

Certificate of Research in Business Administration

Leadership Competencies for Managing Tensions in Interorganizational Networks:

*An Ambidextrous Leadership Perspective on South East European Public
Sector Networks*



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26 March 2026

The Researcher



15 years experience

Public sector interorganizational networks

Sout-East Europe (SEE)

Variety of roles, including leadership roles

My Motive:

Translate the practitioners' tacit knowledge into a transferable leadership model

The Context

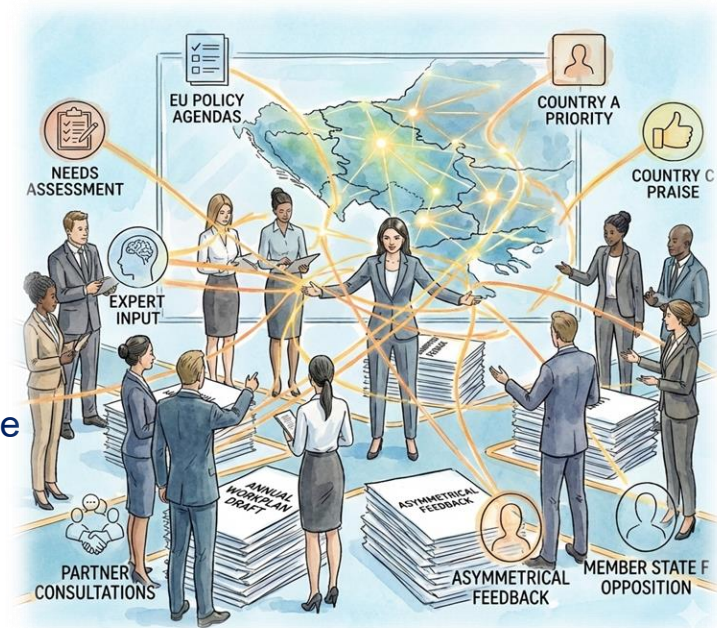
- 20 + networks
- Various Policy Areas
- Secretariats + Membership Bodies
- Not for profit

| Network development phase | Historical Span | Primary Network Role |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| 1: Emergence | Late 1990s – Early 2000s | Reconciliation & Peace-building EU orientation |
| 2: Harmonization | 2005 – 2015 | Alignment of policies Connecting based on knowledge, comparative studies Capacity development EU orientation |
| 3: Innovation | 2015 – Present | Learning Ecosystems Innovation EU orientation |

The Managerial Challenge:

How to navigate the fluid, non-hierarchical requirements of regional cooperation in SEE, while managing the inherent structural tensions of the networks, and in the absence of specialized leadership models?

- The system constantly pulls in at least two directions at once
- No legitimate power over the members
- Relatively bureaucratic members
- Political leadership has the final word
- Executives leadership holds accountability for the strategic direction

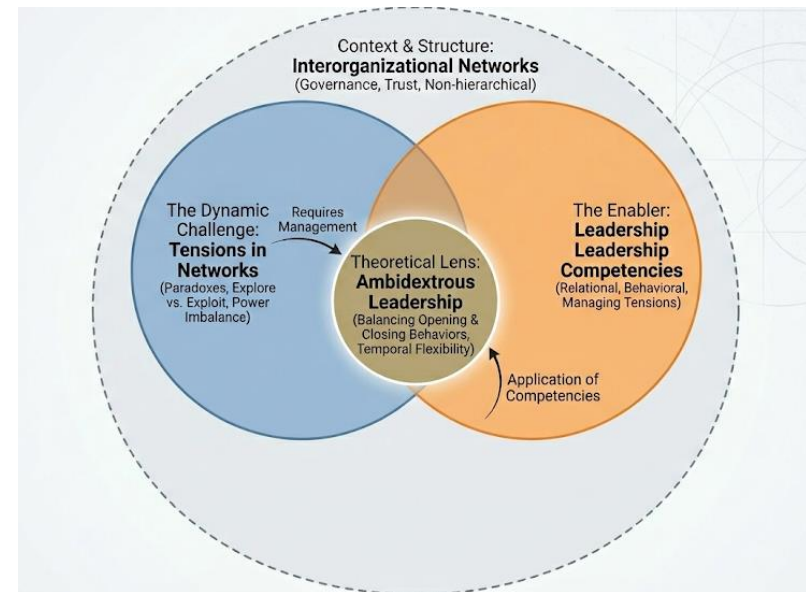


Research Question

| Research question: | Research Proposition: |
|---|--|
| <i>How do executive leaders in SEE public sector networks navigate tensions?</i> | <i>By exploring dynamic ambidextrous competencies</i> |
| What are the tensions executive leaders in SEE public sector networks perceive? | There are different categories of tensions and different consequences (long-term vs short term, financial vs nonfinancial consequences, exploration vs exploitation) |
| Where do these tensions come from? | Different categories of factors generate these tensions (cultural, administrative, political, individual) |
| How do executive leaders navigate these tensions? | Executive leaders deploy dynamic ambidextrous competencies to navigate these different categories of tensions (creating a Dynamic Competencies Model for Ambidextrous Leadership). |

Literature Review

1. **Interorganizational Networks**
2. **Tensions in Interorganizational Networks**
3. **Leadership Competencies in Interorganizational Networks**
4. **Ambidextrous Leadership, as a preliminary theoretical lens**



Literature Gaps

- Current theories are predominantly developed within the stable Western institutional frameworks, **not in transitional administrative cultures like SEE**
- The "tensions" are recognized as inherent to networks, yet there is **limited empirical input** to complement the theory
- The theory of ambidextrous leadership defines does not offer understanding **how leaders decide to shift competencies in the middle of tensions**

Methodology

Constructivist & Qualitative :

Exploring subjective leadership experiences in SEE

Abductive:

Moving between practitioner data and existing theory to develop the framework

Perspective:

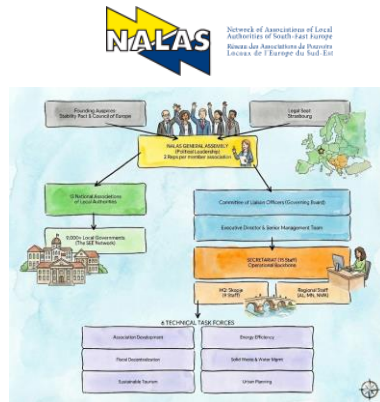
Understanding the meaning-making processes (Dumez, 2016) of executive leaders as they navigate institutional tensions

Iterative Design:

Reflexive cycles to refine and rework research stages (Chevalier et al., 2022).

Methods

A case study (Chevalier et al., 2019) embedded in one public sector network



Data collection:
15-20 Semi-structured interviews
Organizational Documents

Analytical Autoethnography

as a method of analysis implemented through self-study (Vryan, 2006)



Data collection:
Reflexive Journaling
Personal archive of documents

Data Analysis

Iterative Abductive Dialogue:

empirical findings from the case study and the researcher's autoethnographic records are iteratively compared against the preliminary theoretical lens of Ambidextrous Leadership

- 1) Data familiarization and data preparation**
- 2) Generation of initial codes**
- 3) Creation of categories**
- 4) Iterative process for identification of competencies of ambidextrous leadership:**
the “matching” of the observed coping strategies with ambidextrous leadership concepts will be done through an iterative dialogue between the empirical data and the theories
- 5) Synthesis of the Research Findings**

Expected Results

Theoretical contribution:

To the theory of Ambidextrous leadership

Practical contribution:

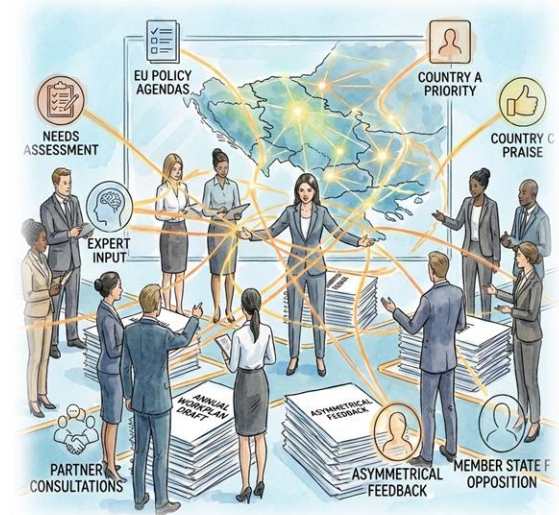
Dynamic Competencies Model for Ambidextrous Leadership

Managerial Recommendations:

For interorganizational networks

Contribution to Researcher's career:

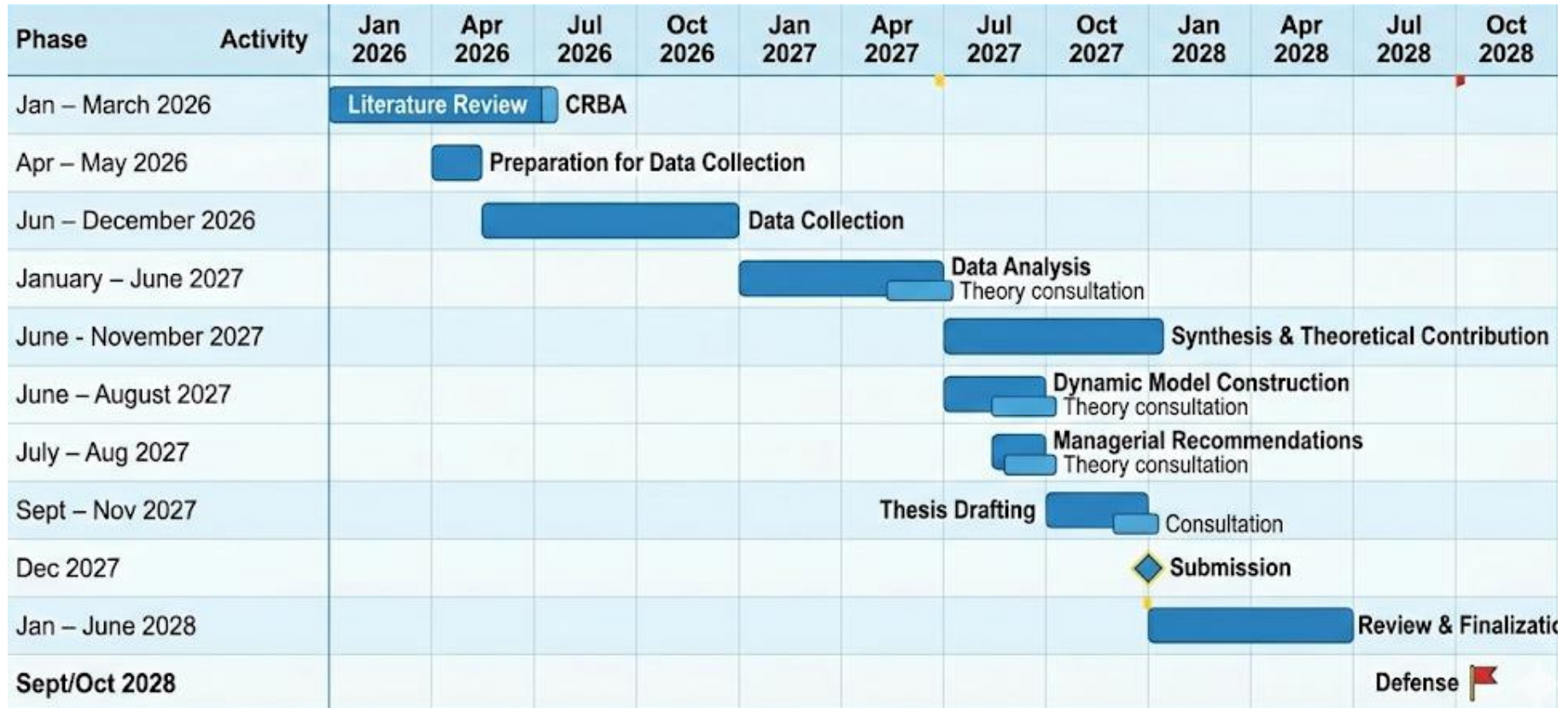
From a network practitioner to an expert in interorganizational and ambidextrous leadership
High-level advisory package



Risks, potential challenges

- Sensitive and contemporary topic
- Transparency level at interviews
- Bias during autoethnographic research methodology
- Force major

Research Plan





**BUSINESS
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Doctorate of Business Administration

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Thank You!



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