Contemporary local government administration: Competences, Roles and Values Among managers and middle managers in a changing context

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Introduction

One of the main ingredients within New Public Management (NPM) has been to almost glorify the role of management, both in relation to the political level and in relation to the professional level. "Steer – not row" have been an appeal not just to politicians, but to managers as well. There are three main ideas that are supposed to be the foundation of this ideal type of new management. The first idea is labelled as "let the manager manage", which signify that a strong and effective leadership needs distance from the political level. The second idea is that management is a profession in it self with specific qualities. Good management is thus assumed to be conducted without thorough knowledge about the specific substantial fields. The third idea is that this kind of new managers should facilitate and give room for occupational professionalization within the specific sectors (such as teachers in schools and care workers within eldercare).

Hence, key words in accordance to these ideas are "independent management", "professional management" and "professional independence", which have been rhetoric figures for reforming municipal organisations in Sweden since the 1980s. In this paper we argue that there is great distance between these fundamental ideas of how to "modernize" municipal welfare institutions and the actual development for managers. More specifically we pinpoint what managers and middle managers actually do when they manage and what impact this managing activities may have on the professional work within education and eldercare.

The gap between management ideals and management in practice has been a subject for research ever since the idea of a "scientific management" was introduced in the early twenty centuries. Especially the "new" ideas inspired by the NPM philosophy and its implementation have been scrutinized from different perspectives. In general, some of the findings suggest that expectations and demands on managers often consist of several contradictions and trade-offs (Pollit & Bouckaert 2011:187-190) and that resolutions of

contradictions are often delegated to managers on the spot (Wälllstedt & Almstedt 2015). Other findings that the introduction of internal performance control systems, stronger demands of cost-efficiency, and documentation occupies an increasingly mount of time for managers, which means that there is less time for supporting professional service activities (Forssell & Westerberg 2014). Still other findings suggest that the development during the last decades has not is not in forward towards "professional independence", but the other way around. Occupational professions, such as teachers and care workers, have increasingly become less independent. They are, together with middle managers embedded in more and more sophisticated and digitalised control systems (Kankkunen *et al* 2015). To put it bluntly: there is a strong impression that managers and middle managers (often in spite of their wish) are participating in a system that disturb rather than support the professional work within education, social care and health care.

Hence, he overall question raised in this paper is how the role of management has changed over decades and what contemporary managers within elder care and education actually do when they manage and what kind of values and competences that are required and practiced. How do managers and middle managers cope with contradicting demands and expectations? Do they support or do they disturb the "core business" of education and elderly care?

In what follows, we first outline a theoretical framework as well as a methodology that will guide our analysis. Next, we briefly introduce the Swedish local government system and the system of governance in education and eldercare. Then, the findings are presented in accordance to themes in the theoretical framework. Finally, discussion and comments are offered.

Leadership and management in transition

A generic conclusion within social science is that human actions and values are depended on and interwoven with the contextual setting within which they are operating, and that contextual changes alter behavioural and value patterns (Johansson 2016). The normative basis of the NPM-agenda and the organizational reforms implemented in line with it has fundamentally changed the context within which the public administration and its servants carry out their tasks. However, only one group of public servants has been emphasized as essential in the NPM-project and that is the manager (eg. Lapsley, 2008; Jarl, Fredriksson and Persson, 2012). Above the fact that the manager has been expected to direct and control the transformation process s/he also is understood as the most important key figure in an NPM-setting. Consequently, if our intension is to describe how and if managerial practices has been changed since the 80s, and analyse its impact on managerial and professionals roles it is necessary distinguishing expected roles and functions of managers in NPM-inspired systems from those in traditional public administrative systems.

In classic theory of professions and welfare state theory managers are not defined as a profession. Instead one main task of managers is to direct and support professions within above all core areas of the welfare state, such as for example health care, education and elderly care (eg. Friedson, 2001; Evans, 2011). Further, welfare professions are understood to have a legitimate mandate to make independent decisions with high discretion based on trust, scientifically knowledge and best practice (e.g Svensson, 2006; Evans 2011). In both theoretical and empirical studies researchers have found that the implementation of NPM-inspired reforms has changed the traditional role of the manager, as well as the relationship between managers and professions and the discretion of professions.

New professionalism, hybrids, hybridization, leaderism and organisational professionalism are only a few of those expressions and concepts used by researchers in the filed whom try to describe and capture the effects and consequences of the transformation process (e.g

Noordengraaf 2007; Noordengraaf, 2015; Evetts, 2009; O'Reily and Reed 2011; Croft, Currie and Lockett 2015)

In the wake of NPM-inspired reforms organisational professionalism has been hypothesised to grow at the expense of occupational professionalism (Evetts, 2003; Evetts, 2009; Evetts, 2011). It is argued that organisational professionalism develops within contexts characterized by *external* forms of regulation and control systems, composed of for example performance targets and indicators while occupational professionalism is fostered in a context characterized of *internal* forms of regulation- and control systems such as for example professional standards and trust.

Consequently, external regulation- and control systems are hyphoteized to support the formation of new and the reformation of old professions. New emerging professions are often defined as hybrids implying that these professions often comprise a mix of tasks and values that cannot solely be related to one context (Considine and Lewis, 1999; Noordegraaf 2007, Noordegraaf, 2015, Currie and Croft , 2015; Berg and Pinheiro 2016). Within the research field the changed roles, functions and values of the key figure in the NPM-project – the manager – is problematized, quite often more or less based on a purely theoretical discussion and analysis. On theoretical grounds NPM is expected to promote organisational professionalism which transform tasks, knowledge- and value-formation, loyalty- and interaction patterns as well as trust building and the foundation of legitimacy (Green, 2013; Johansson and Montin, 2014; Shanks, Lundström and Wiklund, 2015; Hansen and Jacobsen, 2015).

Based on five comprehensive and general competence areas for public managers Virtanen theoretically analyses why and how NPM- inspired reforms most likely will affect both instrumental and value competences among them (Virtanen, 2000). His conclusions will be

used as a starting point in our search for an emerging management profession and will also serve as a basis for the identification of professional dimensions that may be present among managers in elderly care and education in Swedish municipalities.

The first general competence, *task competence*, is defined as skills and behavioural technics that the manager must be able to accomplish within the frame of given goals and means and its value component is defined as motivation. The second competence, *professional competence,* is composed of (theoretical) knowledge about the subject area (e.g elderly care, education) and the implementation structure (e.g human resource management) and its value component is societal and policy sensitivity. The third competence, *administrative professional competence* is understood as the ability to execute and implement political decisions and its value component is ability to control programmes and to co-operate. The fourth component, *political competence* is defined as the manager's ideology and interests and the value component is her ability to use official authority. The fifth component, *ethical competence*, is understood as the moral values and norms a manager believes in and the value component is morality. Further, the instrumental and value components of each of the five competences can be either superficial or profound. It is first when the manager is committed to and fundamentally has changed her interpretation and understanding of competence that the manager's role has been transformed.

What value components are likely to be found in competences that elderly and education managers perform and uphold, if a transformation process from occupational to organisational professionalism has taken place as a consequence of the NPM-project?

	Traditional manager	NPM (organizational) manager
Task value competence	*Procedural accountability* Motivation in relation to bureaucratic rules	*Performance accountability* Motivation in relation to measurement systems and rules
Professional "substance" value competence	*State interventionism* (Govern – Base policy objectives on scientific and professional knowledge) Use intervention. At first hand support welfare professionals initiatives and solutions. Loyality – target groups	*Anti-interventionism* ("React" – Base policy objectives on preferences) Avoid intervention, At first hand support citizen and market initiatives and solutions Loyalty – organisational unit
Professional "form" value competence	*Policy management* (Focus on policy advice and implementation processes)	*Resource management* (Focus on budgeting and financial management and performance goals)
Political value competence	*Impersonal and role-bound formal authority* Embraces egalitarian and etatist (large service state) ideologies, applies collective strategic management strategies (with focus on stakeholders in policy community),	*Personal and relational authority* Embraces individualist and neo-liberal ideologies, applies individualistic strategic management strategies autonomous (with focus on the who/what accountable in relation to)
Ethical value competence	*Morality of egalitarianism* Distributive justice Obligation to public interest Solidarity with policy community and professional network	*Morality of self-interest* Fair play in competition "Obligation" to contract-relations Solidarity with superiors and organisational unit

Roles framed within the OP risk altering the rational foundations of acting, which affects interaction patterns that can change the values and knowledge patterns (Johansson, Lindgren, Montin, 2013).

Methods

Empirically the paper is based on a comparative case study of three municipalities (cities) in Sweden within the frame of a research project on values among local public officials[1]. The municipalities are of different size and different political setting (Luleå, 76,000 inhabitants with social democratic majority, Lidköping, 25,200 inhabitants with a majority of social democrats, left party and green party in majority, and Kävlinge, 9, 000 inhabitants with right-wing parties in majority). Due to the size of the municipalities they also differ in administrative size. In total 23 personal interviews within elderly care and education have been conducted. In addition, an extensive number of internal documents have been analysed.

Swedish education and eldercare governance

Local self-government is recognised as a distinctive feature of the Swedish political system ever since 1862, when the first Local Government Act was introduced. Sweden has comparatively a highly decentralised political system (Kuhlmann & Wollmann, 2014). Yet, Sweden is a unitary state, which means that the real world of local self-government is a negotiated order in the shadow of central government and the Parliament (*Riksdagen*). Municipal welfare policies and education is guided by laws, mostly in terms of "framework legislation". Simply speaking this means that substantial objectives are set in the legislation, but local governments are free to choose the means for reaching the objectives. Additionally, national agencies are continuously "filling up" framework legislation by recommendations and instructions. Over the decades there have been a pendulum movement between centralisation and decentralisation tendencies.

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[1] The research project is called "Has value patterns and professional roles among local governmental officials changed during the last thirty years?" and is financed by The Bank of Weden Tercentenary Foundation (2014-2017).

The previously centrally regulated Swedish education system has since around 1990 become a decentralized, quasi-market, and goal-oriented system, with responsibility for schools having been shifted to municipalities and the local government level. Municipalities are responsible for employing school staff, organizing schools and adult education, and determining resource allocation; moreover, they are also accountable to the central government for their schools' achievement of national education goals and requirement levels (Lundahl 2005). The quasi-market education system is based on school vouchers and the right of parents and students to choose freely between publicly financed schools, owned and organized either by municipalities or independent school providers. In 2015 there were 800 (11 per cent) independent primary schools *(grundskolor)* and 452 (32 per cent) independent upper secondary schools (*gymnasium*).

Swedish education governance is a system with several layers, with policy and governance being shaped via a complex interplay between actors at several layers. The Education Act and the government's objectives for education constitute the basis of education governance. On behalf of the Ministry of Education and Research, the National Agency for Education formulates and proposes goals for the curricula, manages the collection, analysis, and dissemination of national statistics, and conducts national monitoring and evaluation. The Schools Inspectorate supervises all schools. Municipal and independent school providers are responsible for schools, for implementing educational activities, for organizing and operating school services, and for self-evaluation by monitoring school quality and results to ensure that they are in line with national goals. Principals are responsible for their schools' results, evaluated on the basis of national goals, but can receive additional assignments from municipal politicians (Skolverket 2013).

Municipal eldercare has historically developed from the responsibility for arranging homes for old and poor people in the 17th century. Modern elder care can be dated from the 1950s, when municipal home care was introduced.

Eldercare services in Sweden is regarded as provided on a universal basis, which means comprehensive, publicly financed and high quality services should be available for all citizens according to their needs rather than their ability to pay. Approximately 85 per cent of eldercare funding comes from municipal/county council taxes, while another 10 per cent comes from national taxes. Users pay covers only 5-6 per cent of the costs (Erlandsson et al 2013). The official policy for elderly care has for several decades focused on home-based care (home help services). A special housing accommodation should only be considered when not other option remains and than it should be as home-like as possible. Overall national goals and criteria of good eldercare is stated in substantive legislation (Social Services Act, SFS 2001:453) and further developed as regulations by the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare (NBHW). Supervising and scrutinising functions is (from 2013) mainstreamed in a special inspection agency (The Health and Social Care Inspectorate, HSCI).

Task value competence

"By law the land should be built" (*Land skall med lag byggas*) was a Royal motto for king Karl XV (1859-1872). The motto has a longer history (it was first used in 1360 by a regional king) and it still used as a "narrative" for modern administrative culture in Sweden. However, laws can be of different kind. Since the 1980s laws governing welfare policy areas are "frame laws", which means that values and goals are stated, but it leaves great room for selecting different means. At the time this was framed as "from governing by rules to governing by objectives" for central-local government relations. When municipalities define means for reaching national goals and values the question of "national equivalence" is raised.

Increasingly, performance accountability in relation to national equivalence within elderly care and education has been regarded as important. Therefore, state agencies such as the School Inspectorate and the Health and Social Care Inspectorate, but also performance measuring systems provided by the Swedish Association for Local and Regional Authorities (SALA), are instruments for increased equivalence. As for the Inspectorates this means developing new rules and instructions. This is a continuing process. Performance controls of different kinds shows lack of equivalence, which in turn is used as argument for more rules.

At local level, in our case municipalities, this ongoing process of re-regulation is obvious. A manager for personnel and quality puts this bluntly:

"(W)e steer quite enormously now … the truths I lived with has been that people perform best if they are given a goal and letting them find the way by themselves … (N)ow we completely have thrown this (idea) in the wastepaper basket and we say that everyone has to do it the same way … Everyone is entitled for equivalent service no matter who is providing it".

In a perspective of 30 to 35 years we can say that there has been a development from trust-based de-regulation (in the 1980s) towards distrust based re-regulation (from the 1990s) (Montin 2015). Over the years the expected task value competence for local managers within elderly care and education has shifted from focusing on procedural accountability towards focusing on performance accountability. However, it does not stop here. On the basis of results from inspections, evaluations and other forms of performance scrutinizing, national agencies have provided procedural rules and guiding principles in order to make local government sectors perform in certain ways. Hence, there is a re-regulation in terms of legal specifications related to national performance measuring and controlling systems. The old idea of building the land by law is still prominent.

Professional "substance" value competence

In one of the municipalities (Luleå) there was a reorganisation of social elderly care about two and a half years prior to our study. An additional management level was put in between the senior manager of elderly care and the unit managers. These new middle managers ("area managers") was supposed to and also (in the interviews) defined them selves as supporting the unit managers in their professional work, for instance by doing some actual care work when needed, which can be referred to as practicing their professional "substance" value competence in a "traditional" way. However, all unit managers did not recognise this support. Instead, one of the unit managers told that in the beginning there was some support as intended but later on the area managers "disappeared" into other management activities. Referring to the overall impression of middle management activities the deviance between intended and actual roles can be explained by the intensified development of different financial and performance control systems and different projects that was not directly related to substance values. The new area managers became embedded within developing and implementing control systems in distance from the professional care work. Another way to put it is that "loyalty" to some extent was transferred from the professional ("target") group towards the financial and performance control system as such.

However, a partly opposite trend is observable in the municipalities studied, related to professional substance value; A trend that bears the hallmarks of both state interventionism and anti-interventionism. Local reforms have been initiated aiming at strengthening and professionalize welfare occupations, within both education and elderly care. In Kävlinge has for example the management level developed and implemented a specialist education program for employees in elderly care that is linked to a career system for homecare staff. Professional and scientific based knowledge within special areas of importance when caring for elderly (as for example dementia and palliative care) is taught through a course-system

that gives a local "specialist degree". That degree broadens the employees' responsibility and decision-making powers within the local elderly-care system and also gives a salary rise. The reform can be defined as a local state intervention reform aimed at supporting welfare professionals' initiatives and solutions. However, it can also be understood as an attempted to counteract a present and anticipated labour shortage within elderly care that all Swedish municipalities try to find solutions to. The construction of a local education and career system is anti-interventionistic in that municipalities try to attract potential employees by offering an employment that adapt to occupational preferences among potential employees. Similar reforms have also been launched within the education area where the Swedish government has developed and supported career-systems for teachers in primary and secondary schools. At municipal level has in some municipalities as for example in Kävlinge these national reforms been expanded to encompass also pre-school staff.

Political "substance" value competence

NPM is based on the belief of individual self-interest: politicians are voter maximizers, citizens are welfare maximisers and managers are budget maximisers and has an inherent drive for autonomy in their management efforts. Accordingly, different forms of competition are regarded as the most important prescription for effective welfare production. If the belief of self-interest turns not to be evident in every case, competition can be a "method for breeding certain types of minds" (Hayek in Nyberg 2016). Self-interest and competitive behaviour is hence not just a basic belief, but also becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Managers within social elderly care and education have to meet and cope with different expressions of self-interests, especially in terms of external pressures. Mass media often criticize social elder care and education from the point of view of individual cases and users and relatives often express their individual needs and wants. In one of the municipalities (Luleå) a national Television program called "Uppdrag granskning" (mission critical review)

paid attention twice to what was regarded as bad conditions for the elderly care users. In yet another of the municipalities (Kävlinge) a similar and even more critical investigation of the school sector was made by a national well-known journalist. Besides these types or more spectacular attentions, reporters from local newspapers and regional television broadcasting quite often critical examine municipal social services and education. Several municipal officers are involved in media relations, such as communication strategist wring press releases, but in most cases managers and middle managers have to answer questions asked by journalists. In addition, managers meet increasing demands from the immediate family of users within home help care and services and in special housing accommodation. Municipal officers who have been working with elder care for several decades makes clear that communication with users and the immediate family has strongly increased. An expression used by a unit manager in Luleå who worked within elderly care for several decades was that "earlier generations did not express any demands or critical remarks, but now this has become very common".

In order to provide a legitimate coping with this external pressure, managers turn to values of traditional administration such as impartiality and rule by law (often referred to as *Rechtstaat-values*). They have to be correct in their answers and try to convince users and the immediate family what is best for all. As an effect of the increased medialization of municipal services, managers have taken courses in media relations. In order to give correct answers (not saying to little or to much) they also have increased their competence in juridical matters. These kinds of management activities and competences can be referred to as organisational professionalization, but not in accordance to the NPM logic. Instead it can be seen as way to cope with expressions of competitive individualised society from the values and beliefs of the traditional administration focusing on *Rechstaat* values and obligation to public interest.

Professional "form" value competence

"Time is money" is an old expression signifying the modernization of society and an increasing restlessness within the capitalist system (Rosa 2011). Cost cutting within the public sector combined with increasing needs and demands of welfare services have made the expression even more relevant and in one of the investigated municipalities time is literally money within social elderly care. Home care services in terms of spending time on each visit and what to do on the visits is in many municipalities not decided by the care workers. It is planned and decided by managers. When a care worker in Luleå wakes up in the morning and start the smart phone there is a list of the planned work of the day. The first thing to do when the care worker comes home to a client is to register in the smart phone. After finishing the activities there is a second registering. It is the time between the registrations that the municipal home care service department get paid for. This means that the department don't have its own budget, but get paid by performance. There are several complications around this internal system. For instance, care workers forget to register or the planning of time and activities (made by others) does not always fit the actual need that particular day for that particular client. Unit managers for home services have to continuously "negotiate" with superior managers and controllers in order to figure out the relation between planned time and actual used time and its causes in order to get the financial matters right.

Within education there is a corresponding system of performance related pay, which is motivated by the national reform of "free choice" of schools for pupils and parents from the 1990s. Simply speaking, a certain amount of money (often referred to as school vouchers) is connected to each pupil and when this pupil for some reasons move from one school to another the sum of money is transferred from the first to the second school. For instance, in Kävlinge the distribution of this individual school voucher (*skolpeng*) is followed up every month and re-distributed among the schools (municipal or private schools). Practically, this

re-distribution is made by distributing invoices to every every school that have "lost" pupils and then transfer the money to the school that have receive the pupils. The same system is used within pre-schools and in after-school recreation centres (which also can be public or private). Altogether, in Kävlinge these three sectors within education can render about 2 500 invoices a month. Given the fact that there are several administrators handling this continuing process of re-distribution of payments across public and private schools and other facilities means that the system is associated with considerable transaction costs.

Different models of pay per performance requires certain administrative and management competence. In terms of professional "value" competence the role of management turns more or less from focus on advice and implementation processes towards a focus on budgeting and financial management. Hence, policy management becomes disconnected with resource management.

In Kävlinge has since the 90s *recourse management* been hegemonic throughout all sectors in the municipality.

"Our head manager, the one we had then, used to say: You have four missions if you work in Kävlinge: The first is "Keep the budget", the second is "keep the budget", and the third is "keep the budget" and then we have the fourth "keep the budget", well that was the only thing they were ever interested in" (manager, education)

However, during the last four-five years a new management model that resembles traditional policy management has started to take form in the municipality, mainly due to the adverse effects the unilateral resource management model gave on above all those parts of service quality that not easily can be captured in performance measurement results. The management system under construction aims at combining performance goals with adequate implementation processes and communications channels and downsizes budgetary goals and

the use of simplistic performance indicators. Further the recruitment policy concerning managers has also been adjusted. Today it is regarded as a merit to have professional knowledge and experience from the substance area, and the idea that managerial competence is sufficient in order to be a competent manager has been abandoned.

There is a noteworthy difference between the management of eldercare and the management of education in one of the four municipalities (Lidköping), especially regarding the allocation of resources to individual schools and care units and related accountability functions. In the field of education, focus is very much on dialogue with school principals and on attaining legitimacy among professionals. Hence, municipal managers work closely together with school principals to construct criteria for distribution of resources that is adjusted for the social context of individual schools, and where performance goals plays a minor role. As one of the municipal managers explains: "In my role as a head economist, I always stress that without resources professionals can not be held accountable for performance."

In the field of eldercare resource distribution and accountability is an altogether different thing. Here, a group of centrally placed municipal managers, have decided on the criteria for distribution of resources to individual care units which are held accountable for performance based on a set of centrally defined performance indicators. The said criteria and performance indicators are in turn connected to national guidelines for quality management systems, decided by the National Board of Health and Welfare. According to the municipality's quality management coordinator, "the most important thing is to have common structures and to guarantee that proper procedures are followed and the stated outcome objectives are met, to put it in the language of Lean."

In recent years national and local politicians and managers have put the disadvantages with resource management and its focus on simplistic performance indicators on the agenda more

frequently. Today national authorities and municipals are in search for alternative management models that enhance service development and learning processes rather than instrumental behaviour. However this development is in an early stage and performance management regimes are resilient when challenged. Above all because performance regimes are both multi layered and a multi-levelled which imply that when one actor in the system tries to challenge and transform it, other actors try to restore order. In performance management regimes the agenda-setting role of media is strengthened and the way in which media spin a story has affect on policymaking. The media is one actor that has the capability to counteract change. Based on the media logic, performance indicators are a gold mine, comparisons across sectors and municipalities allow the construction of stories where blame can be distributed and accountability claimed.

Ethical value competence: Morality of egalitarianism vs self-interest

The concepts managers' use when they refer to those whom receive elderly care or education can be used as an indicator of the value component inherent in practiced ethical competence. User, client, welfare recipient or patient are all concepts more related to morality of egalitarianism than morality of self-interest where costumer is the more obvious choice of words.

Where NPM-inspired reforms have entailed that organizational professionalism has taken root, the concept of customer most probably is used frequently and self-evident in every-day language. From our case studies it is apparent that only managers in Luleå use the concept of customer in this way. Managers from Luleå use the concept frequently and without hesitation and the concept and its inherent meaning is never disputed or put in question during the interviews, costumer is the obvious and self-evident denomination. Managers in Lidköping on the other do not use the customer concept at all while managers in Kävlinge use the

concept in order to illustrate and explain how the concept of costumer imply external expectations on their work as mangers and well as on the work of professionals. However managers in Kävlinge do not use the customer concept when they talk about those who receive welfare and they clearly state that it is not a suitable and appropriate word to use, even though the political level in Kävlinge has decided that customer is the proper word to use.

Kävlinge is the municipality that has the highest degree of private producers of elderly care and education while Luleå is the municipality with the lowest degree. Accordingly, at a first glance and from a theoretical point of view the differences between the three municipalities seem unexpected.

The Swedish overall education curriculum contains three parts: i) fundamental values and tasks for the school, ii) overall goals and guidelines for education, and iii) syllabuses with knowledge requirements for each school form and subject. (Skolverket 2011). Like most other countries, Swedish national education policy has over the years become strongly oriented towards iii) and what is sometimes called a policy as numbers, i.e. an expansive structure of performance measurement systems which state what is worth striving for (Rizvi & Lingard 2009). Contrary to this policy, which to a large extent is supported by parents and not so few teachers and school principals, a team of education development managers in Lidköping are strongly committed to have these teachers and school principals to reverse the policy as numbers towards a policy by fundamental values and tasks, for example by focusing on "what it means to be a responsible citizen". By doing so, the education development managers encourage schools and teachers to "impart and establish the fundamental democratic values on which the Swedish society is built", rather than the neo-liberal and NPM-perspectives that undergirds a policy by

numbers. In this way, they also support a morality of egalitarianism at the expense of a morality of self-interest.

All three municipalities have developed and applied sophisticated and advanced internal performance management systems where units are compared with and to some degree compete with each other i.e a kind of quasi market has been constructed. From the case studies it is evident that the local politicians are much more heavenly involved in the performance management system in Kävlinge and Lidköping than they are in Luleå. The managers in Lidköping and Kävlinge collaborate on a regular basis with "their" politicians and together they design targets, indicators and monitoring systems, something the managers are very positive and satisfied with. The managers in Luleå, on the other hand, seem to have greater discretion when constructing monitoring systems and indicators and they also seem to be more reluctant and negative to the involvement of politicians in the process. While the managers in Luleå regard the performance management system as an administrative system and therefore something for managers not politicians to manage, their colleagues in Kävlinge and Lidköping understand the system as a policy-making system and therefore something that politicians and managers must and need to manage together.

Concluding remarks

Our findings suggest that despite difference in size and institutional settings a increased distance has occurred between management and occupational professionals within elderly care and education. Increasingly, managers at all levels and staff members are embedded in a sophisticated internal and external performance control regime. This development can be seen as an effect of an established NPM-philosophy, but it is not in accordance to the initial ideas of how NPM works. The effects can thus be regarded as unintended negative effects, but it can also be seen as logical and self-reinforced in terms of changed behaviour and value

patterns. The internal and external performance control regime disturb not just occupational professions, but managers as well. On the other hand, it is fair to say that municipalities, sometimes with financial support from the state, puts great efforts in trying to develop professional career-systems within the two policy areas.

In their work managers often have to cope with external individual self-interest and competitive values and behaviour, mainly channelled through mass media coverage and demanding relatives/parents. In coping with these challenges managers do not lean on NPM-logic. Instead they improve their competence in accordance to "traditional" values of impartiality and representing public interest.

Managers and staff members have continuously been fostered into different systems of performance related pay during the last decades which among other things guides the managers towards mainly focus on resource management rather than policy management. It is rather common that these two management activities are decoupled in a way that the former dominates the latter. In this context rather simplistic performance indicators become highlighted and disturbs the process of more nuanced elaboration of policy content and improvement of professional value competence. However, the awareness of the decoupling of resource management from policy management has increased and there are to be found initiatives taken in order to bridge over this cleavage.

When it comes to ethical value competence, results from the case studies suggest that an obligation to (internal) contractual relations as such seems to be of greater importance than an obligation to contractual relations with private producers. The result highlights the need to analyse and theorise what components in NPM-inspired reforms that are of greatest relevance for initiating a transformation process towards organisational professionalism and morality of self-interest. In accordance to the empirical results it can be hypothesized that a) performance

management-systems are more essential for the development of organisational professionalism than the presence of private producers b) local politicians involvement in the construction of targets, indicators and monitoring systems hamper a transformation process from morality of egalitarianism to morality of self-interest. c) if managers have a high degree of discretion within a performance management system organisational professionalism is fostered.

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