



UNIVERSITY OF TARTU
Pärnu College

25
YEARS



25 (+1) YEARS OF PROJECTIFICATION RESEARCH and Some Possibilities for Enrichment



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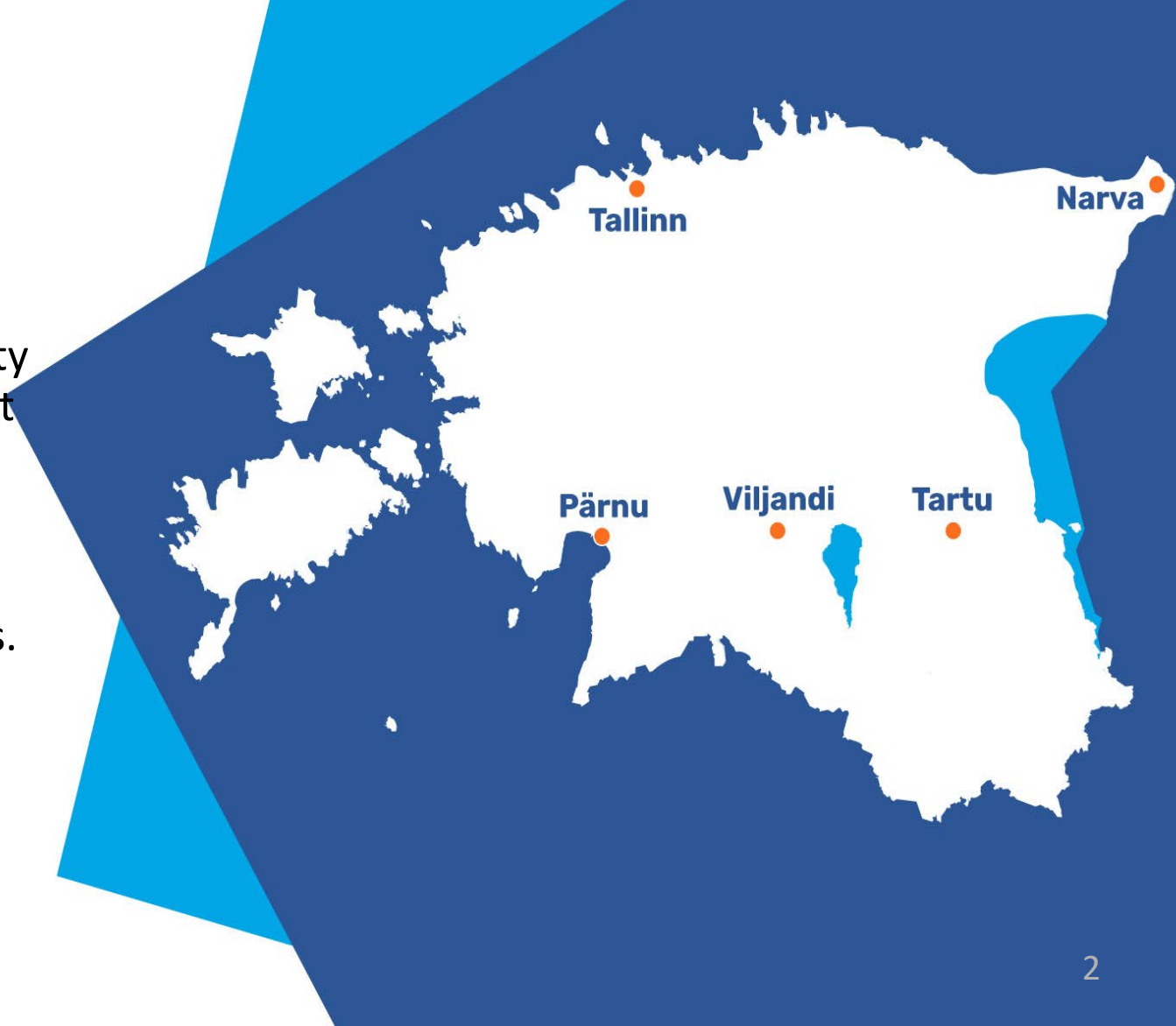
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University of Tartu

(founded in 1632 by the Swedish king) is the national university of Estonia, the largest and oldest university in the Baltics.

Pärnu College is one of its regional outlets.



The presentation:

Main task: marking the 25 years of projectification research, originated in 1995 from C. Midler's seminal work (in Scandinavian Journal of Management).

Main limitation: during the quarter century, projectification research has evolved significantly, thus it is not possible to reflect all relevant matters, nor provide all-encompassing overview on projectification.

Main intentions:

- scrutinize developments, focusing on emerged or emerging trends and streams, paying attention on less covered trends, streams, sectors, etc., and implications (positive and negative) of projectification, and possible over-projectification
- assess the roots of and linkages between trends and streams
- + bring forward possibilities for enrichment and further research

The Nature and History of Projectification

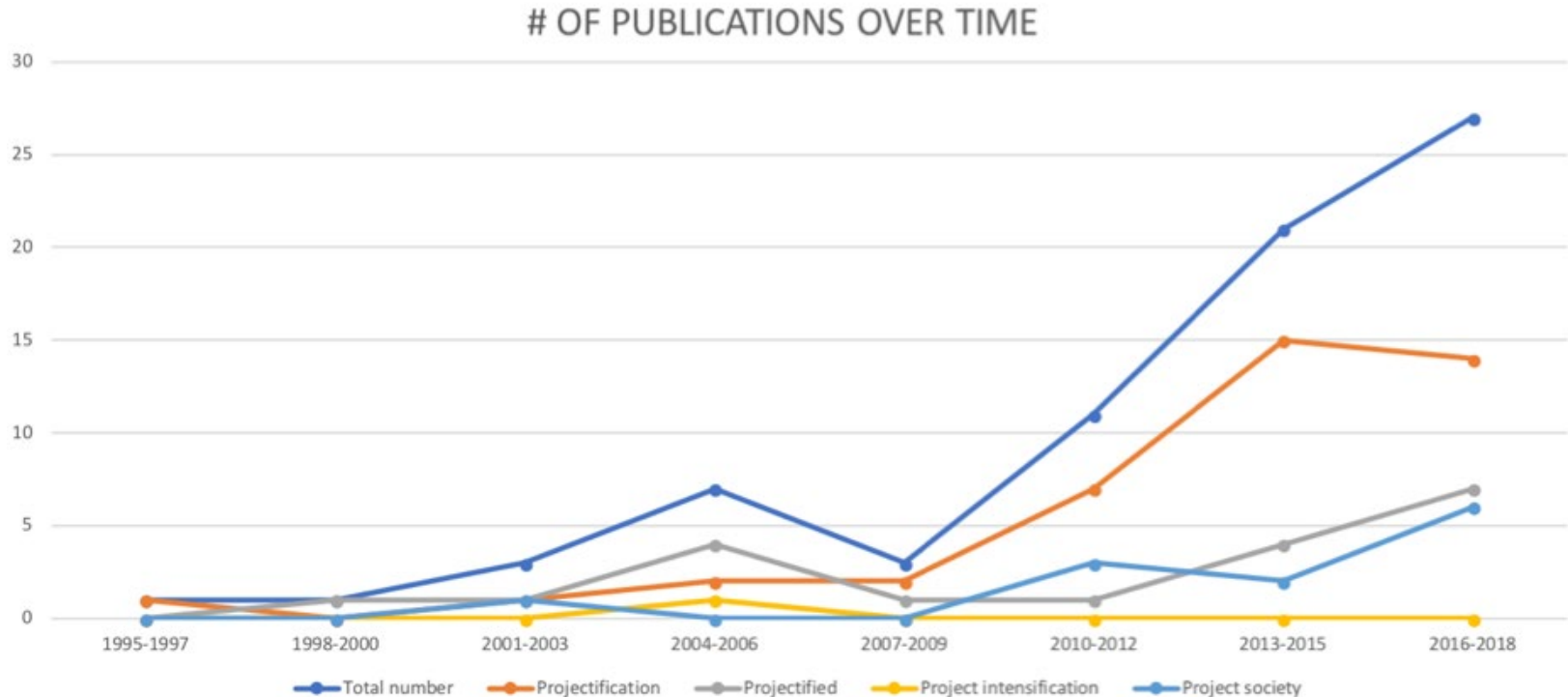
The phenomenon is much older than research: a trend that the societies become increasingly '**projecticised**' (*organized in terms of time-limited sequences of (inter)action*) was noticed already more than 50 years ago (Packendorff, 2002) when the process was ongoing, it started much earlier

Different terms – *project orientation*, **projectification** and **projectization** – have similar but not coincident meanings, thus could be distinguished:

- **projectization** – the degree of organizing activities through projects (vs '*business-as-usual*' or permanent processes and organizational settings),
- **projectification** – not the trend of organizing work through projects but concurred organisational changes (Maylor et al. 2006).

So, projectization is a precondition for projectification; projectification embraces projectization but has a wider meaning.

Projectification: not a novel topic but deserving increasing interest (1)



Source: **Jacobsson and Jalocha (2018)**
(final count 24.1.2018; 2016-18 estimated)
(based on 86 relevant publications)

Kuura (2020): 2016-18 the number was higher than Jacobsson and Jalocha (2018) expected; and in **2019 it was 23!** (based on 89 relevant publications)

Projectification: not a novel topic but deserving increasing interest (2)

Increasing numbers of projectification-related publications can be taken as quantitative proof of growing interest.

Some more qualitative proof:

- a special section “***Projectification and the impact on societies***” in the *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business* (12(3), 2019);
- a related special section in earlier (12(2), 2019) issue of IJMPB “***World views on projects and society***”

... underlines the importance, and also the urgency of a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of projectification to all members of the society (Schoper & Ingason 2019)

+ previous issue (12(1), 2019) of IJMPB included projectification-related papers – particularly Auschra et al. (2019) on projectification of entrepreneurial (start-up) ecosystems, also Kuura and Lundin (2019).

Thus, **2019** can be labelled as ‘**year of projectification**’ basing just on IJMPB!

+ works on projectification in other journals – for one, Henning and Wald (2019) in *International Journal of Project Management*.

Trends and Streams in Projectification Research (1)

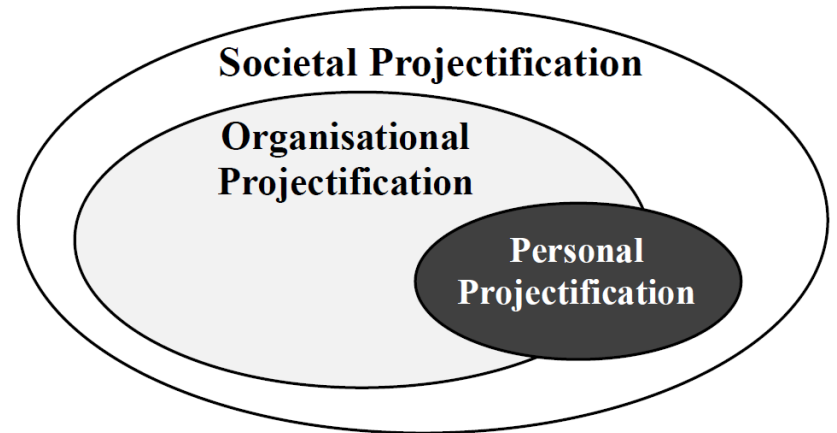
Qualitative proof of growing interest in / importance of projectification – new covered subtopics, novel research streams, etc.

First – the levels of projectification:

a typology: (Jalocha, 2019)

- **micro** (individuals),
- **meso** (organizations),
- **macro** (industries, sectors),
- **mega** (countries, supranational org-s),
- **meta** (transformations of global social structures).

an alternative typology: (Kuura, 2011)



Trends and Streams in Projectification Research (2)

... on **societal** (macro- and mega) level

... includes a specific sub-stream '**euro-projectification**' embracing keywords such as '*project class*' and '*project economy*' (c.f. Kovach & Kucherova, 2006; 2009)

... appears chiefly in post-socialist or transition societies because of massive restructurings BUT

... also in developed countries – for one, the 'innovation paradox' in Finland: "*Projects "that have already been done" are started over and over again, under slightly new names*" (Andersson, 2009) or (in other words) the 'renewal paradox' – most projects tend to be repetitive, also mistakes are repeated (Ekstedt *et al.*, 1999).

The '**euro-projectification**' is greatly related to redistribution in the EU and thus, to public administration and governance.

Trends and Streams in Projectification Research (3)

Lundin (2011): the emergence of new application areas, including the EU – this it is not a question of government, but of governing activities within the union;

> projectification will become an issue also for political scientists.

Godenhjelm, Lundin & Sjöblom (2015): projectification in the public sector, including policy making, in the context of the EU

- need for comparative research on supranational / national levels;
- EU-wide standardization and formalization is counterproductive.

Novel notions, such as *'projectified politics'* (Sjöblom et al., 2013), *'politicized projects'* (Krohwinkel-Karlsson, 2013), and *'projectariat'* (Jalocha, 2018), and just a new ('project') mind-set with potential long-term effects (Fred & Hall, 2017) ...

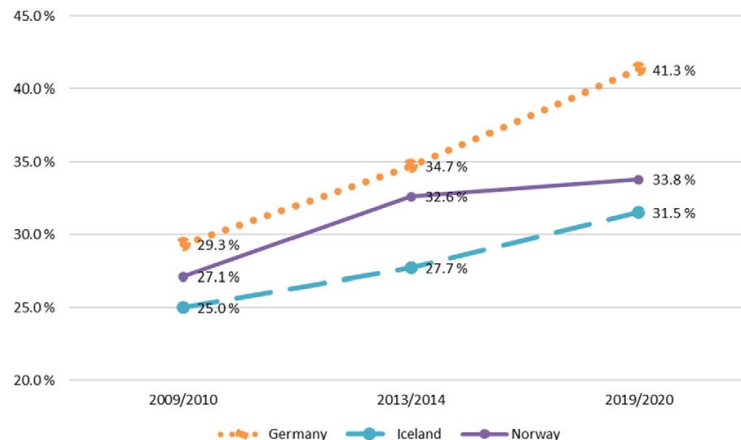
Trends and Streams in Projectification Research (4)

How projectified / projecticised our societies / economies are: quantitative measurement (estimation) of projectification

| The share (%) of project activities: | EU | Estonia | Est./EU |
|---|------------|------------|------------|
| a) gross capital formation (% of GDP) | 20% | 33% | 1.6 |
| - SMEs in value added | 58% | 76% | 1.3 |
| - new/improved products in SMEs | 25% | 25% | |
| b) - in economy by innovation in SMEs | 14% | 19% | 1.3 |
| Overall projectization level (a + b) | 35% | 52% | 1.5 |

Source: Kuura, 2011 (EE)
the idea and data for EU:
Turner et al., 2009.

(a) by project-based and
(b) by project-supported
organizations

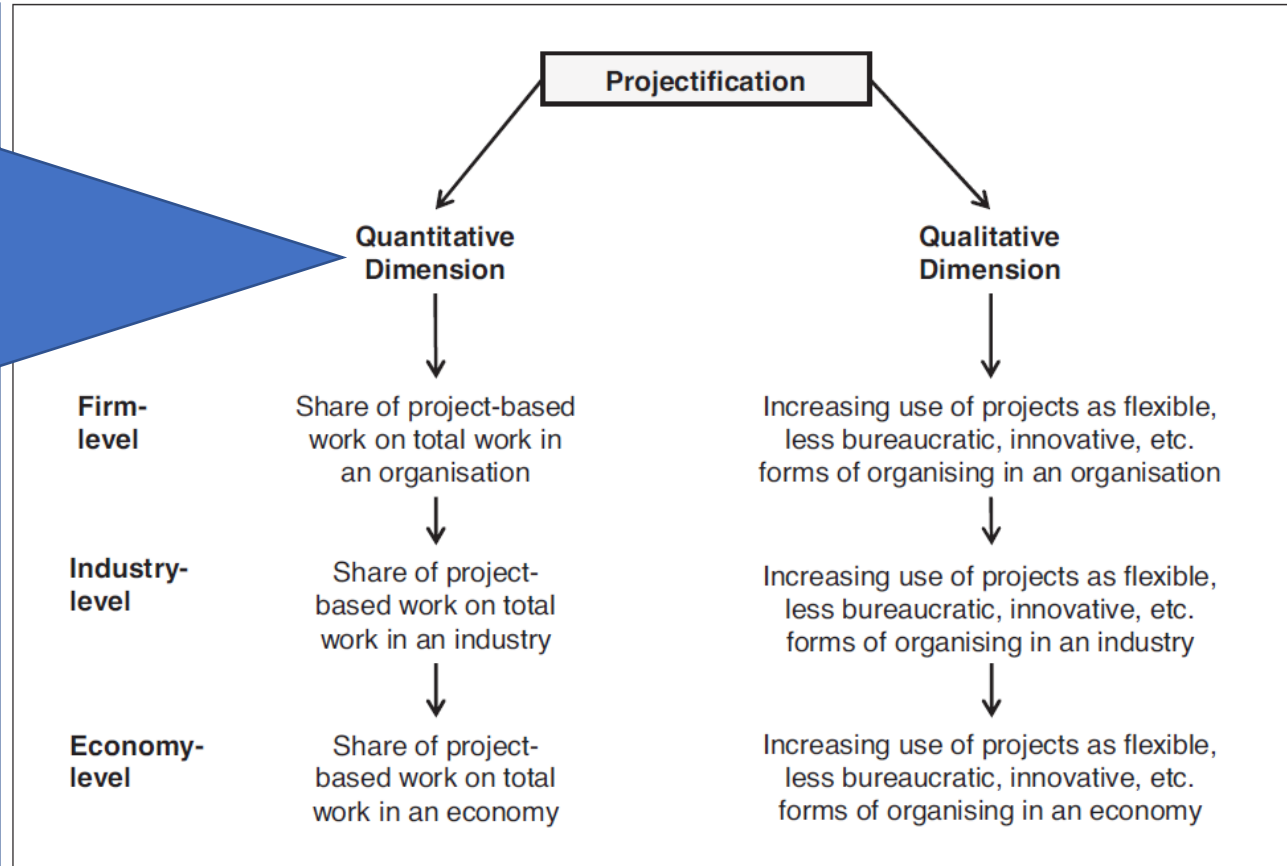


A more recent contribution – systematic and complete measurement of projectification of economies (encompassing all sectors and project types) by **Schooper, Wald, Ingason & Fridgeirsson (2018)**, methodically based on an earlier work by **Wald (2015)**.

Trends and Streams in Projectification Research (5)

Alternative: to label the (left) quantitative side differently, as projectization?

The levels match commonly used micro-, meso-, and macro-levels (the typical subjects on the meso-level are networks/clusters formed by firms and other actors).



Projectification as quantitative ratio and qualitative development (Wald, 2015)

Trends and Streams in Projectification Research (6)

Nowadays projectification is encompassing whole economies (all sectors, project types, etc.) and societies (Schoper et al., 2018) – some examples:

- **social economy** (where the main actors are social entrepreneurs, organized in different forms, NGOs or non-profit companies, etc.) (Bogacz-Wojtanowska & Jalocha, 2016);
 - **culture** (from national level (policy-makers) to cultural organizations and artists) (Jalocha & Cwikla, 2017);
 - **media** (sector “*where creativity and freethinking is a must*” – Lundin & Norbäck, 2016), thus welcomes improvisation (Clegg & Burdon, 2019);
 - **churches** (*Roman Catholic Church*, particularly **event management**) (Jalocha, Goral & Bogacz-Wojtanowska, 2019);
- ... (will continue)

Trends and Streams in Projectification Research (7)

... continued (with still less treated examples):

- ***sports / sport management*** (Puusepp & Kuura, 2014);
- ***academic activities***, including core science or research, what is related to innovation, etc. (Baur, Besio & Norkus, 2018);
- ***academic careers*** (Müller & Kaltenbrunner, 2019);
- ***educational management*** (at all levels) (Landri, 2009)

...

An observation: unequal sectoral and spatial (regional) coverage – for one, *euro-projectification* has been scrutinized on the examples of and by researchers from two regions – Visegrad countries and around the Baltic sea (Estonia, Sweden and Finland)

> pattern: covered spatial units follow the locations of the authors

Projectification Research in Context (i)

Projectification is not a 'stand-alone' phenomenon: it is influenced by and influences other fields of practice and research. **Some examples.**

- ***Work and labour relations***: proliferation of projects leads to ...
 - more temporal work > changes of employment contracts > lower quality of working life (Huzzard, 2003);
 - new macro-level division of labour (Arvidsson & Ekstedt, 2006);
 - changes in HRM of organizations (Bredin & Söderlund, 2006);
 - 'classic' issue in projectified organizations – tensions between the contrary 'line' and 'projects' (in matrixes) (Arvidsson, 2009);
 - being / becoming a project manager, and required competences (Ballesteros-Sanchez *et al.*, 2019);
- ... (will continue)

Projectification Research in Context (ii)

... continued (with still less treated examples):

- changes in work-life and pertinent institutions (+ interplay with novel trends, like **digitalization** and **servitization**) (Ekstedt, 2019)
- gendering, masculinization and femininization of project-based work (Lindgren & Packendorff, 2006; Cicmil *et al.*, 2016);
- critical studies (Cicmil *et al.*, 2016), leading to '**deprojectification**' (decreasing the distinction between line and project work);
- projectification (besides digitalization and spatial and temporal concentration) leads to less self-regulated, and less 'civilized' behaviour, including *organizational romance (sex@work)* but it fosters *organizational improvisation* (Clegg *et al.*, 2015)

... could be labelled as the '**projectification-HRM**' stream

Projectification Research in Context (iii)

Other relations of projectification:

- *governance* and *governmentality* in organizations (Müller *et al.*, 2016) and networks (Burke & Morley, 2016), and organizational design (Simard *et al.*, 2018);
- increasing attention to temporality in general organization theory (c.f. Burke & Morley, 2016) > coexistence and balance of projects and non-projects (recurrent operations) (Nesheim, 2019);
- project or non-project: it depends on '**projectyness**' – greater or lesser capability to undertake an activity – that is subjective (van der Hoorn & Whitty, 2016), so clear distinction may disappear ...?

Apparently projectification has not been associated with several functional areas in organizations – as financial management, etc. ...

Projectification Research in Context (iv)

Other (latest) relations of and developments in projectification:

In governance: from (still mainstreaming) private firms to ***environmental governance*** and ***public administration*** (Munck af Rosenschöld, 2019).

Overall, to several strategic areas:

sustainable development, notably in ‘megaprojects’ (Sabini *et al.*, 2019) ...
‘Responsible Project Management Education’ (Silvius & Schipper, 2019);

... **projectification of everything**, including home and free-time activities, resulting in ***projects as ‘a human condition’*** (Jensen, Thuesen & Geraldi, 2016);

... ***‘advanced organisational projectification’*** fitting the current paradigm, characterized chiefly by increasing complexity, especially in megaprojects (Maylor & Turkulainen, 2019);

...

Projectification Research in Context (v)

25+1 years: some examples of the latest contributions:

- Berglund, Lindgren, and Packendorff (2020): Prosuming Subjects ... 'Projectified Selves' (is a continuation of *enterprising selves*; *prosumption* – (project-based) production and consumption.
- Dollinger (2020): The projectification of the university ...
- Li, Liu, Wang, Xia, and Zhu (2020): Projectification and Partnering: ... New Venture Creation in an Entrepreneurial Ecosystem
- Rogers, Dombkins, and Bell (2021): Legal Project Management: Projectifying the Legal Profession
- Sperfeldt and Hughes (2020): The Projectification of Reparation (development and deployment of project-based approaches to judicial reparation – so the application field is criminal justice)

Concluding discussion (i)

Proposed by Packendorff and Lindgren (2014) **narrow** (primacy of projects) and **broad** (cultural and discursive processes in societies) **conceptualizations of projectification are still actual.**

Projectification has natural limits, over-projectification is possible, so “**defence of permanence**” (Packendorff, 2002) is (more) actual.

A **RQ**: is there optimal level of projectification / projectization – for an organization, industry, region/country, ... and individual – or (in other words) a right balance between projects and non-projects? If yes (theoretically), how can it be determined (even calculated)?

Some foreseeable difficulties: the (level of) ‘**projectyness**’ (van der Hoorn & Whitty, 2016) ... and the **definition of a project** (Schoper et al., 2018: the definition might not suit for all, especially smaller and agile projects)

Concluding discussion (ii)

The (right) balance between temporariness and permanency

A Typology of Temporary Organizing as a Form (Source: Sydow, 2017)

| Actor \ Structure | Temporary | Permanent |
|-------------------|--|---|
| Temporary | (1) Temporary, ephemeral or disposable organization Fully (100%) projectified | (2) Semi-Temporary organization (PSO, PBO, PNW) |
| Permanent | (3) Semi-Permanent organization with temporary employment | (4) Permanent organization Not (0%) projectified |

... is what we are used to call **projectification**

Temporary does not necessarily mean short-duration!

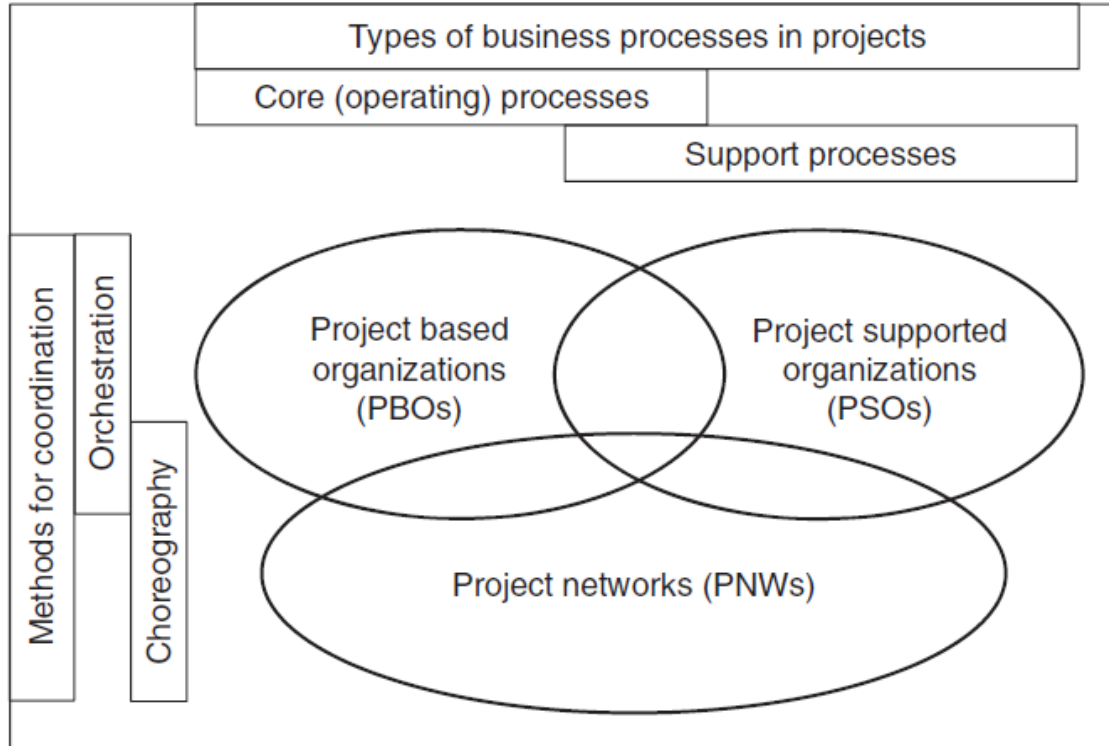
Life cycle of a SME may be shorter than some (mega)projects

... is this also **projectification?**

What kind of organizations might be (1) and (3)? Some examples:
(3) – a beach bar (on Pärnu beach where the season lasts for 2-3 months)
(1) – a band forming and playing at a jam session

Concluding discussion (iii)

Permanent, semi-permanent, semi-temporary or temporary structures are used for coordination of (business) processes: (Kuura & Lundin, 2019)



Following Sydow (2017): does it make difference, if processes in projects are coordinated using temporary, semi- or even permanent structures?

Proposal for distinction:

- **projectization** – occurs via processes (the share of 'projecty' processes;
- **projectification** – occurs via structures (the share of temporary structures)

Concluding discussion (iv)

25(+1) years of projectification research – significant developments:

- + growing numbers of publications (interest in theory and practice),
- + enlarging coverage of (sub)topics, sectors, levels, ..., regions,
- + achieving academic rigor and richness,
- + reflecting of various overall trends and interchange ('export' and 'import') with other fields

(+) (still) greatly treading in 'Midler's footprints' (Aubry & Lenfle, 2012).

Possibilities for further development:

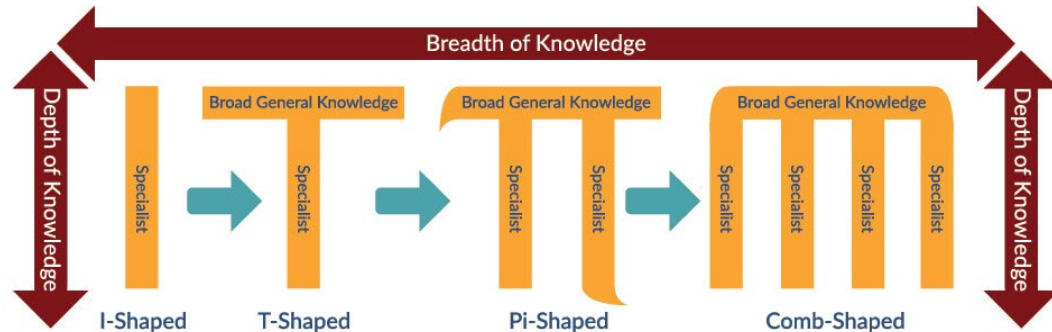
- coverage of (sub)topics, sectors, levels, countries/regions is erratic
- > scrutinizing not/less covered (sub)topics, sectors, levels, ... regions (possibly an accomplishable task for students, especially on master level)

Concluding discussion (v)

More possibilities for further development:

- intensifying interchange ('export' and 'import') with other fields – some examples (research topics / questions):
 - Project Society/Economy *versus* Entrepreneurial Society/Economy ...?
 - Project Society/Economy *versus* Service Society/Economy (or in other words, projectization/projectification *versus* servitization) ...?
- ... and **sustainability, digitalization & Big Data**,

We need to become more interdisciplinary and cooperate with researchers from other fields; therefore, we must become more ...





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Thanks!
Vielen Dank!
Hvala!

Questions and/or comments
are welcome – here and now
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