Lokal policydesign

Om hur kommuner skapar policy som klargör ansvarsrelationen mellan kommunen och kommunmedborgarna i krissituationer

Andreas Ivarsson

AKADEMISK AVHANDLING

GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET
FÖRVALTNINGSHÖGSKOLAN

Policy design for crisis management.

A study on how municipalities determine the responsibilities of the citizens as well as the municipal organization during crisis.

Abstract

In Sweden, the policy concerning the public responsibility for the citizens' welfare and protection during crisis is somewhat ambiguous. Therefore, this responsibility will reveal itself in practice during an actual crisis. Much of the crisis management is delegated to the municipal level and therefore the determination of this responsibility will take place at the municipal level. The determination of such responsibility by municipal actors can be viewed as ad hoc interpretations of the general crisis management policies, as well as other policies. However, a preliminary assumption is made that this kind of interpretations, during the actual implementation of policy in a crisis, in fact might be policy making. The interpretations made during a crisis might be established and function as a local policy guiding municipal decision making in the future. The policy design and social construction theory developed by Schneider and Ingram was chosen as a preliminary theoretical framework in the study.

The aim of the study is to develop knowledge on how policy is made during implementation. By empirically examining if local policy is made by the municipalities, how it is made, and the factors that affect the policy making process, such knowledge can be developed. This knowledge can in return be used for developing the policy design and social construction theory since the theory has not thoroughly been applied to policy making during implementation. Three municipalities, two hit by hurricanes and one flooded, were chosen as empirical cases.

The conclusion of the study is that policy design is developed in the empirical cases. Further the policy process involves the social construction of target populations, as predicted by the theory, even if other types of social constructions are more relevant in some cases. However, to fully grasp the policy making processes in the cases it is concluded that the policy design and social construction theory are not sufficient. The model of policy making in the theory is too simple. The function of social constructions of target populations is not the same in the empirical cases as in the theory. The concept of occasions for policy making and the concept of incompatibility are introduced to clarify the function of the social constructions of target populations in the empirical cases. The policy making is described as policy making practices for dealing with incompatibility, rather than strategic and goal-based policy making as predicted by the theory. A number of contextual factors affecting the policy making process and type of policy design developed was identified such as the specific decision dilemma, external demands and established social constructions in the municipal organizations. A proposal is made to use the concepts of occasions for policy making and different types of occasions like incompatibility, to empirically ground the future studies of policy making during implementation, even though these studies can be based in the policy design and social construction theory.

Keywords: Policy design, policy making, policy design and social construction theory, implementation, crisis management, social constructions of target populations, municipalities