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Policy formation failure and implementation: The case of regional museum education in Sweden

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Networks are popular in contemporary governance discourse, but handing over decisionmaking power may prove difficult for governments. The result is lip service to decentralization and suboptimal governance. In this article governance effects on policy outcome is investigated through a case study of regional museum education policy in Sweden. The study contributes to the under-researched area of governance of culture and cultural policy implementation. Policy formation and independent factors rather than incongruent implementation are shown to have generated poor policy outcome. The article contributes to an elaborated understanding of the policy implementation process in networks in the shadow of hierarchy.

Keywords: network governance, policy implementation, museum education, effectiveness, legitimacy

Introduction

Bad policy design affects public service delivery and the conditions for providing public services at operational level. Fragmentation of public management due to governance reforms becomes visible in policy failure, something which is a problem for governments, public service providers, as well as tax payers. Much theoretical effort in public management has been put into assessing collaborative initiatives, based on theoretical assumptions that coordination and collaboration improves public service delivery. Evidence of such benefits is not concordant, however (Hupe, 2011). Assessing policy effectiveness is far from straightforward. That policy influences outcomes has been shown by research, also that processes and managerial discretion have an impact, but how they are related is seldom discussed in studies seeking generalizable causal links (Lynn and Robichau, 2013). This article focuses on a detailed multilevel analysis of a single case of policy formation and implementation. The whole policy formation to policy outcome chain is mapped in the case study of this article, and through this case provides information of policy processes in the field of culture, but also manifests the complexity of multilevel policy analysis that makes such studies rare in literature. Policy makers, civil servants, and agencies strive for improved policy outcome, and this article shows how complex relationships and dependencies may hamper good intentions. The study undertaken is qualitative, as research in this area is fragmented and not necessarily concordant with other areas of governance, and large data sets from the cultural sector is difficult to access. Researchers in policy design have called for more detailed studies of policy design and its effects through a backward perspective (Schneider and Sidney, 2009), and this is what has been done in the study presented here. The article addresses the dynamics between government and sectoral governance, an issue that can well be explored through case studies (Héritier and Lehmkuhl, 2008). The single case

approach in this case aims at theoretical generalization rather than generalization to a population (Yin, 2003; Schout, 2011).

The article traces a chain of events linked causally to each other generating a specific policy outcome. By tracking causal links in an individual case, an analysis of qualitative relationships between policy formation and implementation phases is made, centered on the concepts of effectiveness and legitimacy. It is argued that poor policy outcome in the studied case depends on bad policy formation rather than poor implementation, and that hierarchy is still at the center of a cultural policy implemented in networks. The article highlights how implementation networks among regional, local and other actors operate in the shadow of hierarchy, resulting in effects opposite to those intended. The article is structured as follows. First, the theoretical framework of the article is set out: implementation theory is the starting point, focusing on links between policy formation, implementation and outcome. Also, research on governance, especially network governance, is addressed. Thereafter, the design of the study undertaken is presented. The article proceeds with an analysis of policy formation and implementation processes through a streams perspective and the effectiveness and legitimacy of these. The article ends with some conclusions.

Analytical framework

Policy formation and implementation takes place in public contexts that are increasingly crisscrossed by other policy initiatives. Local, regional and national, even international policies may affect the day-to-day work of an individual public service organization.

Hierarchical, network and market structures are all relevant in contemporary governance, and result in messiness, especially at the regional level (Niklasson, 2007). Regions have become more important in governance simultaneously as governance has grown more complex, leading to demands on governments to develop ways to govern in networks and partnerships rather than only through hierarchy (Agranoff, 2007; Mccallion, 2008; Tolkki et al., 2011).

Regional policy is implemented in complex contexts. Networks are increasingly presented as solutions to governance challenges and wicked problems (Pollitt and Hupe, 2011). Research has, however, pointed to a remaining strong impact of hierarchical structures in policy and governance performance (Lynn and Robichau 2013). Therefore, the understanding and explanation of an empirical case of policy failure may prove difficult from a single theoretical framework, of which there are many available across policy implementation and governance literature today. Therefore different approaches to policy implementation will be presented and used for analysis of the case study.

Policy implementation

Policy implementation research has as its object processes and behavior, outputs, outcomes and causal connections related to policies (Hill and Hupe, 2002: 12). Policies can be described as propositions to solve societal problems, including goals and tools for achieving these.

Policy is a process with several actors and stakeholders involved, and contain different kinds of action, including decisionmaking (Hill and Hupe, 2002). According to Schneider and Ingram (1997; Schneider and Sidney 2009) policy design consists of a) problem definition and goals to be pursued; b) benefits and burdens to be distributed; c) target populations; d) rules (policy directions); e) tools (incentives or disincentives); f) implementation structure; g) social constructions (stereotypes used to make sense of reality); h) rationales (justifications and legitimations); and i) underlying assumptions. Policy design, according to Schneider and Ingram (1997) is constructed through structural elements informed by cognitive and value-laden dimensions of world making and assumptions. Actors participating in policy design have perceptions of rationales for action of other actors, and of effective means of action, and use these when proposing courses of action.

Policy implementation research embraces policy design and the actual processes and results of these in relation to stipulated goals. Policy goals often are vague on purpose, resulting in

negotiations and interpretations at both policy formation and implementation stages; in turn resulting in complex policy structures and processes. This creates difficulties in distinguishing clearly between policy formation, policy implementation and policy outcomes (Hupe and Hill, 2007; Sørensen, 2007; Lægreid and Verhoest, 2010). Ambiguity and conflict are, thus, in research increasingly seen as intrinsic to policy throughout policy formation and implementation processes, leading to games being played (Matland, 1995; Hill and Hupe, 2002). Policy implementation is thus not only a question of success or failure, but of management of complex, intertwined processes. Policy implementation research, in turn, is about offering profound knowledge of the details or regularities of such processes (Lane, 1987; Hupe, 2011).

Factors of relevance for implementation studies

Policy implementation can be analyzed with the help of the concepts input, output and outcome. Input contains the resources that go into a policy, including its design. Output can be defined as activities undertaken as specified by the policy. Outcomes can be defined as effects on the problem targeted by the policy. Outcome can be further analyzed through the categories of dependent and independent variables. Dependent outcome variables include design of structures and processes, whereas independent variables affect results without being linked to a specific policy (Hill and Hupe, 2002; Willem and Lucidarme, 2013). It is, finally, important to assess the appropriateness of the policy as such to the identified problem. A policy may be implemented successfully but not be considered as an appropriate or effective means to solve the problem at hand.

Lynn and Robichau (2013; Lynn, Heinrich and Hill 2000) identify a series of hierarchical relationships and interactions which causally effect policy and governance outcome:

1. between citizen preferences and interests expressed politically and the purposes, structures and processes prescribed in public law;
2. between prescriptive and enabling public authority and discretionary organizational management and administration;
3. between public management/administration and service delivery (direct or contracted out);
4. between service delivery and its results: organizational or agent outputs and outcomes, that is, government performance;
5. between performance and the reactions of stakeholders that it elicits, expressed politically; and, to complete the circuit;
6. between stakeholder reactions and citizen preferences expressed politically (Lynn and Robichau, 2013: 209)

This specification of causal levels of interaction allows easier identification of where factors affecting governance and policy outcome occur. This list of hierarchical levels can be combined with models of network governance to identify where in the causal chain between policy formation and outcome specified interaction and outcome-affecting factors occur. As Lynn & Robichau's model of hierarchical levels is based on differences in power to frame a relationship, it is interesting to compare to models of network governance, which assume power to be distributed horizontally, at least in theory (Hill and Lynn 2005). In this article, all interaction levels but the first and last will be discussed. Schneider and Ingram's (1997) policy design elements will also be used to analyze details of the case.

Network governance

Networks have been claimed as superior to hierarchical and market governance solutions especially for the achievement of effectiveness and legitimacy in an environment where non-

public bodies are increasingly engaged in welfare provision (Provan and Kenis, 2007; Fawcett and Daugbjerg, 2012; Klijn and Koppenjan, 2012). Central features of a governance network are, according to Sørensen and Torfing (2007), interdependency, autonomy, negotiated interaction and self-regulation. Governments may choose to have a special position in governance networks. Rethemeyer and Hatmaker (2007) differentiate between policy and collaborative networks, where the later could be described also as implementation networks. Klijn and Koppenjan (2000) identify four main roles of government in governance networks: a) that of refraining from engaging in a network; b) that of participant on equal terms as other participants engaged in cooperation; c) that of process manager for the policy, acting as an enabler of interaction between the other members of the network; and d) that of network builder, attracting members to structure or change a network (Klijn and Koppenjan, 2000: 153-4). Klijn and Koppenjan (2000), Provan and Kenis (2007) and Willem and Lucidarme (2013) all recognize the centrality of trust and legitimacy in networks, and a number of tensions in this form of governance, in particular those of efficiency versus inclusiveness and of flexibility versus stability. Fawcett and Daugbjerg (2012) state that particular network structures and management impact on the effectiveness and legitimacy of policy networks and that network governance, despite its emphasis on equal power relations, takes place in the shadow of hierarchy. In the assessment of network performance, independent and dependent factors, or exogenous and endogenous factors (Kenis and Provan, 2009), may be used to identify the factors contributing to specific performance.

Span et al. (2012) identified different roles of municipalities in relation to governance networks, generating top-down or bottom-up networks. The role of municipalities and the character of a governance network is defined by how strictly a number of functions is dictated by the municipality. Span et al. (2012) identify main actor; steering mechanisms; boundary conditions; responsibility; network goal; vision; alignment; dependencies; and monitoring as

functions that identify the character of a governance network as top-down or bottom-up. The listed functions help elaborate our discussion of legitimacy of a specific governance mode, and will be used in the analysis of the case.

Policy and governance legitimacy

Governments and stakeholders of public policy networks are interested in the issue of policy success or failure. Adopting a non-normative approach to policy implementation, success is here measured through the level of perceived legitimacy and effectiveness. Effectiveness is what comes closest to a goal-oriented perspective on policy success or failure. What is the level of achievement of stated goals with the policy and governance model used?

Effectiveness can be defined as goal attainment, problem-solving capacity and efficiency; whereas legitimacy can be defined as generalized support and voluntary obedience (Börzel and Panke 2007: 157, 159). Fawcett and Daugbjerg (2012) argue that legitimacy is a result of how a network is managed and structured in terms of interest integration vertically and horizontally. They define input legitimacy as the process through which decisions are made, and output legitimacy as the actual output and outcome and their effectiveness (Fawcett and Daugbjerg, 2012: 202). Schout (2011), referring to Bekkers and Edwards's (2007) definition, describe effectiveness as an element of output legitimacy, along with flexibility and subsidiarity. Input legitimacy Schout defines as hierarchical control, administrative mechanisms, legal control and functional cooperation. This model of legitimacy indicators will be used to structure the discussion of the studied policy and governance. All the models of factors of relevance for policy formation and implementation presented here, and used in the analysis of the case, are summarized in table 1.

Table 1. Comparison of policy design and implementation elements across analytical perspectives.

<p>Policy design elements (Schneider & Ingram, 1997; Schneider & Sidney, 2009)</p>	<p>a) problem definition and goals to be pursued; b) benefits and burdens to be distributed; c) target populations; d) rules (policy directions); e) tools (incentives or disincentives); f) implementation structure; g) social constructions (stereotypes used to make sense of reality); h) rationales (justifications and legitimations); and i) underlying assumptions</p>	<p>1) between citizen preferences and interests expressed politically and the purposes, structures and processes prescribed in public law; 2) between prescriptive and enabling public authority and discretionary organisational management and administration; 3) between public management/administration and service delivery (direct or contracted out); 4) between service delivery and its results: organisational/agent outputs and outcomes, that is, government performance; 5) between performance and the reactions of stakeholders that it elicits, expressed politically; and, to complete the circuit; 6) between stakeholder reactions and citizen preferences expressed politically</p>	<p>Government roles in governance networks (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2000)</p>	<p>a) that of refraining from engaging in a network; b) that of participant on equal terms as other participants engaged in cooperation; c) that of process manager for the policy, acting as an enabler of interaction between the other members of the network; d) that of network builder, attracting members to structure or change a network</p>		<p>Elements by which to identify the hierarchical character of a governance network (top-down to bottom-up) (Span et al., 2012)</p>	<p>1) main actor; 2) steering mechanisms; 3) boundary conditions; 4) responsibility; 5) network goal; 6) vision; 7) alignment; 8) dependencies; 9) and monitoring</p>		<p>Elements of policy and governance legitimacy (Schout, 2011)</p>	<p>Input legitimacy a) hierarchical control, b) administrative mechanisms, c) legal control, d) functional cooperation Output legitimacy a) effectiveness, b) flexibility c) subsidiarity</p>	
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Methodology

The case study is the reform of a regional museum education policy in Skåne, Sweden, coordinated by the Region of Skåne but executed by municipal, regional, national and private museums. The results of a formal evaluation of the policy (Author omitted, 2011), indicating low effectiveness and internal legitimacy, stimulated interest in exploring the reasons and conditions resulting in poor performance. The empirical data was generated through document analysis of formal reports and meeting minutes, informal documents and archive material, and from interviews with educators and management at the museums involved in policy implementation. Representatives at various levels of the Region of Skåne were also interviewed. Interviews were relatively highly structured. Totally twenty interviews have been undertaken, and various types of formal documents consulted, including annual reports on performance, applications, political decision protocols and formal meeting minutes. The following presentation of the case is based on the analytical perspectives presented in the theoretical framework section.

Case study: museum education policy in Skåne

The Region of Skåne defines the area of arts and culture as a tool for development of the region. The Region supports culture and the arts with the objective of gaining social and economic development. Most museums and galleries in Skåne have municipal principals, and their primary orientation as regards educational activities is towards local schools. There are some regional, national and private museums and galleries as well. The Regions since 2012 have a larger say in the distribution of state support to regional culture through regional culture plans developed in dialogue with municipalities and the state. Museums and galleries in Skåne have developed educational services according to demands and ambitions of their principals and directors. During the last decade, there has been an expansion of such

activities. This expansion to a certain extent correlates with the introduction of regional support to education at museums and galleries in Skåne in the early 2000s. Although most museums and galleries have few staff, and educational staff many times consists of only one employee and a number of extras called in to give individual presentations at week-ends, there has been a clear increase in the number of persons engaged in museum and gallery education across Skåne in recent years. These organizations traditionally offer educational activities to children in the municipality, such as school visits and workshops. Open workshops at weekends are also common, where families are the main target group. Local institutions usually offer education free of charge for the children of their municipality, whereas they charge fees for groups arriving from further away. Educational services at museums and galleries are often offered to main target groups, and mainly funded through ordinary budgets, as fees do not cover the total expenses of these services.

The professional networks of educators across cultural heritage institutions in Skåne have been important and maintained by the professionals themselves. At a certain point in time the Region supported a larger formal network, but decided later to leave networks to be managed by professionals. There are also other formal and informal professional museum education networks on national and international level. In this context, the Culture Committee of Region of Skåne in the early 2000s, as part of the overall objectives of its Development department, decided to reform its support of access to cultural heritage in the region. The Region decided to support the development of museum education through structural support and information in the form of a catalogue of cultural activities available at arts and cultural heritage organizations in the region, distributed to schools. The information material was coordinated by the Region, and during this coordination work, they recognized a need for communication among professionals within the field of museum and gallery education as these were few and far apart. This took the shape of regionally employed educators, who were mobile and worked

at various museums and galleries. After a few years, however, the mobility of regional educators was seen as problematic, as their knowledge of the specific collections of individual institutions remained superficial. The regional educators were therefore physically located and employed by individual, selected museums with funding provided by the Region. The task of the regionally funded educators was to offer education to a higher extent than would have been possible without the regional support. Regional support was given to sixteen organizations. The organizations receiving support annually applied for and filled in forms regarding their plans and performed activities together with data on number of attendant visitors and similar. The regional support has been aimed at expanding the range of educational activities and oriented towards children as target group. In 2007 the existing system was claimed to be outdated, and a political decision was taken to reform the regional support to education in Skåne.

Policy goals and outcomes

The goals of the reformed policy in 2009, approved by the Culture Committee of the Regional Assembly were:

1. greater coordination and clarity as regards the regional museum, arts and archive education resources
2. more even geographical distribution across the region
3. increased adjustment to profile areas and other regional commissions, and regional action and development plans for the arts and culture
4. increased flexibility in the use of museum, arts and archive educational competence for regional projects and other cultural priorities (kultursatsningar) of the Region of Scania
5. clearer regional commission contracts on both general and individual basis that contribute to the development of Scania within the area of museum, arts and archive education, with a

basis in existing profile areas, development commissions, geographical location and accessibility (KS, 2011-01-19, translation by the author)

A formal evaluation undertaken in 2011 showed poor policy outcome measured both as goal fulfillment and effectiveness (Author omitted, 2011). As regards goal fulfillment, it can firstly be concluded that the policy did not result in greater clarity as regards resources as perceived by participating museums, except possibly from the point of view of the Region. Secondly, the policy did not enhance geographical distribution across the region, if measured as the location of organizations receiving regional support. Thirdly, the policy was clearly an adjustment to regional action and development plans, but not to any significant extent to the orientation of the involved museums. Fourthly, flexibility in the use of educational competence was increased for the Region, but not for the museums. Fifthly and finally, the commissions were phrased in a way that might appear clearer than previous ones, but upon reading demanded clarifications that turned out to be difficult to get. Furthermore, several of the policy goals were overlapping and difficult to understand from an external point of view, for example for the museums involved.

The reform of regional museum education policy in Skåne in 2009 had the aim of improving the current system in terms of achievement and effectiveness, but also to create flexibility within the system according to political priorities. The Culture Committee of the Regional Assembly wanted regional support to museum education to reach more children with the same amount of support than previously. Regional support was currently given as direct support for the employment of educators at individual museums, something that had resulted in well-developed educational services. After the reform support was given for the task of developing new educational services at museums, whereas the regular educational work, previously funded directly by the region, was to be covered by other means. Before 2009, commissions

contained objectives but not directives on how to pursue them. An example of the goals stated in commissions in 2007 (a municipal cultural history museum in a coastal town):

a) ***the museum shall in its educational work have as principal goals to:***

- *aim at reaching as broad and multifaceted audience as possible through conscious audience (development) work*
- *make cultural history come alive through broad educational activity*
- *act for and be an arena for democratic dialogue regarding artistic and societal topics*
- *apply a diversity perspective on its activities*

b) ***the museum shall in particular prioritize:***

- *further development of its work with archeological education*
- *development of the cooperation with other municipal departments and organizations, and with external actors*
- *active participation in the Kultur Skåne educational network (KU, 2006; translated by the author)*

The new commissions, exemplified by the same museum as above) stated that:

5. Commission

Public archaeology (coordinator)

[Museum A], [Museum B] and [the museum] have a joint museum education commission to execute competence development within the area of public archaeology for groups that work professionally with children and young people within different sectors of society, such as schools, leisure time activities, health care, tourism, and other.

The commission is to develop public relations and communication with a general audience with a focus on children and the young within the area of archaeology and cultural heritage and

with a visionary perspective. Emphasis is to be placed on co-creation, interactivity and participation with current societal topics with clear links to archaeology as a starting point. [The museum] has a general coordinating responsibility for the commission. (KN, 2009-05-27; translated by the author)

What the change of wording in these commissions resulted in will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

Input: structure, processes and resources

The Culture Administration (Kultur Skåne) had the task to translate the new policy defined by the Culture Committee into concrete measures. The Culture Administration collected information and opinions at the concerned museums regarding their specific areas of competence and educational activities. After these interviews, Culture Administration employees designed a new system of commissions that were to secure increased impact of the resources used for museum education; the details of which were presented for the museums only as it was implemented, however.

The reformed regional support from 2009 targeted teachers and instructors working with children rather than children themselves. This change was based on the assumption that targeting teachers rather than children would give a multiplier effect to the total number of children being reached by the same educational input. By educating teachers instead of children, more children would get access to the educational resources of museums.

The directives were detailed on how aims were to be achieved by the museums:

6. In order to achieve these overall aims, [the museum] is to

- primarily target those groups that have children and young people as the target groups of their professional activities

- cooperate and form a work group with the above mentioned museums for the execution of the commission
- participate in, and develop and arrange courses (fortbildningar) and competence exchange within the museum and gallery education network
- aim at making connections between research, theory and practice explicit
- coordinate and document development work with a point of departure of the activities of the own institution and make the work, the courses offered, and the results accessible for other actors and stakeholders throughout the region. (KN, 2009-05-27; translated by the author)

Based on their profiles, participating museums were divided into cooperation groups by the Region. Apart from these dictated cooperation networks, museum educators were recommended to continue existing informal network collaborations. Interviews made with museum staff and civil servants at Kultur Skåne show that these two groups had clearly differing perceptions of the characteristics and dynamics of educational work and innovation. Museums were dissatisfied with not having had a say in the development of the policy, as they perceived it as a drawing-board product and not based on experience and knowledge of the field. The commissions were constructed so as to force museums to develop new collaborations and services with detailed directives that did not allow for the expertise of museum educators to be consulted, was their view.

The thematic groups developed teacher instruction packages offered to teachers in the form of education days for individual teachers to book on their annual competence development days. What the museums realized when implementing this new policy was that teachers did not have time to attend teacher instruction days at museums and galleries. There was too much

competition for the few competence development days that teachers have as part of their employment. The result was that the offers were poorly utilized.

The policy goals of cooperation and development were also made concrete through a shift of resources (25 per cent) from ordinary educational activities to innovative, educational cooperation projects accessible for a broader range of cultural organizations in Skåne. This shift in resources and commissions clearly led to new activities being undertaken as part of the policy. This non-earmarked part of the funds was allocated to project based on an application procedure in the form of a dialogue with Kultur Skåne. Smaller sums were granted directly by Kultur Skåne officials, whereas larger sums had to be approved by the Culture Committee. There was only little public information on the criteria for acceptance, as written applications were not used. The non-transparency of this procedure was later criticized by several organizations.

The information on the reformed policy did not function optimally. There were communication failures between the Region and municipalities, and between municipalities and museums at the outset of the new system meaning budget cuts for the involved museums. The result was that museums in the autumn of 2008 realized that they lacked secured funding for a quarter of the salary for one of their education staff. This led to individual educators finding themselves in a situation where they did not know if their employments would be reduced on a few months' notice.

During the studied period 2009-2011, politicians of the Culture Committee made decisions that contradicted to their own stipulated policy goals. For example, grants to single organizations based in Malmö and Lund were given out of the funds pooled for innovative projects within the area of museum education. This meant that 'free' funds were used for single-organization development work rather than to cooperation with new network partners.

Furthermore, the decisions went partly against the goal to increase the geographical distribution of educational services. Lund and Malmö are the most museum-dense areas of Skåne, so the decision concentrated the number of organizations receiving regional support even more to these urban areas, but at the same time allowed these organizations to host more school visits.

The total amount of funds allocated to the policy remained constant after the reform in 2009, but was distributed differently. As mentioned, a quarter of the funds were put into a free project pool at the disposition of the Culture Committee with certain delegation of Kultur Skåne. With the shift of policy objectives, the commissions changed. Three quarters of the resources previously spent on the educational work with children was now to be spent on educational development work at these museums, regardless of who in the museum undertook the work. The educators who were previously employed partly with the support from the region thus lost earmarked resources for their employment. One quarter of the total amount of support was instead pooled in a fund for innovative projects relating to museum education, available for a broader range of cultural organizations for educational projects. This change in resources allocation was the result of a reorientation of the Region's role in relation to cultural organizations in Skåne. The support given to regional museum education has been roughly the same over a period of years, but the objectives for which they were allocated and the recipients of them changed. The regional educators were first employed by the Region, later by museums, and with the reform in 2009 the money was to be spent by museums according to priorities regarding staff at each museum.

Output: performance

The museums commissioned to undertake regional development work jointly produced a number of school teacher education days, as required, besides their ordinary educational work and other commissions within the educational field. It is not worthwhile to give any

quantitative report on the output of the policy, as the sixteen museums involved worked jointly, and the size and contexts of the participating museums differ substantially. Some museums have several educators, and an established network with schools, whereas others have very limited resources and networks. The report sheets that the involved museums were to send in annually, contain a number of information that relates not exclusively to the regional policy and commission, and are often more oriented towards a qualitative presentation of activities than quantitative. The quantitative data demanded included figures for all educational activities of the museums, and therefore cannot be assessed only in relation to the regional policy. In no case can it be said that the museums failed to deliver educational activities targeted at school teachers, but, again, depending on the state of educational activities in each museum, this took different form across the total network of museums. In interviews, respondents from museums emphasized their experience of the poor outcome of the policy, notwithstanding their individual performance. There were no absolute demands on output levels, and there has been no feedback from the Region on performance to individual museums, something which raised questions among respondents as to the necessity of the annual reporting of performance.

Independent and exoneous factors affecting policy output and outcome

As for factors impacting on the policy outcome, a change with a profound impact on the implementation of the museum education policy was the reorganization of Kultur Skåne itself. This was decided by the Culture Committee in 2009 and the new organization was launched in 2010. The reorganization meant that all staff at had to apply for new positions in a completely new departmental structure. This had as a consequence that none of the newly appointed contact persons at Kultur Skåne for the museums of the education policy had any previous knowledge of the intentions and details of the reformed support systems. The policy objectives and conditions had to be interpreted both by officials at Kultur Skåne and educators

and management at the respective museums, which as such did not affect the level of goal achievement, but created uncertainty. Another independent factor directly affecting outcome was competition over school teacher education days. The policy was based on the assumption that teachers would and could spend more days first at courses to learn about new exhibitions and educational resources at museums in the region. It was also based on more children taking part in museum education activities through this dual option available for school teachers and educators to either visit the museum and take part of educational activities offered by museum educators, or use the museum as space where they themselves could act as educators with resources available at museums. As it turned out that teachers did not choose educational courses offered by museums on their development days, the basis for the effectiveness of the policy fell through.

Kenis and Provan (2009) identify the form of a network; voluntary or mandatory formation; and the developmental stage of a network to be exogenous factors influencing performance. Networks ideally imply interdependence and mutual processes, whereas in the case studied, it is evident that there was a hierarchical relationship between the government and the museums involved. In Klijn and Koppenjan's (2000) terminology, the Region of Skåne took on a combined role of process manager and network builder. The Region was both coordinating and supporting part, whereas the museums were executing parts. The policy formation was undertaken by the Region, based on information collected from the museums. Due to the detailed commissions, the museums had no substantial means of influencing the design or outcome of the policy. In line with what other researchers have found, the government in the case clearly dominated the network, which was in fact a network only at execution level. The policy was not implementable without the museums, but they had an almost inexistent bargaining position in relation to the Region, as the contract form used for commissions limited the scope of negotiations for the museums. The hierarchical relationship with the

government, however, made issues of resources less conflictual, as the Region stipulated the resources for each participant in the network. The detailed directives were from the point of view of the Region a guarantee for effective implementation of the policy, as they perceived the museums to be in need of challenges and not willing to develop spontaneously. On individual and organizational level, informal professional networks had an important role to play for inspiration and the work with the development work. The newly formed network groups caused natural limitations in performance, as much time had to be dedicated to build up work within groups, and ideas on what to produce jointly had to be developed. Therefore the low performance of the networks during the first three years of the new policy is not surprising. The mandatory character of the museum network and its groups did not seem as such to cause lower effectiveness in performance, neither the form of the network itself. As mentioned previously, it was rather characteristics of the policy they were told to implement that proved to generate poor results.

Using Lynn and Robichau's (2013) categorization of hierarchical interaction levels, the impact of hierarchical and network structures can more clearly be identified, as can the level at which independent and exogenous factors affecting policy outcome occur.

1. between prescriptive and enabling public authority and discretionary organizational management and administration;
2. between public management/administration and service delivery (direct or contracted out);
3. between service delivery and its results: organizational/agent outputs and outcomes, that is, government performance;
4. between performance and the reactions of stakeholders that it elicits

Using this hierarchical model, we can see that the first interaction level comprises interaction between politicians on one hand and civil servants of the political organization on the other. In the case study civil servants at central level developed policy tools based on overall objectives formulated by the Culture Committee, and received approval of the design of the policy from politicians. The next level described is that where the Region signs contracts with individual museums for the delivery of specified outputs. At the third level, the output stipulated was provided by museums, but without achieving expected outcomes. The fourth and final level comprises feedback and evaluation of the outcomes in relation to the policy. If we should place the endogenous and exogenous factors and the dependent and independent elements of the policy studied, we can see that at the first level there is a central factor causing the poor results, namely the demand from politicians on civil servants of the Culture Department to find ways by which the effectiveness of the previous policy could be enhanced. The civil servants of Kultur Skåne decided that this could be achieved by shifting the focus from regular educational activities to development work, and the idea to shift the target group from children to teachers can in itself be seen as a reasonable point. The error made was that this shift was based on assumed market behavior rather than on intimate knowledge of the field of education. As civil servants did not engage the museums involved in the provision of the regional education services in the design phase of the policy, they also missed important feedback opportunities regarding realistic expectations of such a change in the policy. Without a dialogue in the policy design stage, the involved museums later faced a situation where they had detailed directions on how to achieve the Regional policy for museum education development. We can then see that at level 2, there would have been opportunities for different interaction patterns that were not utilized. The reason was probably external legitimacy and efficiency consideration, as well as a preference for a hierarchical rather than a network governance model. The hierarchical model, then, secured efficiency and external

legitimacy. Acknowledgement of a network governance model would, probably, have led to a slower process and probably a rather different design of the policy instrument, and thereby the outcome. However, it is difficult to say to what extent a different policy instrument would have been more effective in achieving the stipulated policy objectives. Openness from the Region towards working in a policy network would, however, for sure have had significant effects on both the policy instrument used and the output generated. Whether the policy objectives as such were unrealistic is a question that is more difficult to answer.

Policy legitimacy

Using the elements of policy legitimacy identified by Schout (2011), the legitimacy of the reformed policy will now be discussed. Input legitimacy is by Schout defined as hierarchical control, administrative mechanisms, legal control and functional cooperation, whereas output legitimacy entails effectiveness, flexibility and subsidiarity. In terms of hierarchical control, it is clear that the regional government controlled all the strategic decisions, much to the frustration of the involved public museums. The administrative mechanisms were well intended, but evidently, due to internal and external factors, partly fell through. The reporting, overall considered important as a governance tool, was hardly used by the government in its steering. Functional cooperation, finally, was hampered through the top-down governance model, leaving the museums without leeway in their commissions. The main weakness of the policy was the output legitimacy, as the policy was not effective in terms of goal achievement. The poor outcome depended on assumptions of certain behavior from school teachers in response to changed behavior of museum staff. The poor effectiveness depended both on the difficulty in operationalizing the policy goals and on the expected behavior of target markets, that was not based on detailed experience and knowledge of the field. Neither was the policy flexible, as the commissions were stipulated in rather fixed formulations. The policy was neither particularly subsidiary, as an experts was consulted only in the evaluation stage of the

policy, and not at previous stages. The museums were involved in the initial stages of policy design, but were not allowed to react to the proposed policy before its implementation.

The expert evaluation resulted in a complete reform of the policy, and so the low levels of legitimacy regarding administrative mechanisms, functional cooperation, effectiveness, flexibility and subsidiarity were hopefully improved in the subsequent policy implemented in 2013. The problem to be solved, suboptimal use of regional educational resources at museums, remained unsolved. This was due to the independent factor of teacher and educator actions that did not correspond to those assumed by the Region. Policies based on a certain response from the target group of the policy, as pointed out by Ethridge and Percy (1993), can be risky. Effectively, the Region of Skåne seems to have perceived the problem of increased impact of museum education development as a marketing issue. The construction of the policy assumed that school teachers would attend museum courses without considering the context of schools and teacher development opportunities. The degree of interest from the side of school teachers towards opportunities to attend museum education courses was never problematized.

The phrasing of the policy goals indicate that the Region of Skåne designed the policy to be suited for the objectives of the Region rather than for the museums involved or the target group. The policy objectives stated that the specific conditions and profiles of individual museums be recognized, but the commissions in effect did not recognize them. The museums executed the commissions given, even though they had professional doubts about the effectiveness of the design of the policy. The museums did not resent being forced to cooperate, but to do it in a restricted form dictated by the Region. The museums would have preferred a more dialogical process during which the contents and phrasing of the commissions were formulated. The museums were used as museum education providers rather than as policy network partners. External consultants were commissioned to design a

new model for the development of regional museum education, rather than negotiating and consulting the museum sector in the region.

The understanding of legitimacy can be further elaborated by the analysis of the characteristics of the network by the nine dimensions stipulated by Span et al. (2012). In accordance with the findings of Span et al (2012), the Region in the case can be said to have chosen a top-down governance role in the studied network, by being the main actor as the initiator of the network, by determining the steering mechanisms and setting boundaries of the network, setting the ultimate network goal, making sure that the museums involved were aligned with the policy goals and monitoring performance. The vision of the policy and the network was to be sure shared by the Region and the museums alike. The museums bore the responsibility for executing the commissions, whereas the Region must be said to be responsible for the policy outcome overall. The studied regional network then supports the findings that most local governments do engage in mainly top-down networks. Span et al. do not discuss effectiveness of top-down and bottom-up networks, but the characteristics of the studied network can be linked to these dimensions. The top-down mode of governance of our network indicates low trust in the museums from the Region as regards achievement of the policy goals. The low internal legitimacy, on the other hand, from the perspective of the museums, was not reflected in performance. The low outcome has been shown to be dependent on policy formation failure rather than network implementation failure and low legitimacy. The top-down character of the network ensured effectiveness, but independent factors resulted in low outcome.

Conclusion

This article set out to explore the reasons behind poor outcome of a reformed regional museum education policy. A first conclusion is that the poor outcome depended on poor policy formation at regional administration level, based on assumed target group behavior. A

second conclusion is that politicians decided against their own stipulated policy goals; a third that the policy objectives were numerous, inconsistent, and partly iterative. Thus, the policy failure was an effect of policy formation and contextualization failure rather than implementation failure. The governance was hierarchical and resulted in high effectiveness but low internal legitimacy. The attitude of museum educators and management towards the policy was one of compliance, notwithstanding the opinion that the policy was not effectively constructed. The network governance mode had an effect on the output of the museums, but not on the outcome of the policy. It can be speculated that incongruent implementation might even have improved the policy outcome. This would, however, have meant a breach of the contract signed by the museums and the Region. It is also shown how independent and exogenous factors influence policy output and outcome. It is clear from the case that museums are vital for regional museum education policy to be implemented. Networks are, however, governed in a hierarchical manner resulting in suboptimal use of the contextualized knowledge and specific expertise of museums.

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