is based on, linear cause and effect. This style strives to eliminate uncertainty, ambivalence and anything that cannot be controlled (Voß & Kemp, 2006). With wicked problems however, this style can result in unintended consequences since wicked problems are multi-disciplinary, and difficult to model and limit and control since wicked problems can affect so many different aspects unknowingly. (see Ch. 2.1). In such instances, reflexive governance is needed. Unlike rational problem solving, reflexive governance acknowledges that "governing activities are entangled in wider societal feedback loops" such as science, public discourse, informal institutes, and technological development, meaning that the governing activities "are partly shaped by the (side-) effects of its own working" (Voß & Kemp, 2006 p. 7). In other words, reflexive governance "understands itself to be part of the dynamics which are governed" (Voß & Kemp, 2006 p. 7).

Voß and Kemp (2006) recommend five reflexive governance strategies related to sustainable development to help governing actors better support society. The first is to have integrated knowledge production to handle the complexity of sustainability. Integrated knowledge production strives to bridge multiple disciplines as well as multiple scales such as society, technology and ecology. The second strategy is to experiment and be adaptable. Often there are high amounts of uncertainty with sustainability problems, since there are many interdependent processes which are not able to be analyzed with linear cause and effect models. There are also many feedback systems, which are hard to predict and can occur suddenly. Therefore, it is important that all "strategies, as well as cognitive, institutional and technological structures need to be adaptive in order to allow for error and learning" and that governments should experiment "in order to systematically work with new experiences, altered interpretations and changed circumstances" (Voß & Kemp, 2006 p. 15). Thirdly, it is recommended to anticipate the long-term effects and assess the current path relating to sustainable development. Sustainability is path dependent, meaning that the future developments are based on the specific historical developments. As a result, it is important to shape and guide what is currently happening in order to allow for future sustainable development through anticipation and assessment. The fourth strategy is to have participatory assessment in the goal formulation phase. It is often hard to meaningfully define sustainable development, since sustainable development "cannot be scientifically determined as 'objective knowledge' but will always incorporate normative valuations" (Voß & Kemp, 2006 p. 17). Therefore, it is also difficult to understand what practices and knowledge are needed. As a result, "broad participation of affected societal actors" is required to share "their values and respective problem perspectives" to identify the specific sustainable development goals (Voß & Kemp, 2006 p. 18). Finally, the interactive strategy development is recommended to help implement sustainability for the fifth strategy. Since sustainability involves a diverse range of actors, including various levels of government actors, it is important to coordinate their actions and efforts. (Voß & Kemp, 2006)

## 2.3 Cruise Ship, Expedition and Backcasting Expeditions

This section outlines the cruise ship-expedition framework. It discusses the metaphor, the characteristics of the cruise ship and expedition mode, potential tensions between the two as well as why both are needed within the organization.

The cruise ship-expedition framework is used to help organizations balance their daily operations with innovation exploration. Holmberg (2019) use a metaphor of a cruise ship and an expedition to help simplify these logically opposed organizational concepts, make it easier to understand the existence of the tension between the two as well as the values of each mode within the organization. There are two key modes described in this framework, a cruise ship and an expedition, as seen in Figure 1 below.

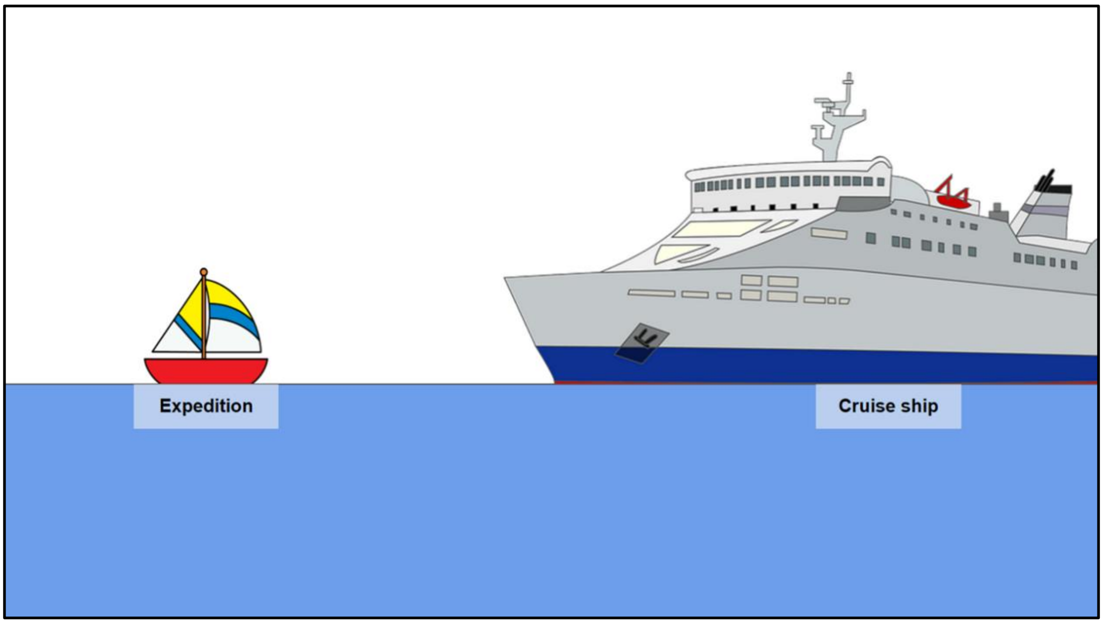

*Figure 1: Illustration of a cruise ship and expedition*

First, it is important to understand what a cruise ship and expedition is outside of the metaphor and in reality. A cruise ship is a large ship that sails on the sea. The senior management's "primary goal is the safe function and longevity of its operating system" (Veronneau, 2012, p.243). As a result, "great emphasis is place on prevention and proactive maintenance with planning done years in advance" (p. 243). On a cruise ship, there are many regulations which need to be followed and lots of paperwork involved to ensure that everything is running smoothly. There is also a "vast-decision making structure" (p.243) similar to a hierarchy, and thousands of people works can the cruise ship, not including the passengers. The crew are subject to intense formal training related to the cruise ship day-to-day operations as well as local, national and international requirements. On board, there are often repeated routines with minimal day-to-day changes and the ship itself is completely self-sufficient.

Within the cruise ship-expedition framework, Holmberg (2019) describes that the cruise ship mode connects to the predominantly existing "regular mode" of operation that organizations often find themselves in when conducting their business as usual (Holmberg, 2019). The application of the metaphor has been in the public sector, it is then the regular mode of the public sector that is the cruise ship. Organizations strive to reach this level of operation, where routines and hierarchy exist, and the organization is essentially smoothly self-sufficient. While an organization in the cruise ship mode may be functioning well, the transition to sustainability calls for moving outside of the cruise ship's day-to-day comfort level. Cruise ships are not effective at exploration and finding a new path forward – it goes beyond their functioning mode and the cruise ship mode is ill fitted for that effort. Instead, when faced with a challenge that affects the organizational culture, or relates to a conceptual change to the organization, the organization might start, or metaphorically speaking send out, an expedition (Holmberg, 2019).

Expedition mode is the second mode in examined in this framework. Outside of the metaphor, the definition for an expedition is "a long organized trip for particular purpose, or the people, vehicles or ships making such a trip" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2021). The goal is to go "off the beaten track," and to explore unusual and unexplored cultural or natural places

(Lonsdale, 2018, Oceanwide Expeditions, 2021). An expedition ship is often smaller and more flexible and maneuverable than a cruise ship (Lonsdale, 2018). Normally there are less people on board, and the people who are on board have specific knowledge related to the expedition. The tools onboard are also often context specific (ibid). In this framework, the expedition is described as a mode focusing on how to explore and try new things.

Within the organizational framework, Holmberg (2019) describe the expedition as a mode focused on system innovation, establishing a space for exploration for future challenges, testing new ideas and concepts, and is a place for co-creation with multiple actors (Holmberg and Larsson 2018; Holmberg 2019). The expedition mode is also temporary and time-limited, because the goal is to explore and then bring back it's insights to be integrated into the day-to-day routines of the cruise ship mode.

To better understand the cruise ship and expedition mode, Holmberg presents a table, as seen in Table 1, which lists and contrasts characteristics of each.

*Table 1: Describes the characteristics of the mode of the cruise ship and expedition, respectively. The table is created based on personal translation from Table 1 as found in Holmberg (2019).*

*The cruise ship logic is supported by the current system whereas the expedition is inhibited by them and is supposed to move beyond the existing structures. Moving outside the existing structural organization allows new processes and insight to take place in the expedition, whereas staying within in would be very limiting. As a result of these different characteristics, there can sometimes be tension between the two modes.*

| The cruise ship (current business/operation/mode) | The Expedition |
|---|---|
| Existing routines, structures, budget frameworks etc. supports the operation | Prevailing routines, structures, budget frameworks etc. obstructs the expedition |
| The main goal of the work is to streamline and optimize the existing system | The expedition needs to think beyond and challenge the existing system |
| Goals, direction and control are important | Guiding principles, trust and creating space for change is what matters |
| Measuring and follow up is emphasized | Learning is at the center. Including learning from mistakes! |
| The organization is at the center for leadership and decisions | The question is at the center. It is often investigated together with actors from other organizations. Capability to facilitate is more important than power to make decisions. |
| Is typically about solving problems and implementing solutions. Removing things that are undesirable. | Is about realizing what is new and different. Create something that is desired. |

As a result of these different characteristics outline in Table 1, there can sometimes be tension between the two modes. Holmberg (2019) outlined a few of these potential tensions. One could be when the purpose of the expedition is forgotten. The purpose of the expedition is to go out and explore and then return to the cruise ship with new insight and insights. However, when the purpose of the expedition is misunderstood there is a risk that the expedition sails away and becomes isolated. Additionally, due to the differences in characteristics, the expedition members could see the cruise ship as slow moving, and the cruise ship could see expedition as irrelevant. Therefore, it is crucial that there is good collaboration and communication between the two modes. If there is not, internal competition might occur between the two modes rather than valuing that the expedition can be an asset for the cruise ship, and the expedition can be supported by the cruise ship.

While sometimes the organization might focus more on one or the other mode, both are needed in order for the organization to survive in the long-term. They are also both dependent on each other. Holmberg (2019) points out that the value of the expedition is in minimize the risk and maximize the learning for the cruise ship. In return, the expeditions are able to use the resources and the knowledge from the cruise ship.

In addition, there might also be multiple cruise ships and expeditions within an organization ( J. Holmberg, personal communication, spring, 2021). There may also be multiple departments in their organizations which can each be seen as their own individual cruise ships which the expedition needs to dock into. Additionally, there might be multiple organizations, such as regional science parks, or EU organizations, which can also be described as a cruise ship. There might also be more than one expedition running within a municipality at once.

While all previous theory here mainly covers cruise ship and expedition as a theoretical concept and a way of viewing organizations and understanding them with different logics, there is also a formalized application of this theory that is more practical. It is called 'backcasting expeditions" and it the combination of the concept of an expedition with the multi-step process called "backcasting" (Holmberg, 2019). This backcasting process can be organized within an expedition, where the participants start with defining the desired future, identifying the gap between with that future with the present situation. When this gap is found the goal is to bridge this gap through possible leverage points, an area with a big potential for an intervention to bridge the gap. In a final step these leverage points will be acted upon through various connected interventions within the same. Exploring deeper theory of how backcasting expeditions are conducted at large is not the purpose in this thesis work. Meanwhile, it however important to recognize that the initial steps of exploring the desired future, the gap and in an overarching manner exploring *why* something needs to be done, are emphasized (Holmberg, 2019). Before any expedition starts understanding and exploring the why-question needs to be done. In addition, there is both a need for understanding the purpose of the expedition logic (ibid) and exploring the purpose of the specific backcasting expedition, known as the meta-question (Holmberg & Widbom 2020).

It should also be noted that this idea of two opposing logics, one focused on day-to-day and the other on exploration has been mentioned in literature before. For example, expansive learning theory (Engeström & Sannino, 2010) and ambidexterity (O'Reilly III & Tushman, 2004 & 2013) which is further discussed below.

## 2.4 Ambidextrous Organizations

This section provides an overarching description on organizations as well as the ambidextrous framework which helps an organization balance their present and future needs. Below, there is first a short background for how to understand an organization. Next, a brief overview of the success of ambidextrous organizations, followed by an explanation on the two individual units of ambidexterity which are called exploitation and exploration, and how balancing these two units can be achieved through structural ambidexterity. While this framework has mostly been investigated in terms of business organizations, and therefore business language is often used to describe it. However, the insights can be still relevant and applied to the public sector, as described in the final paragraph.

Organizations can be defined as “social structures created by individuals to support the collaborative pursuit of specified goals” (Scott & Davis, 2016 p. 23). Organizations can be diverse, in regard to size, wealth, accessibility to resources, location, culture and environment, and they could be public or private. However, there are also similarities between different organization. According to Scott and Davis (2016), all organizations have certain defined objectives and goals; individuals or participants, who are selected, trained, and replaced who help meet the objectives; some kind of coordination and structure of these activities; and finally resources which are organized in such a way that the goal of the company is achieved while at the same time utilizing the resources so that the organization can “expand and maintain the organization itself” (p. 23). Scott and Davis (2016) then organized these similarities into six essential elements which defines an organization.

Scott and Davis (2016) six essential elements are (1) environment, (2) goals and strategy, (3) work and technology, (4) formal organization, (5) informal organization and (6) people. The environment is described as the physical, technological, cultural, and social context that the organization exists within. The second element, goals and strategy, are that which the organization chooses to make and follow. The third element is work and technology, where work describes “the tasks that the organization needs to accomplish given the goals [...] the workflows, and the level of interdependence among parts of the organization” (p. 32) and the latter is any machines, hardware and information that the organization uses. Formal organization, the fourth element, represents how the organizations do their work, such as the hiring people, the division of jobs, and the structure. In contrast, the informal organization, the fifth element, is the “culture, norms and values, social networks inside and outside the organization, power and politics, and the action of leaders” (p. 33) within the organization. Finally, people play an essential role, since they contribute knowledge and skills, and have needs and preferences which bring into the organization.

Ambidexterity is a framework which helps organizations focus on both the present and future needs. It can be difficult for an organization to balance their present needs, such as refining and improving their current products and operations, with their future needs such as identifying and exploring new innovations. Organizations tend to focus on just one, either the present or the future, but focusing on both could be key to stay relevant in the long term. Ambidexterity is one way to do this.

Organizations that use ambidexterity have been found to be more successful in terms of their current business performance, as well as at the introducing a new innovation. O’Reilly III and Tushman (2004), reviewed four different organizational frameworks and measured the success each. In two frameworks, the current business and new innovation work was completely integrated. In the other two frameworks, two independent units for the present and future were created which had their own routines, processes and organization structure. Ambidextrous organizations fall into the latter category and have two independent units which are integrated through senior management. When O’Reilly III and Tushman (2004) compared the success of the organizational frameworks, they concluded that the ambidextrous organization was the most successful in both the performance of present operations and in bringing forth innovations for the future.

In an ambidextrous organization, there are two different modes of operation. Exploitation which focuses on the present, and exploration which is focused on the future needs. Exploitation is about creating “incremental improvements in [...] existing products and operations that let [the organization] operate more efficiently and deliver greater value to customers" (O’Reilly III & Tushman, 2004, p. 76). March (1991) characterized potential exploitation actions as “refinement, choice, production, efficiency, selection, implementation [and] execution” (p. 71). In contrast, exploration is more about discontinuous innovations, and radical advances, with a focus on creating new customers or markets (O’Reilly III & Tushman, 2004). Here, the focus is more on “what is good in the long run” rather than the short (March, 1991, p. 73). March (1991) also highlighted that exploration could be captured “by terms such as search, variation, risk taking, experimentation, play, flexibility, discovery [and] innovation” (p.71). As seen in Table 2 below, these two modes often can vary in regard to their expected value, variability, resources needed, risk preferences within the organization. As a result, this often leads to complications and tensions between the two (March 1991). If the focus is only exploitation and the present, then a product could be “rendered irrelevant by changes in markets and technologies" meaning the company will eventually fail (O’Reilly III & Tushman, 2013, p. 235). Whereas “exploration, by its nature, is inefficient and is associated with an unavoidable increase in the number of bad ideas,” meaning that while it might be useful long-term it cannot operate day-to-day or without the help of the cruise ship (O’Reilly III & Tushman, 2013, p. 235). Therefore, there is a need for an organization to exploit and explore simultaneously to be successful.

*Table 2: Comparison of exploitation and exploration (O’Reilly III & Tushman, 2004, p. 80)*

| **Alignment of:** | **Exploitative Business** | **Exploratory Business** |
|---|---|---|
| **Strategic Intent** | Cost, profit | Innovation, growth |
| **Critical Tasks** | Operations, efficiency, incremental innovation | Adaptability, new products, breakthrough innovation |
| **Competencies** | Operational | Entrepreneurial |
| **Structure** | Formal, mechanistic | Adaptive, loose |
| **Controls, rewards** | Margins, productivity | Milestones, growth |
| **Culture** | Efficiency, low risk, quality, customers | Risk taking, speed, flexibility, experimentation |
| **Leadership** | Authoritative, top down | Visionary, involved |

While there are approaches to achieving ambidexterity, here only structural is discussed. Structural ambidexterity occurs when there are two independent units in the organization, one for exploitation and the other for exploration, each have their own process, structure, people and cultures, but “maintain tight links across units at the senior executive level” (O’Reilly III & Tushman, 2004, p. 75-76). A depiction of this is displayed in Figure 2 below.

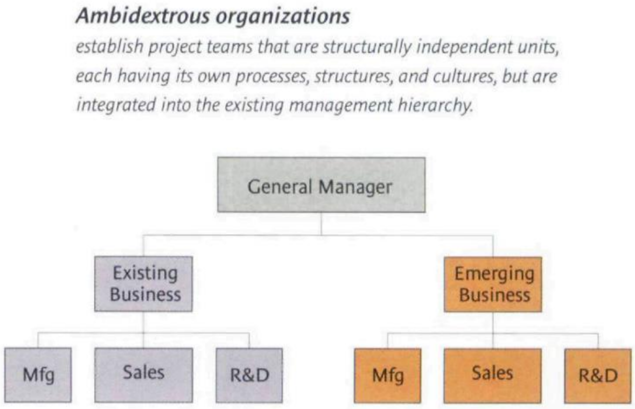


*Figure 2:Simultaneous ambidextrous organizational structure O'Reilly III & Tushman, 2004, p. 79*

The individual units are each allowed to create their own structure, process and culture they need to be successful. The executive level communication provides cross-fertilization, and ensures that the two units share resources, such as cash, talent, expertise, customers etc. (O'Reilly III & Tushman, 2004). However, it should be noted again that this structure and the terms is based on a business, which has a different structure than the public sector. The term senior management in relation to the public sector is further defined in section Ch.4.3.

One example of structural ambidexterity is the newspaper USA Today. In the late 1990s, USA Today needed to change their operations since the media was slowly replacing the newspaper (O'Reilly III & Tushman, 2004). USA today realized that they could be more effective if they created a new unit, independent from the main organization, that would just be focused on learning how to develop a media platform for news (O'Reilly III & Tushman, 2004). This independent unit was still however, working directly under the support of senior management (O'Reilly III & Tushman, 2004). This way, the main organization did not have to be preoccupied with also addressing the future needs but could just focus on the present and making the most out of the existing business. However, by having the senior management collaborate across the two units, the main organization was able to benefit from the insight of the independent unit while the richer resources of the main organization were also available for the independent unit to use (O'Reilly III & Tushman, 2004). Eventually both organizations were able to capitalize on the frameworks and internal competition could be avoided (O'Reilly III & Tushman, 2004). Additionally, O'Reilly III and Tushman (2004) found that with the ambidextrous framework not every single employee had to have the capacity for ambidexterity, the important part was that the management team was supportive and knowledgeable about both units.

The ambidexterity framework has also been explored within the public sector. Cannaerts et al (2016) conducted a study to identify how the public sector uses the ambidextrous design to balance the two units. They analyzed two cultural centers in the Netherlands and found that one cultural center "sees exploitation not as a goal at itself but as a manner to implement explorative projects" (p. 741). They also believed that the explorative projects helped the organization become more efficient. In contrast, the other cultural center does "not consider exploration to be a task of the cultural center," and they do not strive to innovate or reach new market niches (p.741). In terms of employees, Cannaerts et al (2016) found that people were always involved and spent time working with both units, they did not work only in one. In terms of senior management, they found that in both cultural centers, the management teams tended to focus more on exploration whereas the other members focused more on exploitation.

## 2.5 Expansive Learning

This section will outline expansive learning theory. This section will explain how expansive learning is different from traditional learning and how the general process works.

Expansive learning theory is a theory where tensions are resolved through learning as a community. As previously stated, society needs to master variation rather than only focusing on how to standardize and optimize isolated actions and processes. There is also a need to go outside of a single discipline, and to understand the whole system. This all creates tensions between the old activity systems and new, and expansive learning provides another opportunity to change and learn simultaneously. This section will explain how expansive learning is different from traditional learning and how the general process works.

To understand expansive learning, it is important to understand how it differs from traditional linear interventions. With linear interventions, the goal, content and process are "known ahead of time" by the people who design, manage and implement the insight (Engeström & Sannino, 2010, p. 15). Only the subjects are expanding their knowledge and following the easy predetermined process. The aim of the project is to "control all the variables and to achieve a standardized solution module that will reliably generate the same desired outcomes when transferred and implemented in a new setting" (Engeström & Sannino, 2010, p. 15). In contrast, expansive learning works with complex social challenges where "nobody knows exactly what needs to be learned" and the main goal is for the community to "learn something that is not yet there" (Engeström & Sannino, 2010, p. 3, 2).

To move from an abstract idea into concrete activity in expansive learning there is a general process, however the exact details might vary depending on the social challenge. Expansive learning often stems from internal tensions or conflicts within the activity system, since "contradictions are the driving force of transformation" (Engeström & Sannino, 2010, p. 5). Contradictions can occur in various different places, such as between an old and new activity or tool. The existing logic is questioned first by individuals, who are eventually joined by other members of their community who are also affected by the conflict. Their main focus is on an object which can be understood as a "resistant raw material" or "a moving, motivating and future-generating target." or "problem space" ((Engeström & Sannino, 2010, p. 3,5, 6). The object is open for interpretation and depends on the communities' and individuals personal sense making. It is also important that all members of a community are involved and heard, since "expansive learning is an inherently multi-voiced process of debate, negotiation and orchestration" (Engeström & Sannino, 2010, p. 5). The object is then eventually turned into an outcome, with the influence of instruments, rules and division of labor. Instruments means tools or signs, rules refer to "the explicit and implicit regulations, norms, conventions and standards that constrain actions within the activity system," and division of labor involves the "horizontal division of tasks and vertical division of power and status" (Engeström & Sannino, 2010, p. 6). This is displayed in Figure 3 below.

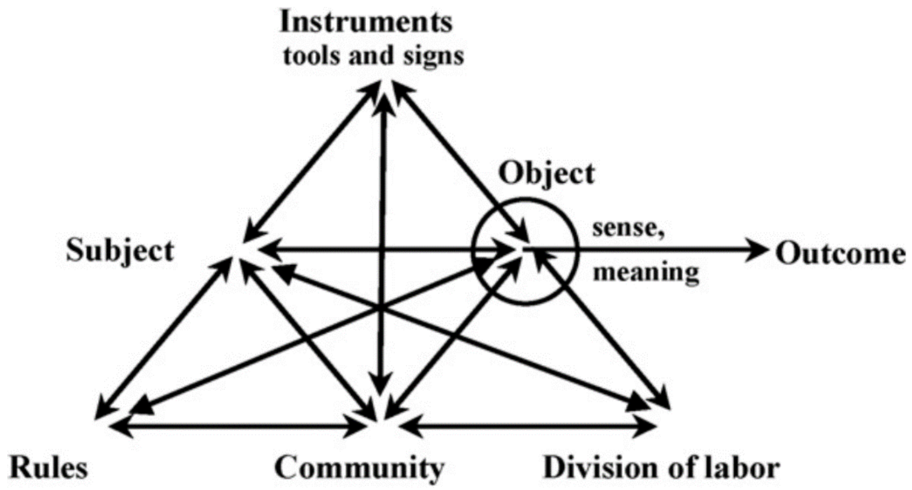


*Figure 3: General model of an activity system as seen in Engeström & Sannino, 2010, p. 6 and first cited in Engeström 1987 p. 78)*

In order to turn to turn an object into an outcome, "cycles of learning actions" are applied (Engeström & Sannino, 2010, p. 1). In the beginning, the community questions and analyzes the existing logic. This is followed by modeling, examining the model, and eventually implementing it. Finally, the community reflects and evaluates the process. Additionally, the measures of success are different for traditional learning and expansive learning. In traditional learning, the measure of success is often various tests or trials which focus on concrete and measurable results. Whereas if expansive learning is successful, it will likely lead to a "qualitative transformation of all components of the activity system," which is then determined through "measured improvements in the performance of the organization" (Engeström & Sannino, 2010, p. 9)

# 3. Methods

This chapter describes the methods that were applied in order to collect and analyze the data to address the research questions. As previously stated, the aim of this thesis is to find ways to improve the docking between the cruise ship and expedition modes within the Swedish public sector at a municipal and regional level. There are four different stages which are outlined below; (1) a literature analysis to better characterize and understand the cruise ship-expedition framework, (2) stakeholder interviews to collect data on the challenges as well as how to improve the docking stage, (3) thematic analysis to analyze the data and finally and (4) a co-creational reflection session to verify the initial results.

## 3.1 Literature Review

This section describes the first stage of this thesis, which was the literature review. A literature review can help support the research question and provide contextual understanding of the topic and associated theoretical concepts (Rowley and Slack, 2004). Additionally, it can help highlight what has been done and what further work is needed (Randolph, 2009). The literature review for this thesis, provided all of this, as well helped to answer the first sub-question *How can the docking function be understood?* Overall, journal articles and books were used within the literature review. Some literature was provided by the supervisor of this thesis, due to his extensive knowledge on the topic, others was used from relevant course materials.. Further literature was based on the number of references of the article, and the ranking of publication.

## 3.2 Stakeholder Interviews

This section describes how data was collected through interviews, and how participants were identified.

Interviews were chosen as method for collecting data as they allow the researcher to gather detailed information about the topic, and interviews can be adapted and updated based on the information gathered (DeCarlo, 2018). In addition, they provide a framework to understand the story behind the interviewee's answers (ibid). Two different types of interviews were chosen, scoping and semi-structured and all were held virtually on Zoom or Microsoft Teams since there were meeting and traveling restrictions because of Covid-19 pandemic. Below describes why each type was chosen, and how it was applied in this study. In the end of this section, it will also outline how the interviews are in compliance with the Swedish Research Council.

First, scoping interviews were conducted to provide early insights into understanding the docking (first sub-question), potential challenges (second sub-question) and improvements to docking (main question). Scoping interviews were applied because they have a broader approach compared to other styles, and can be used to identify gaps in the research knowledge base, clarify key concepts and help determine the best ways forward (Peters et al, 2015). Overall, a total of seven scoping interviews were conducted with people from five different organizations. Notes were taken for all of the interviews.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the main method for collecting data. This is because a semi-structured interview allows for a blend of closed and open-ended questions, and the interviewer can ask follow-up questions (Adams, 2015). This means that the interview is more of a dialogue, but still structured enough so that every interview is still similar and comparable (ibid). A general interview template was based on the research questions, and partially based off of what the theoretical background suggested might be relevant, as well as the scoping interview. The goal for the interview was to learn about the interviewee's experience with expeditions and cruise ships, and to learn what they thought the challenges were related to docking, and how it could improve. However, it did not always follow this exact order since the questions were customized to the interviewee. The interview guide can be found in Appendix A.

The interviewees were identified first through suggestions by the examiner and supervisor. This is because the examiner and supervisor created the cruise ship-expedition framework and therefore know who has worked with this method before and would be willing to be interviewed. Additionally, the snowballing method was used which occurs when the interviewee recommends other people to be contacted and interviewed (Yin, 2011). However, just because other people were suggested did not necessarily mean they were interviewed due to the limited amount of time. All interviews were picked due to accessibility, proximity, and availability of their schedule.

Overall, two groups of stakeholders were identified and interviewed, practitioners and experts. Practitioners includes people who work in the public sector and simultaneously were part of formal backcasting expeditions. They use and are familiar with the concept expedition and cruise ship to understand their work. While all the practitioners were involved and have experience in their respective organization's (region or municipality) development work, this is their first time working with and leading an expedition. Similarly, it was also the first time their organization conducted a formal expedition. The other group of stakeholders, Experts, work either in the public sector and/or have experience and insights related to the cruise-ship and expedition frameworks from in their jobs. None of the experts were both a permanent employee by the public sector organizations investigated and simultaneously involved in the formal backcasting expeditions (that was exclusively the practitioners). New names were chosen for all of the participants to hide identities, ensure objectivity and give the interviewees privacy. Randomized names starting with E were given to the Experts, and names starting with P were assigned to the Practitioners. In order to hide gender, the pronoun "they" is used for interviewees. Table 3 below provides more information about the interviewees.

*Table 3: Groups of Interviewed Stakeholders*

| Experts | Practitioners |
|---|---|
| Elijah, worked in top management in large multi-national industries | Paula, works in municipality B, has been working with expeditions for a few years |
| Elena, consultant to the public sector, works with the terms cruise ship expedition | Philip, works in Municipality B, has been working with expeditions for a few years |
| Eda, consultant on social challenges to industry and public sector | Pete, works in Region A, just starting an expedition and getting to know the framework |
| Eric, works in Municipality A on expedition-like projects | Petra, works in Region B, in the middle of an expedition |

Overall, there were eight participants from seven different organizations, who partook in the semi-structured interviews, all approximately 60-90 minutes long. There were seven interviews

in English, and one interview in Swedish. The Swedish interview was personally translated into English. After having received permission, all interviews were recorded.
All interviews were conducted in line with recommendations from the Swedish Research Council (Swedish Research Council, 2017). They set out many recommendations, but those that were the most important to this work was to inform interviewees with what purpose and under what conditions they were interviewed and how the data would be stored and used. The first aspects of purpose and use was explained in all interviews. In the scoping interviews they were informed that their input would inform the overall direction of the research and what main aspects would be focused on later in the thesis. The scoping interviews were more similar to a general conversation rather than a formal interview. It was not recorded, no specific quotes or information about stakeholders was collected and other aspect regarding use and data storage was thus not explained. The semi-structured interviews were recorded by audio which covers a description of the stakeholders' background, which has not been revealed, as then the interview itself of which quotes were used from. Therefore, interviewees were informed more formally and, in more depth, compared to the scoping interviews. The interviewees were informed that they at any point could leave the interview or choose not to answer any question, without explaining why. Interviewees were also informed that neither they nor their specific organization would be identifiable by name, but that contextual aspects of their organization or role may be explained. They were asked whether they agreed to be recorded and informed that it would be stored locally and only used internally as well as that the recording would be deleted as soon as the report is published. They were given the opportunity to review the use of the data from their interview in the report before publication. On a final note, interviewees were also asked if they had any other questions to make sure all concerns on these matters were handled before starting.

## 3.3 Thematic Analysis

This section outlines how the data which was obtained from the interviews was analyzed using a thematic analysis. All of the semi-structured interviews were transcribed and imported into NVivo 12 which is a qualitative data analysis software. A thematic analysis was then applied. Thematic analysis is a method widely used for qualitative research because it can help identify patterns and themes in a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The themes in this research were identified through an inductive analysis, meaning that the themes arose from the data themselves and were not pre-defined before the thematic analysis began. There are a number of steps which outline the process, which are described below along with how it was done for this research.

There are 6 phases of thematic analysis according to Braun & Clarke (2006). The first step is to become familiar with the data and transcribe and read the interviews (ibid). For this study, all of the semi-structured interviews were transcribed, re-read and imported into NVivo 12 which is a qualitative data analysis software. The second step is to generate initial codes, which means coding interesting quotes in a systematic fashion (ibid). The two authors read the same interview separately and each created codes based off of the transcribed interview. The authors then came together and compared their analysis to create a shared understanding of some initial codes, in order to reduce bias. The remaining 7 interviews were then split up between the two authors, who each coded the interviews. The third step of thematic analysis is searching for themes, which means creating potential themes and putting the data into the themes (ibid). This step was carried out by the authors when they came together to discuss initial themes that they had identified. A summary of each quote relating to docking was then placed into Miro, a visual collaboration software, where the data were then organized into the initial themes. The fourth step is to review the themes, and double check that the themes make sense in regard to the quotes, and to create a map of the analysis (ibid). The authors did this by reviewing the themes and the quotes within each theme, and then created new themes based on the quotes which did not seem to match the theme. The fifth step is to define and name the themes, which is completed by specifying each theme, creating a story, in addition to further defining the themes (ibid). The review of the themes by the authors was repeated three more times, where the themes became more defined, and the names changed until the themes were mutually exclusive and internally exhaustive and that they covered the majority of the material gathered in interviews, which resulted in the final 3 themes and 8 sub-themes that are presented in more depth in Chapter 4.

## 3.4 Co-creational Reflection Session

All practitioners were invited to co-creational reflection session to verify the initial results and to provide feedback on what they believed to be the main areas of improvement. In the beginning, all of them accepted but at the last minute one was unable to attend due to work reasons, so only 3 attended. The session was 2 hours long. They were given a presentation with visual aid of the thesis work in progress, specifically focusing on the initial results. They then reflected and shared each in an initial round if they thought the themes aligned with their personal experience with docking. Practitioners were also allowed to interact with each other and react on the things each of them shared, following their initial turn. In the end they were also asked what themes they considered to be the most important and to share any other relevant thoughts.

This session also served as a networking event. This was also the first time that most of the practitioners had met each other or met anyone who had similar role with knowledge about the cruise ship-expedition framework in the public sector. There are only a limited number of people who work directly with the cruise ship expedition framework, so this also provided an opportunity for them to share their own experience and advice about working in the expedition, cruise ship, and on how to dock. So, there was also a small discussion on how they could continue to keep in touch after the session, so that their own personal insight could be continuously shared with others in the field.

# 4. Results

This chapter presents all results from this thesis. First it describes how the docking function can be understood, which is the first sub-question. Next, comes a section on the preliminary understanding of challenges and improvements to docking, which is the second sub-question and research question respectively, based on the scoping interviews. Then follows the section of all the identified themes of challenges and improvements to docking based on the thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews. The final section presents the verification of the results, as well as the co-creation of the most important areas of improvement based on the co-creational reflection session.

## 4.1 Understanding the docking

Below follows a collection of theory from literature review and a brief practical perspective based on interviews, that help answers the first sub-question: *How can the docking function be understood?* This will mainly cover how the docking is understood as a metaphor and the mechanisms involved in phenomenon of "docking" as used in this work. The practical aspects of the docking such as improvements are handled at large in following chapter.

In addition to the cruise ship and expedition as introduced in Chapter 2.3, another important concept, and metaphor also a metaphor, for this work is the "docking." In the metaphor the docking is the space or function where the expedition meets with the cruise ship to share insights. The docking is not a formalized and overarching concept in literature, but a concept informally used by professionals and researchers within backcasting expeditions (for more information, see 2.4) to communicate the act of transferring insight between the two modes. The name "docking" and the concept is borrowed from Holmberg and Widbom (2020, p. 700). They describe that while working with a formal backcasting expedition the team operating it saw a need for an internal "docking station." This docking function was formed in the shape of a group within the organization with members consisting of civil servants from all sectors in the municipal organization of Ale. They further write that the purpose of the group was to make sure that the expedition would remain relevant to the activities of the main organization and not to become an isolated project. Furthermore, the purpose of the docking in that expedition was also to receive insights from the expedition and connect it to other ongoing processes. Lastly it also served a purpose of establishing an internal capacity for docking insight from other processes and future expeditions. However, it should be noted that the way that the docking concept is used in this thesis is slightly more inclusive. It also draws from other related theory described below and from experiences and insights from the interviewed stakeholders in this thesis that have used processes or formats that is similar but in other organizations. , for this work is the "docking." In the metaphor the docking is the space or function where the expedition meets with the cruise ship to share insights. The docking is not a formalized and overarching concept in literature, but a concept informally used by professionals and researchers within backcasting expeditions (for more information, see 2.4) to communicate the act of transferring insight between the two modes. The name "docking" and the concept is borrowed from Holmberg and Widbom (2020, p. 700). They describe that while working with a formal backcasting expedition the team operating it saw a need for an internal "docking station." This docking function was formed in the shape of a group within the organization with members consisting of civil servants from all sectors in the municipal organization of Ale. They further write that the purpose of the group was to make sure that the expedition would

remain relevant to the activities of the main organization and not to become an isolated project. Furthermore, the purpose of the docking in that expedition was also to receive insights from the expedition and connect it to other ongoing processes. Lastly it also served a purpose of establishing an internal capacity for docking insight from other processes and future expeditions. However, it should be noted that the way that the docking concept is used in this thesis is slightly more inclusive. It also draws from other related theory described below and from experiences and insights from the interviewed stakeholders in this thesis that have used processes or formats that is similar but in other organizations.

In research on acceleration of urban sustainability transitions Ehnert et al. (2018) writes that the concept of "embedding" is "the alignment of old and new ways of doing, organizing, and thinking to integrate them into city-regional governance patterns" (p.3). It is also highlighted as the main mechanism that speeds up the transition to sustainability. This comes from that it "links new ways of DTO [doing (practices), thinking (narratives, imaginaries), and organizing (structure)] with traditional ones" (p.9). Additionally, in an earlier paper with authors in common, Gorissen et al (2018) describes the same mechanism to cover how much the context, in which a transition initiative is ongoing, is impacted strategically. They also detail that it can cover aspects such as "'formalizing' community projects and participation methods (Bussu and Bartels, 2014) aligning efforts, strategies and agendas/goals between transition initiatives and local governments (Horsford and Sampson, 2014)" (p.173). Furthermore, it can include when an institution incorporates "transformative ways of TDO [same as DTO, different order in this paper] at higher institutional levels or even changing institutions accordingly" (p.173). These different mechanisms and characteristics help to understand the docking theoretically from outside the cruise ship and expedition framework.

As established in Ch.2.3 *Cruise Ship, Expedition and Backcasting Expeditions*, expeditions are also initiatives seeking to accomplish a transition to sustainability much like in aforementioned papers on embedding. While similar in that regard, the expedition in the paper by Holmberg and Widbom (2020) is run by a local government, even though they may collaborate with other actors. As used in this thesis, the docking concept regards docking from expeditions mainly in the public sector. This stands in contrast to the transition initiatives in the work of Ehnert et al. and Gorissen et al. where the explorative efforts are run by the community, and not by the public sector. Furthermore, the expedition and the docking from the same as described by Holmberg and Widbom (2020) places a strong emphasis on learning, also from mistakes (see also *chapter 2.3*), it seemingly has less focus on formalizing projects/methods. Regarding the learning process that happens in expeditions (that subsequently will be docked), Holmberg and Holmén (2020) highlights the need for evaluating them in the right way. In order to do this, they suggest Gregory Bateson's (1972) classifications of insight which are 1. confirmative (doing things better), 2. reformative (doing better things) and 3. transformative (to see things in a new way), the added description is based on Holmberg and Holmén (2020). This suggests that the docking will bring in more profound insight than just implementing a method. It requires learning from mistakes, or of what is not working, to do better things. It also calls for reshaping perspectives and re-evaluating how things are perceived.

Concludingly, the theory and process of expansive learning also has a strong emphasis on learning (as explained in detail previously). It also gives an idea of how docking can be understood, that resembles embedding. The action in the end of the expansive cycle is described as "consolidating its outcomes into a new stable form of practice" (Engeström & Sannino, 2010, p.7). The outcomes are what follows from the previous steps of questioning the common practice and imagining a new method (put very simply).

From a more practical perspective, Widbom and Holmberg (2020) describe the docking to be an internal group with the function of docking expedition insights into the municipality, which guided our way of understanding the docking. However, a key observation from scoping and semi-structured interviews was that the docking is not so simple to understand. The framework of the cruise ship and expedition provides an entry point to the understanding of docking, but did not set out to cover all scenarios. According to the practitioners the docking function can be both as a group of various people who are working to dock the insights, a single person from the expedition who is individually communicating all the insights to other people as well as a network of groups meeting to dock. In addition, the insights do not only have to be docked within the public sector. The insights from the expedition might also be incorporated or docked into society, or other organizations who are participating in the expedition. Additionally, it was found that insight could be docked in at an EU-level or national level as well. There is however a multitude of factors that both impact challenges and improvements to the docking, that needs to be examined also for the understanding of the docking itself (further addressed in chapter 4.3).

## 4.2 Preliminary Challenges and Improvements

This section presents the results obtained from the scoping interviews. These results formed a preliminary understanding of the challenges and improvements to docking and as a foundation for the semi-structured interviews. While many different challenges and improvements were shared in these interviews, the three prominent concepts were (1) key personnel, (2) motivation, and (3) resources.

It was mentioned by 4 of the 7 interviewees that it is important to have the right people involved in the docking process from both the expedition and cruise ship. Senior management in the organization should partake in the expedition, in addition they should care about, be passionate about and be invested in the expedition. This will make it easier to dock the learning gained from the expedition to the cruise ship logic management. It was also highlighted that it should not just be one person, but multiple people from senior management who are in various departments. Additionally, the people who are running the expedition should be passionate, and have the energy to work with this process, and be invested in making it work, because this emotional commitment increased the chances of success for the expedition and docking of insight.

The initial motivation for the expedition can also influence the challenge and likelihood of successful docking. Many interviewees mentioned that question that the expedition explores should be contextually relevant to the cruise ship, because then the cruise ship will be invested in docking the insight. One interviewee also mentioned that they thought that the cruise ship should set a clear direction for the expedition. At the very least, the cruise ship should be aware of why the expedition is going off and exploring, and the advantages to their success.

The final concept that was often highlighted by interviewees related to the resources needed for docking. Interviewees discussed the responsibility of the cruise ship to provide resources for the expedition before it leaves. An inappropriately resourced expedition could fail in some way, and therefore not provide the insight from the expedition to the cruise ship. The main resource mentioned was external money to help fund the expedition.

## 4.3 Themes of challenges and improvements to docking

This section describes the results from the thematic analysis conducted on the semi-structured interviews. It sets out to answer mainly the main research question and second the sub-question on challenges, but does also contribute indirectly to first sub-question the understanding of docking though it is not discussed here. Overall, a total of 3 themes, *Ready the Ship*, *Desire to Dock*, and *Ability to Dock* were identified along with 6 sub-themes within these main themes. These themes describe the challenges and improvements associated with docking, as well as suggestions from the interviewees on how it could be improved. To illuminate the themes, a continuation of the maritime metaphor, which the expedition-cruise ship framework exists in, was applied. Additionally, quotes from the 8 interviewees which exemplified the themes are displayed throughout this chapter to provide deeper insight. In understanding cases or projects, it is important to consider that the struggles and needs are dependent on the historical and organizational context they are in (Engwall, 2003). Therefore, the context is described in this chapter when necessary. It is also therefore important to remember that not every suggestion is relevant for every context. Additionally, the challenges can be different depending on if the expedition is carried out within a region or municipality, so sometimes the results within the themes are split accordingly. As a reminder, names have been randomized with names starting with "E" given to experts, and "P" names assigned to practitioners, all genders have been hidden and instead everyone is referred to as "they". The themes and sub-themes are all described below, and displayed in Figure 4 below.

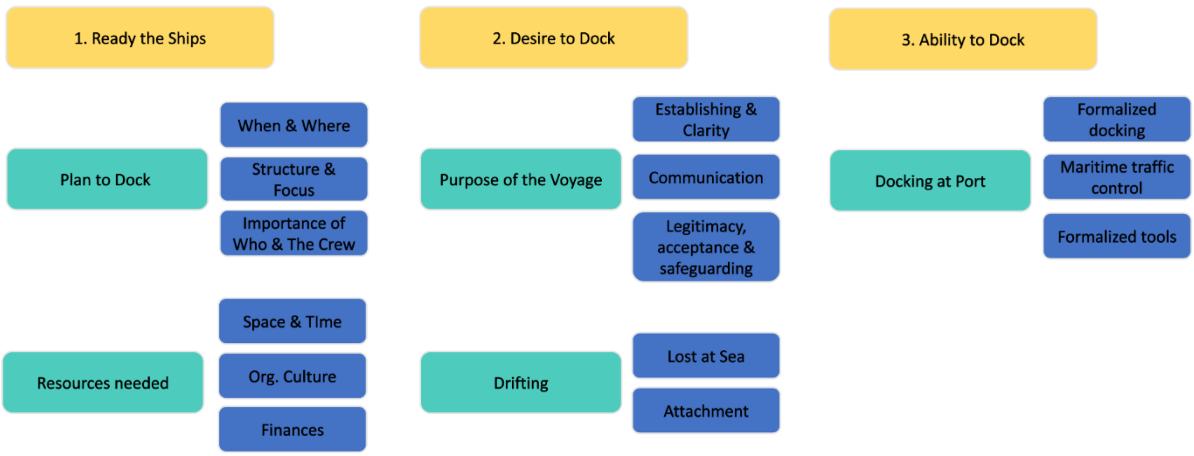


*Figure 4: Overview of the themes*

To understand the themes, it is also important to note that the definition of senior management has been further defined and applied to the public sector. The term management in the public sector can be difficult, because higher management in the public sector is both a political leadership and an administrative leadership on the civil servant side. Typically, when practitioners, who are employees of the public sector, talk about top management they refer to the leadership in their civil servant organization. They often refer to the political leadership separately. Therefore, the term senior management is used to refer to both the political and the administrative leadership.

### 4.2.1 Ready the Ships

This section describes the necessary docking preparations to be made before starting an expedition. Metaphorically speaking, before a ship leaves the dock, the ship needs to be readied for the journey ahead. The captain calls out "ship ready!" as the ship sets the sails; the ship has already been loaded with the necessary amount of food, the navigation has been planned, as well as the time for the return and docking. In this research, this metaphor is used to describe the theme *Ready the Ship*, which outlines the essential preparations that are needed to be able to dock the insights found during the voyage. 'Ship' here could refer to the entire organization, or specifically the expedition or cruise ship part of the organization. Below are some comments that highlighted the need for the cruise ship and expedition to create a plan to dock before the expedition leaves.

> And the thing is, when you design those expeditions you have to think about how to dock that from the beginning. You have to have that in mind all the way. How will this dock in? Why are we doing this? If you think about the cruise ship, what will the cruise ship be interested in? What kind of problems do they want to have solved? – Eda, Expert

There are many challenges surrounding this preparatory phase. One, as described below, is that people can forget that the expedition has to have a plan to dock.

> We believe that the challenge is the expedition. And we're so excited, we're going on an expedition! Wow! How cool is that? Who wants to go? And people go on expedition. Unfortunately, […] We haven't even anticipated the problem of returning. – Elena, Expert

One practitioner, Petra, mentioned that it is difficult to create a docking plan if it is the first time doing an expedition, since everything is new that it is hard to anticipate the coming challenges. However, even though Elena has been part of multiple expeditions, Elena explains how they too did not anticipate the need for a docking plan in the beginning. Two sub-themes, *Plan to Dock*, and *Needed Resources*, were identified under main theme *Ready the Ship* which illustrate the steps needed prepare for docking in the early steps.

#### *4.2.1.1 Plan to Dock*

This section describes the formal planning in the early stages needed to dock. Metaphorically speaking, it is important for the expedition to know the coordinates, such as where the expedition will meet the cruise ship, when to dock, which might be affected by the conditions at sea, and may require preparations of provisions, such as water, food and gasoline. In regard to this research, this section will address the challenges and improvements to planning to dock, relating to where and when to dock and who to dock with, the appropriate structure and having the space for docking and the financial resources needed.

##### Where to Dock

The first aspect is identifying where in the organization the docking can occur, which is partially dependent on the organizational structure. Organizations can be large and complex, making it a challenge to know where to dock. Before knowing where to dock, it is important to first understand the workings of the cruise ship, and the advantages and value of the expedition in that specific organization. There also might be more than one expedition or cruise ship as illustrated below in Figure 5.

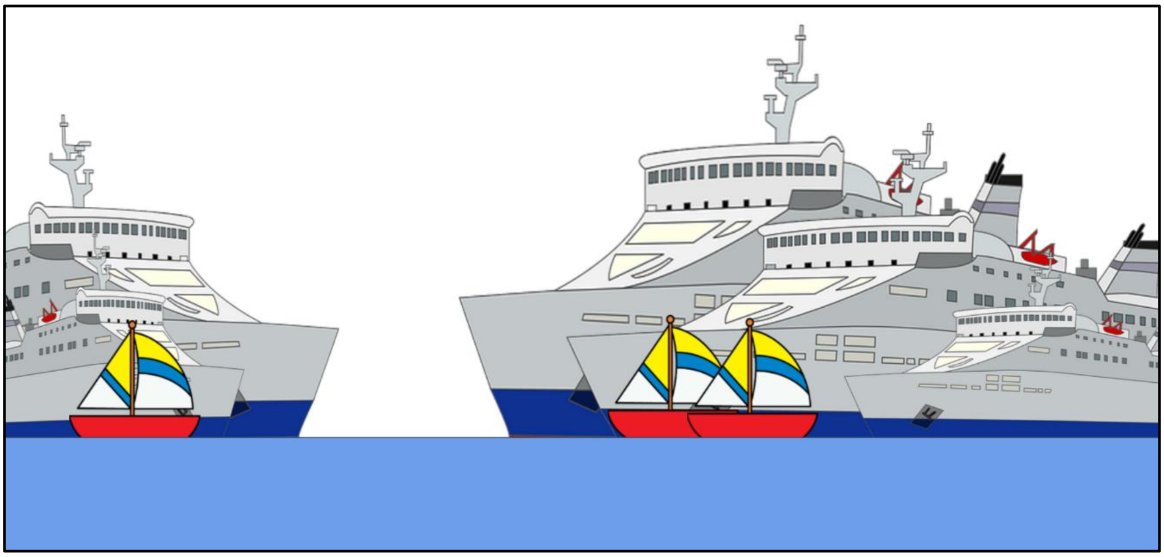

*Figure 5: Multiple cruise ships and expeditions*

For example, Region A had started two expeditions around the same time, so they had to distinguish what each expedition was, their needs, and where each one should dock. There might also be multiple cruise ships that are relevant for the expedition that the expedition should docked into, as suggested by Pete. Additionally, Eric discussed that there is a possibility that the cruise ship can change over time, depending on who is running the organization, so where to docking might need to adapt and change. Eric also suggested that it could be that the cruise ship needs to create a position or platform, in order for the docking to work, but this is discussed more later in the report in *Ability to Dock.*

## When to Dock

Another aspect that should be planned is when to dock. Many interviewees mentioned that it is a challenge to know when to dock the expedition insight. Pete set up a formal docking process that occurred alternate weeks, and another municipality met once month. Petra did not say when specifically, the docking should occur, but just said it should happen continuously as is displayed below.

> We will discover and we will do. But if we are going to do transformation, we have to dock continuously. – Petra, Practitioner, Region B

One expert discussed how maybe it is best to wait a few years to dock. However, even though there might be a plan to dock, it still might take time. Another aspect that was mentioned was that sometimes the docking might not occur when it is expected, but instead take a few years for the ideas to take hold and adapt the organization.

> You may think that you should dock in 10 years but it may turn out it takes 20 years to dock. – Eric, Expert, Municipality A

There are also many external events which might affect the timing of docking. In terms of a metaphor, it could be understood as the conditions at sea which might affect the likelihood of docking, as displayed below in Figure 6.

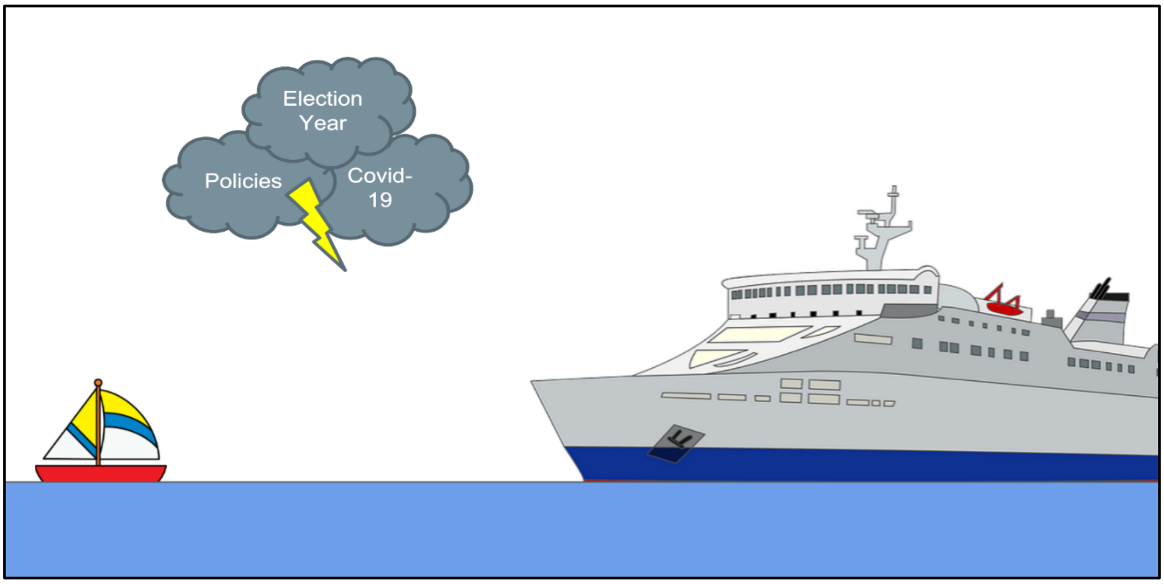

*Figure 6: Conditions at sea which effect the likelihood of docking*

In this research, for instance, an election, a policy change or a pandemic such as Covid-19, could all affect docking. Practitioners mentioned that many challenges occurred during Covid-19. Access to the people in the organization changed because employees were now solely focused on Covid-19 related matters, or the cruise ship no longer saw the need for the expedition because Covid-19 was a higher priority. Additionally, as Elena stated, if there is an election coming up, politicians might not want to make a drastic change. Two quotes relating to the external context challenge are displayed below.

> Now we have arrived to the Corona crisis, and we have a good amount of funds right now as there has been a large injection of money. But there's a lot of worry for later "Gosh, what will happen in 2023?" – Philip, Practitioner, Municipality B

> In an [expedition], someone may say "those are great ideas but not right now, we are busy doing other things." So, even though your ideas are great and we could have done great things with them a year ago now it's "but hey Corona hit, we don't have appetite for any of your stuff." Then you need someone else to be able to take that decision. But again, this is also similar to Corona, it may also be the case that "yeah you want to dock but you shouldn't dock." "Why not?" "Because maybe the idea you have of how to transform the energy system would be great if it comes after the EU decision to re-classify biofuel but useless if it comes before that." – Eric, Expert, Municipality A

### The Structure and Focus Needed for Expeditions & Docking

It is also relevant on how things are structured in the organization, who does what and where. Philip points out that it appears that there is a special burden for transition-oriented efforts in an organization where the core activities are struggling. The political side needs to be content with the daily practical 'musts' to allow for focus on transition. They should not have to run the business as usual. However, it is worth noting that another interviewee also gave account how organizations both when doing well and poorly may find reasons not to change (see section on *Drifting*).

> [...] in the first place they have things in order within the cruise ship. That in itself is a prerequisite, that the political side feels satisfied and comfortable with the way that the core activities are working… Then you also have the opportunity to provide space for development as well as becoming interested in it. If you as a politician or higher level boss always are to control [review] results in school, that no elderly trips or ”why is there a hole in this road” etc. Then you will never come up to the level that is required when you talk about these matters. Then you don’t understand to give space and time to people in the organization to be able to work with that. – Philip, Practitioner, municipality B

The practitioners in the expedition of municipality B both drew inspiration from the way it works in another municipality. It was described how they there set up a specific structure that focus on important matters of development and cross-sectional questions which they perceived as promising. From the context it appears that they foresaw how a designated structure for that function would have better resources and less opposition in carrying out that agenda. The set up was also such that each part of the municipality had to position themselves relative to the agenda.

> They also have a parallel organization that is dealing with development questions and pushes these cross-sectional questions to allow in a different way to have space for it… Based on these overarching grand transition challenges that the municipality has, each individual sector has to declare how they relate to and positions themselves towards the same, so it is kind of always included in it all the time. – Philip, Practitioner, municipality B

### With Whom to Dock and the Impact of Crew on Board

It is also important to plan which members will be involved with the docking process, both on the expedition and the cruise ship. Additionally, the type of crew, or people, involved with the process have an impact on its likelihood to dock.

Two interviewees mentioned the importance of ensuring that the right people with the appropriate expertise from the cruise ship are involved with the expedition, to make sure the expedition had the right cruise ship knowledge to allow for an easier docking. It was also mentioned that having an equal gender ratio, and people of all ages represented meant the expedition was more likely to succeed, and docking was more likely to occur. The connection between the various members can also impact the likelihood of docking. Eda discussed how in an expedition-like project they was working with, there was originally low trust between different organizations, so it took a while to get something accomplished and learned. However, after those connections were made, it could take only weeks to do something that before could have taken a year. While it might be difficult to plan if no connections have been made, it is still important to consider.

A challenge regarding with whom to dock with, is that people can leave the organization, and take all of their knowledge with them, meaning that knowledge relating to the expedition and docking is lost. This makes it difficult for the expedition because it is hard to remember what happened and to keep the knowledge within the organization, as is exemplified in the comment below. To combat this, Eda suggested that new people are continuously invited into the organization from various cruise ships in order to create a bigger knowledge structure.

> People change to another organization and they carry [the insight] with them and then we lose that knowledge and that insight from our organization. And if a new person should start in the organization, it will take time for that person to get into it and catch up on the expedition. – Philip, Practitioner, Municipality B

Senior management was also brought up multiple times as being helpful in facilitating the docking. As stated in 4.1, senior management in the public sector refers to both the political leadership and the administrational leadership on the civil servant side. Senior management can help protect and suggest the insight to be implemented in new projects, as well as enable learning, and ensure space for the expedition as mentioned by Petra, Paula, Elijah and Elena. However, the hierarchy structure often found in the cruise ship can pose a challenge relating senior management. As a result of the hierarchy, it might be difficult for expedition leaders, such as the practitioners, to have access to the right higher up people in a hierarchical organization. Petra especially struggled with this since Petra was new to the organization. Pete highlights the importance of understanding who the expert is in a given area and where this expert lies in the hierarchy. It is important to consider if expedition members should have that role or if it is senior management. Pete suspects that there may be clashes if senior management tries to assume the expert role that perhaps expeditions members should have instead.

> Regarding hierarchies, it is important to consider who assumes the role of the expert. As the expedition members conduct the expedition and explore the specific question, they will probably gain more expertise in that area than the senior management and politicians. – Pete, Practitioner, Region A

There were also other similar challenges mentioned in regard to senior management. It was mentioned by Eda that since senior management does not conduct the normal day-to-day business of the cruise-ship they might not know how to best dock the insight in the cruise ship. Another challenge is that senior management might be busy, and not have the bandwidth or free time to help the expedition. It is also important for senior management to value both cruise ship and expedition and help manage the relationship and share the insight.

Additionally, it was found that senior management, along external factors (in this case Covid), can have an important impact on the expedition efforts and learning from the expedition. This happens if senior managements values, or needs to value, other activities higher. An example of this can be seen in Municipality B, where there was a change in senior management in the middle of the expedition process. The focus of the new senior management was more on efficiency which left less room for the expedition efforts and the docking. This was explained since expeditions rather have the focus of, and needs to have the focus on, long-term learning and exploration which fits poorly with the short-term focus that senior management shifted towards.

> In many municipalities today, in ours too, there has been an increased need for efficiency. When Covid came, our municipality had to focus more on short-term needs and be to efficient. So when we had a change in senior management and this need was reflected there too, they had more focus on the short-term. We experienced that this focus negatively impacted the expedition, that needs more long-term focus and exploration. It became more difficult to dock insights from the expedition and to communicate these matters with senior management. But it was also that people had to be busy with this crisis. – Philip, Practitioner, Municipality B

Furthermore, Pete resonates with this issue in describing a fictive but (to Pete) likely scenario where the political leadership side of senior management may obstruct the expedition and the docking process if they see a clash with their political agenda.

> But I think sometimes it can be like that - if it's uncomfortable information, it can be like "but that's not the way we [political leadership] want to do, because we have our political agenda and want to do it that way!" – Pete, Practitioner, Region A

In speaking of things that Philip would have wanted to be different in their organization to improve the docking, Philip presents formulation of what senior management could have done instead. Philip points to the need of clear management so people in the organization know what should happen and so that knowledge in the organization actually is captured. The directives from senior management need to support the new direction.

> If you have distinct management and direction so that everyone feels comfortable with what should be done… It's about capturing all the knowledge that exists in the organization… If you consider the cruise as it exists today, there are new targets set from above and then you are asked to report about things that doesn't contribute to anything new. – Philip, Practitioner Municipality B

#### *4.2.1.2. Resources needed*

This covers the aspect of what resources are needed to have a ready ship. Interviewees generally spoke of three different types of resources presented in a subsection each below; *Space and time to Dock, Culture needed for docking* and *Finances to Dock.*

##### Space and time to Dock

There were also voices who raised the need for having the resource of conceptual space in the organization. The organization should leave room for bringing in new thoughts. Eric gave support for this on an overarching level, though not related specifically to the docking.

> This led to the idea that we need to have a way and a space for thinking about our future that is not controlled by the company. – Eric, Expert, Municipality 1

Pete in region A resonated with this but discussed specifically the docking function. Pete gave an account that shows how senior management expressed a concern regarding that the expedition did not produce enough results in the way that management expected when they were trying to dock. Senior management were reluctant towards prioritizing the work and expected more results than what was visible (in such a situation it is worth reflecting on whether it was very little happening or not the expected things).

> [...] "we [senior management] have to be executive, we have so much to do so I am not sure I have time for some of my development leaders working with this" [...] I can see, they were expecting more action than when we came in November-December with the reports and the expedition came, they were kind of "shouldn't they do something soon, shouldn't they all… at least have a timetable for what they are doing [...]" they wanted to see something like that. – Pete, Practitioner, Region A

Interviewees also gave accounts regarding the closely related aspect of time. Philip explains how their organization in an overarching manner is often preoccupied with their daily business in a way that obstructs strategic questions. If there is limited time for strategic questions in the organization, it will also be difficult to dock insight from the expedition as they are of a strategic or long-term nature. Another very mechanical challenge with time was also that it was difficult for people in the organization to find time to take part in the expedition and help dock the insight. Multiple interviewees mentioned that expedition activities could be time consuming, both for expedition participants and those relevant to the expedition in the organization. Their existing roles in the organization fill their time, with no time left to add the new expedition tasks. Pete discussed how the limited time made it a challenge to arrange docking activities. Other practitioners also mentioned that in order to create expedition insight and dock them, dialogue between expedition members is needed. However, this becomes a challenge if people do not have the time to actively participate in the expedition. Even though practitioners tried to make time, they struggled to convince others to find time. Philip concluded that in order to solve the problem it "demands that the bosses make sure that you have time for it."

> A comparison is that we most often fail to handle strategic questions that actually would aid in the daily business as we are so busy with just the daily business and it is exactly the same with this. If you don't have the time to think through how we could change our operations, then you just keep on running ahead. – Philip, Practitioner, municipality B

> Maybe it's better to announce a conference and say, "we have found this out, who is interested?" But I know it is always harder to collect people that way because they are so occupied with those networks, those networks meetings being scheduled like this, it's like the existing structures can be a bit hindering or against this [challenge driven] way of working… That is something to think of. – Pete, Practitioner, Region A

> … but I think also inviting people, talking to people - that sort of communication too. But it's difficult, because you don't want to take up people's time. Because they're so busy already, there's so many meetings going on all the time. So, you have to be careful with people's time. – Paula, Practitioner, Municipality B

### The culture needed for docking.

In addition to having the space to dock, there also needs to be a culture in the organization, both in the cruise ship and the expedition, that supports the docking. Eda and Elena mentioned a few characteristics, such as trust, curiosity, respect and a focus on listening and understanding between participants, which affects the success of expedition. A challenge mentioned was that sometimes information discussion is uncomfortable or clashing with other agendas, which then suggests a need for also keeping an open mind or an atmosphere of trying out ideas. One way to foster this culture, is to sharing stories of past accomplishment in addition to the previous overcome challenges according to Eda. In addition, experts stressed that participants should be allowed to fail on the expedition, and not fear failure but instead embrace it and take risks and try new things. Interviewees also suggested that the cruise ship, and especially senior management, had to recognize that the expedition could failure but agree that they support it anyway. In order to foster this culture and help people come comfortable at being vulnerable, Petra suggested a 15-minute check-in at the beginning of every expedition meeting. This vulnerability plays a role when informally transition knowledge back to the cruise ship as found below.

> I think that also goes back into the docking process as well. Is, how do I take the whole me that's been in the expedition back into the cruise ship in a safe way? And that's quite a challenge I would say. That would be something to look at. Because I haven't figured that out. I'm really able to be vulnerable, I have no problem with it. But I can see that a lot of other people did. I'm happy to take the oh my god are you on total *flum* [Swedish word for incoherent air fairy nonsense], what is this crap, and I can take that. But a lot of people I see don't have that psychological safety – Petra, Practitioner, Region B

#### Finances to Dock

Another important aspect is the having the resources to dock, and many interviewees brought up funding specifically.  One challenge mentioned by Elena is that often times the funding is only focused and applied to the expedition, not the docking. As a result, all the resources and funds are used to create the insight, and once the expedition finishes there are no funds left to dock them back into the cruise ship. Therefore, Elena suggested that the funding should be split in half, where half is applied to the expedition to use, and the rest for the docking. When Elena's suggestion was brought up to Eda on the other hand, Eda suggested that instead, if funds was less focused on creating reports and more focused on making an impact and making a difference and then the docking would happen automatically. Eda also brought up that projects, such as expeditions, can get funded without a focus on changing the organization, or ensuring that the organization will learn from the expedition, and that is another difficulty.

Funding can also help dock the insight with the participants and senior management, according to Petra. Petra mentioned that they launched a parallel Seed Fund halfway through their expedition when the expedition was at the stage of investigating leverage points in the formalized backcasting expedition process. This helped the participants imagine ways they could dock the insight. It also meant that the politician and executive leaders became involved and learned about the expedition since they had to manage the Seed fund.

## 4.2.2 Desire to Dock

This section covers the theme of the *Desire to Dock.* Conceptually, this theme highlights the need for having a safeguarded, accepted, legitimate, and clear purpose of the voyage that is communicated in a good way.  It also describes how the cruise ship or the expedition could get lost at sea or the crew could fall in love with their own ship, both referred to as drifting. The interviewees witnessed that limited desire to dock risks poor docking or not docking at all. They also suggest measures that can be taken to make sure that the organization does desire to dock.

### *4.2.2.1 Purpose of the Voyage*

Interviewees mentioned that the purpose of the voyage had an impact on the desire to dock. The purpose can be understood as why the organization launched an expedition or considered a new direction and what that new direction is. It also covers aspects closely related that impacts it, such as how it is maintained. The challenges and improvements related to this sub-theme are establishing a clear vision and purpose, communicating the purpose and legitimacy, acceptance and safeguarding. Many of the interviewees talked a lot about the topic why their expedition was launched or why their organization considered a new direction at all. They also gave testament to that this purpose had an impact on the desire to dock and the challenges and opportunities concerning this was focused on the areas of; communicating the purpose, that it has legitimacy and acceptance in the organization and that this purpose was safe guarded or fought for. The common logic that seems to appear is that if the organization is not onboard and if it is unclear what is to be done, they are either not willing to dock the undertaking nor is it clear what should be docked.

### Establishing a clear purpose/vision

Interviewees spent significant time highlighting the importance of establishing and maintaining a clear purpose or vision. Their accounts covered both the need for establishing the overarching purpose of backcasting expeditions but also what the purpose of their specific expedition was (their specific challenge). At the start of these backcasting expeditions, the practitioners learned about the importance of why, through help from experts on this type of transformational experimenting, and thus put effort in establishing these.

> We have also told the expeditions that this is not a normal project where you should implement something and just produce [...] This is more like a research project that you should make insights. – Pete, Practitioner, Region A

In Municipality B, there was a group, here referred to as the *Creation Group,* which explored and established the purpose of the voyage.

> It was sort of in that group that the why was [explored…] but they spent 5 whole separate days just talking about these issues and these questions [of why and purpose]. – Paula, Practitioner, Municipality B

Furthermore, there were accounts suggested that there were and could become difficulties in comprehending the purpose. This supports their already existing realization that the purpose need attention.

> …they were trying to link something they thought we were already quite good at with a new method. But I think the people who choose this method thought it as more of a prescribed method. So when I became involved […] I was like so, where is the handbook? – Petra, Practitioner, Region B

> So, we tried to with that group [who was acting as a formal docking] also to give them the tools to see why this was necessary. Because it's difficult to have that kind of group if they don't really understand and believe in the cruise ship and expedition logic. – Paula, Practitioner, Municipality B

Through lived experience of practitioners later on in these expeditions it also appeared that issues arose when there was ambiguity in the purpose or when it was misunderstood. Even though at least two of the practitioners had realized the importance of purpose, early struggles still appeared. In one of the expeditions there was a realization that those involved had not fully agreed on the main purpose. It indicates that they did not fully differentiate between their former cruise ship operations and this new expedition they attempt.

> And that's one of the things that we - well it wasn't one of the things that we didn't agreed on, but something we actually didn't have the same perspective on. We hadn't really agreed on what the main purpose or even the type of output would be from it. So, we had a lot of implicit opinion, but we didn't ever really spend the time to agree what

> that was. So some of us took it for granted that we'd end up at a particular point with a particular logic of outcome in a traditional style – Petra, Practitioner, Region B

As stated in earlier section, sometimes expedition members felt like the expedition was a waste of time. While it generally is important for the organization to perceive the expedition as meaningful, it is especially important for those that are to dock the insights. Paula describes how they had this problem with the people in the formal docking function that is supposed to dock the insight according to purpose. They frequently had to revisit the purpose in the group so that it was perceived as urgent, but people perceived it to steal their time. Paula explained how this group for docking eventually was ended, but amounted that mainly to the rise of the Covid crisis as people were preoccupied in dealing with that. Paula did however speculate that if people working in their municipality would have been more used to working online and it was perceived as crucial, that it may have continued in a different fashion. However, Covid posed a very acute threat that had to be dealt with.

> But we didn't really get [the formal docking station] to work in the way we wanted. I think this is also because we didn't really… It's hard because in our municipalities, or in our organizations, we have so many different groups. So, we have to also, in that group always remember and talk about "why are we doing this, why are we here, what's our purpose with this group." So, we had some people in that group that was sort of anxious of "this is just taking some of my time," "I don't really understand why I am here."– Paula, Practitioner, Municipality B

When Paula was asked what the purpose of communication of purpose was, Paula returned to the purpose and described how the focus on the specific question that was explored within an expedition became too much. The focus should rather have been on the overarching goal of learning how to explore, as seen below.

> I think we got lost a little bit in that [the expedition] was about this project, this expedition. It was about the [certain topic]. But [the expedition] wasn't about that, that was just one specific question that we tried this method. – Paula, Practitioner, Municipality B

While the importance of establishing a clear purpose was suggested by many, the suggestions for improvement came from the two practitioners from the Municipality B. Some of them relate specifically to the aspect of establishing and maintaining the purpose, while others are presented further down under other purpose-related aspects. One of the provided suggestions was to start earlier with formalizing insights into a tool so that they can be used in the municipality as it could be it easier for others to understand what the expedition was about.

> I mean we are trying now to describe the insight […] in a tool that we shall be able to use in the municipality and then we realize that "Woow, we have so many tools and we have learnt so much." If we would have done that continuously on our journey, maybe it would have been easier to have others understand what this is all about… Now we are doing it in retrospect – Philip, Practitioner, Municipality B

### Communicating the purpose/vision

Closely related to establishing a clear purpose and vision is also the act of communicating it. The specific comments regarding communication of purpose were only made from practitioners in municipality B. However, there can be a learning opportunity from this still, as they are so closely related to the common topic of finding the purpose of the expedition to be of importance. It was both suggested that a lack of communication issues and that good or frequent communication can help with the aforementioned problem of not having the purpose established enough.

The first response included below highlights the need for frequent communication on the ‘why’, to make it clearly understood, which can be seen as a solution to the former issue. A second response from the same interviewee regarding the role of communication suggested that it serves a purpose of spreading the purpose (and findings) to more people and to help it becoming part of the ‘organization DNA’. Another interviewee also stated when talking about communication in relation to senior management and them giving support, that even if they can not necessarily explain their process, the vision (purpose) needs to be clearly communicated to avoid ambiguity and the feeling that the expedition lacks a meaningful purpose.

> So, we have to also, in that group always remember and talk about - why are we doing this, why are we here, what’s our purpose with this group? – Paula, Practitioner, Municipality B

> And also so that all the findings and [pauses] everything that we learn is not just in one person or the people that worked with this. We wanted it to be in the organization’s DNA in a way. – Paula, Practitioner, Municipality B

> But then at least you need a vision regarding what it is that we want with this and that needs to be communicated. So that other won’t feel that “there they are sitting in a room and… I mean, what are they doing kind of,” because nobody knows what we are doing. – Philip, Practitioner, Municipality B

Interviewees also described that poor communication could lead to the organization misunderstanding the purpose. The issue at communicating it to others, however, was also connected to their own difficulty in explaining what the expedition was about, as it was complex. The same interviewee also makes a distinction on the communication by differentiating between communicating into the organization and communication externally. It was claimed that it is more difficult to communicate the purpose internally. Additionally, it was suggested that communication extended beyond their intranet. Instead, there is a need for communication face to face and by inviting them to physically be part of the expedition.

> We were not good in communicating [the expedition] and what it was, we couldn’t really [...] because we didn’t have the entire picture so it was always hard when we communicated into our organization to say “this is [the expedition]” because it was so many different things… – Paula, Practitioner, Municipality B

> So, the communication, especially into the organization, was a key learning. And I know that [Elena] told us that in the beginning, that it’s always easier to get the people in the municipality or our inhabitants, easier than our organization. The organization is the most difficult part. The politicians were easier also in the beginning. - Paula, Practitioner, Municipality B

> I mean we have this intranet where we can communicate but I think also inviting people, talking to people, that sort of communication too. But it's difficult, because you don't want to take up people's time. Because they're so busy already, there's so many meetings going on all the time. So, you have to be careful with people's time. – Paula, Practitioner, Municipality B

Overall, the interviewee concludes that there was a need for more communication overall and that it requires a lot of work. At the same time, there was a comment made that shows how communication of purpose and establishing a purpose are hard to separate. As they had struggled with clarity of purpose within those that had a role of leading the expedition efforts, it was difficult to communicate in an inviting way. To help the communication as well as the purpose it was concluded that work is needed to have clear picture of what was seen among those who had the insights.

> So, communication, communication, communication [...] we should have done so much more there. - Paula, Practitioner, Municipality B

> We have to plan as long as we can, but we can't draw the entire map [...] because we don't know where we're going, yet. Though when you communicate, that's very difficult to communicate. Like "come and join us, we don't know where we are going but we want a lot of your time and you need to do all these things for us, but we don't know where we are going!" So, to have, more of like a picture of what we saw, we should have worked more with that, I think. – Paula, Practitioner, Municipality B

### Legitimacy, acceptance and safeguarding

The third area relating to the purpose or vision of the voyage is to make sure that there is legitimacy for the agenda, that it is accepted and that there are measures to safeguard or protect it. Without this, there will be no desire in the organization to dock. The first suggestion on this covers that the purpose of the expedition needs to be in line with what the cruise ship (main organization) expects in order to be legitimate and accepted. In the second quote a situation is described where senior management has to carry out on an agenda that partly rivals with the expedition agenda. Philip describes that in order for the expedition to bring valuable insights the purpose needs to be understood and made legitimate by the senior management's acceptance. Senior management needs to listen to the expedition members to understand its value and to protect the insights. In many ways the expedition efforts were in fact supposedly in line with the new agenda introduced, but this was not understood by senior management. The next related response found below also show that there indeed was a docking going on, they were able to use the insights from the expedition in the new attempts. However, the lack of understanding and protecting of the agenda to some extent halted a continuous docking and meant work instead was spent on efforts that was seen as novel and needed by management, but that in fact were quite similar to the expedition. If the purpose originally were understood, perhaps then the expedition insights could have been continuously acted on more directly or been brought in more actively in the new efforts. These two accounts also showcase the need for the purposes of senior management (and organization) and the expeditions to be aligned for the expedition to be accepted and legitimate.

> And the thing is, when you design those expeditions, you have to think about how to dock that from the beginning. You have to have that in mind all the way. How will this

dock in? Why are we doing this? If you think about the cruise ship, what will the cruise ship be interested in? What kind of problems do they want to have solved? – Eda, Expert

After the expedition efforts were halted from Covid and all that, we started new efforts instead with an innovation platform and are part of this education [part of their new efforts]. This was suggested as something new but there were so many things in this new effort that in many ways were similar to what we did in the expedition, but senior management missed this. After the change in management the expeditions were not listened to as much. I think it is important that you listen to what has been done and understand it, so that it can be included into new efforts. Senior management needs to make sure that the expedition insights are protected, so they are not lost. But it's important to remember that covid also impacted this, there were other needs that had to be handled acutely. – Philip, Practitioner, Municipality B

You could always draw the parallel to that we are part of an education now, quite a few from the development department, where we are taught innovation and change management as well as digitalization. […] I mean when we read we see, when we compare with what we have learnt a lot, that is exactly the same, well not exactly the same thing, but it is very much from the work with [the expedition] that can be used in the innovation platform work and how we think of change management too… This aspect of feeling that "ohh, we have not been able to bring our organization on board the train, haven't we learnt anything?" But now we feel that we who have been on board, I mean we are using what we have learnt in all of the process that we enter. – Philip, Practitioner, Municipality B

There were suggestions from interviewees on the issues of legitimacy, acceptance and safeguarding that may be keys to improving or managing a situation where those aspects are lacking. One response partly resonated with the previous responses regarding the misunderstandings, it expressed that the senior management level needs to listen more. That response was given in the context of how hierarchies are viewed, it can be an issue of who should be the expert, those in in the top or those working with the issue.

…. if you are in a leading group or a politician you can't really say something about the information, it's more to listen,"- Pete, Practitioner, Region A

There were also voices seemingly suggesting that having expeditions members themselves engage in action managing and protecting the expedition agenda could help the expedition efforts to move on if a new agenda is introduced from the top. They protected the agenda of the expedition by trying to make it fit in new ways. It appears that having devoted people onboard that tries hard to learn and dock insight may be an asset. If this is kept in mind early and invited from then these people can fill a more legitimate function out in the open.

Yet, we feel that it is 'skönt' [nice, carries slight connotation of "relief" or comfort in Swedish] that we are a bunch of people who took part and that can continue, but we have to adapt to the new bosses and get it on the agenda in the way we can. – Philip, Practitioner, Municipality B

But I am now translating [the tools and findings from the expedition] in Municipality B, so I am changing some words - it's still the same but you know changing some

> words, talking more about innovation maybe [...] That's you know, what you have to do. – Paula, Practitioner, Municipality B

> Even if it at times it feels like there are barriers, here comes new bosses, now we cannot continue, now we'll have to start from scratch… But when you feel that we have a whole lot of knowledge with us that is just as useful as in what we are to do now, then it doesn't really matter if they get that it is [the expedition] who contributed to that, as long as we move forward. – Philip, Practitioner, Municipality B

However, it was identified that practitioners in Municipality B still see a need for and ask that the leadership in the organization give outspoken support. In part, this would also serve to protect the expedition from concerns that it may both take time and involve failures along the road. The lack of this was seen as a great problem.

> I believe that… It was a bit difficult for the political side to go out and say, "we believe in this," it was too sensitive, it was an election, etc. There would have been a need for the leadership to go out and say that "this is something we believe in, it will take time, we may fail but we must test this because we are facing such challenges that we just have to" we would, these processes that we did have in [the expedition in Municipality B]. That is a major problem. – Philip, Practitioner, Municipality B

#### *4.2.2.2 Drifting*

Another reason for the lack of desire to dock could be because the expedition is drifting. In other words, the expedition has started its voyage, but never returns to the cruise ship. Many interviewees mentioned this challenge. Two reasons identified for drifting are that the expedition and cruise ship loose contact with each other, or that the expedition crew falls in love with exploring.

> We talk about the fact that it's kind of like a bubble. That you have these projects within the public sector and they evolve within the bubble but then they kind of sail away and never come back. But within that bubble you have all these nice visions and ideas and they keep on working and they have all these reports and seminars where they talk about all of these beautiful things that will get done, but they never come back. – Eda, Expert

##### Lost at Sea

The first reason discussed for why an expedition might drift is because the expedition and cruise ship lose contact with each other. Metaphorically speaking, this results in the expedition becoming lost at sea, as illustrated in Figure 7 below.

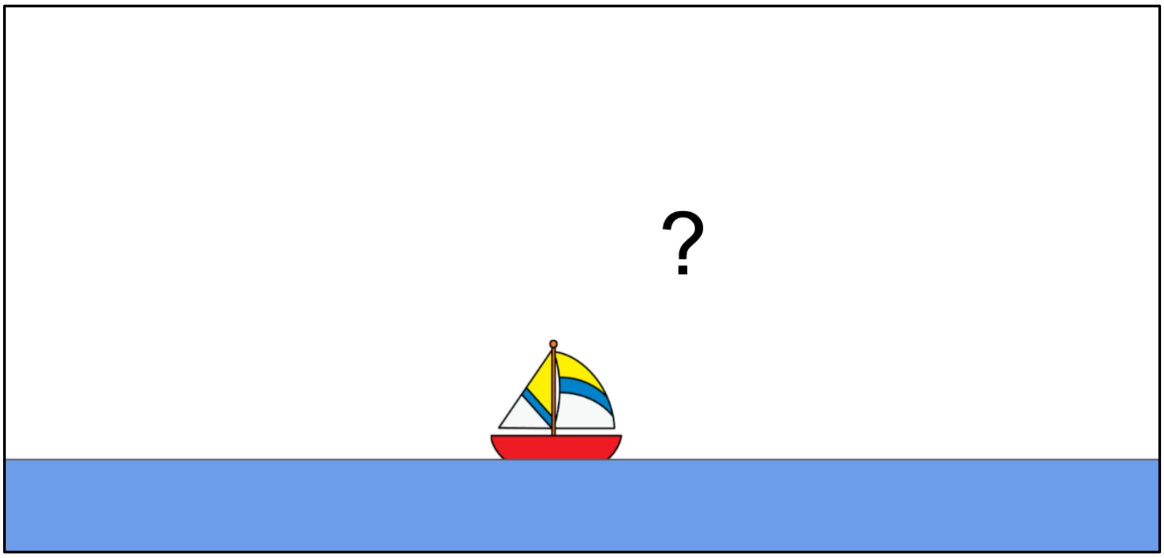


*Figure 7: Expedition gets lost at sea*

Two experts mentioned that when an expedition goes on their voyage, it can sometimes lose track of how the cruise ship functions or its challenges, so therefore the expedition insight are no longer relevant.

> Of course a few things came out [of the expedition-like project], some materials, but it didn't as a concept. And maybe it was also too much of a free concept, because it was a different [product] with a different audience, with different suppliers. Everything was so apart from the existing strategy so it was difficult to dock. – Elijah, Expert

An additional challenge is that the cruise ship might no longer cares about the expedition or it's insight and therefore does not see the need to dock, leading to no docking. Elijah mentioned that sometimes the organization might not want to dock a new and experimental concept even though it seems beneficial because the organization is too worried about surviving, and thus not willing to assume a risk by adapting and incorporating the expedition insight. In contrast, it was also suggested that even if the organization is doing well financially, they also might not dock because they do not see the need to adapt and dock a new concept.

> But it didn't fly because [Company 1], well the main reason was that [Company 1] was really trying to survive. And I think that was the key reason. In order to survive, well, you know they were the biggest employers in Sweden, they had lots of assets, existed all over the world, and had a responsibility to keep it going. – Elijah, Expert

> It was more about strong corporate culture [at Company 2] that was neglecting it. You could say it was the other way around, since we are doing so well, why should we change a successful concept? So it's really the other way. On the [Company 1] side you don't dare because you might lose your cruise ship completely. On the other side, [at Company 2] it's so good, so why change it? So two very different reasons. – Elijah, Expert

> Just because [Company 1] didn't work at the time doesn't mean it was wrong so to say. Of course, still we could say it would have been great if they had more courage to build that in, but since I know the situation, that it was so fragile, just to survive that the degrees of freedom were very few at the time. – Elijah, Expert

There were a few suggestions for how to handle this challenge. One suggestion was by Elena was to ensure that both the expedition and the cruise ship continuously value each other, and share the power between the two so that they do not loose each other and instead are able to successfully meet and dock. Communication between the expedition and cruise ship was suggested. Eda highlighted the need for internal communication between the cruise ship and expedition and suggested having more than one person from a department involved so that they would not forget the cruise ship's goal and mission.

### Forming attachment to the expedition

Another reason the expedition might remain adrift at sea is because the expedition crew becomes too attached to the expedition. In other words, the expedition crew might be very happy and relieved to be working in an unpredictable environment, exploring new challenges and difficulties, that therefore does not want to return to the cruise ship. This was mentioned by Eric, Elena and Eda.  This feeling can be described in the comments below.

> You know the whole thing of when you do a project, and it goes away, and it becomes an isolated island, and no one ever remembers what they did because they had so much fun out there. This is something that when you say this, when you talk to other people about this, in the organization or with other municipalities, everyone laughs because everyone knows that that's how it is. – Paula, Practitioner, Municipality B

> Another challenge is it's really difficult getting people to come back. If you're on that cruise ship and you're like me, a bit impatient, and you go out on the expedition and someone says, "now we're going back we're stopping with this expedition and coming back to this cruise ship," and I'm like "noooo it's so nice on this expedition. I want to stay here!" You need to know that people, maybe the individuals, might be having so much fun that they never want to go back. – Eda, Expert

This theme is displayed in the Figure 8 below.

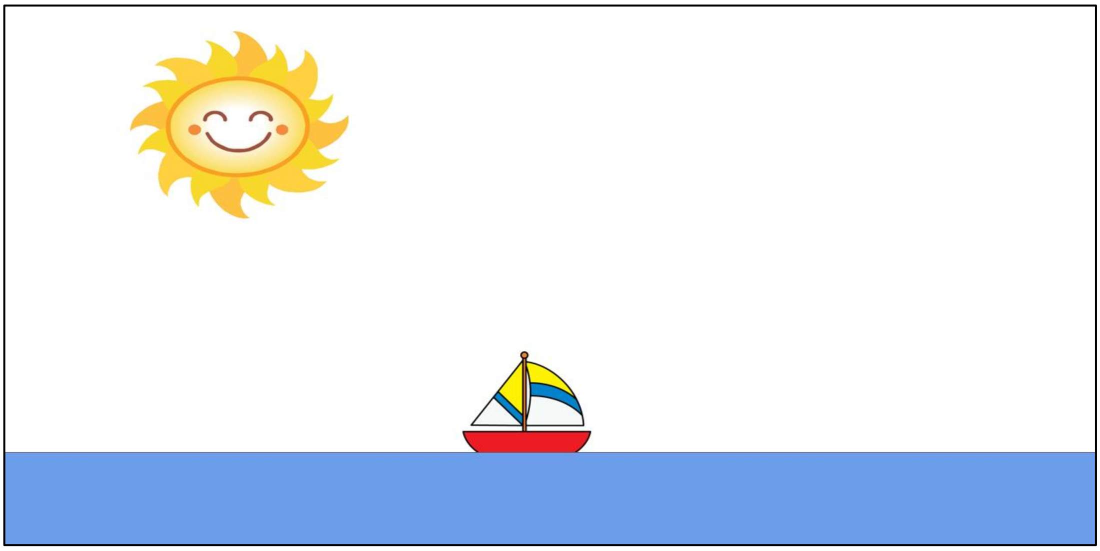

*Figure 8: Expedition crew enjoys the expedition and does not want return home*

Another challenge brought up by Eda is that sometimes people might only jump from expedition to expedition, which means the insight are never incorporated or shared back into the cruise ship. Paula also mentions that a contact in another municipality shared a similar experience on redoing experimenting efforts. Paula's contact had conducted the same experimenting effort with the same purpose three separate times in a row because the organization had missed or forgotten the purpose of it. Therefore, it was not recognized that the same effort already had been done before. A suggested improvement by Elena was to ensure that all organizational members values both the expedition and the cruise ship, and sees the need to share the power between the two in order to successfully meet and dock. Another suggestion from Eda was to first realize that these crew members want to be on an expedition, and then later remind the crew that once they finish docking the insight from this expedition, they could begin another.

### 4.2.3 Ability to Dock

This section describes outlines the way that docking can occur between the expedition and cruise ship. The docking can either happen at a 'port', meaning a formalized method for sharing the insight, or informally through 'vessels', such as people. These two sub-themes, docking at port and vessels for docking are described in the section below.

#### *4.2.3.1 Docking at Port*

This section outlines the formalized docking methods, the maritime traffic control (MTC) function, and how expeditions insight can be shared outside the organization. The formalized docking consists of two parts, a docking station where the cruise ship and expedition regularly meet to share the insight. The MTC is a function needed to oversee the docking station and thus proceeds the specific docking function. Finally, formalized tools that are used to share the insight with others both inside and outside the organization is described.

##### Formalized Docking

Two docking arenas were set up by Municipality B and Region 1 where the expedition insight could continuously be shared to with the cruise ship. In Municipality 2, they created a group, which will be referred to as the *Docking Group*. The Docking Group was made up key members from many departments in the municipality and met once a month. The expedition members shared the insight with the *Docking Group* so that they could be docked into the relevant cruise ship departments. Additionally, the cruise ships were able to share their challenges with the expedition so the expedition could adjust its voyage accordingly. One challenge with the *Docking Group*, was that sometimes the cruise ship members felt like the meetings were taking up too much time and often forgot why the expedition was important, meaning they were less likely to dock the insight. As a result, Paula suggested that there should continuously be communication and remind the members why this group was important and why they needed the expedition.

> We thought of the [Docking Group] to be sort of like the docking or whatever, [so that what] came from the expedition, would go into the cruise ship that way. But also issues that we had in the cruise ship could also go out into the expedition. So, like both ways
> - Paula, Practitioner, Municipality B

In Figure 9 below, an illustration of Municipality's Docking group can be found.

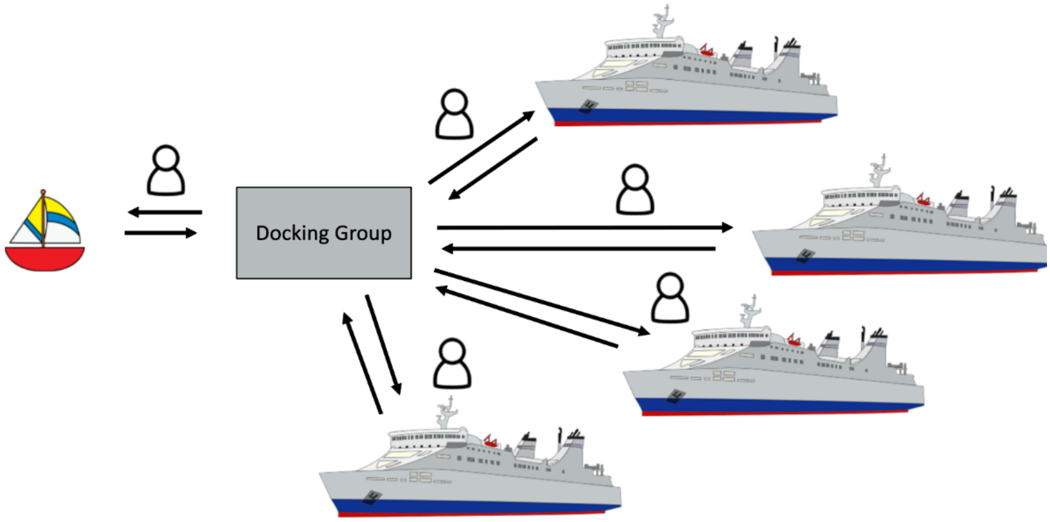


*Figure 9: Illustration of Municipality B's Formal Docking*

Region A also created a formalized docking process where the insight from the expedition are shared back to the cruise ship in a regular feedback loop. In Region 1, there are two expeditions running simultaneously. Their formal docking process is based on a few elements. They have a team led by one development manager responsible for the overall expedition effort, that meets with representatives from within the expeditions in *Learning Meetings*, and then with senior management in alternative weeks. In this they are able to share insights to and from both parts. Another part of the docking function is that senior management also meet directly with the expeditions to share insight. This docking structure ensures communication in all directions, between the expeditions, to the team overseeing them and back, as well as it allows continuous sharing of insight, updates, and challenges in both directions with the people from the senior management. This formalized docking process can be found in Figure 10 below.

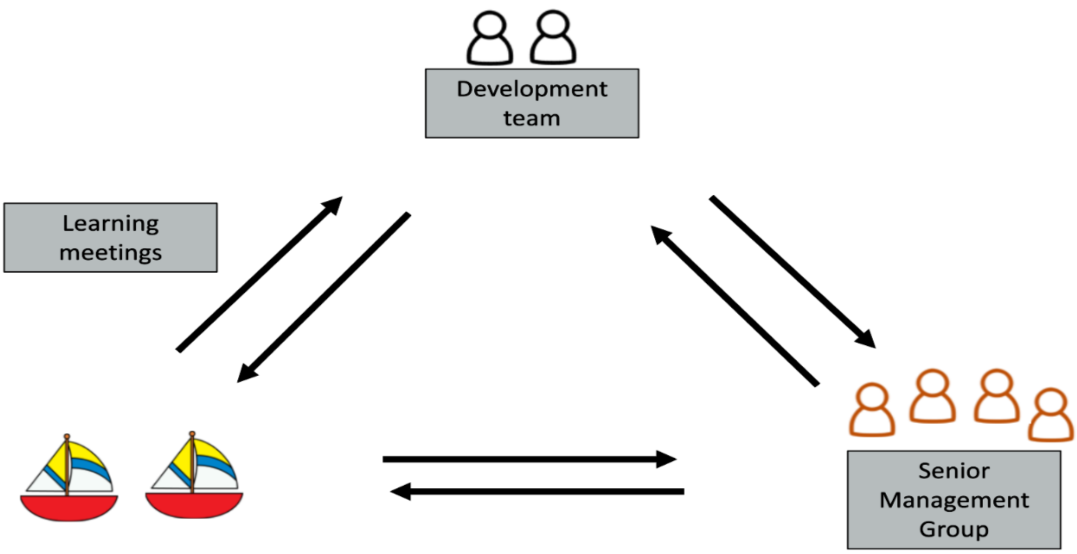


*Figure 10: Illustration of Region A's Formal Docking*

Similar to Municipality B, Pete also experienced the challenge where the senior management did not always see the value the expedition, and thought it took too much time or took too long to produce results. To work around this, Pete wrote the role of the senior management group into the project plan which is described below.

> So, this is a very important role that the senior management group is not a deciding group. We have really tried to think about that they should apply this kind of trust based leadership. Letting the expeditions do their work and not… The senior management group should not be the expertise and doing these decisions. They should learn and reflect how to support the expeditions. That's a very new role for them so we have written it in the project plan. - Pete, Practitioner, Region A

> …. if you are in a leading group or a politician you can't really say something about the information, it's more to listen. - Pete, Practitioner, Region A

These two formalized processes were set up before the expedition began, and ensures that the learning can be shared with the cruise ship. It also means that the cruise ship can be continuously informed about the expedition's progress, and can support it accordingly.

### Maritime traffic control

Next to the formalized docking function appeared another, somewhat related function, that can be called *Maritime traffic control* (MTC). Using the metaphor, when a ship is approaching a port or dock that they want to enter they need to contact and communicate with the MTC (a function of the port authority) that ensures traffic runs smooth and safe, among other things. This metaphor represents an overseeing function that directs the docking. The specific function and the metaphor were indirectly introduced by Eric. Practitioners from two of the investigated expeditions did however give accounts that resembles such a function.

While not formally involved in backcasting expeditions, Eric from Municipality A made a suggestion that gives support to the concept of a maritime traffic control function. The account describes it as an airport control tower, but is here extended into the maritime metaphor. This MTC function needs the broadest possible perspective of what is ongoing in the organization. This is in order to be able to judge the timing of what is relevant when and where, and to help the organization realize the value of insights made. This need to be relating to the overall strategy and thus the function needs to be close to those with power in the organization. However, the exact person or role that assumes this position depends on the specific question, again highlighting the importance for contextual understanding and adaptation rather than generally applicable models.

> Yeah, the metaphor which I find missing here in the cruise ship-expedition framework is the airport control tower. If you going to land planes this time, […] someone needs to keep track of where the other planes are, if there are space, when the winds are going to change etc. – Eric, Expert, Municipality A

> I mean, who that is itself a function of the question you ask. If you run your expedition and one thing that expeditions do is to question the broader assumptions of the mothership. In questioning the assumptions, you come to realize that you are affected by things you didn't think you are affected by. This is a big question, because some cruise ship is going to reject great ideas, not because they are not great but because they do not understand yet the relevance they have to them [...] if you are having an institution that is to learn new things you also need to recognize your new insights.

> That's why I think if you are doing this, ideally for it to work you need the person with the broadest possible view to sit closest to the power. You need a strategy that is able to do that. – Eric, Expert, Municipality A

This concept is exemplified below in Figure 11.

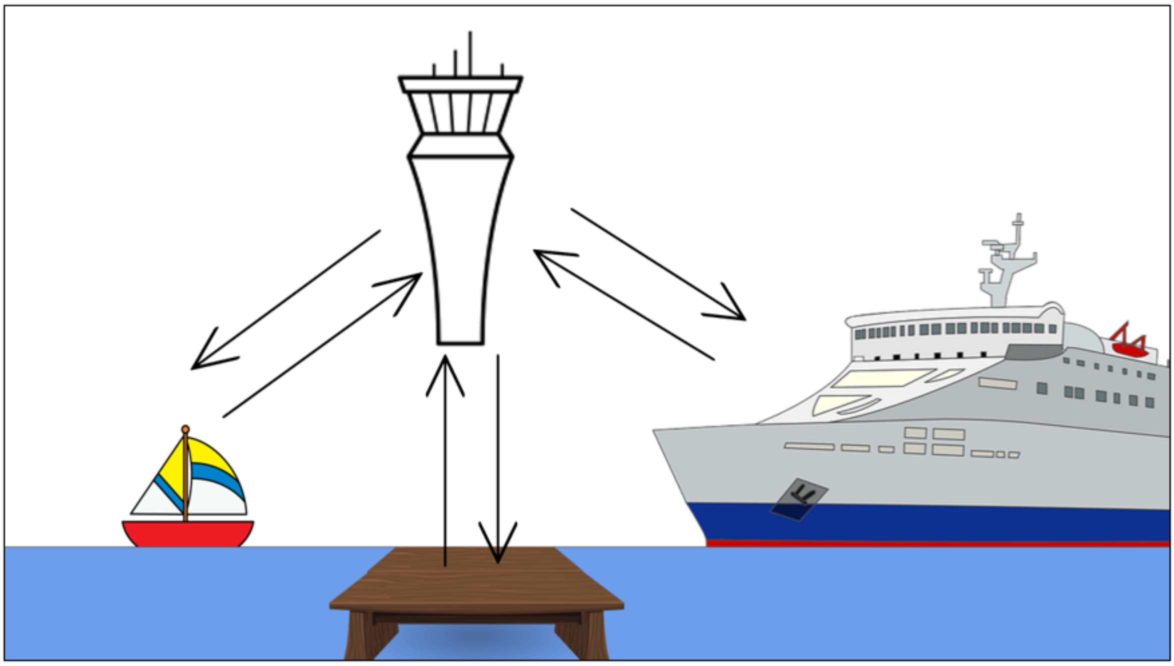

*Figure 11: Maritime Traffic Control*

Furthermore, Eric also interjected that "That view may not be had by anyone in the cruise ship. Actually, there may not be anyone to have that." Again, highlighting the importance for considering what functions that are needed in these efforts and who can hold that function (see section on *Plan to Dock)*. Should such a function be missing, also the opportunity to dock a great insight could be missed if it is then not recognized by the organization or if the organization does not have a proper docking function in place. Additionally, the interviewee also made a very specific account supporting the indirect idea from the other interviewees mentioned on that this overseeing function needs a formal mandate to act in this way (which in the other cases happened through close connections with senior management). It is also suggested that the maritime traffic control function should be autonomous, which requires other diverse but relevant entities to give it power.

> So, I'm now setting up this transition function in [Municipality A] that is on purpose not part of any of these other entities [...] But there is a formal mandate that is given by three different entities [an energy company, municipal environmental department and a municipal company facilitating for local businesses]. So, I try to create a logic where I lock myself in, intellectually, as little as possible. While at the same time maximizing my formal mandate through other entities. - Eric, Expert, Municipality A

As discussed before in *Formalized docking,* Region A has a team of people who help oversee the expedition as well as to facilitate the docking between expedition and senior management (thus the rest of the organization). From the responses of Eric, Region A's role of facilitating the docking (when and where to dock), is very similar to the MTC function. In Municipality B, it is also described how there was a group, similar to this function, which guides the process and also partly helped docking. For the study, it will be referred to as *Creation Group*. However, in lager perspective this is a function to mainly lead and to help others to dock (rather than being the docking themselves). In running the expedition efforts, they also took responsibility for that a docking function existed in the first place. The aspect of seeing to that docking of expedition insights into the organization happens, municipality to also resemble the MTC function. The responses from the practitioners suggest that an applied MTC function is both to oversee the expeditions and how they should dock into the organization. Additionally, the group that executed this function in municipality B, contained some members of senior management but also others. In region A the function was held by a team around the interviewee who is a development manager (not the senior management of the whole organization). This is therefore a function along with senior management and others (even though they may be related). However, senior management served an important role in giving the function legitimacy, directly by participation in municipality B and indirectly in region A as senior management and traffic control interacted.

> We had the sort of what we call the [Creation Group], and that was very important that they met, because we had the highest political leaders, we had our "kommunchef" [director of the municipality], and [...] if you don't have the highest sort of leaders, it's no point in a way when you try to transform in that sense… – Paula, Practitioner, Municipality B

> Okay, I must do one more thing… After we have had these[learning meetings] with those, expeditions… We have a 2 hour meeting in which we are reflecting, "what did they say, what do we have to handle, how should we handle it, can we support them with something, do they need supporting out from outside or what, should we push or pull" – Pete, Practitioner, Region A

> We gather 4-5 times a year with the senior management group together with development leaders and we try to learn from each other and breaking the silo walls… So, that is something that I'm organizing as well together my team. […] Then, we can put in also experiences from this [the expedition] into that. – Pete, Practitioner, Region A

To summarize, accounts from Eric and practitioners from region A and municipality B together paints the picture of a function, here called the MTM, that has two main roles; to lead and guide the expedition efforts, as well as to facilitate the meeting between the expedition and cruise ship (to dock insights). It can in the formal expeditions also to some extent serve as part of the docking function but is a function in its own too, along roles such as senior management.

### Formalized Tools

Interviewees also mentioned formalized docking tools that they use to share and record the expedition insight either for themselves or for people outside the organization. Alongside having a formalized docking, Philip also suggested that the insight should be shared early in the process via tools, since it would be easier to formulate and communicate insight that way. Thus, also for others to understand what the expedition are working on. Practitioners Pete and Philip also discussed that people outside the process were fascinated by their expeditions, and wanted to learn more their findings.

One tool that was often mentioned was documentation. In Municipality B, many of the findings were written into the municipalities' "översiktsplan" which is the master plan that municipalities keep for how land will be used. Elijah suggested that relevant organization members have a reflection session, and then write an official report discussing the expedition insight. Philip also started writing and sharing their expedition work with Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions and 'Västra Götalandsregionen' (administrative region of Västra Götaland in south-west Sweden). Pete mentioned that funding requires them to write a report, which has been helpful to ensure no information has been lost. However, Eda voiced a worry that an expedition is about so much more than a report, so therefore reports are limiting and the true outcome cannot be conveyed.

There are additional tools that practitioners used to share the insight. Petra created small YouTube videos of the process, and would share them with expedition participants. Petra also created LinkedIn groups with expedition participants, and would share relevant documents with them. One aspect that Petra highlighted however, was that it was important to keep consistent colors and graphics on the communication so that the participants felt safe. Practitioners also presented to the region, industry, and EU, partially to share the expedition knowledge and experience but also to gain traction and recognition for the expedition. Pete also considered to host a conference about the expedition and the insight, and invite everyone who was interested, but was worried that it is hard to identify who is interested.

Overall, these docking tools are methods that interviewees are applying to share the insight to the organization, as well as beyond.

#### *4.2.3.2 Vessels for Docking*

Another method for docking is having vessels, such as people, informally transfer the insight from the expedition to the cruise ship. Overall, all of the practitioners and one expert mentioned the importance of individuals bringing the insight informally from the expedition back to their cruise ship or applying the expedition methods in their cruise ship tasks. Below are a few quotes which exemplified practitioners informally sharing the expedition insight.

> The docking process that I have now developed is that I am docking into all levels of the organization. Drip feeding. Drip. Drip. Drip. Every moment I get. For example, we have a check in every Monday morning with my team, so I will usually give them some kind of insight that I've gathered from my ever increasing learning from this process. Whether it's like, I linked one to Burné Brown's talk, what was it about, how emotions can signal our values, and our values play such an important role in our framing of [our expedition] in terms of understanding how we wanted the future to be. And then pulled all of that in. Then it turns out that someone said 'I've used that [expedition] values exercise in something else.' - They had all of the documentation and just taken it straight. Which is brilliant. – Petra, Practitioner, Region B

> So, I mean, since I go back and forth into the organization I work with a lot of different questions. I use this method in all the work I do, so in a way we are working with it – Paula, Practitioner, Municipality B

> But, I think it's mainly because of the people who was in this. The people who took all these findings and carried them into different things. – Paula, Practitioner, Municipality B

One expert mentioned that it was very important for people to share their knowledge with the cruise ship informally, since it is people who are able to change the organization. This is described below.

> You have to think about the people. Because, normally, all of this information actually transforms back from mind to mind. And it's not the report, it's not a written vision, or the seminar. It's always people that carries the results. – Eda, Expert

Various tools were brought up by interviewees which individuals use to informally dock. For example, it could be in conversation, where an individual brings up an expedition learning or suggests a method in conversation. Another suggestion by Eda was for an individual to write and publish articles within the organization, to help spread information about the insight.

> I'm communicating back in many different ways depending on who it is. Some of it can be very informal, oh that reminds me of something we learned in challenge-lab. And you drop it in [to conversation]. So that was as recent as yesterday, we were talking about an idea for developing a project and two of the three people in the meeting had been participating in expedition. And I said, can we use the c-lab method to do this? And they are then taking it into their own organizations as well, so I am kind of supporting them in doing that. But then I take that back to my team, and say you know, we used this method. And people are really getting excited about it in my team and telling other people about it and it's building its own momentum almost. – Petra, Practitioner, Region B

Having a shared ownership of the expedition can also increase people's likelihood of informally docking the insight back into their cruise ship. This was especially stressed by Petra as is seen below.

> In regards to docking into other cruise ships… when people don't feel ownership, as in the type of ownership I have of the process as in the project manager, they are less prone - because of the mindset that people often have when if they don't own it, as in, it's not theirs. And therefore they can just take it or leave it. And it's maybe too much hassle for them to take that fight because it's not really theirs. So, I've been doing all of my hardest work to engage and inform and almost like coach them into that. – Petra, Practitioner, Region B

Interviewees also mentioned it does not just have to be the employees of the public sector who are transferring knowledge into their organization. As previously stated, expeditions are often interdisciplinary and involve participants outside of the public sector. At a regional level, Petra discussed how Petra had brought regional science parks into their expedition and believes the regional science parks will help bring the insight into their own organization. At a municipality level, citizens are often involved, and Paula believes that they will take the insight into their personal lives and jobs. A suggestion brought up by both Petra and Eda, was that it is easier when there is more than one person from the organization involved in the expedition, which can be seen below.

> One of the good things we've had from a couple of the industries - we've had 2 members from the same company who have taken part, and even members who have their own little cluster so they can speak together. And that grouping and clusters have

> been helpful. So they kind of have got each other with the same language that we're using and they can then together take it back. Which I think when you're on your own is quite tough because it feels like it's quite random. – Petra, Practitioner, Region B

This theme is displayed in Figure 12 below.

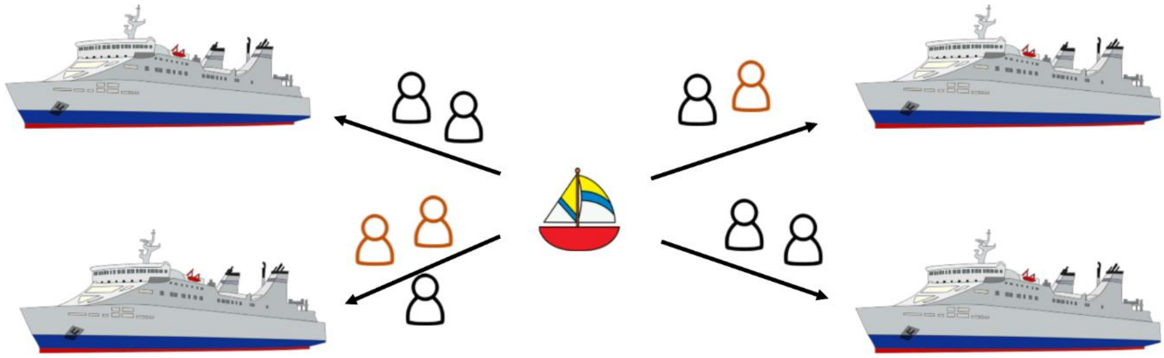

*Figure 12: People, or Vessels, informally docking insights*

Overall, it seems one method for docking is to have the individuals in the expedition informally share their insight with the cruise ship.

## 4.4 Verifying the Results and Co-Creating the Areas of Improvement

In this section the initial results were verified by the practitioners who attended the co-creational reflection session. New cross-generated results were also generated in this co-creation session and are discussed below as well.

The practitioners shared their reflections after the presentation on the initial results. All practitioners agreed that the presented result was accurate according to their experience. The themes also resonated with the practitioners, and they shared that they recognized the themes which they had discussed in their personal interview. Stakeholder feedback seems to verify the results. The practitioners also shared that since the original interview, they had many new insights and reflections on how docking could be improved based on initial discussion. This also led to a discussion between practitioners about how to generally improve docking. Overall, they discussed the purpose of the expedition, senior management, the people involved in the expedition, how people had a function for docking, and how experience makes the expedition process easier.

The need for establishing a purpose early in the beginning was repeated by stakeholders as well as the need for maintaining and conveying it so that the focus of the expedition is not lost. All of the practitioners agreed to this and the importance of putting extra effort into working with the purpose. It commented on by Pete that upcoming election year steered the purpose more in the direction of delivering concrete results and short-term project rather than learning, exploration, and long-term perspective. Petra also mentioned that in some meetings, it was normally obvious who partook in the expedition and who did not. Petra found that the members who were part of the expedition engaged and thought in a very different manner. As a result, tensions rose between the group. Therefore, Petra suggested more work be done for how to include everyone in these conversations even if they have not gone through the expedition process. This sentiment was shared by the rest of the practitioners. Paula also shared that the need for learning how to ask 'why' both for the expedition and in general was an important finding from the expedition. Paula exemplified a situation past the expedition when Paula was in a meeting and asked why a group were conducting a certain project, and they then realized that they have been asking the wrong questions for years.

It was also found from the session that Region A experiences an issue of how the purpose of expeditions are perceived overall by politicians and senior management, which resonated with the others. To address this, Pete suggested a helpful parallel for how expeditions could be treated in their region. Pete explained that in the government and the state there is an accepted and familiar form of exploring in the form of "Statens offentliga utredningar" (Swedish Government Official Reports, SOU). So, in the Region Pete belongs perhaps it could be seen that when the region says yes to do an expedition it is like when the government says yes to conducting the work to an official report. Pete explains that this may help with the docking even if Pete has not figured it out fully. It was also suggested that this approach could allow for both long-term and short-term to co-exist, instead of either or.

The importance of having senior management onboard and in support was also brought up multiple times throughout the session. Petra brought up that in the beginning of the expedition, the senior management from Petra's cruise ship was not involved. As a result, the expedition became slightly weakened because it did not have the necessary support from management. But Petra also saw it as an accidental plus, because it meant that there then was more focus on the docking to other expedition members' organizations instead. This resulted in that the expedition process became more owned by those participating in it than those initiating it. Another finding in the session connecting back to purpose was the risk that senior management might lose track of it. Pete shared specifically regarding the upcoming elections that it made senior management focus on short term purposes so that politicians are able to show results. This resulted in a lack for senior management support for the expedition efforts and consequently a difficulty for expeditions members to dock these ideas. In addition to this, the importance of making sure that both majority and opposition politicians know and understand the purpose was highlighted. Paula pointed out though, that once the politicians do understand the new way of working and the advantages, politicians can be strong allies. In Municipality B, the top politicians have "learnt things we can't unlearn." Paula explains how one of their politicians added "can we dare to go a different way?"

Additionally, it was found the alongside the formal docking function, people can act as vessels in an informal docking. In Municipality B, they have started to have interviews with people who took part in the original formal expedition. In those interviews it was found that expeditions members are using many of the expedition methods in their daily work and that they have changed their way of thinking and acting. As a result, there are now people in many different sectors who are acting upon the expedition insight. The presentation held on initial results introduced the idea that those running an expedition can send out an expedition, have expedition members come back and dock and then allow them to go out again. This was found to be important, and Paula explained that they were now sending out expeditions all the time in small ways now. Instead of thinking that they should solve the problem of "taking care of mental health issues in [name of municipality]" they are now trying to explore the issue, bringing in people who are affected and then sending out the expedition again. This further highlights the importance of the informal docking. It was also reinforced that the risk of crew becoming 'lost at sea' connects to the importance of people as vessels for docking. Petra shared how they will leave their current position and thus an important piece in leading the project and an owner of information and insight will be lost. This raised the question of how purpose can be embedded if senior management is switched out. Here practitioners agreed that docking the purpose in many individuals can be part of a solution.

Related to above, it was yet again found that the timing of docking and what to dock is of importance. Pete shared how their region could have the docking meetings every week but that sometimes "if work is going slow, the expeditions may feel insecure, the new ways or working take time to understand" meaning that they may be too little to dock at times. In terms of what to dock Pete explains that "they do not always have much to come with in terms of the old way of thinking [performance focus]" again highlighting the need to consider what is expected to be docked.

Practitioners also really bonded together over how hard it is to run expeditions, and how much they have learned from this process. Because they all just recently started learning about and working with expeditions, they did not know what to expect in the beginning. Therefore, throughout the process they all felt as if they have learned a lot, both about themselves and about docking. They all felt as if they are now much better equipped to prepare for docking, and know now what should happen. Petra suggested that maybe having a small introductory expedition or mini-backcasting process on how to dock before starting the expedition might have been a good idea to improve the docking from the expedition.

In the very end of the co-creational reflection session, the practitioners were asked what they believed to be the most important areas to be considered for an improved docking. They mentioned (1) the preparation to docking, though this can be difficult because they learned as they went along what should have been done, (2) the timing of when docking should occur and how much time there should be between dockings (3) the purpose, relating to understanding of the question that the expedition is actually working with and 4) purpose and senior management meaning (a) that it is important the senior management understands the purpose of the expedition from the beginning and (b) how to embed the purpose if someone in senior management leaves.

All of the practitioners were very thankful and glad that the co-creational reflection session was held. They really enjoyed meeting the other practitioners, and hearing about what other practitioners are doing, and hearing potential examples for what they could implement.

# 5. Analysis & Discussion

This chapter analyses and discusses the main results and examines them in relation to the theoretical framework and the research questions. It also provides a further discussion on the whole body of research, the methods and the results. It starts with expanding on the contribution of this thesis in which first the three main areas of improving the docking are analyzed, discussed and propositions are made. This is followed by section on what the main contribution of this work is, and a section on other notable contributions and findings. Continuing, the limitations to the study will be discussed and lastly also suggestions of further work.

## 5.1 Main Areas for Improving the Docking

The aim of this thesis report is to find ways to improve the docking between the cruise ship and expedition modes within the Swedish public sector at a municipal and regional level. Consequently, this section analyses and discusses the three main areas for improving the docking. These areas arose from conversations with stakeholders, who identified suggestions of improvements for docking as part of the main research question on improvements. In addition, the second sub-question also investigated challenges which stakeholders also identified. These challenges will also be treated as a background to the improvements and may be turned into a proposal of improvement in e.g. that a certain challenge needs more attention.

The three areas of improvement are based on the most prominent areas from the three main themes and 17 sub-themes in the results. This is done to allow for more concise proposals of improvements as well as due to time constraints limiting the option of deeper analysis of the extensive result section. An area is a theme, sub-theme or element impacting the docking. An area was deemed important depending on; whether it was suggested by practitioners in the co-creational reflection session, the frequency that the challenge or suggestion occurred in the interviews, how critically stakeholders described its impact and how unexpected and surprising the realization of the improvement was to stakeholders when it was discovered. The first factor of what areas the practitioners believed to be the most important when asked in the co-creational reflection session were given the greatest weight as practitioners were considered to be the most knowledgeable in practice. The remaining factors were weighted according to the order they were listed.

The three areas that will be analyzed and discussed deeper in a sub-section each are (1) *Purpose of the Voyage* (also a theme), (2) senior management (area only) and (3) V*essels for Docking* (also a theme). While these three areas are distinct and very different entities they still are still interconnected. For instance, purpose of the voyage is of a higher overarching order which directs the whole expedition work. Senior management concretely organizes the execution in the organization, which need to be guided by the purpose and thus they also need to be familiar with it. Vessels, or people, transfer the expedition insights to relevant parts of the organization, often by moving around or communicating with different parts of the organization. As a result, they essentially dock the insights of the purpose throughout the organization, and they could also be members of senior management.

To help guide how the proposed areas should be understood it should be noted that Flyvbjerg (2006) makes a case for that it is a misunderstanding that one cannot generalize from a single case. This work is based on interviews from practitioners from three different expedition efforts and from experts with experience in this or closely related fields. While this is relatively few cases it is more extensive than a single case. Therefore, the proposals can be more generalizable and thus a few are given below. However, as the proposals are based on the suggestions by stakeholders this means that the proposals will reflect the contexts which stakeholders have been in. According to Engwall (2003) "no project neither takes off from, nor is executed in, an organizational vacuum" (p.803). He argues that projects are impacted by their organizational history and context and that research needs to take this into account and not treat them as an "island." While this is positioned in a project management context, we believe that it has a relevance also in this field. Practitioners were brought together to discuss and evaluate the results too. While this helps mitigate the risk of the outlying results resonating with only one stakeholder, we ask the reader to consider how the proposed and discussed challenges can relate to the readers own context. These are not to be seen as fully generalizable facts directly applicable everywhere.

Flyvbjerg (2006) also discusses the value in avoiding summary and writes that "the goal is not to make the case study be all things to all people. The goal is to allow the study to be different things to different people" (p.23). We therefore propose that the most important findings for some reader involved in expedition-like efforts may actually be found in the result section rather than within the proposed improvements. It was strived to keep the results as more descriptive and richer in material, rather than selective and prescriptive. Nevertheless, below follows a selection of proposed improvements to docking, but rather than limited to a few specific proposals only, they firstly propose a wide encompassing area to be focused on and then various proposals under each area, respectively. This is to allow for the reader to conclude which proposals the reader himself/herself find to be the most important. We also ask that the proposed areas are understood in relation to the richer result section where more nuances are found.

### 5.1.1 Purpose of the Voyage

The first area of improvement relates to the purpose of the expedition. The area and sub-theme *Purpose of the Voyage* is the one that has been repeated the most throughout this work. It was uncovered in early browsing of research papers, in scoping interviews, within thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews and highlighted by practitioners as one of the four most important areas for an improved docking in the reflection session. It was also described as critical to dock the insights as well as to the expedition efforts as a whole. The need for considering the purpose in expeditions was something that practitioners in the backcasting expeditions knew at the start because of the involved experts who guided them in their process. However, purpose was not linked to docking specifically at the time, instead it was more seen as necessary for the success of the expedition. While it was a known aspect, it is nevertheless an important area to cover due to how critical stakeholders explained it to be to the docking and how much stakeholders focused on it in interviews and in the reflection session.

The need for the area of purpose is also prominent in research. In the gathered experience and insights on expeditions as suggested by Holmberg and Holmén (2020), Holmberg and Widbom (2020) and Holmberg (2019) the need for considering the aspect of purpose, goal and "why" is considered important and makes up a significant part of the preparatory steps (see also chapter 2.3). They also put emphasis on exploring the purpose as well as stated that it should anchored with senior management. Furthermore, the need for considering purpose-related aspects is also identified in literature outside of that focusing on backcasting expeditions. Ambidexterity does not primarily focus on how the purpose is established or what that process is like regarding the purpose of the efforts of exploitation, besides that it should be ambidextrous, but rather focus on the need for it to be anchored and maintained in the organization (O'Reilly III & Tushman 2004). It should also be noted that the need for exploration and exploitation is seen as equally important in terms of purpose within Ambidexterity. However, in the context of the Swedish public sector investigated there was a tendency for the cruise ship logic to be dominating which is why more focus is placed on the expedition side. In other cases the reverse may be needed. Purpose also appears in expansive learning and carries similarities to that of backcasting expeditions as it also puts emphasis on asking why-questions about the current system to see what needs to be changed and where to go (Engeström & Sannino, 2010).

The area of purpose was discussed by stakeholders in multiple ways throughout the work. In the reflection session specifically, practitioners agreed that they should have spent more time and effort working with purpose-related aspects such as establishing what the purpose of the expedition is. It was found that that differences in level of understanding of purpose are prone to happen between those who are involved within the expedition process and those who are outside but still have stakes in it. Practitioners suggest that there should have been more communication with those not directly involved to mitigate this difference in understanding. Furthermore, practitioners brought up the importance of not only establishing a purpose, but also ensuring that it survives. External factors, such as upcoming election year or a change in senior management, could lead to a change in the purpose or focus of the organization (more in Ch.5.1.2). It was also found that it is very important that the senior management specifically understands and protects the purpose (more information in Ch.5.1.2). Lastly, practitioners mentioned that when members of the organization do understand the main expedition question, it might also lead to losing the purpose.

It is also important to recognize that there are two different purposes involved. In accounts from practitioners, it has been identified that there is one overarching purpose related to the expedition logic and need for expeditions. The other refers to the purpose of the specific expedition itself, and understanding the expedition question which is dependent on the context it is in. As introduced in theoretical background, this is recognized by Holmberg (2019) and Holmberg and Widbom (2020) as the purpose with expedition logic and the specific meta question. From the experience of practitioners, it seems as if the first aspect is the one that is the more crucial. This also resonates with the overall theory of expedition and cruise ship where the main organization is more used to addressing and solving a specific question while the overarching logic of the expedition is entirely different. Accounts from a practitioner in Municipality B however, discloses that there was a confusion between the meta-question and overall purpose. They got lost in the specific meta question at times and also confused the expedition as a project. Lastly, within the thematic analysis results, *Purpose of the Voyage,* there were three sub-themes, *establishing the purpose, communicating the purpose* and *legitimacy, acceptance and safeguarding.*

One challenge is that purpose needs to be sufficiently established early on. Accounts from municipality B suggest that it was difficult to dock insights later if the purpose was not clearly established or understood sufficiently. This was discovered when they were attempting to formulate a tool to be used in the municipality based on the insights found – when they did that, they had an easier time actually explaining the purpose, and wished they had done so earlier. Holmberg (2019) writes that the point of having a clear *why* is that the experimenting will be more successful. In other words, a clear idea of what is important to steer towards provides a purpose and direction to the expedition . Interviewed stakeholders at large also emphasized the need not only for having a clear purpose, but also stated that the purpose should align with what the cruise ship expects. This was also suggested by Holmberg and Widbom (2020). Pete specifically suggested that a way of helping the cruise ship to understand the purpose of expedition could be to draw a parallel between expedition work and Swedish Governmental Official Reports. This is an accepted form in the government for conducting exploratory work. Having a parallel to something familiar that works, may aid also in the regional setting.

It was frequently found (in interviews and reflection meeting) that there is a tendency from the cruise ship to misunderstand the purpose and rather expect the expeditions to deliver concrete results in terms of cruise ship logic rather than insight. Holmberg (2019) writes that a common result of not understanding the different logic between cruise ship and expedition is that the expeditions are evaluated with the same instruments as in the cruise ship. This should not be done as they are based on entirely different logics. Such an issue arose when e.g. Covid-19 emerged, when an election year is approaching and also when there was a change in senior management. As covered in the results, as all these aspects were found by stakeholders to change the direction in the organization towards more efficiency and short-term results, rather than long-term exploration. Such a change in purpose is also recognized by Engeström and Sannino who writes that a "directional discontinuity emerges when the very aim and rationale of the collective learning effort is dropped and replaced with a different one. Such a break typically leads to the disintegration or cessation of the expansive learning process" (2010, p.14). As a matter of fact, practitioners also highlighted that docking efforts either ceased due to this or became more difficult as there was more expectation on results than insight even in the formal docking functions. Engeström and Sannino further describes a situation similar to those experienced by practitioners. They explain how two examined organizations were under similar political pressure (similar in comparing the two organizations, not to situation in this thesis) but that one of them resisted the pressure and could continue the expansive process. They write that the "findings of the study suggest that in this organization, 'actions of articulation, analysis and argumentation concerning the alternative directions have been repeated time and again and not been limited to the early phases of the expansive cycle' (p. 333)" (Engeström and Sannino, 2010, p.14). This additionally highlights the need for a continuous focus on the purpose.

The communication of the purpose is also important. Practitioners were surprised to find that communicating the expedition's purpose to stakeholders outside of the organization was easy, whereas internal communication within the organization was a challenge. Within the organization, there were differences in how well the purpose was anchored and understood between the expedition members and those in the cruise ship/outside the expedition who either have stakes or are needed for the expedition efforts. It was suggested this might be because there was not enough involvement or direct communication with the latter group. Poor communication could result in the purpose being misunderstood, or unable to reach the full organization, meaning the organization does not know what is going on and is therefore reluctant to engage in docking the findings. The stakeholders mentioned that people in the organization often expressed disbelief in the expedition efforts, and, among other things, thought that the expedition members spent too much time talking and being locked up in meeting rooms. The need for communication of purpose is recognized also in the Ambidexterity framework. O'Reilly III and Tushman (2004) writes that one of their investigated organizations "USA Today, […], took a particularly aggressive approach to communicating its new vision, strategy, and organization" (p.81) and that "in addition, all members of the company's management committee were expected to hold weekly communications meetings within their units as well as workshops focused on the changes employees had to make in their own jobs" (p.81). Furthermore, regarding work that aims for something completely new they write that the manager at USA Today says, "When change is at a revolutionary level, you can't be aggressive enough in confronting the issues" (p.81). In other words, they also see a clear need for communication. Practitioners also specifically mentioned the need for having conversations directly with the people outside of the expedition, that it needed to be face to face and inviting people (in contrast to e.g. communication on their intranet, they mentioned). This also relates the last area, *Vessels for Docking,* which is further discussed in 5.1.1.3).

Lastly, many stakeholders highlighted the need for legitimacy, acceptance and safeguarding of the expedition purpose. This area is closely related to the previous but places more emphasis in measures to directly protect the purpose even after it is created and shared. When this was not done enough there were consequences for the docking efforts. In the situation of Municipality B, the lack of legitimacy and acceptance of the expedition's purpose was part of the reason the expedition and docking efforts struggled, while the main cause for it ending was found in the rise of the Covid crisis and lacking access to key people. Senior management did not fully perceive the purpose of and the value of the expedition. Due to this a new effort was launched in the municipality regarding innovation platforms and more, which was seen as something new, and legitimate. Practitioners however could witness that in many ways that effort was the same. This implies that time and effort was used inefficiently on something new, yet similar, instead of formally continuing the docking of previous insight. In order to have the expedition seen as legitimate stakeholders also mention the importance, throughout the work, of making sure the purpose is in line with the cruise ship. These aspects are also recognized within ambidexterity, O'Reilly III & Tushman (2004) writes of one of the investigated companies that a manager "understood the importance of protecting the new units from the processes and cultural norms of the old business" (p.80) which pointed to solutions of anchoring the purpose of the new effort through changes regarding senior management. While this refers to the efforts as a whole, and not only the purpose, these aspects seem to go hand in hand as the expedition effort in itself serves a whole new purpose in the core of its logic. Additionally, they specifically mentioned how a new purpose was formulated which served to "bringing together all employees in a common cause and preventing organizational separation" (p.80).

In addition, it was also found that practitioners in Municipality B that were included and knowledgeable on the expedition were able to protect the purpose of the expedition and thus the docking process. They did this by adopting the insight found so that it fit with the new agenda introduced. By continuously using the insight even in new efforts they were able to continue docking despite that the senior management did not fully understand the efforts. Of course, this would have been much easier to do with the outspoken support from senior management that could have made their efforts much more legitimate and protected the expedition in the overall organization.

#### The proposed improvements:

We therefore propose the following ways to improve the docking when conducting transformative efforts either in an expedition or expedition-like logic:

Establishing and maintaining the purpose:

- Acknowledge that there may be multiple purposes to an expedition. Both an overarching purpose regarding to the expedition logic and a specific meta question or purpose related to the specific expedition. It is important that these are not confused with each other and that the focus remains on both, not just one.

- Be aware that the work and preparation regarding purpose of an expedition requires a lot of focus. Practitioners were prepared that it would require a lot of work but still stated that they wished they had done even more. The work with the purpose needs to be considered as a early as possible in the preparation phase, but also continuously in the project. If the purpose is lost, there is little interest in docking insight of that effort.
- In establishing a clear purpose and working with it continuously, it can be helpful to simultaneously try to formulate the idea of the expedition in a concrete way or relating it to familiar activities. This could be done e.g. through efforts at formalizing what the expedition is about in a concrete tool to be used in the municipality or through the parallel to Swedish Government Official Reports, as suggested earlier in this chapter.
- Regarding the overall purpose, it is important to acknowledge that expeditions are not efforts focused on results such as a project, that can be evaluated through the logic of the cruise ship. When this is misunderstood the insight to be docked from the expedition may seem to be of little value to the cruise ship
- Related to above, it is important to pay attention to and consider what external factors may challenge the logic of exploring and focusing on long-term transformation and learning. Through the interaction with stakeholders, it appeared that events such as Covid-19, approaching elections and change in senior management may change the focus of the expedition and increase the focus on efficiency and short-term results.

Communicating the purpose:

- Acknowledge that there is a need for thorough effort in communicating the purpose, especially direct communication such as face to face and by inviting others to be part of the efforts. The communication needs to be continuous throughout the entire expedition effort. When this is not done there is a risk that the organization does not understand the expedition efforts and thus halt the docking.
- Pay attention to if everyone in the organization who needs to know about and be involved with the expedition is communicated to and understands the purpose of it. It can easily happen that conflicting differences in understanding, between those who are in the expedition and those who are outside, arises. To prevent this, direct conversations between those that are inside and outside are needed.

Keeping the purpose legitimate, accepted and safeguarded

- Remember the importance to put focused efforts into keeping the purpose of the expedition effort legitimate, accepted and safeguarded. It will likely come in part from previous steps of having an established and communicated purpose, but is worth the extra attention. This is to ensure that the expedition survives and continuously can dock, as suggested by practitioners.
- It is best if senior management especially embraces the purpose and that the purpose is in line with the direction that the cruise ship is taking. Otherwise, the docking may cease, and efforts may become wasted.
- Senior management should also continuously protect the expedition with regards to the other parts of the organization so that it has room to act, and its integrity is maintained. They need to communicate the value and need for the expedition to the rest of the organization so that the organization as a whole perceives the expeditions as important. Note that this is assuming contexts similar to the investigated public sector expeditions, there may be other cases where the situation is reversed and the short-term logic needs to be protected.
- It is important to realize that individuals who work in the expedition are often very passionate about it. They may have a role in protecting the expedition even if the organization takes an unfortunate and sudden redirection. In the same way as it may be important to protect the expedition, it may be important for the organization to empower people in this role so that they can continue to protect the agenda of the expedition.

### 5.1.2 Senior management

The second area of improvement relates to senior management. It is an area that has been brought up since the beginning in the scoping interviews, repeated by all in the semi-structured interviews and appeared in all of the main themes and many of the sub-themes. More importantly it was also suggested by practitioners as one out the of the four areas that they considered to be the most important to improve docking. Additionally, stakeholders also described it as an area with a rather critical impact on the docking. Similar to purpose of the expedition, this was an area that stakeholders expected was important. From a research point of view, it is not very surprising either, it has often been highlighted as important. Multiple authors covered in this thesis points to the importance of senior management for the outcome of experimental efforts (Holmberg & Holmén, 2020; Engeström & Sannino, 2010; O'Reilly III & Tushman, 2004). In their paper on Ambidexterity, which has two logics similar to cruise ship and expedition respectively, O'Reilly III and Tushman write that "one of the most important lessons is that ambidextrous organizations need ambidextrous senior teams and managers-executives who have the ability to understand and be sensitive to the needs of very different kinds of businesses" (2004, p. 81). Holmberg and Holmén (2020) states that expeditions need to be anchored with, and relevant to, the cruise ship to function in the long term and that there is a specific need for anchoring it at the highest level. In Holmberg and Widbom (2020), they also describe how the "design team" running the expedition consisted of among others the municipal directors and the leading politicians from majority and minority respectively, which mean that they were involved in the preparation of which purpose is part.

In mentioning senior management as an important area, stakeholders talked about it in different ways which also is reflected in that it appears under multiple themes and sub-themes. To repeat a few, in the reflection session they mentioned the need for the senior management to be involved early in the expedition process and that the expeditions were limited by not having them onboard earlier. They additionally talked about the need to have the senior management understand the new way of working so that they would not obstruct the expedition efforts. In this latter aspect they brought up specific issues with politicians being too focused on results, which relates to the timing of election years as well. Also, they talked about the issue of how purpose can become anchored in senior management, so if senior managements leave or is switched out, the purpose can get lost as well. In other words, senior management is important to protect the agenda.

It has been suggested by both literature and stakeholders that senior management is crucial to expeditions and similar efforts. Senior management is the entity in an organization that has the highest level of formal power and therefore also a high ability to direct what activities are ongoing in an organization, which means that they also can have a big impact on expeditions. As stated earlier, O'Reilly III and Tushman (2004) pushes specifically for the importance of senior management to successfully explore and exploit simultaneously. They point to the need of having senior management understand the need for ambidexterity as well as an ability to understand businesses of different kinds (activities in this context). This connects very well with points made by the stakeholders throughout this thesis work regarding the docking from the expedition mode (known as exploration within Ambidexterity). When the senior management did not fully understand the purpose of long-term learning-oriented efforts, stakeholders witnessed that senior management would come in with a greater focus on having results and concrete figures to show rather than a focus on learning. It was voiced how this also happened in the very meetings where expeditions shared insights with senior management. Naturally, this was explained as problematic to dock the insights.

While the stakeholders problematize senior management's lack of understanding of the expedition logic, O'Reilly III and Tushman (2004) go further. They include an example in their paper where a success factor to one of their examined ambidextrous organizations was that the company got rid of managers in the organization who did not support the ambidextrous agenda. O'Reilly III and Tushman (2004) conclude that it may be acceptable to have employees not in full support of an ambidextrous agenda, but never senior management. As the purpose of expeditions is learning about new directions, results measured by only the cruise ship logic does not work out (Holmberg & Holmén, 2020). Stakeholders therefore suggests that senior management should be included early, allowing for senior management to understand the expedition efforts and by their involvement and also legitimize the direction the organization is heading with expeditions.

One reason why senior management might become increasingly focused and concerned with results and performance related deliveries could be due to an approaching election. This was identified by practitioners in the reflection session, and in interviews with practitioners. Politicians became more concerned with short term projects and less focused on long-term exploring during an election because they wanted to show their results to their constituents.

This was something that was recognized early on in region A when the expedition started. The experts consulting these expeditions had emphasized the need for including both the political opposition as well as the majority and the municipal director on the administrative side. This was so that the agenda was not to change as a result of the election as both sides were involved.

An additional challenge relating to senior management, occurs when senior management changes. Petra raised the issue of how the embedding of purpose works out if such a change occurs. In Municipality B, there was a change in senior management part-way through the expedition. While the former management knew and protected the expedition and its purpose the new management had more focus on optimizing the cruise ship. This situation came from a current situation where many municipalities due to the economic situation had to focus more on efficiency as well as the rise of Covid, as explained by the practitioners. This called for different management. The new management (and the current situation) caused the docking to be halted. This shows how senior management may become very important for the purposes even if the purpose initially is embedded in senior management. There is also support for the risk of senior management halting such learning efforts in theory. In addressing a paper expressing concerns regarding expansive learning Engeström and Sannino (2010) writes that "studies reviewed in this paper include numerous cases in which an expansive cycle has been broken or thwarted, sometimes by active counter-measures of the management, more often due to passivity and lack of support from the management, from practitioners [note: practitioners are different in this thesis], or from both" (p.4). While the concern was addressing policy to make expansive learning possible and Engeström and Sannino means that the aspect of power only plays a part there; they acknowledges the impact from senior management on the continuation of learning.

Stakeholders also mentioned that senior management has an important role in facilitating the docking. They can provide space in the organization for a docking function and make sure that there are people designated for that function. Senior management also has the power to suggest new efforts to be taken such as further projects or functions in the organization based on insights that comes from the expeditions. As introduced in the theoretical background, this would be an act of consolidation and making sure that insights can become the new common practice (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). As part of this act in facilitating and providing space, stakeholders highlighted a few challenges. One is that senior management might not be accessible to expedition members, and even when they are they still might not listen enough. This could be because senior management may have a limited "bandwidth" for expedition matters as they are preoccupied. It was suggested that senior management might be more focused on running the daily business of the municipalities such as reviewing school results, fixing holes in roads etc. rather than protecting the long-term agenda. Additionally, senior management might act as an expert on expeditions, even though they have less insights into the day-to-day expedition work compared to expedition members,

### The proposed improvements:

We therefore propose the following ways to improve the docking when conducting transformative efforts either in an expedition or expedition-like logic:

- Make sure that senior management is involved in setting the purpose so that they understand it and find it acceptable. This typically means that they need to be included from the beginning of the expedition process, or might even launch it themselves. There may also be reason to have senior management revisit the purpose so that it is continuously understood and accepted as well.

- Senior management should aim to facilitate the docking process and legitimize the expedition effort. They do this better if they focus more on listening to the expedition members.
- Senior management should acknowledge that the expedition members are the experts on the execution of the expeditions. Senior management should see themselves as facilitating the expedition.
- Remember that it in the context of the public sector, it is also very important to include both the political power (opposition and majority) as well as the administrative leadership in the expedition efforts (according to theory), to ensure full support from the top of the organization. We find that it also may be important that there is a balance between the political power and the administrative management and that their respective agenda is protected. While not explicit, it appears according to interviewees that the political leadership in Municipality B was originally supporting the expedition agenda but that the change in senior management also changed the focus of the organization too much towards efficiency despite initial political support. Similarly, in region A there may have been an imbalance where an approaching election made administrative management focus more on short term results as if that was expected by politicians.
- To combat the impact of a change in purpose due to a change in senior management (or key people) the purpose could also survive through other people in the organization who internalize it. Even though an expedition might have formally ended, insights can still be docked through employees.
- It may be helpful to have the managers present the expedition results to the organization rather than the expedition members to force the management to really grasp the process and insights.

### 5.1.3 Vessels for Docking

The final area of improvement covers the aspect of people, or vessels, docking the insights from the expedition. It only occurred in the theme *Ability to Dock*. This area was not highlighted in the literature review within the cruise ship and expedition framework, nor the scoping interviews, but was mentioned by all of the practitioners and one expert. Additionally, it was indirectly suggested as one of the four most important areas by practitioners. They talked about the opportunity of anchoring the purpose in people (vessels) to combat the impact of senior managers leaving an expedition. Furthermore, stakeholders identified this area as crucial even though they did not realize it is importance in the beginning. Initially, stakeholders considered formal docking methods to be most vital. However, due to formal docking not working out as intended, it has been found that often docking occurs through people instead.

The literature review on cruise ship and expedition did not explicitly discuss this area even though people certainly are regarded as important to expeditions. There were however other literature that can give clues. Scott and Davis (2016) specifically point to the importance of people at an organization level too, since they have needs and preferences which are brought into the organization, and thereby influence the organization. However, Scott and David do not mention the docking function since their paper is focused on organizations at large. The docking function itself is only covered in brief detail in the papers on cruise ship, expedition and backcasting. In the covered theory on expansive learning however, there are clues to begin to understand this area. Engeström and Sannino (2010) writes that "the theory of expansive learning cannot be reduced to the learning of abstract organizations without concrete human subjects […]" (p.6). They continue to explain the need for leaving the view of an organization as a system and rather see identifiable people:

> Movement between a systems view and a subject view is of crucial importance: "The system view of an organization is blatantly insufficient when the researchers try to understand and facilitate qualitative changes by means of expansive learning. Changes must be initiated and nurtured by real, identifiable people, individual persons and groups. The interventionist researcher must find within the activity system flesh-and-blood dialogue partners who have their own emotions, moral concerns, wills and agendas. Organization must necessarily be translated back into a workplace inhabited by human beings." (Engeström & Kerosuo, 2007, p. 340) [citation as it appeared in original text].(Engeström and Sannino (2010, p.6))

The expansive learning does carry similarities to expeditions and Engeström and Sannino (2010) suggests here that insights happen through people and needs to be viewed as such, in this context. This does however not specifically aim at the aspect of docking insight. A clue regarding docking may however be found in that Engeström and Sannino also write that "the student or group of students may act as a crucial boundary-crossing change agent, carrying, translating and helping to implement new ideas between the educational institution and the workplace" in commenting on a specific case they have investigated. This aligns closely with how stakeholders talked about people docking insights. Stakeholders explained that individuals can learn from the expedition, and then carry those insights back into their cruise ship. Reid and de Brentani (2004) also mention this type of role when they talk about a "boundary spanning individual" in the context of discontinuous innovation and product development. They describe this role as "individuals [who] are responsible primarily for information exchange between the organization and its task environment, or boundary-spanning activity" (p.174). In other words, a boundary spanning individual brings in concepts from the outside world and applies them to their organization. This is very similar to the area of vessels. The individuals (or the "boundary-cross change agent") are the people that docks insights into the cruise ship (the organization) from the expedition (the outside world). While these two concepts are very similar at a mechanism level, the latter concept is not focused on system innovation.

In the reflection meeting practitioners talked generally about individual persons or group of persons who learnt from the expedition, primarily by being part of it and then applied or brought these insights into other areas. There were also accounts of when insight or experiences from the expedition was internalized and made an impacted on how the person thought and acted, more so than just relaying information.

Expedition members can also bring the expedition insights into their own departments and into other contexts. Practitioners in Municipality B interviewed previous expedition members and found that they now were using the expedition methods in their daily work. An important aspect that also aligns with Engeström and Sannino (2010) and Reid and de Brentani (2004) is that expedition members in Municipality B came into the expedition from different sectors and thus were able to spread the insight to different sectors (boundary spanning). The findings from the interviews however suggest that the docking covers more than just information and ideas as suggested by aforementioned authors, the individuals also carry and embody a change as well as a skill and/or method. This later aspect is seen even more in the accounts on politicians in Municipality B that internalized the expedition insights and use them wherever they go. Practitioner Paula recounted them saying "[we] learnt things we can't unlearn", and one politician also added "can we dare to go a different way?" Paula has also internalized the insights from the expedition and applies them in daily work. Paula has been bringing insights continuously to the entire municipality since she works with multiple groups and departments.

As discussed in the results, there are multiple ways that people can dock the insights. Within Region B, it consisted almost solely of one person who communicated the insights as intensely and with as many people as possible. Eda also resonated that people can be vessels for docking by highlighting the need for considering people. Eda mentioned that it is not about report or seminars, but the people who carry the results. As already touched upon in the results, it was found that the docking from people happens more easily if there are multiple people from the different organizations and parts of organizations involved in the expedition. This allows for these people to reflect on insight together and creates a higher potential in spreading the insight into different parts of their organization.

There is however one clear limit to the potential of people as vessels for docking. As discussed in results (see *Space and time to Dock*) people in organizations are frequently preoccupied and their job description may limit them in ability to be part of other initiatives in the organization, such as the expedition. To better allow for people to be even more involved in docking it would require mangers to allow employees more time for expedition activities, as well as a culture (see *Culture needed for docking*) of exploration where it is appreciated to be part of such an activity. Additionally, people involved in the expedition activity experienced quite harsh behavior from management at times which is difficult. As discussed from theory in the analysis of P*urpose of the Voyage* it is important that the organization protects the expedition.

Lastly, vessels for docking also have a role to play in regard to purpose and senior management changing. In the early phase before major insights have occurred, it is mainly the purpose that needs to be docked or transmitted. Based on gathered stakeholder input and the theoretical concepts of boundary spanning and crossing with a focus on information and ideas, it is not a far extension to suggest that people can be vessels for docking the purpose too. In fact, in discussing the communication of purpose, accounts frequently highlighted the need for face-to-face communication and invitation to participation which seem to suggest that the in-person docking is also of importance there. Additionally, in the reflection meeting practitioners brought up the issue of how purpose can be embedded even if senior management or influential people change within or leave of the organization. They agreed that a potential partial solution to this can be that the purpose is anchored in more people. In Municipality B this was also what happened, when there was a change in senior management it was people whole heartedly involved in the expedition that continued to dock insights. To some extent this also serves a function in protecting the purpose or agenda of the expedition.

### The proposed improvements:

We therefore propose the following ways to improve the docking when conducting transformative efforts either in an expedition or expedition-like logic:

- People as vessels for docking needs to be acknowledged as a crucial way of docking and organizations need to consider this element in their planning and preparation for docking. They should consider designating time for such activity to occur, make sure that there is a culture suitable for engaging in expedition activity. Lastly senior management needs to recognize and appreciate people executing this crucial function and avoid subjecting them to harsh behavior.

- Organizations should also recognize the advantage in having multiple people from an organization and departments within an organization involved in the expedition effort as that allows these people to reflect together and bring the insight back stronger into the organization. Additionally, there is also an advantage in including people from many parts of an organization in the expedition so that the insight can be transferred into even more parts of the organization.

- If there is a change in senior management or other key personnel an extended number of people as vessels for docking can help the docking to still continue. These people become even more important as it happens and there may be a need for protecting their agenda so that new management or similar does not halt their efforts. It may be worth considering this already from the beginning to dock the purpose and insight continuously in more people to combat the impact of such a change in management.

- Organizations should keep in mind that the people as vessels for docking can dock both the purpose and later insight. Potentially, those that have been involved early in communicating the purpose may also be prepared from this to better or more purposefully act in this function also for later insight.

## 5.2 Contribution

In this section we describe the different contributions that we have made through this work which can be found in four sub-sections found below.

### 5.2.1 Areas of practical improvement for the docking function

We consider the main contribution of this work to be the collection of experiences, challenges, and possible improvements of the docking function from stakeholders working in this field. This is spearheaded by the three main areas analyzed above but also complemented by the richer result section covering all the identified themes that allows people working with expedition efforts to make their own conclusions. We believe that our work is more of a practical value to stakeholders than what is a significant theoretical contribution. Through the interviews and the reflection session, it appeared that stakeholders experienced that the docking of learning is an important area in their work and something they put a lot of thought into. Through their accounts of interaction with other stakeholders and municipalities it was additionally discovered that others too struggle with docking. Most notable is perhaps our stakeholder Paula witnessing of how docking is a recurring issue among colleagues in the field. Paula shared a quote from one of them saying "the thing is that we have had this project […] and now we are doing the same project for the third time!" This came as the docking struggled and insight from previous projects were not brought in and the efforts had to be repeated later. This indicates the importance of improving the docking, also confirmed by the other interviewees.

By organizing insights from stakeholders into the themes in the results and making further analysis in relation to theory of the three areas that appear to be the most important, we hope that this report can serve as a shortcut to existing and future practitioners to establish a better docking. We hope that we help them avoid making similar mistakes, to utilize strengths and improvements suggested by stakeholders and to save them the time from gathering this information themselves. We believe that the analysis, discussion and proposal of the most important areas, can help others obtain some insights into docking more quickly. By also keeping a thorough result section we hope that people engaging with expeditions and docking of insight also can draw their own relevant and deeper conclusions of how to better dock, besides the proposals we have made.

### 5.2.2 Contribution to research

There appears to be a knowledge gap in the specific combination of how a transfer function (docking) between expedition-like efforts and the public sector can be improved. It is in filling in this gap that we believe this work has its main contribution to research. The knowledge contribution is of more practical nature on improvements, but also helps to understand what different mechanisms and factors that are involved in the docking process. While other papers such as Engeström and Sannino (2010) expand on theories for how learning may happen in organizations such as the public sector and elements in their expansive learning carry similarities to the cruise ship and expedition framework. O'Reilly III and Tushman (2004) furthermore expands on Ambidexterity which the cruise ship and expedition draws from. Onwards, Gorissen et al (2016) and Ehnert et al (2018) details the mechanism of embedding (used to describe the function of docking) and have investigated that in relation to the public sector. However, the combination of these aimed at the docking between the cruise ship and expedition in the Swedish public sector is to the best of our knowledge a novel contribution.

Additionally, the maritime traffic control (MTC) appears to be a valuable metaphorical addition in the cruise ship and expedition framework. The metaphor of the MTC represents the function within the cruise ship and expedition framework that creates and oversees the expedition and docking process, helps facilitate them and ensures communication between them. This function seems to be what the group creating the expeditions in the framework fulfills. However, there may be a value in using it in the metaphor alongside the cruise ship, the expedition and the docking to better visualize and recall the need for such a function. We therefore hope that this thesis report can be part of the first steps in such a process of expanding the metaphor.

### 5.2.3 Reflection session as a docking & metaphors for aiding conversations

Additionally, we believe that the arranged co-creational reflection session was an important intermediate step for the insights on docking to be transferred between practitioners in the field. The practitioners engaged very actively and seemed to learn a lot from each other. If the time frame had been more generous it seems like they had many more things to learn from each other. It was an opportunity for them to learn directly from each other but also to reflect on the common insights they had previously share with us, that we presented to them in the presentation of results. This session also became a potential start for further networking on matters that relates to this area. Lastly, practitioners found the presentation on this material and the maritime metaphors to be of help in discussing matters related to the docking of insight. This thesis report may have a potential in developing more visual aid or conceptual models on how a docking can be improved.

### 5.2.4 Other notable contributions and findings

Overall, the cruise-ship expedition framework seemed easy for people to apply and think about. Out of the 8 semi-structured interviewees, 3 had never heard about the framework before, but after a short discussion they found it easy to apply the framework to their personal experience. A further discussion on the framework can be found in the limitations.

As previously stated, there were two groups within the semi-structured interviews, experts and practitioners. It seemed as if the experts had more of a birds-eye view of the whole projects and could better highlight and discuss the overarching challenges to docking. Whereas the practitioners brought more practical experience, were able to bring up more specific examples, and were more humble about their suggestions and what worked for them.

Another interesting possible contribution is that the whole process of conducting this master thesis in itself can be seen as a way of docking. This report is in itself gathers insights from expeditions and are docking them into an academic setting and to the different practitioners who expressed as well as to anyone else reading this report.

Furthermore, the examiner and supervisor of this master thesis shared that there is a value in having students interview stakeholders. As stakeholders may share more information, and open up in a way they would not for non-students. They explain that this is because students are seen less as competitors and that students are in a natural position to ask curious questions in an honest way without posing a threat. We also found this that stakeholders confided in us in ways they told us that they would not have with other researchers. This covered sharing of very personal opinions regarding how things work out in the organization, what they think needs to be done or aspects relating to their role as a person.

## 5.3 Study Limitations

One of the main limitations in this work could be the cruise ship expedition framework itself. This framework does not strive to provide a complete model for how to understand the docking and learning from explorative efforts. It is rather an entry-point to it and uses a metaphor to help engage with it. While this meant that there were more openings for making a practical contribution to the understanding and improvement of the docking process, there are limits to the level of support that the framework provides in this work. The framework was used to identify in between which entities the docking would occur, that is between the two modes of expedition and cruise ship. This conceptual construction made intuitive sense and was chosen as the core framework in entering this work. While the cruise ship and the expedition framework is covered in literature, and the docking function exists in literature, a lot of the knowledge on this rests in the community of researchers and practitioners who work with these matters. While these stakeholders have been interviewed by us, that is not as robust and unequivocal as if we had been able to consult existing explicit research on the same topic as a point of reference. As the docking function itself is only lightly covered in literature and there is no specific direction within the framework of cruise ship and expedition of how the docking should be understood, we cannot ensure that our application has been fully appropriate. The concept of embedding and expansive learning has however been used before in a context of public sector and efforts at learning from explorative efforts.

Another limitation is the use of the metaphor for expedition and cruise ship. Metaphors can be used to simplify something that is very complex and can be used as a shortcut. While this can be useful, it can also be hard for people to understand and grasp the metaphor. This may have become a problem in the interviews when the metaphor was discussed. While we presented our understanding of the metaphors to the stakeholders and asked if they recognized it, we cannot guarantee that metaphor concepts mean the same thing to interviewees as it did to us, even though precautions were taken. There is also a risk that the metaphor can oversimplify a concept and replace what is happening in real life. This risk was felt throughout this thesis. While conducting interviews, people often talked metaphorically about what the cruise ship or expedition should do, providing more ship-like metaphors instead of providing specific examples that were based on real life. We did sometime experience struggles to go beyond the metaphor and dig deeper within interviews.

The interviews were conducted very closely together, meaning that there was not much time to do a thematic analysis between them. If a thematic analysis could have been done sequentially, it might have given the authors more time to identify concepts brought up by one interviewee and ask other interviewees if they also believed that concept was important. This could have created deeper insight into the topic. However, since interviewees were all from various backgrounds, and this research strived to understand what the interviewee thought was most important, not statistically confirm these themes and ideas, the results should still be valid at large.

Another limitation relates to the interviewees themselves. The cruise ship-expedition framework is a fairly and unknown and new concept, so not many people have worked with it, and those who have, have worked with it intensely. Therefore, they might not have reflected as actively on what could be important and valuable for the docking to occur or might still struggle to express it (they may have taken it for granted). Additionally, all of the expeditions studied are fairly new since all of the practitioner's expeditions are not older than five years. Therefore, there may be issues related to the docking function specifically that might appear in the future, since the expeditions have not voyaged enough times to build necessary experience. Given longer experience in working with the framework, more profound insights from practitioners could potentially be found. Additionally, there might be many other specific contexts which are not able to draw insight from the results, because there is only a few contexts studied.

Additionally, the interviews were held in English and 7 of the 8 participants were not native English speakers, and instead spoke Swedish as a first language. One of the authors is Swedish so the interviewee could still say phrases in Swedish, and it would be understood, but there was still sometimes a communication barrier. Additionally, one of these interviews was also held in Swedish, which means only one of the authors could grasp the primary material. The translation was done by the authors themselves and may carry inaccuracies.

## 5.4 Further Work

We suggest further work at large on the themes and sub-themes on challenges and improvements to examine their relevancy and accuracy also in other cases. This thesis was based on a relatively small number of cases and stakeholders; more nuances and different findings may be discovered if the work is extended. We suggest that it is relevant to further explore how to better communicate the purpose of an expedition as this was what practitioners stressed was the most needed in the co-creational reflection session. They witnessed of difficulties in the communication of the purpose of their specific expedition as well as in the communication of the need to conduct expeditions, to members on the cruise ships. While this research mostly provided an overview of the themes, in-depth research could also be done to better understand the complexities and the challenges related to them. The three specific areas of improvement that were selected was discussed more in depth, also including more specified suggestions, similar efforts may be of value to all the other themes as well.

Additional work is also needed on the combination of docking and the cruise ship and expedition framework. Throughout this study, additions to the understanding and characterization of these were suggested. However, more study is needed to better define and characterize the function of docking. We have suggested that the theory on embedding helps understand it, but more work can be conducted on validating this and exploring other explanations as well. It could also be of value to see if both the framework of cruise ship and expedition, methods for docking used within it and the findings of areas of improvement can be relevant also in other settings such as in other areas in e.g. EU or even in other types of organizations. Maybe in a few years, there will be more expeditions that can be investigated. More expeditions may also have come to an end giving the opportunity of reviewing them in a retrospect.

Additionally, as discussed, the metaphor was extensively used in this work also in interviews. This may have introduced a bias and misunderstanding as it may oversimplify the reality as well as indirectly seek to confirm itself as stakeholders were prone to try to use the introduced concept. Therefore, we suggest that further work is conducted overall that moves beyond the metaphor and tries to investigate more carefully what mechanisms and aspects that is underlying it.

From conversations with other employees in other municipalities that practitioners brought up in the conducted interviews, it also became apparent that there is collective struggle to engage with sustainability transitions. Their struggles align with those that the cruise ship and expedition modes and an improved docking seek to address. We therefore propose that the findings from this thesis should be made more accessible and shared among practitioners in municipalities. It may be of specific value to develop tools and visual aids based on the metaphors found in this thesis as practitioners found them useful to communicate on these matters.

# 6. Conclusion

This thesis strived to identify areas to improve the docking of insights within the regions and municipalities within the Swedish public sector. To do this, methods such as scoping and semi-structured interviews were conducted, followed by a thematic analysis, and then a co-creation reflection session with practitioners which helped to verify the results.

This research created many different insights related to docking, as well as helped further understand the docking within the cruise ship-expedition framework. This research has also helped organize knowledge which has been individually generated by the stakeholders and identified patterns from stakeholder interviews to learn how to better dock the insights. It has brought together groups of people who do similar work and given them a chance to share their experiences and expertise. Furthermore, the combination of a rich and extensive result section and the three main areas of improvement of the docking is what we consider to be the main contribution, both to those practically engaging with expeditions and to research. The three areas chosen to be analyzed and discussed more in-depth. The first area was *purpose*, which highlights the need to establish, communicate and protect (1) reason why an expedition mode is needed within the organization and (2) the goal or over-arching question at the heart of the expedition. The second area of improvement related to *senior management*. Here, it was important that senior management understood and helped facilitate the two purposes previously mentioned as well as the docking process itself.  A major challenge to docking occurs if there is a change in senior management, and the new management prioritizes the expedition or its insight less. The final area was *vessels for docking*, which emphasizes the role that people play in docking the insight. Findings suggest that the importance of this informal way of docking was somewhat surprising to practitioners. The formal docking function, more frequently mentioned in literature on the cruise ship and expedition framework was in practice less prominent relative the more informal docking through people. This final area additionally discussed ways to ensure that people transfer the insight from the expedition into the cruise ship.

We hope that people who work on expedition-related projects may use this study, both the three more specific areas of improvement as well as the general results, to identify how docking can be improved in their own organization.

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# Appendix

## Appendix A – Interview Guide

Where do you work?

What is your role? What kind of projects do you work on?

What are you passionate about?

*[explain cruise ship and expedition framework, and the docking function]*

Do you understand this framework, and does it make sense in regard to your experience?

Have you worked on something similar to an expedition?

What were factors in your overall organization, both cruise ship or expedition, that helped facilitate/contribute to a learning exchange? Please relate to the past experiences you have had.

> Looking back, what were the main obstacles? Would you have changed anything about how you responded to these?
> What are some ways the ensure that learnings remain and survive and are acted upon (post an expedition)?

*[Depending on how the conversation goes, and what they bring up]*

What was the role of managers/bosses (senior management), and what was the impact of their involvement in your expedition?

> How did it contribute to the exchange of learnings?
> How did it create extra challenges?
> If you would do it again, would you change anything or suggest that something should have been done differently in regard to the role of top management?

How was the organizational structure between the expedition and cruise ship? Was the expedition and cruise ship completely separate? Or were they working together?

> Was there someone who was bridging between the two logics (facilitating learning exchange)?
> How did it contribute to the exchange of learnings?
> How did it create extra challenges?
> If you would do it again, would you change anything in regard to the organizational structure?

How was the organizational culture (openness and freedom in the organization, and willingness to explore a new idea, risk taking) within the cruise ship and expedition individually?

> How did it contribute to the exchange of learnings?
> How did it create extra challenges?
> If you would do it again, what would you change anything in regard to the organizational culture?

How was the organizational culture (openness and freedom in the organization, and willingness to explore a new idea, risk taking) within the cruise ship and expedition individually?

How did it contribute to the exchange of learnings?
How did it create extra challenges?
If you would do it again, what would you change anything in regard to the organizational culture?

What measures or tools were used in the project to incentivize the organization and employees to participate at the start, middle and end? What was the outcome?

Were there any national, regional and/or local reward systems, mandates/instruction or incentives that played a role in your expedition?
Did people on the cruise ship understand why it was important to start an expedition?
Research suggests that visions in expeditions and similar is important. Please elaborate on how the vision and its impact in your expedition?

*[Asked to everyone]*

Is there anything else that you think is important in this topic that we've missed?

Is there anyone else should we contact?

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