Does Network Management Matter?

The Coordination of Integration Policy Delivery at the Local Level in Sweden

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Swedish integration policy is primarily implemented at the local level. In a policy area where many public and non-public actors are involved, the municipal administrations are responsible for coordinating public action. In seeking to make the local integration process work, each municipal administration faces the challenge of managing a complex network of actors as efficiently as possible. The focus of this comparative study is on the relationship between network management and the integration situation in the municipalities. Two hypotheses are tested in an empirical analysis which combines quantitative and qualitative techniques in a two-level design: that (1) local cooperation agreements and (2) high densities in the local implementation networks are positive for integration. None of the hypotheses are supported empirically. Network management does not matter – a result which calls into question the high attention and priority that network solutions get in present-day public administration.

Introduction

Public sector reform over the last decades has made networks and network management increasingly important. When implementing policy, governments of today do not rely as heavily as before on hierarchical structures of command and control. Instead, implementation is more and more taking the form of steering dynamic networks that have vertical as well as horizontal components. Governments still exercise power, but in a network setting this is mainly done by means of persuasion, negotiation and coordination. Modern-day public network management is in fact not very dissimilar to conducting an orchestra (Kjaer 2004; Salamon 2002, p 9–18).

At the same time, the integration issue has moved higher and higher on political agendas across the globe. The international population movements of the post-Cold War era have affected almost every corner of the earth. Sending countries cope with such things as brain drain and remittances, while receiving countries handle the sensitive challenge of smoothly integrating a steady stream of newcomers into society. Since nearly one tenth of the inhabitants in the developed nations are now international immigrants, the integration task has become vital and is therefore a central feature of political life (Castles & Miller 2003; Sales 2007, p 7–11).

When it comes to integration policy in Sweden, implementation primarily takes place at the local level. In a policy area where many public and non-public actors are involved, the municipal administrations have the overall responsibility for coordinating public action.[1] Public bodies at different levels, health care institutions, housing providers, the civil society and the business community together make up a complex network of actors which the municipal administrations need to manage in seeking to make the local integration process work. Network management is not only part of everyday life for the municipal administrations, it is also an aspect that has consistently been underlined in national policy development in the area. The main strategy for policy enhancement has been to try to strengthen cooperation and a key element in that strategy has been to create formal local cooperation agreements between the actors involved in the policy-delivery phase.

The focus of this study is on the relationship between network management and the integration situation in the Swedish municipalities. Does the way in which a municipal administration manages its integration policy network have an effect on the degree of integration in the local community? Is there a relationship between how networks are managed and the integration outcome? Does network management matter?

Two features are salient when it comes to the overall design of the study. The first is the comparative methodology. The study is basically about comparing circumstances and experiences across the municipalities in a structured way. The second feature is the combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques in a two-level analysis. The integration dynamics in the municipalities is analysed at two

levels: the aggregate and the specific. At the aggregate level, all 290 municipalities are included in a quantitative analysis of general patterns. Statistical techniques give a picture of the effect of variations in network management on local integration outcomes. At the specific level, a qualitative analysis of four strategically selected municipalities complements the aggregate analysis. Through a series of interviews, the impact of local network management on integration is studied in more detail.[2]

This translates into a seven-step structure of the article. Following this introduction, the second step is a brief overview of Swedish integration policy implementation. The third step is an account of the public administration literature on networks. Based on the theoretical discussion, two hypotheses to be tested empirically are defined. In the fourth step, some key methodological issues are dealt with. The fifth step, in which the general pattern across all municipalities is studied in a multiple regression analysis, is followed by the sixth step, in which four municipalities, selected on the basis of the results of the regression analysis, are studied more closely. Finally, conclusions are drawn and the contribution of the study is put into perspective.

2. The implementation of Swedish integration policy

Swedish integration policy is essentially implemented at the local level. The municipal administrations are in charge of the key elements of the policy: the introduction programme for newly arrived refugees and the language training programme for immigrants in general.

The introduction programme aims at providing the participants with qualifications to live and work in Sweden on equal terms with the natives (Proposition 1997/98:16, p 82). The core components are language training, internships and a general orientation about Swedish society. The programme is normally 24 months long and mainly financed by the national government through a system of grants. The municipal administrations can add their own resources to the national grants, but the grants cover all basic expenses. The administrations can also let other immigrants than refugees participate, but since the grants are restricted to the refugee group, most administrations primarily involve refugees in the programme (SOU 2008:58, p 319–24). Given that from 1980 to 2005 about one third of all immigrants receiving a permanent residence permit in Sweden were refugees, this means that the scope of the programme is actually somewhat limited (Sjögren & Zenou 2007, p 8). To be eligible for the grants, the municipal administrations must make an individual introduction plan for each programme participant. For all participants old enough to work, the local office of the Public Employment Service (Arbetsförmedlingen) is to be consulted when making the plan (Finansdepartementet 2007, p 100).

The language training programme, Swedish for Immigrants (SFI), is a sequence of courses where most students start as beginners and the objec-

tive is to end up fluent in Swedish. Anyone who was born abroad and is at least 16 years old can join the programme, which is financed by the municipal administrations partly through introduction programme grants, partly through the municipal budget (Finansdepartementet 2007, p 112).

In taking care of the delivery of these two programmes, the municipal administrations are also responsible for coordinating the activities of all public actors involved in the area. The municipal administrations are to make sure that public action is coherent and that refugees and other immigrants get the assistance they need. In doing so, the administrations have an interest in working actively not only with public actors, but with various non-public actors as well. The administrations can therefore be described as local integration network managers. National authorities and regional public bodies have their specific responsibilities, but it is largely up to the municipal administrations to make things work (SOU 2008:58, p 319–24; Emilsson 2008, p 10–14).

One repeatedly identified problem in Swedish integration policy, however, is a lack of cooperation between different public actors. National authorities, regional bodies and municipal administrations have been bad at coordinating their actions. Therefore, in seeking to improve policy performance, a core strategy in the last ten years has been to try to strengthen cooperation (Emilsson 2008, p 17–22).

This has primarily been done through a series of cooperation agreements between the main actors involved. At the initiative of the Integration Board (Integrationsverket), the process started in 2001 with the signing of a central cooperation agreement. The agreement was seen as a platform from which cooperation routines could be developed and it had as a core objective to stimulate the creation of similar agreements at the regional and local levels. It was intended to function as a pattern for concrete action in the regions and municipalities (Integrationsverket et al 2005, p 17–22; SOU 2008:58, p 97–99).[3] In fact, its signals were well received and a lot of activity was initiated. In 2005, there were 15 regional as well as 102 local agreements all over the country (Integrationsverket et al 2005, p 5–6).

The contents of the local agreements vary across the municipalities. A common feature is that the agreements establish a structure for the cooperation effort by defining the roles and responsibilities of the different actors. Many of the local cooperation agreements are labour market oriented. In addition to the municipal administrations, which are the key actors, the local offices of the Public Employment Service (PES) are very often in a main role. These two actors were involved in almost all of the agreements that had been crafted up to 2005 and are the actors with the most concrete responsibilities vis-à-vis the newly arrived immigrants. While the municipal administrations manage the introduction and SFI programmes, the PES has the job to facilitate the entry of immigrants into the labour market. As to other actors, the Migration Board (Migrationsverket) was involved in 62 of the agreements existing in 2005,

the County Councils (Landstingen), in charge of health care, were involved in 10, the Social Insurance Agency (Försäkringskassan) was involved in four, while trade unions and local business communities were represented in three agreements each (Integrationsverket et al 2005, p 26–28, 33–38; SOU 2008:58, p 99).

3. Networks and network management

The issue of networks and network management has received quite a large amount of attention in the public administration literature over the last decades. Governance is the key concept in a growing body of academic work. While the concept is applied in many contexts, it is often used to draw attention to the changing roles of governments. Public sector reform since the 1980s, in combination with an increasing complexity in society in general, has made governing a more complicated task than before. Instead of relying on traditional hierarchical structures of authority and control, governments make more and more use of networks in policy implementation. The concept of governance has been defined in different ways, but a common feature in most definitions is this network perspective (Kjaer 2004; Salamon 2002, p 9–18). As Rhodes (1996, p 658) puts it: "Governance is about managing networks".

When hierarchies are replaced by networks, governments need to change the way they act. Steering a network is not the same thing as steering a vertically structured bureaucracy. Following Salamon, the hierarchical approach of command and control has to be replaced by a network method focusing on dialogue, negotiation and persuasion. In order for policy delivery through networks to be effective, governments have to be good at activating the actors in the network, coordinating the actions and giving the individual actors the right incentives to contribute positively to the cooperation effort (Salamon 2002, p. 15–18).

When studying the implementation of integration policy in Sweden, the general governance perspective is highly relevant. In addition, there is a need to look more closely into what networks do and how the management of them affects policy outcomes. How can we empirically analyse the effects of municipal network management on integration?

Related to and partly overlapping the governance agenda, research on networks has been carried out within the framework of implementation theory. Some of this research deals with implementation situations that are similar to those in the integration policy area in the municipalities and there are at least several relevant studies looking into the effectiveness aspect (O'Toole 2000). However, before going into the details of the empirical analysis, two points need to be made.

First, the issue of network effectiveness has not been very thoroughly studied. There is broad agreement – in the governance literature and elsewhere – that networks are increasingly important in policy implementation, but this has not brought about very much of

academic activity focusing on effectiveness. Provan & Kenis (2007, p 229) note that "there is still a considerable discrepancy between the acclamation and attention networks receive and the knowledge we have about the overall functioning of networks".[4] According to Provan & Milward (2001), one reason for this is probably that cooperation often is considered to be something intrinsically good. We are inclined to think that if actors work together in networks, the outcome is almost per definition better than if they work on their own. When discussing the organisation of service delivery in the health and human sectors, this belief is particularly solid. With clients that have multi-faceted problems and service providers that are often narrowly specialised, the case for networks seems convincing. Given this natural assumption that networks are good, it is not surprising that there is a lack of studies that objectively investigate whether networks are in fact good or not. Nonetheless, as pointed out by both Provan & Milward (2001) and Provan & Kenis (2007), it is indeed important to study if public-sector networks are effective and to learn more about the effectiveness of different types of networks. Whether networks work or not – as well as how and where they work – are ultimately empirical questions.

Second, the scarcity of knowledge is particularly troublesome when it comes to the link between cause and effect. There is not much in the way of well-established causal theories in the field. To build the empirical analysis on a solid ground, we need a more a specific idea of what it is that makes networks effective or ineffective. There has to be a picture of the causal mechanism.

Overall, I find it sensible to say that there are two sides to networking. On the negative side, it takes time and resources to maintain network contacts. Whatever the positive network effects are, they should always be compared to the size of the effort that is put into networking.[5]

On the positive side, networking can have many benefits, which can be illustrated by turning to network theory at the individual level in the field of sociology. Granovetter (1973, 1983), in a seminal article from 1973 and in later research, distinguishes between strong and weak interpersonal ties. Strong ties are the connections individuals have with a close group of family and friends. Weak ties are the more distant connections with acquaintances of different types, created for example in workplaces and associations. Granovetter argues that weak ties are very important for knitting communities together. The weak ties function as bridges between different community groups. They are good channels of information and facilitate the building of trust. A community with a lot of weak ties can organize effectively for common goals. Communities with few weak ties, on the other hand, are not able to organise as effectively. Without the weak tie bridges, those communities are too fragmented for successful concerted action. As an example, Granovetter notes that one community in Boston back in the 50s and 60s was able to fight urban renewal making use of extensive weak ties, while another community, without those bridges,

was not even capable of forming an organisation to fight the renewal which ultimately made the community disappear.

Slightly modifying Granovetter's argument, one could say that there in public administration exist strong ties, knitting the different actors together internally, and weak ties, connecting the actors to each other. If there are extensive weak ties between the actors in a network, there are good channels for information, a relatively high level of trust and a capability to act in a concerted way when needed. If the weak ties are few, on the contrary, important information is not shared, there are limited opportunities to build trust and there are few established contacts to use in a situation when coordination is necessary. Accordingly, effective network management is about building interorganisational bridges that can be used for information as well as cooperation. In a successful network, the benefits of the weak tie bridges are more substantial than the costs needed to build and maintain them.

Regarding the details of the empirical analysis, two American studies can give further guidance on what is a suitable design. In a 1995 study, Provan & Milward investigate the relationship between interorganisational networks and the effectiveness of service-delivery, while Jennings & Ewalt, in a study from 1998, analyse the importance of interorganisational coordination for policy performance.

The Provan & Milward study (1995) is a comprehensive comparison of the networks involved in the care of the mentally ill in four American cities. Provan & Milward map the service-delivery systems in each of the four cities very thoroughly, including all actors that somehow have to do with the care of and services to these clients. As to the measurement of the network characteristics in the four cities, they focus on two dimensions: density and centralisation. Density is the extent to which the actors in the networks are interconnected. Centrality is the extent to which the network is centred around a dominant actor. In practice, Provan & Milward create a picture of the network characteristics by means of asking every network actor about the nature and frequency of its contacts with the other actors in the network. The results of the study are not very clear-cut, but there are two tendencies as regards the network variables. First, centralisation seems to be positive for network effectiveness. Second, the data does not support the assumption that higher network density leads to better network effectiveness.

The focus of the Jennings & Ewalt study (1998) is a job training programme, JTPA, which is implemented by a special state-level JTPA agency. This agency is responsible for the delivery of the services of the programme at the local level. Since other state agencies have responsibilities as well within the area of employment and work training, it is crucial that the JTPA coordinates its activities with those actors. Particularly important is the cooperation with the state employment service. Two hypotheses are tested. First, Jennings & Ewalt assume that increased levels of coordination bring about better programme performance. Coordination is measured

by counting the number of coordination tools, out of more than 40 available, that are used by the JTPA agencies in the different states to promote cooperation between the state and local level actors involved in the programme. Second, they assume that administrative consolidation of the JTPA agency and the state employment service, placing them within the same administrative unit, leads to improved performance. Through a quantitative analysis, Jennings & Ewalt reach the conclusion that administrative consolidation is clearly beneficial for programme performance, while increased levels of coordination have a modest positive effect on the programme outcome.

Drawing on these studies, two interesting hypotheses can be formulated. First, the Jennings & Ewalt discussion on administrative consolidation is relevant for the analysis of networking in the Swedish municipalities. The use of local cooperation agreements can be seen as a form of consolidation. While it is not about bringing actors together in the same administrative unit, it is definitely about formally bringing actors closer to one another in a structured network. Referring to Granovetter, it is about building weak tie bridges. Since consolidation made a difference in the Jennings & Ewalt study and since the basic idea behind the cooperation agreements is that they will be positive for the introduction as well as the integration process, this is a key network aspect to study. As some municipal administrations have cooperation agreements while others have not, the following hypothesis is a natural starting point:

Hypothesis 1

Local cooperation agreements are positive for the integration situation in the municipalities. Municipal administrations that work with such agreements achieve better integration outcomes than those who do not.

Second, I find the Provan & Milward concept of network density – the extent to which the actors in a network are interconnected – to be relevant and applicable. It is also related to the Granovetter discussion on the extensiveness of weak ties and the Jennings & Ewalt discussion on levels of coordination. Although density does not have a clear impact on network effectiveness in the Provan & Milward study, it is a network aspect that most of us would probably assume to be important. Our inclination to think that networking is good quite logically includes the idea that denser networks are better. In addition, referring to the cooperation agreements and the general emphasis on collaboration in the development of Swedish integration policy, the carrying idea is that more intensive networking is good for the integration outcome. Consequently, network density is the second network aspect to be studied. Despite the Provan & Milward results, I think that the most sensible starting-point is to assume that high density is positive for the policy outcome.[6]

Hypothesis 2

High density in the policy implementation network is positive for the integration situation in the municipalities. The higher density that the municipal administrations maintain in their integration networks, the better is the integration outcome.

4. Methodological considerations

The first hypothesis is tested in a regression analysis. The key question is whether municipal administrations with local cooperation agreements achieve better integration outcomes than those without. Since there are a number of factors other than cooperation agreements that could affect the integration outcome, several of those factors are included as control variables in the analysis. One category of such control factors has to do with all the other things, apart from networking, that the municipal administrations do when implementing integration policy. How the municipal administrations carry out these tasks can also have an impact on integration. The other category of control factors has to do with the general integration policy environment in the municipalities. Included in this category are more general factors that can influence the integration outcome.

An accurate measure of integration needs to be constructed. To get an analysis that is concise and manageable, I make use of only one integration measure. The focus in Swedish integration policy is to a large extent on the labour market. Many of the local cooperation agreements are labour market oriented and most of the day-to-day work in the introduction programme is about making the participants able to find and keep a job. Accordingly, it seems sensible to opt for a labour market integration measure. A good indicator of how well integrated the labour market is in a municipality is the difference between the unemployment rate in the foreign-born group and the unemployment rate in the native population. I capture this difference by dividing the unemployment rate among the foreign-born with the unemployment rate among natives. The resulting ratio is the measure of labour market integration and, by extension, of integration. The lower the ratio, the better is the labour market position of the foreign-born and the better is thus the integration situation in the municipality. Comparing the unemployment rates of foreign-born and natives is an often used method to measure labour market integration (see for example Pedersen 2005, Brekke and Borchgrevink 2007, p 33, and OECD 2007, p 71–72). The exact unemployment rate ratio measure is taken from studies by Kogan (2006) and Bauer et al (2001).[7]

In setting up the regression analysis, data scarcity is a general problem. In some fields, the data situation is acceptable, but in other fields, particularly when it comes to details on the activities the municipal administrations carry out in the integration area, not much in the way of comparable data is available. As a consequence, some of the indicators in the analysis are relatively rough.[8]

The selection of municipalities to be included in the qualitative analysis is based on the results of the regression analysis. Those results show what factors are of importance for the integration situation. The selection strategy is to choose municipalities that (1) are as similar as possible when it comes to the factors that are important for integration, but that at the same time (2) are different regarding the integra-

tion outcome. In this way, a most similar system design is combined with a selection based on known variations in the dependent variable. Given the interest in getting information from as many municipalities as possible, on the one hand, and the limitations when it comes to time and resources on the other, four municipalities are selected.[9] There are two keys to making this design work. First, the municipalities must be selected so that there are broad variations in the integration variable. If the variations are small, it is difficult to correctly assess the causal effect. Second, the municipalities have to be similar as to the important explanatory variables that are theoretically held constant. The municipalities cannot be identical in this regard, but the closer the similarities, the stronger are the conclusions that can be drawn (Esaiasson et al 2007, p 114–115; King et al 1994, p 129–133).

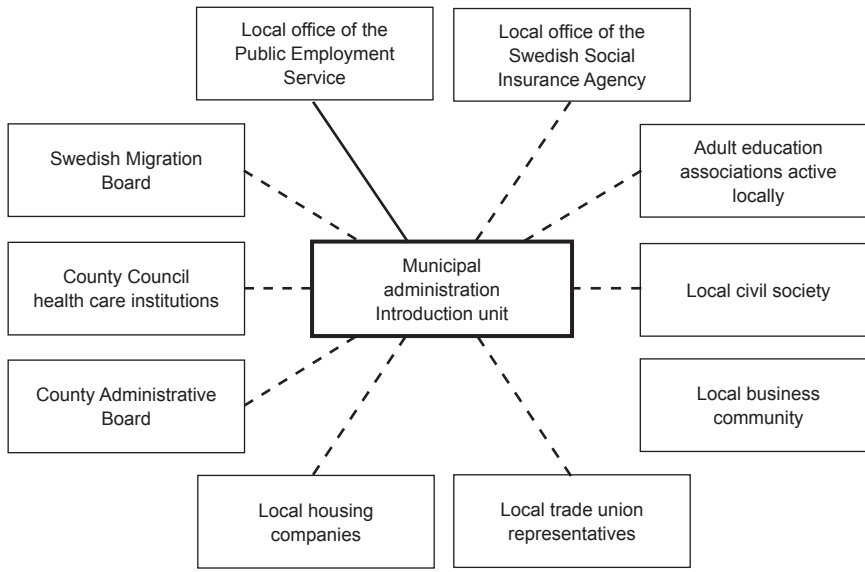
In order to test the second hypothesis, the integration networks managed by the municipal administrations are studied in the four selected municipalities. The analytical model, shown in figure 1, is based on the Provan & Milward methodology. To simplify, I concentrate on what can be seen as the ten most important network actors and I only study contacts that the municipal administrations are involved in.

Within the municipal administration, which is in the core role, I focus on the introduction unit. In most administrations, a special unit has the main responsibility for refugee reception in general, including the activities within the introduction and SFI programmes. While named differently across the municipalities, I use the term introduction unit. The other ten actors in the model are selected on the basis of a close analysis of the implementation networks that the municipal administrations manage. The Migration Board, the County Council, the County Administrative Board (Länsstyrelsen), the Social Insurance Agency and the PES are public actors whose activities are important for the refugees. Except for the County Administrative Boards, which assist the Migration Board in managing refugee flows to the municipalities, these actors are all involved in at least some of the local cooperation agreements.[10] The trade unions and the business community are also part of several agreements. In the original guidelines for the introduction programme, civil society is pointed out as an actor, or group of actors, that the municipal administration should be closely connected with (Proposition 1997/98:16, p 81). Moreover, I have added the housing companies, which the municipal administrations need to cooperate with to find housing solutions for the refugees, and adult education associations, which are a good way for refugees to familiarise themselves with Swedish society. I identify one actor as being more important than the others: the local office of the PES. The PES offices are involved in almost all local cooperation agreements and there is a general focus in the introduction programme on making the participants capable of getting a job. Thus, I believe that the contact with the local PES office is the key network relationship for the municipal administrations.

Between the municipal administra-

tion and each of the ten actors, there can be a solid network contact – a contact that is regular, relatively frequent and of at least some value to the parties involved. Referring to Granovetter, a solid network contact is a weak tie between two organisations. I assess network density in a straight-forward way, including two components in the density assessment. First, the general measurement rule is simple: the larger the number of solid network contacts, the higher is the density. Second, the solidness of the key contact with the PES is given extra weight when the total network density is determined.

Figure 1. Analytical model of the integration policy implementation network.



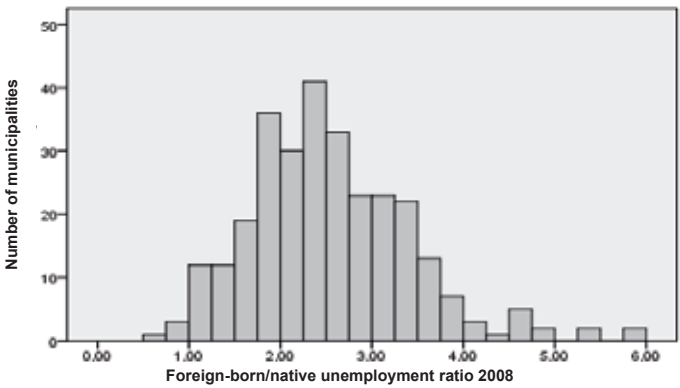
The networks are mapped according to the analytical model in a series of interviews. Two interviews are made in each of the four municipalities: one with the head of the introduction unit and one with the head of the local office of the PES. In measuring the network density in each of the municipalities, the criteria that I utilize to determine whether a network contact is solid or not are the following: there must be (1) established routines, (2) regular exchanges at least once a month and (3) a decent quality in the contact – it must not be described as bad by any of the respondents. Contacts that meet all three criteria are considered to be solid. Contacts that do not meet all criteria are not solid.[11]

Finally, I find it sensible to use rather tough criteria when determining whether the second hypothesis is supported or not. For it to be convincingly supported, the observed relationship between density and integration among the four selected municipalities has to be fully in line with expectations.

5. Multiple regression analysis

To start with, figure 2 illustrates the integration situation across the municipalities. Overall, labour market integration in Sweden is not very good. In 286 out of 290 municipalities, the immigrant unemployment rate is higher or radically higher than the unemployment rate in the native population. In most municipalities, the immigrant rates are around two to three times higher than those of the natives.

Figure 2. Frequency distribution for the integration variable: the foreign-born / native unemployment rate ratio.



Mean = 2,55. Standard deviation = 0,88. N = 290. *Source:* Arbetsförmedlingen.

Table 1 lists all variables included in the regression analysis. A few explanations are needed. As to attitudes towards immigration, there is no comparable public opinion survey data at the municipal level, which is why I use the support for the xenophobic Sweden Democrats (Sverigedemokraterna) as an indirect measure. The *cultural distance* variable builds on the assumption, derived from human capital theory, that immigrants from countries that are culturally distant from Sweden – in terms of for example language, social habits and educational system – find it more difficult to integrate into Swedish society than those from countries that are closer in this sense. The Asian and African immigrant groups are seen as culturally most distant in the operationalisation of this variable. As regards the *number of refugees* variable, it is incorporated into the analysis as a series of dummy variables. Because it is not normally distributed in its original version – which it at least approximately has to be in a regression analysis – it is transformed first into an ordinal level variable with five categories and then into a series of four dummy variables.[12] In the regression analysis, the b-values of the dummy variables indicate how much higher or lower the average unemployment ratios of each of the categories – low, medium, high and very high – are in relation to that of the very low category.[13]

Table 1. Variables included in the multiple regression analysis.

Variable	Definition	Source
Key variables		
Integration	Degree of integration in the labour market. Unemployment rate foreign-born / Unemployment rate natives (2008). The average of three monthly unemployment rate observations – April, July and October – is calculated for both foreign-born and natives. The average rate for the foreign-born is then divided by the average rate for natives. The data refers to persons aged 16-64, not including those enrolled in public labour market activity programmes.	Arbetsförmedlingen.
Local cooperation agreement	Whether or not there existed a formal local cooperation agreement in June 2005. 1 = Yes, 0 = No.	Integrationsverket et al 2005.
Policy environment		
Population size	The logarithm of population size. Total population in the municipality in 2006 (31/12).	SCB.
Tax paying capacity	Taxable income from gainful employment. SEK per inhabitant in the municipality. Average of the annual figures in 2006-2008 (referring to the taxations in 2005-2007).	Kommundatabasen.
Unemployment level	Total unemployment level in the municipality (%). Persons aged 16-64, not including those enrolled in public labour market activity programmes. Average of the annual average unemployment rates in 2005-2007.	Arbetsförmedlingen.
Attitudes towards immigration	Support within the municipality for the Sweden Democrats (Sverigedemokraterna) in the 2006 national election (%).	Valmyndigheten.
Cultural distance	Foreign-born population from Africa and Asia as a percentage of the total foreign-born population in the municipality (%). 2006 (31/12).	SCB 2007.
Size of the immigrant community	Foreign-born population as a percentage of total population in the municipality (%). 2006 (31/12).	SCB.
Policy implementation		
Number of refugees received	Total number of refugees received 2003-2007 per 1000 inhabitants in the municipality. Based on the 2006 population size.	Migrationsverket. SCB.
Resources: Total	Total net cost for refugee reception in the municipality in relation to the number of refugees received 2003-2007. The net costs for each of the five years are added together and then divided by the total number of refugees received over those five years.	Kommundatabasen. Migrationsverket.
Resources: SFI	Costs for the SFI programme. SEK per full-time student. Average of the costs in 2005-2007.	Skolverket.

Table 2. Multiple regression analysis to explain the degree of integration of immigrants in the Swedish municipalities.[14]

Dependent Integration Foreign-born / native unemployment ratio	Multiple Environment b (p)	Multiple Environment Implement. b (p)	Multiple Environment Implement. Network b (p)	Multiple Environment Implement. Network Beta
Policy environment				
Population size	0,42 (0,02)	0,53 (0,00)	0,51 (0,01)	0,23
Tax paying capacity	-1,2E-5 (0,00)	-8,7E-6 (0,03)	-8,7E-6 (0,03)	-0,17
Unemployment level	-0,26 (0,00)	-0,28 (0,00)	-0,28 (0,00)	-0,31
Attitudes towards immigration	0,03 (0,34)	0,02 (0,62)	0,02 (0,60)	0,03
Cultural distance	3,58 (0,00)	2,52 (0,00)	2,48 (0,00)	0,28
Size of the immigrant community	-0,01 (0,21)	-0,03 (0,02)	-0,03 (0,02)	-0,16
Policy implementation				
Number of refugees received				
- Dummy, very low vs. low		-0,02 (0,92)	-0,03 (0,87)	-0,01
- Dummy, very low vs. medium		0,31 (0,06)	0,21 (0,08)	0,13
- Dummy, very low vs. high		0,19 (0,25)	0,18 (0,31)	0,08
- Dummy, very low vs. very high		0,50 (0,01)	0,48 (0,01)	0,22
Resources: Total		3,2E-7 (0,60)	3,2E-7 (0,60)	0,03
Resources: SFI		-2,9E-6 (0,14)	-2,9E-6 (0,14)	-0,08
Network management				
Local cooperation agreement			0,06 (0,63)	0,03
R^2	0,22	0,27	0,27	
Adjusted R^2	0,20	0,23	0,23	
F change	12,6 (0,00)	2,63 (0,02)	0,24 (0,63)	
N	272	272	272	

Sources are indicated in table 1.

In the regression analysis, the variables are introduced in three steps. The policy environment variables make up the first model. I then add the policy implementation factors to the environment factors and get the second model. In the third model, the local cooperation agreement variable is included alongside all the other variables. In this step-wise way, the impact of the cooperation agreements can be seen in relation to the importance of the policy environment and policy implementation categories.

The regression results are presented in table 2. Starting with the first model, four of the policy environment variables have significant effects on the integration outcome ($p < 0,05$). Only *attitudes towards immigration* and *size of the immigrant community* are non-significant. The model as a whole explains 22% of the variation in integration across the municipalities ($R^2 = 0,22$). It is obvious that the policy environment is of central importance for the municipal integration dynamics.

Population size as well as *cultural distance* have positive effects on the unemployment ratio and thus negative effects on integration. The larger the municipality, the weaker the integration outcome (b = 0,42). The longer the cultural distance, the poorer the integration situation (b = 3,58). Regarding *tax paying capacity,* the significant effect is that integration tends to be easier in municipalities where the tax paying capacity is high (b = –1,2E-5). In contrast to these clear effects, neither attitudes (p = 0,34) nor the size of the immigrant community (p = 0,21) are of importance in this model.

While these results are straight-forward, the *unemployment level* variable is somewhat confusing. The unemployment level actually has a negative effect on the unemployment ratio and consequently a positive effect on integration (b = –0,26). The higher the unemployment level, the better the integration outcome. This result is somewhat surprising and has to some extent to do with a "mathematical" measurement effect induced when using the ratio measure of integration. However, since the issue is complex and only applies to this variable, I will not delve deeper into it here.

When the policy implementation variables are added in the second model, there is an increase in explanatory power (the F change statistic is significant), but the increase is small (adjusted R^2 only goes up from 0,20 to 0,23). Evidently, policy implementation does not make much of a difference for integration.

Both resources variables are non-significant. *Total resources* is far from being significant (p = 0,60). *SFI resources* is closer to significance, but still not significant (p = 0,14). Contrary to what could be expected, the size of the resources that are spent on integration activities seems to be of very limited importance for the integration outcome. As to the *number of refugees received*, the picture is mixed. If there had been a clear positive effect of refugee numbers on the unemployment ratio, the b-value of the first dummy would have been positive and the b-values of dummies 2-4 would then have increased step-by-step. That is not the case. There is a significant difference in integration

between the very low and the very high group, with the group with very low refugee numbers in general having a better integration situation (b = 0,50, p = 0,01). But the b-value of the first dummy is in fact slightly negative (b = –0,02) and the b-value of the second dummy (b = 0,31) is higher than that of the third dummy (b = 0,19). The very general trend is that higher numbers of refugees lead to higher unemployment ratios and thus worse integration outcomes, but there are deviations from that trend.

Also in the second model, the *size of the immigrant community,* which was non-significant in the first model, is now significant in the company of the policy implementation variables. The larger the immigrant community, the better is the integration situation (b = –0,03).

The key cooperation agreement variable is tested when added to the other variables in the third model. As we can see, *local cooperation agreement* does not make a difference for the overall explanatory power (the F change statistic is non-significant) and it is far from having a significant effect on integration (p = 0,63). At odds with what was assumed, whether or not there is a cooperation agreement does not have an impact on the integration situation in the municipalities. It is even the case that the sign of the b-value (b = 0,06) is the opposite of what was expected. If the agreements would have been good for the integration outcome, the b-value would have been negative. However, since the b-value is clearly non-significant, the contrary conclusion, that cooperation agreements are bad for integration, can not be drawn. What can be said is that the agreements are neither good nor bad.

Consequently, the first hypothesis does not get any support in the regression analysis. Municipal administrations that work with local cooperation agreements do not achieve better integration outcomes than those who do not.

In the fifth column, the standardised b-values, Beta, are given for all independent variables, which makes it possible to compare effects. *Unemployment level* (Beta = –0,31) and *cultural distance* (0,28) have the strongest effects on the integration outcome, followed by *population size* (0,23), *tax paying capacity* (–0,17) and *size of the immigrant community* (–0,16). As to the *number of refugees received*, the picture of the effect is mixed, while the rest of the explanatory variables are non-significant.

The influence of outlier cases is tested by removing the four municipalities with the most extreme integration outcomes – in relation to what the regression model predicts – and then rerunning the analysis. The outlier problem is limited. Without the outliers, the effect of *tax paying capacity* is not as solid as it appears in the original analysis and the impact of the *number of refugees* variable is more marked than when the outliers are included.

In all, the conclusions of the regressions analysis can be summarised in three points:

(1) *The cooperation agreements do not affect the integration situation in the municipalities.* The local cooperation agreements are neither good nor bad for the integration process, which

means that the first hypothesis does not get any support in the analysis.

(2) *The policy environment is important for the integration outcome.* Three policy environment factors have strong and solid effects on integration: *population size, unemployment level* and *cultural distance*. Regarding population size, the trend is that the integration situation in small municipalities tends to be better than in larger ones. A sensible interpretation could be that the closeness and informal ways of small municipalities are favourable to integration.[15] As to cultural distance, municipalities where large shares of the immigrants are from Africa or Asia tend to have more serious integration problems than municipalities where those shares are smaller. When it comes to the unemployment level, the surprising effect is that higher levels lead to better integration, but the interpretation of that result is to some extent a matter for discussion. Two more factors are of importance as well, but they are not as solid as the other three. *Tax paying capacity* has a positive effect on integration. The richer the municipality, the better the integration situation. This factor, though, is sensitive to the influence of outlier cases. The *size of the immigrant community* also has a positive impact on the degree of integration. It seems that large immigrant networks make it easier for immigrants to integrate into society. This factor, however, is only significant when the policy implementation variables are included in the analysis.

(3) *The policy implementation factors are not that important for the integration outcome.* Policy implementation, as it is measured in this analysis, does not have more than a limited impact on integration. The number of refugees received in the municipalities tends to have an effect on the integration situation, although that effect is not unambiguous. Higher numbers generally make integration more difficult. The size of the resources that the municipal administrations put into their integration efforts, on the other hand, is virtually unimportant. Neither total nor SFI resources affect the degree of integration. Money does not seem to make a difference.

6. Networks and integration in four municipalities

We now have a good picture of which factors are important for the integration outcome. *Population size, unemployment level* and *cultural distance* have strong and solid effects. *Tax paying capacity* and the *size of the immigrant community* have impacts that are less solid, while the *number of refugees received* is of some importance. Since we are also familiar with the integration outcomes, the selection can be made.

When carefully studying the variations of these variables across all 290 municipalities, I find four municipalities that fit very well into the sought-after pattern: Karlskrona, Uddevalla, Örnsköldsvik and Östersund. As far as I can see, this is the best selection of municipalities that can be made combining similarity in the independent variables with clear variation in the dependent variable.

Table 3. Selection of municipalities. Scores for the four selected municipalities on the seven variables involved in the selection. The distributions of those variables are illustrated by the min, max, 1st quartile, median and 3rd quartile values.

	Population size	Unemployment level	Cultural distance	Tax paying capacity	Number of refugees	Size of the immigrant community	Integration/ Unemployment ratio
Min	2 541	1,07	1,19	119 377	0	3,00	0,72
						Örnsköldsvik 5,10 Östersund 5,30	
1st quartile	10 006	2,67	15,4	133 584	3,17	5,98	1,93
					Östersund 5,46	Karlskrona 7,70	Östersund 2,47
Median	15 236	3,23	21,5	140 097	6,91	8,30	2,47
		Uddevalla 3,73		Uddevalla 141 957 Karlskrona 147 231 Östersund 147 999 Örnsköldsvik 148 803	Örnsköldsvik 9,16	Uddevalla 10,7	
3rd quartile	32 507	3,93	29,7	148 809	10,9	11,1	3,10
	Uddevalla 50 507 Örnsköldsvik 55 243 Östersund 58 583 Karlskrona 61 844	Karlskrona 4,03 Örnsköldsvik 4,03 Östersund 4,23	Uddevalla 31,1 Karlskrona 35,3 Östersund 37,1 Örnsköldsvik 37,6		Karlskrona 11,4 Uddevalla 11,7		Uddevalla 3,40 Karlskrona 3,52 Örnsköldsvik 4,68
Max	782 885	6,13	54,8	268 847	65,6	39,4	5,96

Sources are indicated in table 1.

As illustrated in table 3, these municipalities are very close to one another regarding the three most important factors: population size, unemployment level and cultural distance. The differences in tax paying capacity are also very small. As to the number of refugees and the size of the immigrant community, the variations are larger, but still not very large if variations across all 290 municipalities are taken into consideration. In addition to these similarities in the independent variables, the dissimilarities in the integration outcomes are substantial.

An interesting interview result is that the experiences in the four municipalities indicate that the existence of a formal local cooperation agreement does not mean very much. Cooperation

agreements can be specific and substantial tools, like it has been in Uddevalla since the old agreement was radically revised in 2007. But agreements can also be not much more than pieces of paper with limited impact in real life, like in Uddevalla in 2003–2006, in Örnsköldsvik in 2005–2007 and in Östersund. Whether there is a formal document or not does not seem to be of importance. What counts is how cooperation efforts are carried out in day-to-day activities, which has little to do with what is written and agreed upon (Interviews with Loodh, Berggren, Richter, Sörstam, Eurenius and Tegnhed). This is the pattern in just four out of 290 municipalities, but it is nevertheless a clue to why the existence of cooperation agreements does not have an effect on integration in the regression analysis. If the agreements are put into practice very differently across the municipalities, it is not surprising that they do not have a consistent impact on the integration situation.

Turning then to a comparison of network densities, table 4 is an overview of the findings in the four municipalities.

Table 4. Overview of the empirical findings in the selected municipalities: network density and the degree of integration.

Municipal administration	**Network density** Key contact with the Public Employment Service	**Network density** Number of solid network contacts	**Integration** Unemployment ratio
Östersund	Regular and active. The PES always involved in introduction plans. Both parties content with quality of contact.	8 All contacts solid except for the Social Insurance Agency and the trade unions.	2,47
Uddevalla	Regular but not very active. The PES seldom involved in introduction plans. Both parties content with quality of contact.	5 Solid: the PES, the adult education associations, the business community, the trade unions and the County Council.	3,40
Karlskrona	Regular and quite active. The PES often involved in introduction plans. The parties not very content with quality of contact.	5 Solid: the PES, the business community, the housing companies, the County Administrative Board and the County Council.	3,52
Örnsköldsvik	Regular and active. The PES always involved in introduction plans. Both parties content with quality of contact.	4 Solid: the PES, the business community, the housing companies and the Migration Board.	4,68

Sources: Interviews with Eurenius, Tegnhed, Loodh, Berggren, Fagerberg, Kihlström, Richter and Sörstam. Arbetsförmedlingen.

The approach to assessing overall network density is to look at the total number of solid network contacts, while giving extra weight to the solidness of the key contact with the PES. In line with this, it is obvious that Östersund, with 8 solid network contacts and a very solid relationship with the PES, has the highest network density. Furthermore, with 5 solid network contacts each and not so solid relationships with the PES, the networks in Uddevalla and Karlskrona are less dense than in Östersund. When comparing Uddevalla and Karlskrona, it is sensible to say that they are at the same density level. They have the same number of solid network contacts and their PES contacts are roughly comparable. In relation to the PES, Karlskrona has higher activity, while the quality is higher in Uddevalla. Regarding Örnsköldsvik, there are only 4 solid contacts in the network, in comparison with 5 in Uddevalla and Karlskrona, but the PES contact in Örnsköldsvik is more solid than in those two municipalities. As a consequence, a sensible overall assessment is that the network density in Uddevalla, Karlskrona and Örnsköldsvik is roughly the same. This leads to the conclusion that Östersund has a higher network density than the other three municipal administrations, which are at approximately the same density level.

On the basis of that conclusion, the relationship between density and integration can be scrutinized. Four issues are important when assessing the relationship: (1) co-variation, (2) the accuracy of the most similar system design, (3) the causal mechanism and (4) generalisation.

(1) The unemployment rate ratios are included in table 4. Overall, the empirical co-variation between density and integration is to a quite large extent in line with expectations. It is not perfect, but with the clear difference between Östersund and the other municipalities, there is a general trend linking higher densities to better integration. Östersund, with the highest density, also has the best integration situation. What makes the picture look less than perfect is the case of Örnsköldsvik. Although density in Örnsköldsvik is at the same level as in Uddevalla and Karlskrona, the integration situation is much worse. The integration outcome in Örnsköldsvik can obviously not be explained by the density factor. In all, there is a trend in support of the second hypothesis, but there is also a clear deviation from that trend.

(2) The similarity argument is generally convincing. However, there is a problem with the differences in the *number of refugees* variable. Returning to table 3, Östersund received a smaller number of refugees than the other municipalities. Although the effect was somewhat ambiguous, the conclusion was that higher numbers generally make integration more difficult. Thus, the limited number of refugees received in Östersund can probably partially explain why the integration situation is better in Östersund than in the other municipalities. On the other hand, the analysis also showed that small immigrant communities are generally negative for the integration process, which means that the relatively small size of the Östersund community is negative for integration. Östersund's advantage

from receiving few refugees is most likely more important than its disadvantage from having a small immigrant community, but to some extent the effects can be assumed to level each other out. The exact impact on integration of the two variables taken together is difficult to determine.

(3) Network management involves the negative aspect of using limited resources and the positive aspect of building interorganisational bridges which are used for information as well as cooperation. Overall in the four selected municipalities, the positive aspect is more salient than the negative aspect.

On resources, the introduction unit respondents were asked about how much time they spent on managing external contacts. All four answered that they spent between 40% and 50% of their working hours on external networking. They found those activities to be important and no one indicated that the external time was not well-spent. Clearly, their perception is that the benefits of maintaining these contacts are more substantial than the costs (Interviews with Eurenius, Fagerberg, Loodh and Richter).

On interorganisational bridges, there are good examples of the value of solid network contacts – or weak ties in the Granovetter terminology. First, on the information theme, in both Örnsköldsvik and Östersund the close connections between the introduction units and the PES offices mean that the offices are well informed about and actively involved in the case of each individual refugee. If there are opportunities in the labour market, the PES offices can help the individuals take advantage of those opportunities without delay. In that way, information sharing through a solid network connection can make the integration process move faster (Interviews with Eurenius, Richter, Sörman and Tegnhed). Second, as an example of established ties making cooperation easier, there is a contrast between Örnsköldsvik and the other municipal administrations when it comes to contacts with the County Councils. Karlskrona, Uddevalla and Östersund, which all have solid ties with the County Councils, face no major problems in finding health care solutions for the refugees. In Örnsköldsvik, on the contrary, where there is no solid network contact with the County Council, health care is a troublesome issue and the refugees can not always be offered the care they need in a timely manner. Since health care is very important for many refugees, this can be an obstacle in the integration process (Interviews with Eurenius, Fagerberg, Loodh and Richter).

This illustrates why it is logical that the introduction unit in Östersund, with the most dense network, can use its established ties to create opportunities for the refugees in more areas than what the units in the other municipalities are capable of. A dense network can facilitate information sharing and cooperation in many fields, which makes it easier to find good practical solutions for the refugees, which in turn makes the integration process easier. Citing Granovetter (1973, p 1360), there is a "strength of weak ties".

(4) Taking into consideration the points made on co-variation, the accu-

racy of the most similar system design and the causal mechanism – what can be said about the effect of network density on integration? Is the second hypothesis supported or not?

On the one hand, there is a trend across the four municipalities in support of the hypothesis. Due to the influence of Östersund, the overall picture is that higher densities are linked to better integration. There is a causal mechanism that can logically explain the trend and the most similar system design seems reasonably solid. On the other hand, there is a clear deviation from the trend. The poor integration situation in Örnsköldsvik can not be explained by network density. Because of that deviation, the trend is not strong enough for a conclusion to be drawn that there is a similar trend among all 290 municipalities. As has been argued, to say that high density is positive for integration across all municipalities would be sensible only if the observed relationship is fully in line with expectations. That is not the case. Since the relationship is not entirely consistent among the four municipalities, it is not reasonable to assert that it should be consistent among all municipalities. Therefore, I conclude that the second hypothesis is not supported by the empirical results. High density is not positive for integration. At the same time, since the results do not indicate that high density is negative, the overall finding is that high density is neither good nor bad for integration. The network density level does not matter.

Accordingly, the conclusions of the qualitative study can be summarised in two points:

(1) *High network density is not positive for integration.* The second hypothesis does not get good enough empirical support to conclude that high density has a positive impact on integration. High density is neither good nor bad for the integration process.

(2) *Network density does not seem to be unimportant among the four municipalities.* While the hypothesis is not supported across all municipalities, there is a trend linking higher densities to better integration among the four. Although the trend is not fully consistent, the difference between Östersund, with a dense network and strong integration, and the other municipalities, with lower densities and weaker integration, is an indication that density is of at least some importance.

7. Conclusions

With none of the two hypotheses supported empirically, this leads up to the overall conclusion that there is no relationship between how networks are managed and the integration outcome. The way in which the municipal administrations manage their implementation networks does not affect the local degree of integration. Network management does not matter.

That being said, two important limitations in the study should be noted. First, the mapping exercise gone through when measuring network density is not very extensive. Second, although integration is a multi-faceted phenomenon, a labour market indicator is the only integration measure used in the study, making the perspec-

tive rather narrow in this regard. What integration looks like in other areas of society, for example in political life or regarding housing patterns, is not taken into account.

Underlining the need for more research is surely a standard conclusion in the academic world. In this case, however, I would argue that such a conclusion is particularly relevant. Referring again to Provan & Kenis, there is indeed a wide gap between the high priority that network solutions get in policy considerations and what we actually know about the functioning of networks. There is a lack of studies that look closer into the workings of public-sector networks and there is a striking lack of theories of cause and effect – of what makes networks work. Policy implementation is increasingly about governance and the steering of networks, but we really do not have a very good picture of what is going on or what the implications are.

One reason for the scarcity of knowledge is probably that we are inclined to think that network solutions almost per definition are better than if actors work on their own. The results of this and other studies, however, indicate that extensive networking is not an automatic problem-solver. The conclusion on network density – that higher densities do not bring about better policy effects – is the same result on this aspect as in the Provan & Milward study. In the Jennings & Ewalt study the intensiveness of the cooperation efforts is measured differently, but the result is quite similar: increased levels of cooperation are only slightly positive for programme performance. While it seems plausible that higher density should result in higher effectiveness, the real world observations are not really in line with intuition on this point. Along the same lines, the conclusion that the local cooperation agreements are not positive for integration also runs counter to intuition. Clearly, the empirical studies show that networking does not automatically work, but that the case is far more complex than that. As a consequence, it would be beneficial if networks to a larger extent were studied in a neutral and structured way. In a 1997 article outlining a research agenda for the field, O'Toole (1997) urged public administrators and research colleagues to treat networks seriously. It seems that his appeal is still relevant.

Regarding the development of Swedish integration policy, the results of this study do not put the work with the local cooperation agreements in a very good light. The reasonable expectation that the agreements should have had at least some positive impact on integration is not met. Moreover, some of the local agreements seem to have been formal pieces of paper that the actors have not cared very much about in practice. A relevant question for policy-makers to pose is if the present system of cooperation agreements is really appropriate and effective.

Another problem in policy development is data scarcity. There is not much comparable data on the activities of the municipal administrations in the integration area. A lot of useful information that could have been used to guide policy development is not available. Without a clear overview of what is going on in the municipalities it is diffi-

cult to make rational and well-founded reforms in order to improve policy effectiveness. What is positive on this point is that the data shortage and bad evaluation opportunities were highlighted in a recent government report. It was suggested that a new database should be built that would help to at least partially solve the problem. Such a database is really needed (SOU 2008:58, p 270–286).

Turning from problems to opportunities, an improvement of the data situation would imply that benchmarking tools could be developed. There are pros and cons to benchmarking, but in this area I think there would be important advantages. If the municipal administrations could get a structured overview of what is done elsewhere and of which implementation methods seem to be most effective, there are good reasons to believe that at least some of them could make useful improvements in their introduction and SFI programmes. For municipal administrations in small municipalities, which often have limited resources to spend on evaluation and strategic development, such benchmarking tools could be particularly helpful.

Notes

[1] When talking about public administration at the local level in Sweden, I use two different English concepts for the Swedish word *kommun: municipal administration and municipality*. Throughout the article, *municipal administration* refers to the local level administrative unit, while *municipality* refers to the geographical area that is administered by this unit. In Swedish, the word *kommun* can refer both to the administrative unit and to the geographical area, but I believe that a distinction between the different meanings is needed in order for the English text to become clear.

[2] The strategy of combining quantitative and qualitative was strongly argued for by King, Keohane & Verba back in 1994 and is now quite widely recommended (King et al 1994, p 3-7). Teorell & Svensson (2007, p 264-277), for example, are dedicated proponents of this approach.

[3] The first central agreement was signed by four actors: the Integration Board, the National Labour Market Board (Arbetsmarknadsverket), the National Agency for Education (Skolverket) and the Association of Local Authorities and Regions (Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting – which had a different name back then). The Migration Board (Migrationsverket) and the National Agency for School Improvement (Myndigheten för skolutveckling) joined the effort in 2003. When the Integration Board was closed down in 2007, a joint working group took over its leading role within the framework of the agreement (Integrationsverket et al 2005, p 17-22; SOU 2008:58, p 98-99).

[4] It is noticeable that several key articles present agendas for future research rather than empirical results. See for example O'Toole 1997, Meier and O'Toole 2005, Provan and Milward 2001, and Provan and Kenis 2007. The development of research on network effectiveness seems to be at an early stage.

[5] Another potentially negative aspect is that the issue of responsibility can be troublesome in a network setting. If many actors are involved in the delivery of policy, the exact areas of responsibility of the different actors are often difficult to make clear. The straight-forward question of who is in charge is not always easily answered, which can be confusing for the network actors involved as well as for the individuals, associations or companies targeted by the policy.

[6] There are other network aspects to look at and other hypotheses to test, but in order to make the analysis focused and manageable, I limit the study to these two. One obvious perspective that I choose to exclude is that of concentration used by Provan & Milward. However, the concept of concentration is not really applicable to the networks in the municipalities. The municipal administrations are dominant and so clearly in the core role that it would be very difficult to empirically observe differences in concentration between the municipalities.

[7] Obviously, in measuring integration in this way, the integration situations in other areas of society than the labour market are excluded from the integration variable. What integration looks like in politics or when it comes to housing, for example, is not taken into account. It can be argued that it would be more appropriate here to talk not about integration in general but more specifically about labour market integration. However, I think that labour market integration is so much in focus in Swedish integration policy that it is motivated to use it as the only indicator in a discussion on integration in general. But at the same time, of course, the narrowness of the integration measure has to be fully taken into consideration.

[8] Several observers have pointed at the lack of comparable data and knowledge in general

on how integration policy is implemented in the municipalities (see Riksrevisionen 2006, p 42, Integrationsverket 2007a, p 40, Eriksson et al 2007, p 79-81, and Emilsson 2008, p 21). As a matter of fact, the data shortage and bad evaluation opportunities were highlighted in a recent government report (SOU 2008:58, p 270-286).

[9] The initial plan was to incorporate five municipalities in the analysis. However, a key respondent, the head of refugee reception activities in Motala, was in the middle of a reorganisation process and had no time for an interview. Without that information, I could not get good enough insight into the network management routines and therefore decided to exclude Motala from the analysis.

[10] As to the public actors, I describe the current situation and choose only to incorporate actors that exist today. The Integration Board, which was shut down in 2007, is not included in the analysis.

[11] The solid network contact concept as well as the criteria are my own constructions. All eight interviews were semi-structured telephone interviews. Two questionnaires were used – one for the heads of the integration units and one for the heads of the PES offices. In both questionnaires, there were structured as well as open questions. Since the main focus was to map the network and network management routines, the questions on that theme were structured in a clear way, in line with the analytical model. In the introduction unit interviews, all ten network connections in the model were gone through regarding frequency, existence of established routines and quality in the contacts. In the PES interviews, the contacts between the local office and the introduction unit were investigated in detail. In addition to the structured network questions, a number of open-ended questions were included to get a picture of the general integration situation and to get the viewpoint of the respondent on the workings of the integration process in the municipality in question. One of those open-ended questions was about the existence and significance of a local cooperation agreement in the municipality. The intention was to talk only to the heads of units and offices, but when the heads recommended that it would be better if I talked to a well informed colleague, I followed that advice.

[12] In order to check that the variables are normally distributed, they are studied in histograms. In fact, all variables give the impression of being approximately normal, except for the *number of refugees* received variable. The distribution of this variable is positively skewed, with the municipalities clustered towards 0.

[13] Since three municipalities – Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö – are much larger than the others, it is common practise to use a logarithm version of the population size variable in comparative analyses (Karlsson 2007, p 11). When it comes to timing, integration is measured in 2008, while 2005-2007 is the general reference period for the independent variables. The situation and development during that period is what lead up to the integration outcome in 2008. The only data available for the cooperation agreements variable describes the situation in June 2005, which is actually a very relevant measurement point. It means that the existing agreements have been in use for at least three years when the integration outcome is measured in 2008. I do not know how many of the agreements existing in June 2005 that were in operation throughout the period up to 2008. However, the number of agreements stayed roughly the same at least until the end of 2006, which is an indication that most of the agreements were in effect for most of the 2005-2008 period (Integrationsverket 2007b, p 37).

[14] The validity of multiple regression conclusions relies on several assumptions. If these assumptions are not true, the results of the analysis can be misleading (Field 2005, p 169-173; Lind et al 2008, p 530-531). In this case, the statistics and graphs that are used to check the assumptions generally look good. The VIF values confirm that multicollinearity is not a

problem. Values in all models are all well above 0,2 and well below 10, which means that they are unproblematic (Field 2005, p 196). The Durbin-Watson test statistics, 2,098 in the *Multiple Environment-Implementation-Network* model, are close to 2, which implies that the residuals are independent (Ibid, p 189). Furthermore, when putting the residuals into a histogram, it is clear that they are approximately normally distributed, fully in line with what is assumed. Finally, when plotting standardized predicted values against standardized residuals, it is obvious that there is no heteroscedasticity problem (Ibid, p 202-206).

[15] When discussing the conclusions on population size, it must be kept in mind that the variable is included in the analysis in a logarithm version. Since the original and the logarithm versions of the variable are not perfectly intercorrelated (r = 0,69), some caution should be exercised when conclusions are drawn on the basis of the logarithm version.

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Interviews

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Lars Fagerberg	Acting Head of unit, the Refugee introduction unit of the municipal administration of Karlskrona (Karlskrona kommun), 2009-02-24.
Christer Kihlström	Head of office, the Karlskrona office of the Public Employment Service, 2009-02-20.
Stefan Loodh	Head of unit, the Immigrant and refugee unit of the municipal administration of Uddevalla (Uddevalla kommun), 2009-03-05.
Hans Berggren	Head of section, the Uddevalla office of the Public Employment Service, 2009-02-23.
Kerstin Richter	Head of unit, the Integration unit of the municipal administration of Örnsköldsvik (Örnsköldsviks kommun), 2009-02-25.
Runa Sörstam	Head of section, the Örnsköldsvik office of the Public Employment Service, 2009-03-04.
Helén Eurenius	Deputy Head of unit, the Integration service unit of the municipal administration of Östersund (Östersunds kommun), 2009-02-20.
Johan Tegnhed	Head of section, the Östersund office of the Public Employment Service, 2009-02-23.

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