

Abstracts

Strategic patient communication at a Danish hospital

Anja Svejgaard Pors

Over the past two decades, public organizations have increasingly introduced strategies inspired by private actors to improve communication with target groups. Patient communication has become a strategic priority at hospitals. Today, hospitals create communication strategies and build departments to improve communication with patients. This includes face-to-face interactions between doctor and patient in clinical settings, as well as a range of practices that permeate the organization as a whole. The institutional attempts to strategize hospital communication have primarily been discussed as an effect of New Public Management within an institutional framework of organizational legitimacy and identity.

However, there are few empirical studies of how strategic communication affects collaboration among professional groups within the organization. The empirical focus of this paper is a case referred to as 'The Perspective of the Patient': a user-oriented communication strategy developed locally at a Danish public hospital. In this paper, I trace how the strategy is being disseminated. The primary aim is to highlight how strategic communication unfolds as distributed governance. I argue that tensions in the strategy and its implementation are effects of a social constructivist approach to knowledge and reality. On the one hand the strategy sets the stage for different per-

spectives on organizational reality, and on the other hand the strategy insists on pre-defining standards. The paper argues that organizational actors must pay attention to the paradoxes that strategic use of a social constructivist approach entails. Prospectively, I suggest including different perspectives and practices as embedded components in developing and disseminating organizational strategies – especially strategies of communication.

Teacher-pedagogue cooperation – a political construction and a management challenge

No Emil Sjöberg Kampmann

The Danish school reform from 2013 has put cooperation between teachers and pedagogues firmly on the political agenda. However, observers have shown how cross-professional cooperation is a challenge. As a response, the political system stresses the importance of 'more and improved' school management, to overcome these cooperation challenges. This political demand for 'more and improved' school management has however several meanings which make it difficult to apply.

From a discourse theoretical point of view, the purpose of 'cooperation' is constructed in two different ways. Through its representation of the professionals, the unions have created one discourse. This describes cooperation as an interaction form between two autonomous professional groups, each with their own justification. The other

discourse is made by the political administrative system, and constructs cooperation as an element in developing a new common profession.

Furthermore, it is not just the purpose of cooperating which can be interpreted in two ways but also the management approach. On the one hand, the school leaders must relate to the logic of the disciplinary society. This logic stresses that leaders must think themselves responsible for following the structure and directives from the political hierarchy. On the other hand they must also relate to the logic of the project society that seeks to exceed the disciplinary logic and, instead, create flexibility.

Due to this 'double duality', school leaders are put in a difficult position when they are ascribed responsibility for delivering 'more and improved' management.

Complexity in the front line of the welfare state

Signe Mie Jensen & Kaspar Villadsen

This article explores the challenges faced by managers of contemporary welfare services which constitute increasingly complex organizational systems. Conventional specialisms have been targeted by reforms inspired by New Public Management and at the same time employees have become exposed to growing mass media attention and the accompanying fear of becoming the subject of scandals. Seeking to obtain a better understanding of these managerial conditions, a qualitative study was carried out in the residential care service in the Danish municipality of Tønder. Over a period of seven months, detailed observations were carried out of project for leadership development and organizational change lead by a consultant. The observations were analyzed from the perspective of Niklas Luhmann's

systems theory which highlighted communication patterns and contradictions.

A key observation was the existence of incompatible communication codes – i.e. law, care and money – which employees felt placed paradoxical demands and encroached upon their room for providing professional care. As result, "civil disobedience" became a popular term among the care workers to designate activities guided by professional judgment rather than judicial regulations. The article presents a series of considerations on the conditions of management in such welfare services and offers suggestions as to how managers may attempt to navigate them. It is suggested that the conclusions are of relevance beyond the context of residential elderly care and may find broader resonance in contemporary welfare management.

Between quality standards and clinical practice

Marie H. Madsen

Management in health care has been an important area of research over several decades. Among other things, a key theme has been the meeting and interplay between public initiatives of control, transparency, documentation etc. and the many strategies of health professions to resist these initiatives and keep autonomy and control of work practices. This tension has resulted in the suggestion of new concepts such as hybrid managers or hybrid professions, as categories that integrate these initiatives with the health profession's own ideas of clinical management. The analysis presented in this paper aims at contributing to the idea of hybridizations by focusing on the role of quality coordinators in the translation of national quality standards into localized practices. Quality

coordinators are a function established in many Danish hospitals, responding to the many demands of practicing quality work in Danish Healthcare. The Danish Healthcare Quality Program is one of the newest and most comprehensive sources of those demands. In this program, both quality standards and methods of monitoring quality are described; providing the quality coordinator with a legitimate position to engage with the processes of improving clinical practice. In this way, quality coordinators facilitate the connections of quality standards with leaders and healthcare professionals. As a result, connections are established across both organizational and professional divisions, resulting in changed conditions for clinical work.

Lean and professional autonomy at hospitals

Peter Hasle

Hospitals are facing major challenges caused by growing expectations from both patients and the society. This is occurring at the same time that budgets are being limited alongside the introduction of new and expensive treatment possibilities. Lean has become one of the most important measures for management in their attempt to meet these challenges. However, lean originates from the manufacturing industry and its compatibility with the complexity of a hospital organisation should be questioned. These questions are studied during the introduction of lean into a cancer department at a university hospital. It proved more difficult than expected to implement lean, and the department experienced relatively limited sustainable results. For the employees the consequences seem to vary considerably. Lab technicians and nurses were the two main groups involved in lean

activities, and they had quite different experiences. Lab technicians reported improvements to their psychosocial working environment, while the opposite was the case for nurses. A possible explanation for the positive results for the lab technicians could be that they had a relatively standardised work, and the standardisation elements in their work was in accordance with professional norms in their work whereas the continuous improvement activities in lean opened for new ways of employee involvement. The nurses already experienced a work context marked by complexity and minimal standardisation. As such, they considered attempts to standardise elements of their work as limiting their autonomy and challenging their professional assessment of the patients' care needs.

Recognition in managing professionals

Ulla Skjødt & Jonas Sprogø

There is a growing focus on securing quality in the public sector. Accreditation expresses a movement towards securing and developing quality by means of an increasingly standardized practice. At the same time, the academic regulations for the bachelor of science in nursing demands that a trained nurse is able to apply ethics, and a humanistic scientific approach, as well as experience-based knowledge in situated practices. These two demands represent two conflicting voices in the polyphonic organization: one with a focus on standards, evaluations and audits to ensure that the organization becomes accredited; one with a focus on professional ethics and individually oriented, situated practice. Drawing on Axel Honneth we show that each of the voices create certain forms of recognitions and conditions for nurses' autonomy and personal development. The

'accreditation voice' recognizes correctly filled out schemas, following standardized interview guides and documentation, whereas the 'regulation voice' recognizes a situated practice based on professional judgment. Thus, the two voices condition nursing practice, as the autonomy, identity and self-understanding of the nurse is affected differently depending on which

voice is louder. Balancing these two voices poses a challenge to the middle manager, as the voices are present at the same time in practice. In the article we analyze how the two voices create different forms of recognition. Then we propose a way for the manager to balance these opposing and conflicting, yet simultaneously occurring voices, by way of polyphonic leadership.