

SITUATED META-GOVERNANCE IN THE CITY OF COPENHAGEN

Lars A. Engberg¹ & Jacob Norvig Larsen²

1. Danish Building Research Institute, Aalborg University, Dr. Neergaards Vej 15, Hoersholm, DK-2970, lae@sbi.dk

2. Danish Building Research Institute, Aalborg University, Dr. Neergaards Vej 15, Hoersholm, DK-2970, jnl@sbi.dk

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Abstract

Place-oriented urban leadership and public service innovation is at the heart of the Danish urban planning agenda. In the last decade, local governments have experimented with new collaborative area interventions and urban renewal programmes in distressed neighbourhoods. These initiatives combine a context-sensitive approach based on citizens' participation with different institutional mechanisms to support the local bottom-up processes. With this collaborative planning practice new governance practices emerge that contributes to the innovation of traditional public service delivery in the urban context.

The aim of our paper is two-fold. Firstly, we report on a major strategic effort conducted by the City of Copenhagen to deal with the challenges of integrating horizontal issues of area-based interventions with vertical and sector-organised administrative practices. Secondly, we demonstrate that the Copenhagen case is an illustrative example of how local governments develop new governance practices that we characterise as *situated meta-governance*. Meta-governance refers to the regulation of self-regulation. The meta-governance approach developed by several municipal departments is situated in that it is responsive to different contexts at the local level while strengthening cross-sectional coordination and integration. The approach developed in the City of Copenhagen, termed “the horizontal pillar”, combines six specific measures at different organisational levels. Directly and indirectly, these measures create a governance framework that integrates the local and situated policy inputs of area-based projects into the strategic and operational priorities of the municipal administrations.

Introduction

"the challenge to functional/sectoral organisation, these days often called 'silo mentality', generates a momentum to create more linkages between policy fields as they impact on the places and connectivities of urban areas, expressed as a search for 'policy integration' and 'joined up government'" (Healey 2007, p. 5).

A key challenge to urban leadership is to build and strengthen collaborate arenas that allow for integrative policy development and implementation. The governance challenge is to build creative linkages between policy-fields that tackles the 'silo-problem' of modern bureaucracies (cf. Healey quote). Taking the ongoing fight against ghettoisation in urban cores as our example, we argue that urban leadership from this perspective is about developing an institutional space for the emergence of local, context-sensitive strategies which are linked to centralised policies, objectives and priorities in reciprocal relationships.

The study of the City of Copenhagen illustrates precisely this: It shows how an institutional framework is being developed that allows for local strategies and development processes to be reflected in and a reflection of the institutionalised practices and decision making processes at higher administrative levels. Analytically, we conceptualise this process of connecting top-down and bottom-up strategies and collaborative processes as 'strategisation' (Healey 2007), and we argue that the notion of meta-governance (Sørensen 2006), (Jessop 2002) offers a relevant analytical perspective on the practical steering involved with developing the institutional prerequisites for this 'strategisation'.

Urban leadership has to do with paving the way for strategisation. With Hambleton (2007) we define leadership as "shaping emotions and behaviour to achieve common goals" (p. 174). In the context of area-based interventions and decision making, such leadership is place-based in that it supports and channels local interests and aspirations for improvements in the quality of life of citizens and other stakeholders living and working in the community.

The article offers new knowledge about contemporary urban leadership in Denmark on two accounts:

First, it brings evidence to the fact that local governments – taking the example of the City of Copenhagen – develop new meta-governance strategies to better cope with the steering paradoxes and dichotomies of comprehensive, area-based interventions designed to combat ghettoisation.

Second, drawing on the empirical findings from our case study, we suggest that 'situated' or 'embedded' meta-governance is a fruitful analytical perspective on contemporary urban leadership. Urban leadership needs to address complexity, fragmentation and collective action dilemmas in practice, by handling governance relations at multiple levels simultaneously. To do this, contextualised meta-governance strategies do indeed pave the way for better strategic integration of top-down and bottom-up processes with their conflicting logics and competing institutional imperatives.

Context

Since the early 90s, the Danish debate on segregation and ghettoisation in distressed neighbourhoods has to a large extent defined national urban policy initiatives. Shifting governments have set up national programmes to turn around negative cycles of segregation, lack of integration, unemployment, marginalisation etc., and to make Danish municipalities fight ghettoisation more systematically. Despite a string of policy initiatives and programmes, national and municipal efforts to combat ghettoisation have not been successful. In a national survey from 2006, the conclusion was unmistakable; no local government could attest to a capacity to turn local ghettoisation processes around though some stated that programme activities did help slow down processes, seeing as "*had we done nothing, it would have been markedly worse today*" (Engberg 2006).

The fight against ghettoisation nourishes a tradition in Danish urban regeneration policies for social outreach activities, citizens' participation and concerted government action in distressed neighbourhoods. Danish policy makers share the view that the ambition to reverse negative trends in these neighbourhoods is a long-range effort. Programmes typically subsidise long-term projects situated in a collaborative framework, i.e. governed by municipalities but dependent on substantial participatory input from the citizens concerned. When area-interventions are emphasised as holistic, attention is widened to cover not only traditional physical improvements but also non-physical matters. All relevant aspects of the citizens' quality of life are brought into focus, i.e. social matters, employment, integration, housing conditions, health, etc. Therefore, holistic area-interventions place demands on coordination of the relevant fields and is typically developed in close dialogue with the local community.

This is the analytic entry point: the anti-ghettoization interventions stimulate collaborative planning practices and establish communication channels that enable citizens to articulate their knowledge about everyday problems of local neighbourhoods, and connect this knowledge to wider planning and allocation structures in the municipality. Because of the network processes in area-

interventions, the municipal organisation downplays the hierarchical management style in favour of an approach based on mutual negotiation, agreements and networking. However, different empirical analysis of area-interventions, urban regeneration programmes etc. all testify to the fact that these programmes suffer from inefficient cross-sector coordination and multiple governance conflicts that hampers or slows down stakeholder involvement and local empowerment processes (Norvig Larsen 2001, 2002, 2009), (Engberg 2000, 2003). On this background, Danish local governments experiment with different ways to develop new administrative practices to improve coordination.

Strategisation and meta-governance

According to Louis Albrechts, the dialectic between top-down structural policies and bottom-up approaches rooted in local uniqueness and diversity constitutes the essence of multi-level governance (Albrechts 2005, p. 258). To get closer to these formulations analytically, we call attention to Patsy Healey's notion of strategisation (Healey 2007). By strategisation Healey refers to the "*drawing out of a sense of potentialities and possibilities from multiple unfolding relations, within which to set actions that will intervene in these unfolding relations in the hope of furthering particular objectives and qualities...Strategic thinking involves a way of thought, in which events, episodes and possibilities are continuously interpreted in terms of their significance for an enterprise as it evolves over time in a specific and dynamic context. It encourages the continual shaping of actions in terms of new information and understanding of the resistances and potentials for an enterprise (ibid. p. 28)*".

With Healeys formulations, we understand strategising as a dialogical process where positive feed-back loops between system and local participatory processes are developed that both stimulate local innovation and problem-solving and influence the ways in which the system responsively regulates these processes (inspired by Wagenaar 2007, p. 42). Strategising has an element of self-organisation; it develops in the emerging patterns and processes of networks which cannot be fully governed, devised or predicted prior to the complex interaction processes. But the interaction does create a pattern and a direction which can be manipulated and governed. Following Stacey and Griffin (2008) we see self-organizing as processes where agents "*interact with each other on the basis of their own local organizing principles, and it is in such local interaction that widespread coherence emerges without any programme, plan or blueprint for that widespread pattern itself*" (p. 8).

From a governance perspective, the challenge is to manipulate the dialectic relationship between semi-autonomous patterns of self-organisation, and steering mechanisms that embed and condition these patterns. The term *meta-governance* refers to such efforts to regulate self-regulating governance networks by influencing

the conditions under which they operate (Jessop 2002) (Sørensen & Torfing 2005). Analytically, meta-governance supports an epistemology of emergent complex responsive processes but with a focus on the process of ordering these through indirect governance tools and strategies. We see it as a dialectic relationship between formal governance structuring and the unforeseen complex response patterns of multiple actors orienting themselves towards this structuring.

Remember the characteristics of *governance networks* as described by Sørensen & Torfing (2005: 203): 1) a relatively stable horizontal articulation of interdependent, but operationally autonomous actors 2) who interact through negotiations 3) which take place within a regulative, normative, cognitive and imaginary framework 4) that to a certain extent is self-regulating, and 5) which contributes to the production of public purpose within particular policy areas. Because the definition of governance networks *per se* places emphasis on interdependency and relative autonomy, meta-governance does not imply that the state can act as a unitary meta-governor regulating governance games behind the backs of network actors.

Yet, public authorities have different ways of influencing policy games. The networks that emerge in relation to public programmes to promote comprehensive area-interventions and urban regeneration are semi-autonomous in that actors participate voluntarily and can opt out. The point is that their autonomy is relative in that it is autonomy to do something *in relation to* the collective issues and agendas of the policy problem being addressed by the network. As Triantafillou puts it "*our actions are always already taking place in relation to particular understandings of the issue calling for action. Moreover, such actions always take place in relation to the attempts of other social groups seeking to make us act in particular ways*" (Triantafillou 2007, p. 189).

Public authorities have different meta-governance strategies available to them in practice (O'Tool Jr. 2007, p. 223-229). They can influence networks through *policy formulation*, define policy agendas and set the scene for network games directed towards influencing or changing this agenda (and sometimes networks influence or even define policy agendas adopted by government). Through *involvement* in the specific policy game, make network actors preferences visible to one another, stimulate network games if they support the public agenda etc., use informational instruments, identify potential coordination synergies etc. connect issues etc. Or through *linking and segmenting games*, build connections between actors in different games, linking or segmenting games, or building a bridge over successive games over time.

In the following we present our case study, developed in an action research process in collaboration with two departments in the City of Copenhagen. First, we discuss method and research strategy, then we present the case, and finally we discuss our findings in the context of the theoretical perspectives outlined above.

Data and method

The action research project has been developed in collaboration with two departments of the City of Copenhagen: the Department of Technique and Environment, and the Department of Integration and Employment (Engberg 2008). The process took place during 10 months in 2008 and involved 30 urban planners and professionals involved in area-based programmes run by the two departments. Qualitative interviews with all participants have been carried out, and the mapping analysis has been discussed in a dialogue that involved workshops, individual meetings and extensive e-mail exchanges between all parties.

Two phases structured the action research process: Phase one involved mapping of coordination dilemmas and collective action problems in relation to the successful development and implementation of horizontal, comprehensive interventions, involving local stakeholders and several organisational pillars. In phase two the strategic perspective labelled 'the horizontal pillar' was developed. The perspective emerged as a *theoretical* response to the key coordination issues formulated by planners and researchers. The perspective has been formally sanctioned by administrative leaders in the two departments, as a relevant change agenda and a new paradigm for coordination of area-interventions to be implemented in a medium-term perspective.

After the termination of the action research, the implementation and practical ramifications of the propositions (phase 3) are carried forward by decision makers at different levels in the city administration and at the level of local interventions. The Department of Social Services has subsequently joined this effort, and potentially other departments involved in area-based activities will support and adopt the framework.

The purpose of the action research process was to establish a critical dialogue that combined reflective, theory inspired knowledge with practical and tacit knowledge about institutional practices and coordination barriers as experienced by practitioners. The mapping of barriers and governance dilemmas in phase one was guided by the researchers, who combined different qualitative research techniques (individual qualitative interviews, round table dialogues, "self-descriptions" of administrative practices according to editorial guidelines and discussion of resulting analyses) in a process anchored in a working group. The researchers formulated the propositions in

phase two, in direct response to key themes emerging in the first phase. The propositions were scrutinized, modified and approved in a steering committee chaired by the Technical and Environmental Department.

	<i>Phase 1. Mapping of coordination issue</i>	<i>Phase 2. Articulation of strategic perspective/ governance paradigm</i>	<i>Phase 3. Subsequent implementation</i>
Tasks and methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - theoretically informed agenda formulation - qualitative interviews - workshops and brainstorming - guided mapping and self-description of administrative practices/dilemmas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - synthesis of problem identification and analysis - development of propositions 1 to 6 of new strategic framework - Critical administrative scrutiny and modification of propositions - formal sanctioning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - negotiation, specification and implementation of propositions

Two premises guided the action research approach. First, the meta-governance and strategisation perspectives potentially offered relevant operational inputs to the institutional dilemmas experienced by practitioners. The assumption was that agents working within pillarised agencies could better deal with holistic, wicked problems like ghettoisation if they engaged in an "institutional frame reflection". Mapping the dominant coordination problems, the strategy was to discuss with planners how coordination dilemmas were reflections of the limitations to their institutional domains and governance practices, and not only "local" issues to be handled by street-level personnel. This second-order reflection process could stimulate an increased awareness of institutional boundaries and blind spots and potentially point to elements in a meta-governance strategy. The term meta-governance was not introduced in the discussion, but the substantial argument of the premise was.

Second, we presented an initial proposition to introduce a new evaluation practice based on the concept of change strategy (inspired by Kubish, Fulbright-Anderson & Connell 1998) and a standard strategy template as a practical tool to be used in all area-based interventions run by the City (proposition two below). The premise was that the evaluation practice and strategy template would constitute a push toward strategisation processes. The new practice would potentially stimulate strategy development at the local level; link local and City strategies and programmes better; clarify administrative involvement in local interventions; generate qualitative knowledge of local effects to inform administration and governance practices; and offer a shared framework for negotiations and dialogue in relation to development, implementation and termination of specific area-based projects and interventions.

Meta-governance and 'the horizontal pillar' in the City of Copenhagen

The governance system of the City of Copenhagen is composed of the City Council as the governing body, and seven standing committees. The Finance Committee, chaired by the Lord Mayor, is the overarching committee in charge of city wide coordination and planning. It is comprised by the chairmen – mayors – of each of the standing committees, and six other City Council members. The mayors and the standing committee members are elected by the City Council according to proportional representation. The result is that the mayors do not have a born majority in the committees or in the City Council. They have to negotiate all issues on a case-to-case basis. Administrative governance is divided between the 7 mayors and the managing directors of the seven municipal departments. Each department is subject to the authority of both mayor and Standing Committee.

It follows from this structure, that it generates tensions and conflicts potentially within but especially between different departments run by political opponents. From a coordination perspective, *party political disagreements and differences among mayors and committees obviously affect administrative structures and generate interdepartmental power conflicts*. It stands to reason that developing a common practice in a cross-disciplinary field in this governance structure is quite a challenge. The mayors involved may disagree on the necessity of prioritising specific interventions, or on cross-departmental strategies and programme solutions. Further, political committees often disagree with mayors, and political disagreements of this kind impact administrative practices. It follows, that public servants need to carefully negotiate complex ties of loyalty in relation to the political leadership of each department, in relation to political struggles between departments, and between the municipal administration and local stakeholders involved in joined-up activities.

The City of Copenhagen is the biggest workplace in Denmark. Each of the seven departments in practice operates as a group on its own terms, and from an employees perspective there is little if any cross-departmental exchange. Few have knowledge of policies and policy objectives across all sectors. This, in combination with the large number of local projects and interventions, means that public servants centrally and locally in practice have little knowledge of the ways in which political objectives are related to specific comprehensive area projects. Further, due to the large number of area-interventions and the complexity of the public administration, keeping track of the different interventions is difficult if not impossible.

Area-based interventions and programmes are primarily run by three municipal administrations: the Department of Technique and Environment, the Department of Employment and Integration, and the Department of Social Services. The

administrations work with a broad range of interventions targeted at specific problems in distressed neighbourhoods.

A political majority in the City Council has expressed a wish to strengthen public dialogue at the district level, and City administrations pursue a network-based planning approach to support this dialogue. Ideally, the approach allows the City to respond to local needs in a holistic and contingent manner, and develop new insights on how to improve traditional public service delivery in the context of specific neighbourhoods and everyday life situations of their citizens.

The notions of "area-interventions" or "area-based interventions" cover a range of comprehensive or holistic programmes and interventions that combine elements of citizens' participation, cross-departmental coordination and bottom-up processes. The three departments involved in the action research project place emphasis on the local development processes promoted by area-based interventions, and they define these as *"holistic and decentralised interventions where municipal and non-municipal parties collaborate on the development and implementation of a development strategy, which will improve the citizens' quality of life and strengthen the sustainability of the area concerned by way of measurable initiatives in a geographically defined area"* (Engberg 2008, p. 12).

In the search for a new organisational paradigm for better coordination and integration of such interventions, coordination barriers in three administrative domains have been mapped: 1) comprehensive urban renewal, 2) comprehensive social development plans, anchored in the Department of Technique and Environment, and 3) area-based integration and employment policies run by the Department of Integration and Employment (ibid p. 23-47). The analyses of these domains are synthesised in the following.

1. Comprehensive urban renewal

Danish local governments can apply for national funding of comprehensive social and physical regeneration in distressed neighbourhoods (Ærø et al 2008, Engberg et.al 2008, Larsen 2009). These programmes are run in close collaboration with citizens and other local stakeholders. Urban planners assist citizens in developing ideas and projects, which are prioritised and put into strategic spatial planning documents and legally binding district plans, plans that impact municipal priorities and activities in the districts.

In the City of Copenhagen, *comprehensive urban renewal* is a long-established administrative practice. The City sets up local project teams of urban planners that collaborate with local stakeholders in a typical structure of steering committee,

community office and citizens' working groups. The local teams organise participation processes to empower citizens, and to orchestrate a bottom-up mobilisation and articulation of needs, ideas and preferences as a basis for specific renewal activities.

At the operational level, objectives targeted in districts plans often clash with the plans and priorities of central bureaucracy. The bottom-up procedure adds distracting and sometimes conflictual elements to the day-to-day operations of central administrations. These in turn react defensively by grading down commitments and material involvement in cross-sector projects. An urban planner organising the regeneration scheme acknowledges the conflict but argues that antagonistic relations between local and central level provoke necessary institutional changes: *“The purpose of the Urban Regeneration Programme is to challenge the traditional procedures and the administrative system. However, this is not always welcomed in the administrations. The administrations tend to think in terms of harmony instead of conflict, the consequence of which is weak managerial will to carry out the necessary confrontations to obtain change”*.

The central-local dilemma is accentuated by the advocacy-oriented strategy often pursued by local urban renewal teams and partnerships. Some local teams consider it legitimate to short-cut central agencies and take direct contact to politicians in the City Council. The collaborative local bodies are seen to represent the 'institutionalised voice of the local community' giving a legitimate reason to address politicians directly. This approach is perceived necessary to 'implement the widest possible range of the desired initiatives articulated in the programme'. However, direct political contact initiated by local administrative units obviously shortcut internal administrative procedures. Administrative leaders are anxious about not losing this type of control. They criticise direct contact between front-line personnel and citizens on one side and City Council members on the other. Such contacts severely complicate administrative procedures in an otherwise balanced and tight administrative process. Project leaders and civil society actors recognise the point of view, but argue that succumbing to such arguments is to miss out on a chance to improve matters.

The key organisational dilemma is this: How to organise a positive cross-administrative collaboration, when area-based renewal results in articulation and negotiation of extraordinary demands and political pressures that aim to challenge these administrations? Is it possible to combine the horizontal and vertical logics in a way that challenges power relations and activate the immanent steering-paradoxes and -tensions of the City's governance regime, without placing too high strains on the people involved?

2. Comprehensive social development plans

Social housing associations can apply for funding of comprehensive social development plans in collaboration with local government to combat ghettoisation in social housing estates, and to initiate preventive initiatives in housing estates on the edge of ghettoisation. The plans build on tenants' participation and combine social integration measures, physical regeneration and re-mortgaging of social housing estates to improve their market position. The plans are financed by the National Building Fund of the social housing sector, provided that 25% of the project's total budget is co-financed by way of funding or manpower. In most cases, local government provides the co-financing. Together with the social housing sector, the City of Copenhagen has initiated a total of 44 plans (2009) that cover a wide range of initiatives in relation to children and youth, social activities, integration and employment, culture and leisure etc.

The content of each plan is negotiated and specified in a negotiation between the social housing association and local residents' bodies, and the relevant municipal departments, a process governed by a cross-departmental team anchored in the Department of Technology and Environment. The cross-sector involvement is well-functioning, and an effective network between central and local parties has been developed. While the group benefits by a close and binding cooperation on the individual development plans, the parties lack relations on a local level to ensure the coordination and progress of the intervention. As the number of interventions rise, so does the need to develop the organisational structure in order to deal with this issue.

The governance schism in relation to the comprehensive development plans is that the plans presuppose municipal co-financing and practical involvement in implementation, while the project-owner is the social housing organisation in collaboration with the residents' board of the housing estate in the distressed area. The schism is accentuated by the fact that each plan is comprehensive and requires cross-sector coordination, and by the fact that the number of individual interventions increases on an annual basis.

3. Area-based integration and employment policies

The Department of Employment and Integration develops a growing number of area-based interventions to support and supplement the existing employment and integration schemes. The department has developed an Integration Barometer that benchmarks progress on the City's integration policy, also at the level of individual areas. The barometer signals a new administrative practice that combine a focus on and measurement of policy outcomes with a higher degree of administrative discretion with respect to specific implementation. The administrative approach

means that attention is paid to the place-oriented perspective that needs to be integrated in the existing administrative praxis.

Yet, in their everyday practice administrations experience a schism between the horizontal and the vertical perspective in relation to the efforts on employment and integration. The department bases its cross-disciplinary approach on the integration politics of the City Council. At the same time, interventions are regulated by law, and therefore organised within a sector-oriented framework as opposed to that of a place-oriented. For example, the strategy behind the local employment centres is not place-oriented, and in the different decentralised functions, the task of establishing a sound, area-based perspective to frame the intervention is viewed as complicated.

A substantial part of the administration's public service delivery is structured within a legal framework not adhering to an area-based logic. In consequence, the administration is faced with the challenge of balancing between its responsibilities of public authority control and those of a cooperative approach to the local community. The department has initiated a number of taskforce activities and teams that seek to integrate these opposing rationales better in order to consolidate the outreach dimension of the departments' activities.

Institutionalised barriers to better coordination

The propositions for a new organisational paradigm are rooted in the analysis of the specific governance challenges as described above, and in a mapping exercise of general institutional barriers to better coordination. 5 such key barriers were identified:

1. Uncertainty of the effects of interventions and projects is problematic

The evaluation and benchmarking of area-interventions and projects is inadequate. Uncertainty about both qualitative and quantitative effects gives rise to two problems: 1) it hinders the development and strengthening of area-based interventions as an instrument for improving social, economic and cultural conditions; 2) it undermines the legitimacy of area-based interventions in relation to effective implementation of policy goals and programmes.

2. The lack of a qualified strategic dimension that links the interventions and situates these in a politico-administrative context poses a coordination barrier

Under the present circumstances, it is likely that administrations miss out on valuable knowledge gained in area-interventions of relevance to their specific fields. Also, the projects are at risk of moving in opposite directions. Without an institutional strategic dimension linking the large number of interventions, diversification rather than coherence characterise the projects. This potentially results in an aggravation of the

problem initially addressed with the interventions.

3. Lack of coordination lead to absence of intended synergy effects

The synergy effects strived for with the holistic, area-based interventions is doubtful without the investment of adequate resources to coordinate these. Without proper coordination efforts, the positive experiences of public participation are put at risk or even counteracted. A typical coordination problem arises in cases where projects with different time horizons and different funding institutions are established in the same area without the projects collaborating or without a concerted municipal coordination of activities in the area.

4. Standardised administrative inputs into area-projects can be counterproductive

When projects are initiated because of funding opportunities, administrations have an incentive to standardise their contribution and offer routine inputs to projects with a take-it-or-leave-it attitude. As a consequence, local projects have to work with inputs that do not necessarily match the preferences and ideas generated in the citizens' dialogue. Further, making administrations explicate their views in relation to the many issues of a specific spatial area is quite a challenge. This lack of a concrete area perspective reduces the room to manoeuvre considerably, leading to frustration in projects and local steering groups.

5. Involving the local community and maintaining this involvement poses a challenge

More often than not, project applications are written under time pressure making the process of integrating the local community difficult. In efforts where the initial phase is characterised by thorough dialogue, the challenge of maintaining the citizens' interest till projects begin taking shape becomes an issue. Additionally, during the lifespan of an intervention considerable replacement among active citizens occurs. In projects with limited time for preparation and weak initial dialogue, the issue of involving citizens and creating actual participation and local ownership becomes a challenge.

To sum up, current administrative practices in the City of Copenhagen are characterised by an inconsistency between demands for a successful realisation of holistic, area-based interventions and a lack of institutional preconditions for this realisation. To compensate for this deficiency, the two departments in collaboration with the researchers have formulated a strategic response to the various coordination dilemmas under the heading 'horizontal pillar'. The metaphor 'horizontal pillar' is a contraction in terms that encompasses the quintessence of the governance dilemmas experienced by departments encouraged to integrate the horizontal perspective with the traditional hierarchical and pillarised practices, and develop a new positive sum between these partly incompatible logics.

The horizontal pillar

The horizontal pillar promotes a specific understanding of 'area-based intervention' along the following guidelines (Engberg 2008, p. 14-15; 54-62):

- The individual intervention should be based on an analysis of the specific area's problems and resources
- The already present resources, qualities and preferences are mapped and integrated into a new and coherent *local strategy for change*
- A successful intervention requires a dialogical approach where local stakeholders contribute to the formulation of this operational intervention strategy

By way of dialogue, the ideas, resources and competencies present in the local community strengthen the municipal activities and programmes, which in turn become closer affiliated to and relevant for the needs and lives of the citizens concerned.

The 6 propositions constituting 'the horizontal pillar' imply a relocation of the complex coordination problems, from an arms length position where they are mainly dealt with as local problems, to a position where dilemmas and dichotomies are explicitly addressed as a challenge both externally and in existing bureaucratic practices. Implicit in this relocation is a break with the viewpoint of area-interventions as isolated development activities to be dismantled as soon as the external financing expires. Instead, the propositions incite a better integration of the interventions with the existing administrative practices by means of a range of instruments: integration of data-sources, political and managerial prioritisation over a period of time, a more structured platform for negotiation and agreements, an integration (unification) of the governance structure, a focus on the influence of the interventions on a city district scale and a more professional evaluation practice with focus on both quantitative and qualitative effects of interventions.

Proposition 1. The departments strengthen joint knowledge sharing on central and local level by 1) making their individual perspectives on problems in the distressed urban areas clear in the map and data basis underlying the interventions, and 2) over time deciding on a joint thematization of problems and data basis

In their work, the administrations make use of different reports of analyses and maps of the city. For instance, the Department of Technique and Environmental uses a

'Socio-economic Map of Copenhagen' and the Department of Employment and Integration has developed an 'Integration Barometer'. Joining forces, the administrations search common data interfaces intent on reaching a joint order of priority on a political and administrative level among certain city districts in need. This ambition requires the implementation of a two-pronged method: over time and on a city district scale, quantitative data sources are able to monitor the more general developments while qualitative data from aggregated strategy templates deliver more specialised information (cf. proposition 2). By comparing the two levels of data the City creates a more qualified basis for evaluating and discussing the total effects of the different area-interventions.

Proposition 2. The departments adopt a new evaluation practice that operationalise and concretise area-interventions following a shared 'change-strategy' template and an agreed negotiation and evaluation procedure¹

The need to document and make the effects of the area-based interventions probable is evident. To satisfy this need the specific *strategy for change* of an intervention is made the focal point of dialogue between the local and municipal parties. Based on certain practice guidelines for evaluation, the administrations assess the effects in the medium-long and long-term by using a strategy template. This template depicts the milestones, levels of intervention and criteria for success described in a given intervention's strategy for change. The specific content of each strategy is developed locally while discussed and negotiated with central agencies to commit these to specific inputs and actions. Thus, the strategy template serves to link individual interventions with municipal political and administrative objectives. The template features stop light indications to be filled out with certain intervals by project participants. These indications form the basis for the continuous local-central steering-dialogue. All existing and new area-interventions are inserted in a template, and all templates are made available online.

Proposition 3. Central and local parties adopt a joint governance procedure in relation to area-interventions

A joint procedure for negotiation and cooperation qualifies the regulation of area-interventions according to political and administrative goals, and it strengthens local dialogue and civic participation by clarifying the scope and content of municipal involvement in local activities. The governance procedure is incorporated in the

¹ The evaluation practice is inspired by Kubish, Fulbright-Anderson & Connell 1998, *New Approaches to Evaluating Community Initiatives*, Vol. 2, Theory, Measurement and Analysis, The Aspen Institute.

administrations' annual routines and serves in relation to the establishment, development and termination of all area-interventions. The purpose of negotiations is two-fold: to specify the City's involvement in the local interventions and to clarify their relevance to the realisation of local goals formulated by local stakeholders. The negotiations are carried out within the scope of the joint strategy template.

There is a need for less ambiguous entry to the relevant areas of administration. This brings into focus the sector administration responsible for the coherence and the interventions within a certain cross-disciplinary policy area. This administration plays an important role in linking the different levels: one entry is to be established from area-level to the administration and another entry from the central municipal level to the administration in question.

Proposition 4. A more coherent (unified) governance structure for area-interventions has to be implemented in the administrations involved

As it is today, a number of parallel governance structures for area-interventions are in use in the City. Thus, the need for rationalising the governance practice and consolidating the efforts in joint governance and coordination structures is clear. The perspective is that in time, all seven Copenhagen administrations will implement joint coordination bodies and join "the horizontal pillar".

Proposition 5. A strengthening of the city district level as a municipal planning framework for area-interventions is recommended

The large number of area-interventions in certain city districts in Copenhagen stresses the need for coordinating interventions on a city district level. If the administrations prioritise those city districts most in need of extraordinary area-interventions and incorporate such a prioritisation in sector policies and strategies, this need can be met. A strategic planning of area-interventions on city district level will enable a mobilisation and involvement of actors locally as well as centrally before funds for new interventions are applied for. Furthermore, a city district focus will encourage the local projects to be more aware of common issues and conditions on an area and city district level. A medium length planning horizon allows for more exact surveys of existing resources, needs and ideas, and potentially supports local ownership to projects.

It is recommended that development plans be made for the prioritised city districts that integrate existing and future area-interventions, which then should be linked to the strategic spatial planning process of the City. On a city district level 'district

conferences' are organised at which project participants, citizens, politicians and public servants discuss the city district strategies and the local development efforts.

Proposition 6. Based on the proposals in the horizontal pillar, the municipal departments join a cooperation agreement and come up with a joint strategy for coordinating the efforts in the (approx. 10) distressed neighbourhoods in the City of Copenhagen

Taken together, implementing the propositions will manage the strategic challenge of combining the area-perspective with that of the administrations with their focus on uniform benefits and services, equal access for all citizens, functional economics of scale etc. The socio-economic map of Copenhagen identifies the worst off areas in the city (approx. 10 neighbourhoods) and a brief review of departmental policies and area-based interventions show that all seven have already extraordinary interventions in these areas. To fully reap the potentials of the pillar, the City should prioritise these districts in a medium and long-term perspective.

Discussion and conclusion

"Time and time again we find that the general rule is that elected officials and professional administrators are not well informed about the slice of social reality that they deal with or about the effects that their policy measures have on the ground...in countless cases politicians, administrators, and experts simply do not know what is going on or, even worse, have no way of knowing it" (Wagenaar 2007, p. 27).

Comprehensive, area-based interventions are tools that potentially modernise and improve the service delivery of local government administrations. The reasons for this lie in the 'dialogical contextualisation' of municipal interventions and services; in a responsive connection of municipal objectives with local needs and preferences; and in the social development push a coordinated intervention can achieve in a distressed neighbourhood.

It is a leadership challenge to implement the six propositions in the administrative practices of the City of Copenhagen. Ultimately, successful implementation facilitates cross-departmental coordination to the benefit of inhabitants of distressed neighbourhoods and the rest of Copenhagen. But a new practice does not remove the basic tensions and power conflicts in the City's governance system. At the same time, any regime have its dilemmas and power balances, and the strategic innovations pursued in the City of Copenhagen denotes a tendency that public servants self-reflexively orient themselves towards strengthening citizens' participation and figuring out how to better contextualise local government activities. The strategic

perspective developed by the two departments signifies a wish to facilitate place-based leadership processes.

In the wake of the action research process, a number of the propositions are being implemented (2009). The new evaluation practice with a focus on local change strategies and their operational connections to existing policies and programmes is being implemented. A task force group has been set up to scrutinize further integration of data sources. All departments are represented in a cross-departmental working group that carries the propositions forward. The district level is strengthened as an administrative unit, and plans are made for new 'district conferences'. The urban planners involved seek to harmonise negotiation processes to strengthen specific commitment and departmental ownership to shared projects. Existing coordination and governance bodies are merged at the municipal level. The City prepares a strategic partnership agreement with the social housing sector, an agreement that also concerns coordination and integration of area-based interventions.

Situated meta-governance

Meta-governance is a soft power steering technology that - in our example - pulls closer the multiplicity of local project activities and semi-autonomous networks to mainstream bureaucratic practices. It situates the local dialogue within a goal-and-agreement model: In order for the governance efforts to come to fruition, City policy objectives must be supplemented with a local and concrete debate on preferences and goals, and the negotiated results need to be mirrored in joint agreements. Concrete and operational goals commit the parties, and indicate that the dialogue is embedded in the everyday life of the target group. The balancing act between central and local rationalities can be expressed in this way: Indirect regulation of the target group's self-regulation presupposes negotiation, dialogue and some degree of participatory influence.

The new evaluation practice urge the parties to specify goals, activities and causal assumptions, and reassess these on a continuous basis, a process that makes problem-definitions and policy discourses in relation to specific interventions more explicit. This mechanism of strategising in practice gives a push to a critical local dialogue about policy perceptions and modes of intervention. Because system targets become visible to local actors they become potentially open to renegotiation and critique. Referring to the theoretical considerations introduced above, we have to ask whether the propositions pave the way for strategisation processes, where existing predefined problem categories and top-down interventions are supplemented with collaborative strategy-making?

Ideally, the new evaluation and negotiation practice with the strategy template at its centre does not exclude the narrative of citizens' knowledge, problem-definitions and change projects. The challenge is to formulate local change strategies that do not reduce complexity to a simple and reductionist format, but establishes a relatively complex strategic agenda that connects the different rationalities at play.

To give an example of the relationship between the strategy template and strategisation processes: Many current area-based projects in the City of Copenhagen address the topic of "threatened youth" in the locality as one of their key priorities. With project funding, social housing associations employ outreach personnel who set up projects for local youth to reduce crime and to improve the quality of life for this group. To support this, the City requests that project owners formulate a comprehensive positive change agenda for the target group, and address the specific problem-solving strategy in relation to other local municipal and non-municipal social integration measures. This way, each project strengthens its strategic dimension and contextualises this, and links and synergies between project activities and City practice are strengthened. The process is further developed in both thematic and district conferences that focus on key issues addressed in area-interventions, for example "youth".

Thus, the pillar propositions establish a framework for a critical discussion of local change-strategies in the context of mainstream welfare provisions. 'Emotions and actions' are shaped towards collective ends by the direct and indirect coordination of many decision making centres and actors in relation to shared agendas. Ideally, the strategisation develops the participatory system so that it stimulates the upstream flow of practical knowledge, enabling "actors in the system to produce, appreciate, and select productive intervention strategies and arrive at coordination of problem solving and decision making" (Wagenaar 2007, p. 29).

Yet, from a system perspective the dilemma continues to be that the place-based perspective clashes with a sector-logic that leaves few incentives to prioritise the development of collective goods that fall outside the categories of sector goals. The 'strategisation' processes challenge this status quo by illuminating sector boundaries and their relative inadequacies from a place-based perspective, and by fostering alternative and comprehensive problem solving strategies and interventions.

But it is an asymmetric power-relation, or David's fight against Goliath. Networks of actors are dynamic as coalitions form and disband, and as different forms of interest representation take place simultaneously, strategisation processes may become replete with conflict and antagonism. When conflicts occur, they take place between a large permanent body in the central administration, and small temporary bodies in

the de-central organisation, staffed by temporary personnel with weak affiliations to the central departments. Needless to say, central authority bodies have the upper hand. When local staff and stakeholders opt for confrontational strategies, these might have immediate results, but at the cost of long-term career opportunities for the planners involved, of proactive institutional support etc. Essentially, when individual planners promote the place-based perspective, they confront themselves with the systemic dilemmas of the governance system as such. From an urban leadership perspective, the 'test' posed by the horizontal pillar is whether a new administrative practice is developed that makes it more attractive for planners and street level personnel to work with area-based interventions and community empowerment.

Conclusion

Governance systems are ripe with steering paradoxes, power imbalances and contradictory forces at play, and they manifest different institutional balances between conflict-orientation and consensus-seeking behaviour. The point is that bureaucratic modernisation strategies geared to deal with wicked, holistic problems strategically develop the second-order perspective in order to manipulate system boundaries and immanent governance dilemmas, and ultimately to improve goal implementation and reduce coordination costs. Our case study of the City of Copenhagen illustrates, that this second-order perspective is not an academic exercise only. It is a mainstream leadership issue that filters down to public servants, who as practitioners have to make ends meet in complex network based organisational settings.

The strategic formulation of the six propositions in the horizontal pillar, and their gradual implementation, reflects this point. From one perspective, the propositions only articulate the second best solution to the steering paradoxes of the governance system in the City of Copenhagen. But from another perspective, they erect a horizontal pillar to supplement the existing 'silos' with a framework that allows for an exploration of shared agendas, stimulating public civil servants to explore institutional boundaries and world-views from a place-based perspective, and possibly transcend these.

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