

## IMPLEMENTATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL MODELS THAT PROMOTE PUPIL ATTENDANCE AND CREATE SOCIAL VALUE? AN INTERDISCIPLINARY PROCESS STUDY

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### Abstract

That pupils succeed in school is an essential protective factor for their social establishment as adults. For pupils to complete school, efforts are not only required within the school. It is also about prevention and promotional efforts outside the school's responsibility. More precisely, it is about coordinating efforts primarily by actors other than the school. Collaboration models are about creating a lasting structure to better coordinate the government sector regarding pupils who must function beyond individual government assignments and policy areas. The overall purpose of the present study is to investigate cross-border coordination and collaboration between professionals in Sweden that strive to create added value for pupils in the school who have norm-breaking behavior. In this context, it means harmful and destructive behavior that, in various ways, means that the rules and norms of the society in which the individuals' lives are violated. It can be anything from seriously breaking parents' rules, truancy, stealing, stealing, and doodling (non-aggressive norm-breaking behavior) to more serious offenses such as fighting and threatening staff and other pupils in school. More precisely, the study aims to explore the implementation process of two organizational models that intend to provide increased support to pupils with norm-breaking behavior in school and contribute to completed schooling and social justice. One model has been created on a national level and a local level. The study also intends to investigate whether public, group, and individual cooperation can create representative added value for the pupils. RQ 1) what organizational processes can be identified locally at school? RQ 2) What organizational processes can be identified on the regional level in the municipality? RQ 3) In what way do the levels connect? RQ 4) If and how does cooperation create social value for the pupils?

The project is built around three types of data collection: focus groups, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Regarding Poole and Van de (2004), planned and emergent organizational change is often seen as the opposite. Still, studying the processes of relationships can also be fruitful since each other can stimulate and initiate them (Jacobsson, 2017). A narrative strategy involves constructing a detailed story based on the data collection. According to Pentland (1999), the narrative is a step to create a chronology, organize the data, and interpret it theoretically for further analysis according to Poole and Van de Ven's (2004) four ideal types. We will use Pickering's (1995) concepts; intention, resistance, and support from Jacobsson's (2017) activity, actions, change, and improvement. The construction of these concepts derives from Van de Ven (2007), who argues that process studies are built up around events and activities that lead to organizational change.

**Keywords:** *Implementation, narrative, organization, pupils, social value.*

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### 1. Introduction

Many societies are, arguably, more interdependent and plural than earlier (Mintzberg, 2015) because of, for example, globalization and consequently, the challenges public service organizations face are increasingly complex, ambiguous, and often addressing societal matters of concern (Bryson et al. 2017; Crosby et al. 2017). The New Public Management (NPM) reforms usually focus on inter-organizational questions. NPM has emphasized the efficiency of internal processes, and the account has been on performance measures of units within organizations. This mentioned focus could result in a poor understanding of the social system and sometimes fragmented welfare services (Fransson & Quist, 2014). But during the last years, collaborative cross-sectoral networks have been used in public sustainability management to create social value and goals (Loorbach, 2010). Academic terms like cross-sector collaboration, networks, and coordination are used terms. Increased collaboration is needed

to deal with the complex reality of nowadays societies (Christensen & Læg Reid, 2011), and cooperation is also required to create the capability to solve challenges in the public sector (Keast & Brown, 2002). At the same time, the partnership *between* organizations meets many challenges; antecedents and trust in the networks have been explored, but far less is known about the distrust in networks. (Shin et al., 2017).

## 2. The Swedish case

The Swedish school system is based on a societal model that gives all young children equal opportunities to learn and participate in school. Therefore, school is essential to children's and young people's health and inclusion. Still, many school systems experience issues such as inequality of opportunities, oppression, and achievement and attainment gaps. For children and young people to succeed at school, in addition to efforts within the school, preventive and promotional measures outside the school's area of responsibility are also required. Different actors in the municipality work separately with the pupils to give them better conditions for achieving results, but it is not enough for some pupils. Coordinated efforts are needed primarily by actors other than schools and can contribute to children and young people achieving goals in school and feeling participation. The central government has a role in establishing the educational and political agenda and working with it through laws and steering documents. The curriculum for the compulsory school, preschool classes, and the leisure-time center (2022) and The educational Act (2010:800) is the governing document that the municipalities' and private actors' schools must interpret. Children in socially vulnerable areas will be exposed to risks that can affect their mental and physical health and develop risky behaviors that can lead to exclusion or crime.

### 2.1. The regional model

The National Coordinator for Agenda 2030 initiated a pilot to develop better with state authorities and county administrations to create better support at the regional level with concerns for the school. The collaboration model is about creating a permanent structure to better coordinate the government sector regarding children and young people, which must function beyond individual government tasks and policy areas. It is based on the county administrations' existing municipal dialogues and a newly established gathering place for regional coordination. The aim is to, through these forums, firstly capture municipalities' demand and need for support and secondly reach out to the cities with support from national authorities in a more coordinated and accurate manner. Some pupils with risky behavior also have - in the long term - a risk of criminal activities, and lack of education means that children who have not gone to school have more difficulty getting a job.

Text.

### 2.2. The local model

In 2019, the municipal board tasked the social administration and children and education administration in X municipality to jointly investigate how coordinated efforts around children and young people with complicated support and care needs could be designed to support the needs of vulnerable children in school. The social service's mission is based, among other things, on § 1 of the Social Services Act (2001), which shows that the social service board must work to ensure that children and young people grow up in safe conditions and that the social service must conduct outreach activities and other forms of preventive work. The School Act (SFS 2010:800) states that "the education within the school system must take into account the different needs of children and students" (p.2) and that "an effort to compensate for differences in the children and the students' conditions to assimilate the education" (p.2). The project was evaluated in 2022, and the two committee politicians decided to implement the working method in all municipal schools. The organizational model's target group is students in grades f-6 who have early norm-breaking behavior or are at risk of developing norm-breaking behavior. The aim is to offer support to children and guardians and coordinate based on the child's needs, and the support should be easily accessible. The long-term goal is for more children to finish primary school with passing grades and trust in society and themselves. The early coordinated efforts are efforts without a needs test with the support of the Social Services Act. The efforts can be made at individual, group, and organizational levels. The model contains several steps; attention, decision, instigator implementation, and termination.

## 3. Theoretical perspectives

This study focused on describing and understanding how processes were initiated, developed, and completed, and a process model has been chosen. The analysis focuses not merely on what can be observed but on the factors causing the events (Danemark et al., 2003). Organizational processes cannot

be studied directly, and according to Pettigrew, Woodman, and Cameron (2001), it is individual and collective events, actions, and activities that develop in a particular context that can focus on observation. Furthermore, Pettigrew (1997) argues that an underlying logic gives meaning to events, actions, and activities. This logic must be interpreted in a theoretical way to make the process and the mechanisms driving it forward visible. Change cannot be evaluated for improvement or regression (Van de Ven and Poole, 1995). The study's definition of change has been inspired by Lynchell's (2003) deliverables, which are the transactions or products that the process primarily produces and which, in turn, can contribute to improvements.

Improvement is seen in the study as someone who has created some progress and result concerning an intention that contributes something new or is done in a new way that goes beyond what already exists. Ontologically, the study is presented within the field of critical realism, where the researcher tries to come closer and understand an objectively existing reality (Danermark et al., 2003). However, our knowledge of this reality is always conceptually mediated and thus more uncertain. For us to be able to analyze the causality in what we perceive around us, Danermark et al. that studying is not enough observable events without the generative mechanisms that produce the events having to stand in focus. To describe this, reality in critical realism is divided into different domains; the underlying mechanisms are called the domain of reality, what the mechanisms possibly generate is called the domain of actuality, and what we manage to observe is called the empirical domain.

#### 4. Methods and analysis

The empirical material comprises observations, notes, interviews, and document analysis. For this study to contribute to understanding this underlying logic, Van de Ven's and Poole's (1995) four ideal types of process theories have been used in the analysis. Motors have been identified within each process theory, which contains generative mechanisms that are key to how actions, events, and activities emerge and are driven forward. The motors also describe the different phases of each process. Regarding Van de Ven and Poole (2004), planned and emergent processes are often seen as opposite. Still, studying their relationship can also be fruitful since each other can initiate and stimulate them (Jacobsson, 2017). The empirical material in the study is analyzed according to Van de Ven's and Poole's four ideal types for process studies: 1) *Life cycle* - which is based on the regulated change. 2) *Teleological process* - that shows development as a cycle when there is some form of dissatisfaction, and the entity finds consensus in new goals. 3) *Dialectical theory* - when there is a conflict between objects, and at last, 4) *Evolutionary theory* when competition arises in the entity. Each process theory has a driving motor to identify and contain generative mechanisms fundamental to how actions and activities are driven forward. Three strategies were used to organize the data to make an analysis possible. Narrative strategy, episodes, and graphic representations were used since they provide partly different perspectives of the material. The narrative approach gives a chronological and rich story, making it possible to compare various events. The episodes make precise timing, and the graphical representation is a way visually to show patterns. Pentland's (1999) structural levels based on narrative theory inspired the theoretically interpreted narratives. The course of events, constructed to enable the analysis, contains one or more episodes, where defined activities are carried out according to an intention worded at the beginning of each episode. Intention refers to the plans or goals that the participants at the various levels (national, regional, or local) formulate and then try to achieve (Pickering, 2005). The intentions may be planned or emerge during the implementation process. About the intention, resistance or support can arise (Pickering, 1995). In this study, resistance and support will be the critical points influencing the actions and activities that follow an intention (Newman & Robey, 1992). Activities lead different events forward, and in the study, cooperation, social justice, collaboration, and value creation will constitute activities that can be derived from the intentions. The processes will be concluded by identifying change and improvement in the chain of activities, actions, and statements over time. Change is understood in the study as a change within existing frameworks (Watzlawick, Weakland & Fisch, 1974). Change is a difference in an organizational unit's form, quality, or state. The entity can be an individual, a work group, an organizational strategy, a program, a product, or the entire organization. In the analysis, it is used an extended view of Van de Ven and Pentland's motors and created activities and forms of results.

I stand for intention (I), A for activity, and R for results. Three different types of activities have been identified; activity/information (ai), activity/proceeding (a/p), and activity/choice (a/c), and two different types of results are identifiable; change (c) and development (d). Two different types of intentions can initiate an episode: prescribed intention (P/i) or emerging intention (E/i). Intentions refer to the plans or goals the participants formulate and then try to achieve (Pickering, 1995). In the study, three types of intentions are used: overall, prescribed (pI), and emerging intentions (eI) (Jacobsson, 2017). In relation to the intention, either support (s) or resistance (r) can arise. The overall intentions were at the

local level to support students with norm-breaking behavior to obtain a complete school achieved goals. The prescribed intentions at the local level consisted of forming a group consisting of professionals usually found in social services to support the pupils mentioned above. At the national level, the intentions consisted of creating conditions for the regions by creating a cooperation model to better coordinate the municipalities' demands and need for support and reach out with the national authorities' approval to municipalities. The intentions consisted of planned intentions and those that emerged during the process.

## 5. Results

The study presents an analytical framework for studying processes in organizations, which is a significant contribution. The presentation of generative mechanisms and their impact on processes gives a theoretical explanation of how activities influence the processes. On the local level, both planned, and emergent processes can be identified. Surprisingly, only the Teleologic motor can promote development, but all motors are working in all the events. However, on several occasions it seems that the planned improvement work inspires emergent initiatives for improvement and seems to be a fundamental condition for their existence. The four motors support and challenge each other, making the process develop and produce results. Within the process, the generative mechanism determine which motor will drive and push the process forward. The insight into the importance of the engines on the theoretical level can contribute to how organizational processes change outcomes in change work. The study's analysis tool is based on the four process theories which in themselves constitute ideal types which in the study were a methodological tool. The process theories are limited in number, and therefore their usefulness as tools for understanding a process may be limited. At the same time, the four approaches, by presenting them in relatively simple, abstract terms, can provide the opportunity to analyze processes and contribute to an understanding of why the various processes turned out the way they did.

### Example of change – a dialectical process

The sequence of events 1 contains four episodes that concern the process of creating a group at the local level, the TTT group, which will work with support for students with norm-breaking behavior. The episode began with the backing concerning the first emerging intention of the course of events – to form the TTT group (EI). The administrative managers discussed how the recruitment would be carried out, the employee's qualifications, and how the group's organization would be carried out. They agreed that the group would have two social workers and a coordinator, followed by an activity (a/i) consisting of information where the administrative managers informed teachers, the student health team, and principals about their decision to create the group. Several employees reacted negatively to the announcement as they considered that they had received too little information and lacked influence, which is interpreted as resistance (m). The administrative managers arranged new meetings to dissolve the opposition by allowing the staff to ask questions and share their views on the organization of the group's members and its tasks, which is seen as activity proceeding (a/p). The staff became more positive after the second meeting with the managers, which is understood as a change (c). This episode is driven by a dialectical engine where the administrative leaders are irritated and reluctant by the staff as they consider themselves to have too little information. The *generative mechanism* that makes the dialectical engine work is conflict. After the second meeting, the staff changed their minds when they had to discuss and ask about the upcoming TTT group, and the managers heard about their intention through negotiation. The episode ends in a change (f) to the emerging intention.

### Example of development – a teleologic process

The second example of a sequence of events concerns the question of whether the TTT group's working method should continue in the municipality. When the second episode begins, an evaluation of the TTT work carried out over a year has been completed. The intention is to explore how the politicians perceive the review and make decisions about the group's possible further work.

The social administration and the political committees of the children and youth administration are informed by the evaluator about the pilot project's outcome and the process's strengths and weaknesses (a/i). The political committees express their support (s) for the permanent TTT group's work and decide that the group will be allowed to continue its work permanently. The decision means that the group gets continued work and is imbued with consensus. The permanent group marks the end of the process, and the result is taken as a change (f) in relation to the emerging intention. *The generative mechanism* makes the teleological motor consensus and goal orientation. When the politicians took part in the evaluation, the subject was discussed on several occasions before a unanimous decision was made.

## 6. Discussion

The study presents an analytical framework for studying processes in organizations, which is significant contribution. The presentation of generative mechanisms and their impact on processes gives a

theoretical explanation of how activities influence the processes. On the local level, in X municipality both planned, and emergent processes can be identified. Surprisingly, only the Teleologic motor can promote development, but all motors are working in all the events in the identified organisation processes. However, on several occasions it seems that the planned improvement work inspires emergent initiatives for improvement and seems to be a fundamental condition for their existence. The four motors support and challenge each other, making the process develop and produce results. Within the process, the generative mechanism determine which motor will drive and push the process forward. The insight into the importance of the engines on the theoretical level can contribute to how organizational processes change outcomes in change work. The study's analysis tool is based on the four process theories which in themselves constitute ideal types which in the study were a methodological tool. The process theories are limited in number, and therefore their usefulness as tools for understanding a process may be limited. At the same time, the four approaches, by presenting them in relatively simple, abstract terms, can provide the opportunity to analyze processes and contribute to an understanding of why the various processes turned out the way they did.

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