Agents, Techniques, and Tools of Projectification
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Introduction

Over the last couple of decades, *the project* as an organisational solution has been

observed as a widespread practice in sectors as diverse as IT, housing, social services, education,

and culture. This "projectification" of the public sector is characterised not only by an increase in

number of projects (see Bergman et al., 2013; Brady & Hobday, 2011; Maylor et al., 2006) but

also by more substantial processes of change (Mukhtar-Landgren & Fred, 2018; Packendorff &

Lindgren, 2014). When project management (PM) inspired language, as well as PM techniques

and tools, permeate public sector organisations, it affects not only how specific projects are run

but also how "ordinary" public service day-to-day activities are organised and executed (cf. Fred,

2018; Büttner & Leopold, 2016). In this regard, public sector projectification is characterised by

processes of adaptation and transformation: individual and organisational agents change, adjust,

match, or simply facilitate the use of project organisations and PM techniques. Previous research

on projectification has documented the phenomenon of the increasing use of projects and PM

techniques (see e.g. Godenhjelm, 2016; Lundin et al., 2015; Maylor et al., 2006; Grabher, 2002)

as well as showing how it occurs in various sectors of society (Munck af Rosenschöld, 2017;

Sanderson & Winch, 2017; Kuokkanen, 2016; Murray, 2016). While this research tends to focus

on *why* processes of projectification emerge and in *what* contexts, we use the example of EU

project funding in Swedish local government to analyse and understand *how* processes of projectification unfold in terms of transformation and adaptation. This is in addition to analysing and understanding what types of agents facilitate this development – in other words, the *how* and the *who* of public sector projectification.

In this chapter, we use the empirical example of EU social cohesion policy[1] as a case study for how processes of projectification unfold. On the European Commission's website, the social cohesion policy is described as "the EU's main investment policy" with the ambition "to support job creation, business competitiveness, economic growth, sustainable development, and improve citizens' quality of life" (European Commission, 2018). Almost a third of the total EU budget – €351.8 billion – has been allocated to the cohesion policy for 2014–2020, making it "the policy behind the hundreds of thousands of projects all over Europe" (Ibid.). As cohesion policies are prevalent in almost all EU countries and organised in similar ways, they make a good case study for the dynamics of the *how* and *who* of projectification. Project funding is the main policy instrument used to implement the social cohesion policy. In this chapter, the perspective of EU funding as a policy instrument, or a tool of government, is placed center stage.

The EU social cohesion policy is implemented by creating incentives for local governments to participate by seeking project funding. This means that its success is dependent upon the EU's ability to spark the local will to join common policy goals (cf. Bruno et al., 2006). However, before any project funding is awarded, this potential local willingness must be paired with the competence to organise the work according to the EU's objectives (Carlsson & Mukhtar-Landgren, 2018). This governing technique is often referred to as soft governing (cf. Borrás & Jacobsson, 2004, p.188; Trubek & Trubek, 2005; Bruno et al., 2006, p. 521). *Soft*

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[1] Sometimes described as the EU's Regional Policy.

governing is a concept used to describe governance based on *voluntary* participation and agreements. It is characterised by vague goal formulations, thus providing a certain local autonomy in terms of levels of interpretation (cf. Andone & Greco, 2018,p. 79; Borrás & Jacobsson, 2004). Here we apply the policy instrumentation perspective to argue that policy instruments are not demarcated tools but rather processual and contextual tools that initiate local processes as they are implemented as tools of government (Lascoumes & Le Galès, 2007). This implies that project funding within the implementation of EU cohesion policy unfolds on the local level in continuous processes of interpretation and adaptation.

We will argue that the degree of local discretion, and the need to facilitate and enable project funding, generates new (project-supporting) roles for older organisations as well as generating completely new agents of projectification active in each stage of the process – from the initial application to the final evaluation of EU projects – constituting what we describe as a project market. These agents will not be seen as mere intermediaries transferring knowledge from the EU to local government but as active *mediators* (Latour, 2005) involved in processes of transformation and adaptation (Czarniawska & Sevón, 2005). We see them as bridges in interpreting, transforming, and translating the substance of what is being mediated. They construct, and are themselves constructed in, local processes of change at the same time as they change and affect ideas and practices (Mukhtar-Landgren & Fred, 2018). We understand projectification in terms of the ongoing mediation of EU project techniques and tools into everyday local government practices. We refer to the agents involved in these processes as *mediators* and *agents* of projectification, and we refer to the strategies and policy instruments as *techniques* and *tools* of projectification.

The aim of this chapter is to conceptualise and analyse EU funding as a policy instrument, specifically, in terms of how processes of projectification are mediated, by whom, and with what techniques and tools. Using the example of EU project funding in Swedish local government, our guiding research questions are:

1. Who are the key mediators involved in the context of local government EU projects?

2. How do these mediators engage local government in EU projects, and with what techniques and tools?

Our main theoretical concepts of policy instrumentation and mediation are clarified in the proceeding section. Thereafter, a description of our methodological approach and empirical material follows. The remainder of the chapter is then devoted to a theoretically informed empirical analysis of who the key mediators are and how they operate. The chapter concludes with a summary of our findings.

EU Funding as a Governing Tool: Processes of Policy Instrumentation and Mediation

We approach and analyse EU project funding in its capacity as a *policy instrument*. The policy instrumentation perspective reveals a theorisation of the relationship between governing and the governed, and each policy instrument "constitutes a condensed and finalized form of knowledge about social control and ways of exercising it" (Lascoumes & Le Galès, 2007, p. 11). Therefore, we regard policy instruments not as purely technical instruments or rational and discrete tools but rather as contextual and processual, generating effects that are materialised in different and often unexpected ways. This means that a policy instrument, such as EU funding, uses a variety of techniques and tools that produce specific effects of their own, independent of their stated objectives or the aims ascribed to them (cf. Lascoumes & Le Galés, 2007, p. 10; Büttner & Leopold, 2016). Lascomes and Le Galès (2007) differentiate between instrument,

techniques, and tools. An *instrument*, they argue, is a type of social institution at the macro level (in our case, "EU project funding"), a *technique* is a concrete device at the meso level that operationalises the instrument, and a *tool* is a micro device within a technique. In our case, the policy instrument used to implement EU policy is project funding, the techniques are the local and regional strategies and processes that "open up" and/or create content as well as form for EU projects, and the tools are the instruments and practices of management used in the day-to-day practices of local government organisations.

Following Lascoumes and Le Galès typology of different policy instruments, EU funding can be regarded as a "new" public policy instrument. In contrast to the more traditional policy instruments based on legislation or economic and fiscal motives, the new policy instruments offer "less interventionist forms of public regulation" (Lascoumes & Le Galès, 2007, p.13) and are based either on "agreement and incentives", "information and communication" or "de facto standards and best practices" (Ibid., p. 12). These new sets of policy instruments are all prevalent in the implementation of EU project funding, based on soft governing techniques and "lend themselves to organizing a different kind of political relations, based on communication and consultation" (Ibid, p.13 cf. Büttner & Leopold, 2016; Godenhjelm et al., 2015).

The skills and infrastructure needed to implement EU cohesion policy has led to an emerging field of EU expertise – what Büttner and Leopold describe as the "EU project world" – where a wide range of private and public agents engage "with the acquisition, implementation, management, evaluation and monitoring of EU-funded projects" (Büttner & Leopold, 2016, p. 54; cf. Mukhtar-Landgren & Fred, 2018). EU funding initiates a number of simultaneous yet overlapping local processes, thus opening up for a "proliferation of actors" (Lascoumes & Le Galès, 2007, p.) with diverging initiatives and actions. In regard to agents, policy instruments,

such as EU funding, can be seen as forms of institutions "partly determin[ing] the way in which the actors are going to behave" (Lascoumes & Le Galès, 2007, p 9). In this sense, the capacities for action of different agents of EU project funding, ranging from civil servants to consultants, differ widely depending on local interpretations by different public and private agents – a testament to the importance of studying who these agents are and how they operate.

Processes of Mediation

When EU policies are implemented in local government, they are not merely transferred from the EU to the local level but rather are continuously developed and changed with their application in new contexts (see e.g. Czarniawska, 2008; Czarniawska & Sevón, 2005; Clarke et al., 2015; Munday, 2016). In other words, they are translated in a simultaneous process of movement and transformation (Suarez & Bromley, 2015, p. 145). Agents involved in these processes of change each add to the proliferation of ideas as they materialise into concrete forms of local government practice (cf. Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996). However, the materialisation of ideas is not only expressed in *ideational* changes in policy content but also in *organisational* change, such as the embodiment of new organisations, new roles for old organisations, or the emergence of new divisions, subunits, or lines of demarcation (cf. Latour, 1986; Lavén, 2008, p. 32; Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996). As a result of the combination of the policy instrumentation perspective and theories of mediation and translation, projectification is not only to be regarded as an increase in the number of projects within an organisation or organisational field but also as processes of transformation and adaptation. This entails changes influenced by PM techniques and tools in the practices of individual and organisational agents (cf. Fred, 2018).

The agents involved in local government EU project work are thus not passive links "simply diffus[ing] a fixed set of ideas and practices" but rather mediators (cf. Söderholm &

Wihlborg, 2013, pg. 268). For Bruno Latour, the concept of *mediators* highlights how actors, by necessity, "transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry". The concept of the mediator developed in contrast to the concept of *intermediary* agents, or those who simply "transport[s] meaning" without changing it (Latour, 2005, p. 39). Mediators act upon ideas which are translated and acted upon in the process (cf. Sørensen & Torfing, 2008). They transform and translate the ideas by adapting and adjusting them to regional and local circumstances, thus involving continued local and regional processes of change (Latour 1986). Mediators are also often associated with specific agents within or around organisations, where they appear as bridges in interpretations and contextualisation (Wihlborg, 2013, p. 32). Yet, from a theoretical perspective, mediators are not actors that proceed or act "outside" processes of mediation; instead, these actors emerge and take form in the mediating processes. In the case of EU project funding, a number of new actors, roles, and organisations are not only produced but also constantly reproduced in processes of projectification through the instrumentation of EU policy (cf. Mukhtar-Landgren & Fred, 2018; Büttner & Leopold, 2016).

The Swedish Case, Research Design and Empirical Material

Our empirical focus has been on Skåne, Sweden's southernmost region and a successful region in regard to EU applications. Skåne consists of 33 local governments, or municipalities,[2] where the largest (in terms of number of inhabitants) is Malmö, with a population of approximately 330,000, and the smallest is Perstorp, with around 7,000 inhabitants. Compared to most other countries, local self-government is strong in Sweden. Each municipality has great freedom to make decisions about its own activities and organisation including independent

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[2] In total, Sweden has 290 municipalities.

powers of taxation (Montin & Granberg, 2013; Larsson & Bäck, 2011). The responsibilities and activities of Swedish municipalities are comprehensive: They employ roughly 770,000 people (almost 20% of the entire workforce of Sweden) and are major applicants for, and recipients of, EU funds.

Our empirical material consists of 32 semi-structured and transcribed interviews conducted with local government civil servants and regional EU coordinators between 2015–2017 as well as official EU documents from all 33 municipalities and several regional governmental bodies and networks. The analysis of both the interviews and the documents was done in two steps. First, we located key agents in local government EU work in Skåne, meaning the key individuals, organisations, and networks commonly referred to by civil servants, websites, reports, or policy documents. This step had the characteristics of a qualitative and lighter type of social network analysis (Wassermann & Faust, 1994) where, instead of statistical data or techniques, we used a snowball sampling approach. One statement or person led to another, generating a map with key connections of people in Skåne related to EU projects. The second step was to investigate how the identified agents work to enable or promote local government EU projects. Here, we used the distinction made by Lascomes and Le Galès (2007) between instrument, techniques, and tools, with a particular focus on the latter two and how they incentivise local government project organisations.

The chapter builds on previous research on how EU project funding not only supports but also accelerates the tendencies of public sector projectification (see e.g. Godenhjelm, 2016; Büttner & Leopold, 2016). The context of local government EU projects is a fruitful area to study mediators in processes of public sector projectification for a number of reasons. First, the context involves several tiers of government, creating "space to manoeuvre"' for the initiation

and/or installation of mediators. Second, as the implementation of EU project funds is based on a voluntary coordination at a sub-national level (Bruno et al., 2006, p. 52), it creates incentives for local and regional governments to comply with and join common policy goals thus installing functions or engaging in processes to do so (see Sørensen & Triantafillou, 2015; Carlsson & Mukhtar-Landgren, 2018). Third, and more generally, "the EU project world" (Büttner & Leopold, 2016) is important to study on the local and practical level because EU projects are widely implemented and affect thousands of European civil servants, organisations, and citizens.

The *Who* and the *How* of Projectification

European structural and investment funds have been described as the "home turf" of multilevel governance (Marks, 1992), with their strong emphasis on implementation in levels ranging from the European to the local city district. This is reinforced in practice through the partnership principle. The modus operandi of the partnership principle is to involve the most relevant actors in regional development (Bache, 2008, p. 119), including both public, private, and civil society actors with local knowledge and insights in regional preconditions and prerequisites for success (Klijn & Koopenjan, 2000; Sørensen & Torfing, 2007). Or, as stated on the home page of the European Social fund: "Working in partnership is the best way to ensure that spending is as effective and efficient as possible and meets the needs of the region or community concerned" (ESF, 2018b).

The structural funds and the social cohesion policy are thus implemented through multi-actor negotiations in vertical and horizontal partnerships (Dabrowski et al., 2014 p. 355). The multi-actor character permeates every level of the implementation process – from the formal organisation of the decision-making bodies to the singular projects which are expected to be collaborative and network-based (Carlsson & Mukhtar-Landgren, 2018). In Sweden, different

EU funds are organised in different ways, but one re-occurring aspect is the prevalence of regional organisations. For instance, The Social Fund, the Region Development Fund, and Leader all function primarily on the regional level. As a result, our empirical mapping focused on the regional and local levels of implementation, while keeping in mind that several of these funds also have a formal national body.

Today, the European Structural and Investment Funds finance 27 different programmes "in which Swedish organisations, government agencies and enterprises can participate" (The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth 2016 p. 1). From our policy instrumentation perspective, the EU funding applied in these schemes initiates processes of implementation that unfold continuously on the regional and local level. Below, we describe this process through an initial section that maps and analyses (a) the mediating agents of projectification in Skåne and (b) the techniques and tools applied in the processes of instrumentation and mediation.

The Agents of Projectification

Swedish municipalities engage with the EU social cohesion policy when they apply for funding from the structural and investment funds (Carlsson & Mukhtar-Landgren, 2018). It is through the application process that they enter the project world of formal EU institutions. When entering this world, they interact with three different forms of organisations which, although they are separated and specified here, are much more interlinked in practice. First, the implementation of the EU funds is channelled through formal, top-down public agencies as part of the EU project funding architecture, meaning regional, often decision-making, offices. Secondly, and parallel to the establishment of formal EU organisations, municipalities have, as a result of EU funding opportunities, developed a number of bottom-up organisations and networks engaged in different

aspects of EU project work. Third, and finally, in tandem with these developments, a field of

EU-related expertise has emerged in Skåne, including a range of consultancy firms that, in

various ways, promote the use of projects and EU funding in local government. Municipalities

navigate between these three types of organisations in all processes of the EU project funding

cycle – from project ideas to project application and project evaluation.

      Starting with the first group, the formal project funding architecture of the EU has

generated a number of new institutions in Skåne. Regulated by the EU (Regulation [EU] nr

1303/2013, L 347/321), these "new" institutions lay down, amongst other rules, the common

provisions for a number of EU funds including ESF, ERDF, CF, EAFRD and EMFF.[3] In the

regulation, it is stated that member states are to form partnerships to implement the funds. The

organisation of the partnerships differ somewhat between countries and funds but have in

common the fact that they entail the incidence of new forms of regional organisations acting as

mediators between the EU and municipalities, and as such, are also agents of projectification.

One example is the ESF council, a state authority responsible for ESF and EAFRD, which is an

organisation with eight regional offices throughout Sweden (ESF, 2018c). Another example is

the SAERG Council in Skåne[4] working to "ensure that EU funds are invested in projects that

promote regional growth and employment" (SAERG, 2018) or the seven Leader offices[5] in

Skåne that explicitly work with project support (Leader in Skåne, 2018). These organisations,

initiated top down, all have regional strategies for the implementation of the different EU funds:

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[3] The European Social Fund (ESF), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Cohesion Fund (CF), the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).

[4] The office of Swedish Agency for Regional Development in Skåne is one of nine Swedish offices.

[5] Leader (*Liaison Entre Action de Dèveloppement de IÈconomie Rurale*). The offices promote collaboration and local development through project organisation. Leader is a local development method that is based on project support with funding from the European Structural and Investment Funds. There are 48 Leader offices in total in Sweden.

they administrate them and provide a number of project-supporting functions. Together with the five *Europe Direct* offices in Skåne that provide individuals and organisations with information about the EU, they are the foundation of the EU's partnership-based multilevel system mediating between the EU and the regional and local governments.

In addition to the emergence of these "new" EU organisations, existing institutions at different levels take on new roles as a consequence of EU multilevel governance (cf. Stephenson, 2013, p. 828). The formal political organisation, Region Skåne (the county council), is one example of an organisation that has taken on new functions in the processes of implementing EU funding. It has an important role in setting up regional goals for the European social fund (ESF) and the regional development fund (ERDF) and has a staffed office in Brussels.

We also find several regional *bottom-up* partnerships installed by the municipalities in Skåne. One example is the Skåne Association of Local Authorities (KFSK), a regional collaborative organisation initiated and governed by the 33 municipalities in Skåne and staffed with a sub-division focused solely on municipal EU issues. KFSK's activities are financed through membership fees from the municipalities, fees from the courses and conferences they organise, and through external project funding (KFSK, 2018). Two similar organisations are *Skåne Northeast* and *Southeastern Skåne* (SÖSK). The explicit purpose of these organisations is to support municipalities' EU-related work. One example is SÖSK, which supports the municipalities by providing *project developers* whose roles are to "actively work with project advice to the member municipalities" (SÖSK EU strategy, 2015, p.7).

When civil servants in the smaller municipalities were interviewed, they spoke of difficulties in keeping up with EU-related policies, thus rendering the regional support an important part of EU-related work. As a result, the regional bottom-up organisations have great

legitimacy within the municipalities (cf. Mukhtar-Landgren & Fred, 2018). However, legitimacy also comes in terms of output, in terms of the ability to enable funding and initiate projects: *Skåne Nordost,* for instance, state on their website that they "have been able to facilitate the acquisition of SEK 280 million (approx. €27 million) through different [EU] projects" (Skåne Nordost, 2018).

Where the regional level is emphasised in the governance architecture of the EU cohesion policy and in the EU structural and investment funds, the local level is more diffuse, and municipalities lack a formal role therein (Carlsson & Mukhtar-Landgren, 2018). As a result, municipalities not only seek information and support from the aforementioned top-down organisations or engage in bottom-up organisation but also employ their own EU experts. All 33 municipalities employed at least one EU expert, and in some cases, several. They have titles such as EU Coordinators or EU Strategists, and in some municipalities, EU work is delegated to a Business Developer. These EU experts are usually employed in central administration, which has close links with the city council and management. Their mediating roles differed somewhat depending on municipality. Some describe their role as providing information about possible EU funds, while others talked about how the work would enable others to apply for funding. Also, several describe how their sole purpose was to enable different departments to increase their work with EU-funded projects. An example of the latter is in Östra Göinge, where the EU coordinator is described as a person working to guide the municipality's activities "by matching their needs with external funding opportunities, supporting them in developing project ideas and seeking external funding for projects" (Östra Göinge, 2018). In Malmö, as well as in Kristianstad, we found not only several EU coordinators but also a network of coordinators working to build the organisational capacity to handle future EU projects.

In addition to these *public* top-down and bottom-up organisations and initiatives, our mapping revealed that *private* companies play an important role in promoting the initiation of EU projects. The use of consultancy firms is common in Skåne, primarily in relation to different kinds of EU and project training courses, seminars, evaluations, and audits. The consultancy firms range from local consultants with just a few employees to larger internationally recognised enterprises with regional offices. The municipal will to participate in EU projects along with their relative lack of EU knowledge and project skills have made Skåne an attractive place for consultancy firms with EU and/or project expertise.

Finally, it is important to emphasise that the boundaries between different agents of projectification are often blurred and that actors tend to move around and assume different roles. During our research, we also noticed that it was common for individual agents to move between these different positions. For instance, we found one EU coordinator who works part time as an EU consultant from "within" local government to promote EU projects, but who also worked from "outside" to promote the same. Another civil servant initially worked as a regional EU facilitator to later work for a municipality as an EU coordinator. Yet another civil servant moved in the opposite direction; after having spent some time in Brussels, this person went from a municipality to the regional office.

To summarise, a wide range of projectification agents divide, share, and assemble what we regard as a regional market of EU project funding. At this market, different roles are taken that come into play. Those that are initiated top-down and embedded within the formal decision-making procedures of the EU have the ascribed purpose of managing the funds, informing about funding and supporting organisations with an interest to participate and apply for EU funding. Others are formed bottom-up and emerge from a lack of EU knowledge and expertise, a

willingness to engage in EU work, and the attraction of external funding. In addition to these top-down and bottom-up initiatives, there is also a considerable market share available for consultancy firms facilitating local government EU projects through consultation, training courses, and audits. Processes of projectification are thus facilitated bottom-up as well as top-down and within the confinements of a sizable market, where many agents appear to know each other or at least know about each other. In the next section, we describe and analyse how these mediating agents work in practice when adjusting, appropriating, and transforming EU knowledge and information to municipalities.

<div align="center">**Techniques and Tools of Projectification**</div>

Within the regional market of EU project funding, the different agents use a number of techniques and tools that have been developed to enable the acquisition of EU funding. As the implementation of social cohesion policy is based on incentives for project funding through local alliances and regional networking, a number of softer policy techniques have been developed in Skåne. After surveying our empirical material, we have categorised the techniques and tools used by the aforementioned mediating agents and place them accordingly into five sections: (i) information, (ii) roadmaps/policies, (iii) collaborations/networks, (iv) courses, and finally, (v) consultation. These are presented and exemplified below in terms of techniques (i.e. the strategies and processes that "open up" and/or create the content and form of EU projects), and tools (i.e. the day-to-day practices and micro devices of local government organisations).

Information

By using EU funding, the municipality can raise the ambition level of local development projects and also become a more attractive employer who, with the help of EU funding, can strengthen staff skills in a number of areas. (Kristianstad, 2018)

This quotation taken from a municipal website is a typical example of how actors use information as a technique of government (exemplified here with the internet as a policy tool). The mediating agent chooses what to emphasise and what not to emphasise, or even include at all about the EU. Our mapping revealed that the information on the municipal websites is directed primarily at two target groups; (i) citizens, regarding what the EU "is" and what it "does" for the municipality and (ii) organisations or civil servants in search of EU funding. In addition to this general information, descriptions of ongoing and/or completed EU projects are common. Related to the project descriptions is another frequently-used EU policy tool, *best practices*, which refers to projects that are presented to other organisations as successful and inspiring examples. The ongoing projects are often described in terms of future "success" and worded in terms of the future results of the project. Best practices are also found on the regional level. KFSK, for instance, has a special web page devoted to "The EU project of the month", where successful EU projects are presented (KFSK, 2018b), a platform also used by municipalities to showcase their best projects.

In addition to websites, all agents, with the exception of consultants, produce and disseminate brochures, booklets, or pamphlets about the EU in general or their own organisations' EU-related work, including individual EU projects. One example of a widely distributed brochure in Skåne is "Your guide to EU funding" (KFSK et al., 2018).[6] In the foreword, it states that the purpose of the publication "is to showcase the possibilities of the EU's programs and funds". Other examples are the reports from the ESF council and the SAREG Council intended to inform about and inspire potential EU project applications.

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[6] Available online: https://kfsk.se/eu/eus-fonder-och-program/ accessed 2018–06–28

While these techniques and tools of information could be defined as an attempt of neutral provision of factual information, the extent to which it is used and the volume of information acts to promote engagement. In addition, some of the material goes beyond the provision of information to adopt a more explicit promotional tone.

Collaboration and Meetings

My Europe 2018 – What Does the EU do for the Municipalities of Skåne?

> On 3 May, the municipalities of Skåne opened the doors to visitors to the My Europe 2018 event. The purpose of the day was to highlight and demonstrate how EU investments create positive local effects by giving visitors concrete examples of how the EU creates development opportunities in their neighbourhood. (KFSK, 2018c)

All mediators are inherently collaborative in their organisational structure. The bottom-up organisations all comprise a number of collaborating municipalities. Yet, as the KFSK website quotation shows, collaboration is also an important policy instrument or technique. Meetings and conferences are important tools, as they combine the ambitions to inform and promote with an ambition to network; hence, it can be understood in terms of a "deliberate choice to govern" (Vangen et al., 2015, p. 1239) by bringing organisations together to attain certain political goals. At the meeting presented in the quotation, the visitors were given the opportunity to '[m]ingle and network with around 15 projects in Skåne […and] opportunities to learn more about the EU's policy processes where provided' (KFSK, 2018c). These events enable EU projects by bringing possible project collaborators or stakeholders together, showcasing good examples of past projects, and directing potential stakeholders and municipalities to where EU funding is available. Another example is the "European Day" which is "celebrated"' every year on 9 May.

In 2017, a range of organisations[7] co-organised an event on this day to highlight projects and give municipalities the opportunity to meet and learn from each other as well as receive information about where and how they can apply for further EU funding (Hässleholm, 2018).

In addition to arranging meetings and conferences, the regional bottom-up organisations coordinate several networks, including a Horizon 2020 network, a Brussels network, a network coordinating EU funding, and a network designated for strategical EU issues (KFSK, 2018d). But it is not solely the bottom-up organisations that use these networking tools: The formal EU organisations, ESF and ERDF, also organise conferences to bring together potential project partners and showcase successful past projects. They also organise learning networks of EU project managers and project evaluators.

The techniques and tools of collaboration and meetings open up for EU funding possibilities and generate incentives by providing access to funding opportunities and project partners, as well as best practices to choose from. However, they also create a sense of community where agents know and learn from each other; at the same time, a certain measure of competition is detected along the lines of "if they initiated such a project, perhaps we could or should too".

Courses and Training

Regions and consultants, and to some extent municipalities, arrange courses related to EU funding. These were not only general PM courses but also courses targeting EU projects or EU funding more specifically. The courses are the result of mediating processes where the agents present not only what the municipalities can apply for funding towards but also which types of PM are preferred and recommended by EU organisations. KFSK, as one of the bottom-up

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[7] The municipality of Kristianstad, Europe Direct Hässleholm, EU Office Skåne Nordost and Region Skåne

organisations, offers a range of EU-related courses including "Economics in EU applications and the management of EU projects" and "EU projects 3.0 – for optimal use of EU funding" (KFSK, 2018d). In contrast, SÖSK works to continually train new *project developers* in each municipality so that new projects can be developed locally and regionally. Thus, the regional bottom-up organisations take on the role of showing the municipalities how to initiate and manage EU projects as well as assuming the role of developer by designing appropriate EU projects for its members.

In several municipalities, we found consultants who were involved in the training courses and in the development of municipal project models to be used in EU projects – models that also demanded further training for the employees. In Eslöv municipality, for instance, a consultancy firm was involved in the development of a project model as well as in several project management and project methodology courses to civil servants as well as to politicians. Similar, but with a specific EU focus, Malmö continuously works to train their EU coordinators in areas relating to the EU, EU funding, and PM.

Although we do not have a full picture of who attends these courses, it is clear that there are more people taking PM and EU-related courses than there are people involved in EU projects in Skåne. Initiated from within the municipalities as well as from outside, the training courses aim to equip civil servants and organisations with tools and techniques to handle (future) projects in general and EU projects in particular. They work to construct a particular understanding of the EU and EU projects, and in doing so, shape legitimacy for the participation in EU funding processes, among other things, through EU strategies or road maps.

Road Maps and EU Strategies

Several municipalities have specific policies or official strategies related to either externally funded projects in general or towards EU projects in particular. These policies and strategies reveal how municipalities want to work; furthermore, they reflect the municipalities' will and direction, as it is here where they demonstrate their view of EU work. As a typical example, Hässleholm has an "EU strategy" with the purpose of "strengthening EU knowledge and access to EU funding through project funding" (Hässleholm, 2016).[8] Lomma has an"internationalisation policy", in which EU projects are specified as an important tool in the pursuit "of achieving better results for the municipality" (Lomma, 2018). These roadmaps can be seen as a methodology to "de-silo" organisations (cf. Brandtner et al., 2017) and gather different actors around joint ventures, encouraging employees to apply for EU funding and providing them with the legitimacy to do so. We found yet another, more far-reaching example of EU strategy in Kristianstad. Here, the city management has adapted the municipal budget to fit the concepts and structure of "Europe 2020" (Kristianstad budget, 2017) with the purpose of increasing the possibilities to receive EU funding.

Although initiated top-down, the road maps and the EU strategies are less of an interventionist form of techniques and tools and more of incentivising approach that enables and gives civil servants and municipal organisations legitimacy to act upon and engage in EU funding processes.

Consultation

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[8] In their strategy, the municipality also describes how it participated in close to 20 projects between 2010–2015 and received almost EUR 42 million from the EU. Thus, the strategy also serves as documentation of past successful EU applications, perhaps to inspire further applications.

Consultation comprises techniques and tools used by mediators to advise and consult in relation to EU-related work. As mentioned, some EU coordinators describe their role as consulting others to apply for EU funding or ensure the organisations increase their use of EU funding. However, the regional bottom-up organisations, as well as some private consultancy firms, also use consultation techniques and tools to increase the use of projects. One such tool utilised broadly in Skåne is the EPA (EU Project Analysis). These analyses are offered to municipalities by the aforementioned regional bottom-up agents. The purpose of an EPA is to "map how municipalities can use EU funding in local development planning" (KFSK, 2018e). In practice, this entails a process in which municipal documents (e.g. budgets and visionary/development plans) are reviewed by a coordinator and local development priorities are "matched" with EU project-funding opportunities. The EPA method is described as an "in-depth analysis" in order to "give each individual municipality a clear picture of how to make use of EU funding in their development" (Ibid.). In relation to an identified problem (e.g. the integration of newly arrived immigrants), the municipality is presented with a "smörgåsbord" of funding opportunities, and suggestions on how the policy problem at hand could be reformulated into an EU project to receive funding. This can include describing "education" in terms of "life-long learning" or long-term unemployment in terms of "social exclusion" (cf. Mukhtar-Landgren & Fred, 2018). The EPA analysis was developed by KFSK, but we found similar tools (although under different names) conducted and sold by other regional agents in Skåne, like the aforementioned Leader organisations, for instance.

Another example of consultation comes from consultancy firms. Municipalities regularly use these firms to audit EU projects and how the municipalities work with and organise EU projects. In the conclusions of these written audit reports, more EU projects are generally

strongly encouraged. As a typical example, the consultants involved in Lund recommended that the municipality acquire more knowledge of EU funding and also apply for more project funding than was then the case:

> The fact that not all subunits examined have applied for funds from the EU is a testament, according to our assessment, of the fact that the municipality does not make optimal use of the opportunities that comes with EU funding. (Öhrlings, 2008, p. 1)

Although the audit reports are something that the municipality does not necessarily have to consider in their future work, they do encourage municipalities to engage in more EU projects, and this seems to make a difference in practice. A few years ago, in certain municipalities that were audited, we could trace project activities back to the audit reports. In Eslöv, for instance, the EU coordinator claims that he was hired, that their EU policy was implemented, and that several EU applications were completed as a result of the audit (Interview, EU coordinator, 2016).

The audit reports may thus be important as tools to legitimise and support the further use of EU projects. It should be noted that some consultancy firms also provide the service of reviewing EU projects as well as a service they call "audit as a basis for successful projects". These consultants act as mediating "EU experts", auditing local government EU activities to map what the municipalities do and could do with EU funding. These audits generally result in the recommendation to apply for more EU funding and engage in more EU projects.

Summarising Discussion

The aim of this study was to contribute to the understanding of how processes of projectification unfold in local government through processes of instrumentation and mediation – with an empirical focus on the questions, "by whom?" and "with what techniques and tools?". Our analysis was divided into two sections. In the first section, we located key projectifying agents in local government EU work in Skåne, and in the second section, we investigated how they worked and which techniques and tools they used to enable and promote local government EU projects. We found three separate but interrelated categories of agents of projectification: *formal (EU-associated) decision-making agencies*, *bottom-up organisations and networks initiated by the municipalities themselves*, and *a range of consultancy firms*. Taken together, these agents develop and utilise a number of techniques and tools resulting in processes of projectification.

The mapping of agents and their practices indicates a strong prevalence of soft governing techniques, based not on sanctions or binding legislations but rather on incentives and mutual agreements (cf. Andone & Greco, 2018). The purpose of the policy instruments employed in relation to the structural and investment funds can thus be said to enable, facilitate, and promote the use of EU funding. In this regard, EU agents (including institutions, authorities, and consultancy firms) make EU projects possible and pave the way for agents eager to engage in local government EU work.

In this chapter, EU project funding has been described as a process of policy instrumentation unfolding in ongoing and continuous processes of projectification. While Büttner and Leopold (2016) describe how these processes materialise in an "EU project world", we conceptualize the day to day practices of that world in terms of an EU project funding market

held together by mediators and their application of policy techniques and tools of information, roadmaps/policies, collaborations/networks, courses, and consultation. Several of the techniques and tools (training courses, project support) are sold to the municipalities as services on a market. In this regard, the policy instrumentation of EU funding has generated a regional market in which municipalities can acquire project techniques and expertise as well as collaborating partners that are necessary to get funding. Even the networking activities, conferences, and meetings have the characteristics of being part of a market: project funding is "available" for your choosing, different agents are presented or constructed as possible project collaborators or stakeholders, and you may also "shop" for best practices as solutions to the many problems your municipality struggles with.

Within the EU project funding market, transactions are made between different public and private agents and the goods "available to purchase" are not only EU funding and EU expertise but also project courses, project partners, best practices, and network activities. This echoes the argument of Aron Buzogàny, who describes the public sector as developing "into consultancy-like companies with rather symbiotic relationships towards donor agencies" (2013, p. 81) due to the policy instrumentation of EU funding. Even though some agents, primarily the formal, decision-making agencies, partake in the EU project funding market in order to inform, others (including bottom-up organisations and consultancy firms) are there to promote and increase the use of EU funding in local government, albeit with different motives.

The local and regional (public and private) agencies are inhabited by a number of different individuals. Our empirical analysis indicated that these individuals often moved between the different types of agencies. They often changed positions, roles, and organisations – but they continued working within the same market of EU funding. In the words of Kovách and

Kučerová (2009), these individuals can be seen as part of a larger societal development – the rise of a "project class". The emphasis on projects and the demand for local expertise and managerial skills strengthen the legitimisation of the project class, thus "making it not only a class of experts, but also a managerial category that is part of the implementation of project programmes" (Kovách & Kučerová, 2006, p.4). So, what do these actors do? The techniques and tools used by these agents – information, roadmaps/policies, collaboration/networks, courses, and consultation – are all soft policy techniques based on creating local incentives for the municipalities to engage in EU projects. The soft governing approach gives local governments a certain autonomy when it comes to interpreting, adapting, and transforming the content and the practical outlet of the social cohesion policy. While some of the techniques imply a mere distribution of information, we argue that they all serve a promotional purpose, but some are used to more explicitly and thoroughly transform and adapt local policies and strategies to match the aim and objectives of the social cohesion policy and the specific funds. We found that the bottom-up organisations as well as some consultants do not only facilitate or help out when asked or commissioned to do so but also explicitly promote the use of EU funding and design and propose specific projects for the municipalities.

So, how do processes of projectification unfold? We argue that they unfold through the workings of different agents sharing, at the same time as constructing, a project funding market in which they mediate between EU funding and possible EU projects. The mediators are situated between the "available" EU funds on one side and possible local government EU projects on the other. At this market, some mediators inform about possible funding. Others enable funding opportunities and project activities through networks, training courses, and meetings. And yet some promote and "sell" projects and project ideas through courses, best practices, or the

transformation and adaptation of local government strategies and policies to those of EU funding requirements. Processes of projectification are triggered by project-supporting incentives created top-down at the same time as several bottom-up initiatives trigger the same phenomenon. Also, processes of projectification are triggered regardless of whether there are or ever will be any EU projects. The municipalities not only employ EU strategists and engage in EU bottom-up organisations and EU networks but also train staff in PM and project methodology and develop project models to handle possible forthcoming projects. The result is that they future-proof the organisation in terms of agents of projects and PM techniques and tools.

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