Locked-in collaboration

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To my grandparents
Tage (1923-2010) and
Birgit (1923-2016) Forsberg

Abstract

Collaboration, employed in defining a problem, finding a solution, and implementing it, has been proposed as a solution to a range of problems framed as wicked or complex. Collaboration can be justified based on instrumental, normative, and value-based reasoning. All approaches start in what collaboration is not: it is not demarcated, silo-based organization, but instead endeavours to achieve comprehensive and holistic perspectives and measures of service delivery. This has resulted in a great deal of research taking a normative and evaluative approach to collaboration. In contrast, this thesis contributes to the growing critical stream of collaboration research. The overall aim of the thesis is to explain how collaboration has come to be a taken-for-granted solution and the possible consequences of this.

The material was generated through a study of legally regulated inter-organizational collaboration (referred to by the acronym "FINSAM") in the Swedish public sector implemented through local coordination associations. The coordination associations implement regulated collaboration between the Swedish National Employment Agency, the National Social Insurance Office, county councils, and municipal councils. Each local coordination association has a joint board and a pooled budget, which is to be used to finance measures targeting individuals in need of coordinated rehabilitation. The study was conducted through fieldwork in two local coordination associations, as well as in conferences and seminars addressing FINSAM in general.

The findings indicate that collaboration in local coordination associations is organized in a project-like way alongside ordinary organizational practice. Two different approaches to organization were identified: the coordination association as either an actor or an arena. Depending on approach the coordination association will be more or less demarcated from ordinary organizational practice. Demarcation is strengthened through the construction of accountability. When local coordination associations are held accountable they are treated as hierarchical organizations with only vertical, but no horizontal, responsibilities. Horizontal practice and outcome are downplayed when accountability is constructed. The findings also indicate that the values attributed to this collaboration, together with its ordering narratives and its impact on legitimacy, create a dynamic resulting in reduced need and latitude to problematize collaboration, which is taken for granted as the solution. This perceived decreased need for problematizing is connected to the pooled budget and the way the collaboration is understood: as something unique and better suited to handling the identified problems.

The conclusion is that collaboration has become locked in within project-like organizations and organizing, and locked in as a solution through the rationalized myth of collaboration. The law governing FINSAM and specially allocated resources in pooled budgets strengthens this lock-in.

List of papers

This thesis is based on the following papers, referred to in the text by their Roman numerals.

I. Andersson J, Ahgren B, Bihari Axelsson S, Eriksson A and Axelsson R (2011) Organizational approaches to collaboration in vocational rehabilitation - an international literature review, International Journal of Integrated Care, Vol. 11, October-December.

II. Andersson J, Löfström M, Bihari Axelsson S and Axelsson R (2012) Actor or arena: Contrasting translations of a law on interorganizational integration, Journal of Health Organization and Management, 26 (6): 778 - 793

III. Andersson J and Wikström E (2014) Constructing accountability in inter- organisational collaboration: the implications of a narrow performance-based focus, Journal of Health Organization and Management, 28 (5): 619 - 634

IV. Andersson J, The circular argumentation of collaboration. Submitted for publication.

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Content

Paper I - IV

Introduction

Collaboration has been proposed as the solution to a range of problems framed as wicked or complex. Collaboration might handle the wickedness through understanding of the problem, through increased probability of finding and agreeing on a specific solution, and through implementing the solution and ensuring that it lasts (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Head and Alford, 2015; Lægreid and Rykkja, 2015; Weber and Khademian, 2008). Collaboration entails expectations of outcomes, such as increased quality, efficiency, effectiveness, comprehensiveness, accessibility, and sustainability through long-term problem-solving capacity (e.g., Dowling, Powell, and Glendinning, 2004; Weber and Khademian, 2008).

Collaboration can be based on instrumental, normative, and value-based rationales. Instrumental rationales can refer to the welfare system and its organization as separate specialized organizations that may be functional for most groups in the population. However, when a person or target group has needs that require the involvement of multiple organizations or professions, this organizational structure might no longer be functional (Grape, 2006). Normative and value-based rationales generally start with the opposite of collaboration, with what it is supposed to replace. Often it is reforms collectively labelled new public management (NPM) that have created this system in need of repair, a system focusing on defining and demarcating organizational practice and responsibilities (e.g., Christensen and Lægreid, 2011). This specialization, differentiation, and even fragmentation of the public sector have led to a need for collaboration (Axelsson and Bihari Axelsson, 2006; Bouckaert, Peters, and Verhoest, 2010). As control systems often do not support organizational or working models that run cross organizational boundaries (cf. Currie and Suhomlinova, 2006; Currie and Hodges, 2011), a person's needs might be considered complex or multiple because they require the services of multiple organizations, and organizing to meet such needs then also becomes complex (Hjern, 2007). Collaboration may then be portrayed as the rational solution to problems and issues perceived as complex, values of collaboration such as holism being proposed as a counteracting those of regular organizational practices and opposing NPM (Christensen and Lægreid, 2011). Collaboration is sometimes even seen as a moral obligation (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2010).

Research into different forms of collaboration has mostly been normative in taking the values and merits of collaboration for granted, although acknowledging the difficulties of making it work (e.g., Huxham and Vangen,

2005). This emphasis on difficulties has resulted in a normative approach, with a linear and rational focus on how to make collaboration work and overcome barriers (e.g., Axelsson and Bihari Axelsson, 2006). However, there has also been critical research questioning this functionalistic approach (Lotia and Hardy, 2009), and research questioning the normative and taken-for-granted underpinnings of collaboration (Mossberg, 2014; Schmachtel, 2015). Previous research has also questioned the point of institutionalizing stable coordination mechanisms, and pointed to the necessity of flexibility (Reff Pedersen, Sehestad and Sørensen, 2011).

This thesis contributes to the more critical stream of collaboration research, without questioning that collaboration may be necessary in order to find and implement solutions. It is based on a study of legally regulated inter-organizational collaboration in the Swedish public sector implemented through pooled budgets and joint boards. This case facilitates analysis of an institutionalized norm: regulated and formalized collaboration based on a legally stated need for collaboration. Moreover, the collaboration is organized as local partnerships between four participating organizations in so-called coordination associations[1]. The coordination associations have relative freedom in organizing, leading to variation their practice. There is a strong relationship between the local coordination associations and national agencies through these agencies' monitoring and evaluation of collaboration practice and outcome. The ultimate target group of collaboration practice is individuals with complex problems in need of coordinated rehabilitation. This collaboration with pooled budgets also merits study in view of the specific local contexts, the relationship between the local and national levels, and how collaboration is justified and cast as relevant.

Previous research into this form of collaboration has applied a micro perspective on practice, concentrating on professional or organizational differences, barriers, and facilitators, and evaluating their effects. There is lack of research into this form of collaboration applying a wider and more critical perspective.

The thesis is a compilation of four papers and this overarching thesis frame. The constituent papers target different aspects of the studied form of collaboration: differences between local coordination associations, the relationship between the local and national organizational levels with a focus on

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[1] The Swedish term for a coordination association is samordningsförbund. In an informational slide presentation from 2015 on the official website (Finsam) samordningsförbund is translated into collaboration agency. In this thesis coordination association is used consistently. The term coordination association is based on the work of Ståhl (2010).

how accountability is constructed, and the ordering narratives underpinning this collaboration. The papers address the process of interpreting the kinds of practice and outcome seen as relevant and desirable, and how these are justified. One paper is a literature review with a broader perspective on collaboration than merely the local coordination associations; that paper examines various ways of organizing collaboration and the factors that hinder or facilitate it.

There are no standard definitions of collaboration, or of other related concepts such as coordination or cooperation. Sometimes coordination refers to resources, cooperation to inter-professional work, and collaboration to inter-organizational work. These distinctions are rough and moreover, the words/concepts are used differently, and the label collaboration may consequently mean, and refer to, different kind of practice. Moreover, the available definitions are theoretically derived and are not always useful to describe or understand actual practice. The usefulness is further implicated by the normative nature of many definitions, where positive outcomes are included in definitions of practice.

In this thesis collaboration is the concept used, and it is used as an overall term to describe practice of working together. Coordination is a term used in the setting of the study, as in the law regulating the collaboration. It is used to describe alignment of resources such as a pooled budget. Coordination of resources, in this setting, is however based on collaboration and results in collaboration.

The next section describes the law making inter-organizational collaboration with pooled budgets possible, presents and summarizes previous research on such collaboration, and outlines common research processes used in collaboration research. Following this, the aims and research questions of the thesis and its four constituent papers are presented. The papers' conceptual approaches are laid out, followed by the research process. The findings of the four papers are then summarized and discussed, before the overall conclusions are presented.

Collaboration with pooled budgets in Sweden

In Sweden, public-sector inter-organizational collaboration with pooled budgets is implemented through coordination associations, regulated by the Financial Coordination of Rehabilitation Measures Act (SFS 2003:1210). The preparatory legal work for the Act describes how the local coordination associations are the result of a choice not to recreate, merge, or redraw organizational boundaries, but rather to collaborate across them (Prop. 2002/03:132). The members of a coordination association are the National Social Insurance Agency, the National Employment Agency, a regional county council (in charge of, e.g., health care), a local municipal council (in charge of, e.g., social services). The Act sets forth two aims of financial coordination: to improve the working ability of the target group and to use existing resources in more efficiently. The Act regulates the structure of the local coordination associations, encompassing their members, contributions to the pooled budget, and tasks.

The Financial Coordination of Rehabilitation Measures Act resulted from previous trials and debates on how to understand the problem of increased sickness absence with its associated costs. Johnson (2010) has described sickness absence as one of the most controversial issues in Swedish welfare policy debate in the 2000s. He discussed how this debate assumed that the increase in sick-leave days in the late 1990s and early twenty-first century was due to an increased number of people on sick leave. However, it has instead been demonstrated that the increase was mainly attributable to an increased number of days of sick leave for sick-listed individuals, who were sick-listed for longer periods of time (Hetzler, Melén, and Bjerstedt, 2005; Johnson, 2010). Johnson (2010, p. 251) argues that the increased number of sick-leave days, due to inability to end cases of long-term sickness absence, can be explained by a breakdown in the rehabilitation system during the 1990s (see also Hetzler, Melén, and Bjerstedt, 2005), when several reforms resulted in responsibilities and tasks being changed or revised. As a result, previous rehabilitation practices were no longer available or possible (Johnson, 2010).

Various collaboration experiments were conducted before the current financial coordination law was enacted. These experiments tested different organizational arrangements, addressed different target groups, and did or did not use joint resources (Prop. 2002/03:132; ISF, 2010:2). Evaluations of previous trials (Socialstyrelsen, 2001) stated that collaboration requires a supporting structure or a joint local arena for coordination. The importance of

joint responsibility is underlined, and joint resources are needed in order to facilitate it. These resources are to be used in line with local needs and priorities and are not to be subject to organizational priorities (Socialstyrelsen, 2001). These evaluation conclusions highlighted certain aspects that became central features of the Financial Coordination of Rehabilitation Measures Act. The many different experiments preceding the current law, in combination with their evaluations, created a window of opportunity for yet another collaboration reform of this sort, in this particular field of the Swedish public sector (Bryson et al., 2015; Kingdon, 1995; Takahashi and Smutny, 2002).

The target group as described in the Financial Coordination of Rehabilitation Measures Act comprises individuals in need of coordinated rehabilitation to improve their ability to work. This group is singled out from ordinary organizational practice to receive special treatment by means of a special solution: collaboration. Collaboration is proposed as a solution based on the following problem definition as described on the official website (Finsam) and in the preparatory legal work: Swedish public administration delivers a range of services such as health care, social services, social security, education, and employment services, which are governed by local, regional, and national governments. Not all individuals in need of such services fit within the existing organizational frames, and it is often stated that this group is at risk of ending up in a "no man's land" or grey zone. In other words, their needs are broader than the established frames of, or boundaries between, the involved agencies (Finsam; Prop. 2002/03:1210).

When the Financial Coordination of Rehabilitation Measures Act was introduced, it mainly concerned sickness absence and rehabilitation. This emphasis has gradually changed, and now the local coordination associations officially operate in the field of vocational rehabilitation, although in practice they encompass return-to-work, labour-market-integration, and re-integration measures (Ståhl, 2010). It has also been suggested that the local coordination associations could serve target groups not generally considered in need of coordinated rehabilitation, such as young adults not working or in school (SOU 2013:74).

Many different actors can be involved in vocational rehabilitation practice: the individual him/herself; an employer and occupational health services, if the person is employed; health and social care services, the National Employment Agency, and the National Social Insurance Agency. The individual's case is often described as located in the intersection of these organizations, and many different organizations, professionals, perspectives, and logics may be involved, depending on the situation (Lindqvist, 2000). The many actors involved are cited in describing the target group as in need of

coordinated services, lest they end up in an administrative "no man's land" (Finsam; Prop. 2002/03:132).

The local coordination associations are regulated and their structure standardized, and they represent a new form of legal entity. When the Financial Coordination of Rehabilitation Measures Act was introduced, it specified that although the associations are a new legal entity, they do not constitute a new agency with the ability to determine the benefits or rights of the individuals concerned. This right and responsibility remains with the various agencies and authorities cooperating through the associations, whose resources and practices should be coordinated to address the target group. However, in the consultation responses and comments several respondents were critical of what they saw as a fifth rehabilitation agency and of the new problems of boundaries and demarcation that would arise from it.

A local coordination association has a joint board comprising politicians from, and appointed by, the involved county and municipal councils as well as civil servants from the local branches of the National Employment and National Social Insurance agencies. The board constitutes the association, but in practice, the financed activities are often included as well. The task of the board, as specified in law, is to determine the goals and guidelines of the association, to support collaboration between the four members, to finance joint activities to address the target group (within the "frame of the collaborating actors' collective responsibility"), to create a budget, and to monitor and evaluate the association's activities (SFS 2003:1210). A board's decisions should be made, without considering agency interests; to discharge joint responsibilities, and for that joint resources are needed (Finsam; Prop. 2002/03:132). These decisions are to result in various activities, labelled either structural or individual. Structural activities are intended to increase knowledge, educate professionals, and improve collaboration, whereas individual activities are rehabilitation efforts targeting individuals, such as the services of teams of rehabilitation professionals. All activities financed by the pooled budgets are to be registered in a joint performance measurement system.

Supporting the board, there is often an operative group of managers, who prepare and anchor the decisions of the board in the member organizations. This group has no formal role in relation to the local coordination association and is not regulated. Generally, the association also employs a civil servant whose label varies, but who is increasingly called the association manager (Finsam, 2016). The board members, operative group, and association manager are in this thesis regarded and referred to as association representatives.

The Financial Coordination of Rehabilitation Measures Act also regulates the pooled budget of the local coordination association. The association members each contribute one quarter of the budget, although the Social Insurance Agency contributes both its own share and that of the Employment Agency. The total budget of all local associations is SEK 678 million for 2016, ranging from SEK 1.5 to just under SEK 30 million per local association. There are 82 associations encompassing 242 of Sweden's 290 municipalities. The number of municipalities participating in a single local coordination association is increasing, but the number of associations is varying due to both the creation of new associations and mergers of existing ones. The local associations vary not only in budget size but also in geographical size and administrative scope. For example, the city of Gothenburg is divided into four associations, whereas one serves the city of Malmö. Some associations encompass whole counties (as in the case of Södermanland, Uppland, and Halland counties), while other associations encompass single municipalities (as in the case of Falun, Öckerö, and Nacka municipalities) (Finsam).

The Financial Coordination of Rehabilitation Measures Act is voluntary and establishes a frame for local actors to fill with activities financed with the pooled budget. It has been said that what the local coordination associations are supposed to do is legally determined, but not how they are to do this (Finsam, 2016). The activities are to be based on local needs (Prop. 2002/03:132); the concept of local needs provides the basis for deciding whether or not to form an association, what target groups to prioritize, and how to organize the resulting activities.

The coordination associations are organized in local, regional, and national networks. The national network of coordination associations was formed in 2009. The network is a mouthpiece for the local associations and supports their development through dialogue and information sharing. The network also strives to "provide a comprehensive picture of the associations, their results, and importance to Swedish society" (NNS Finsam). The network has 69 member local associations. The agencies taking part in the associations are also organized on the national level. In 2008 a national council for financial coordination was established to support the local associations and to give them the needed anchoring and legitimacy (on the national level). The national council members are the National Board of Health and Welfare, the National Social Insurance Agency, the National Employment Agency, and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions. The council issues joint messages from the central to the local levels, and announces allowed and preferred local practice. One of the council's missions is to create a local coordination association in every municipality. Both together and

individually, the national council and the national network arrange conferences, seminars, and courses targeting board members, association managers, and others working in or connected to the local associations and participate in exhibitions to spread information about the local associations and their practice.

Previous research

Previous research has mainly examined the local coordination associations from a practice-close view of the financed activities, through the perspectives of the involved professionals (Hultberg, Lönnroth, and Allebeck, 2003; Sandström, Axelsson, and Stålsby, 2004; Ståhl et al. 2009; Sandström et al., 2007; Wihlman et al., 2008) and with an evaluative focus (Hultberg, 2005). Ståhl (2012) and colleagues (2010) are the only researchers with an empirical focus on the associations as such (the work of Wihlman et al. 2008, would also be included here if the SOCSAM experiments are included). Materials regarding the associations and their financed activities have been used in studies of projects, collaboration projects in particular (Forsell, Fred, and Hall, 2013; Fred, 2015; Löfström, 2010). This approach means that the many aspects examined in the previous section, i.e., rationale of the law, formulation of the law, and the law's target group, have not attracted the same scholarly interest. The local coordination associations as such have attracted only limited scholarly attention (Ståhl, 2012; Wihlman et al., 2011), and a broader perspective than local associations or comparisons of such local settings is missing.

Hultberg (2005) and Wihlman (2009) studied local settings of the SOCSAM experiment. Hultberg (2005) applied a comparative approach in which a group of patients with musculoskeletal disorders in one primary care facility ("the intervention") financed by a local coordination association was compared with a comparable group in one that was not. These studies found no improvement in the intervention primary care facility in terms of number of sick days (Hultberg et al., 2006) or patient self-rated heath outcome (Hultberg, Lönnroth, and Allebeck, 2005). Moreover, neither costs nor health care utilization was reduced in the intervention group (Hultberg, Lönnroth, and Allebeck, 2007). Inter-professional collaboration did, however, improve at the intervention centre (Hultberg, Lönnroth and Allebeck, 2003). A comparative study of experiments with pooled budgets in Sweden and England concluded that neither experiment provided unequivocal evidence of improved cost-effectiveness or better outcomes for service users (Hultberg et al., 2005).

Wihlman (2009) conducted a single-case study in of the settings of the SOCSAM trial, using interviews and to some extent documents. These stud-

ies found that association representatives had qualitatively different views of clients (Sandström et al., 2007) and of the long-term goals of collaboration (Sandström, Axelsson, and Stålsby, 2004). An analysis of barriers identified three interconnected themes – i.e., uncertainty, prioritizing one's own organization, and lack of communication – that could be overcome through a focus on client needs (Wihlman et al., 2008). One study of the development of a collaboration in the SOCSAM trial project concluded that it was initiated for financial reasons and that vertical integration was prioritized over horizontal integration, resulting in scattered islands of collaboration activities with no impact on ordinary organizational practice (Wihlman et al., 2011). Åhgren, Bihari Axelsson, and Axelsson (2009) examined the perceived effect from the service users' perspective, of how they had conceived of participation in activities financed by a local coordination association. They concluded that rehabilitation service users perceived the services as well integrated, relevant to, and adapted to their needs. The SOCSAM research may provide insights into collaboration in vocational rehabilitation in general and, to some extent, in local coordination associations, but the governing legislation is different and SOCSAM was a limited experiment. Notably, however, these studies are fairly critical and do not support the claimed benefits of collaboration.

Ståhl and colleagues (2009, 2010) have studied various aspects of coordination associations under the current law. Their studies are based on individual or focus group interviews and have demonstrated that rehabilitation professionals have different views of central rehabilitation concepts, such as work ability (Ståhl et al., 2009). Moreover, individuals on boards and in operative groups have different perspectives, interests, and priorities in relation to the local coordination association and trust is suggested as a way of overcoming this (Ståhl et al., 2010). In another study, Ståhl (2012) analysed different implementation strategies in two local coordination associations: either projects are first trialled and thereafter possibly implemented in regular operations, or projects are implemented within the association where they are seen as part of its regular operations.

The local coordination associations exemplify collaboration motivated by the presence of groups perceived as having complex needs, as a result of the multiple organizations and professions involved. Their main feature is pooled budgets to facilitate collaboration. The structure of the coordination association as a joint board with a pooled budget is based on previous collaboration experiences and evaluations of them. As laid out above, previous research has emphasized practice- and professional-close aspects, and evaluation in relation to clients. The organization of the coordination associations (i.e. other aspects of the reform, cf. Bejerot and Hasselbladh, 2013), including

their main features and purported benefits, is under-researched and to some extent taken for granted.

The next section discusses two methodological challenges encountered when researching collaboration. These challenges, which are features of much collaboration research in general and of studies of collaboration in vocational rehabilitation and coordination associations in particular, are the focus on barriers and the use of interviews.

Methodological challenges when researching collaboration

Much research on collaboration has concentrated on barriers to and facilitators of collaboration. One such example is the literature review presented here (paper I). This approach has a number of limitations; for example, it often is unclear whether the delineated barriers and facilitators are related to collaboration as such or to its effects (another issue treated in collaboration research). One could also critically discuss the emphasis on barriers. In the setting of the implementation of evidence-based medicine, Checkland, Harrison, and Marshall (2007) argue against using the concept "barriers to change". They claim that the term "barrier" is normative; implying that change is unquestionably good and that barriers to it can and should be removed. Moreover, they discuss how barriers instead are constructed by practitioners and should be seen as strategies to limit the intended impact of change on practice, as part of professional identity work.

From the work of Basic (2012) and Gudmundsson (2011), we learn that perceived barriers to collaboration related to relationships are affected by previous expectations and prejudice. Conflicts in inter-professional collaboration are often seen as the fault of others: the negative stories are about others as opposed to the self and one's own profession, who does what is intended and expected (Basic, 2012). Gudmundsson (2011) has explained how social representations of other professions play significant roles in the collaboration process. Another example is lack of common view among professionals, which is often described as a barrier, or a facilitator if there is a common view (e.g. Huxham and Vangen, 2005). Andersson (2010) has instead argued that a common view should instead be seen as a result and not as a prerequisite for collaboration.

The studies of Andersson (2010), Basic (2012), and Gudmundsson (2011) are relevant on their own but also as indications of the limitations of interviews as the main data generation method, especially when applied using a cross-sectional approach. Interviewed professionals answer the questions they are given in line with how they perceive and experience the collabora-

tion; the results thus obtained should be used to understand collaboration with this limitation in mind (Lundquist, 1993).

Interviews are a common method for gathering data in several social science disciplines, and research on collaboration (which is conducted in several disciplines) is no exception. Although interviews can contribute important information, they have certain drawbacks that limit the conclusions that can be drawn from the resulting material (Lundquist, 1993). Researching collaboration by means of individual or focus group interviews mostly entails talking to professionals involved in ongoing or just-ended collaboration projects. As such, they are in the midst and part of the process they are "judging" in the interviews. Taking interview results at face value as truth is problematic and may produce shallow findings (Pope and Mays, 2009).

The decision to base research on interviews and to treat their results as objective truth rather than as what interviewees perceive or want to portray has additional limitations. The normative side of collaboration research is seen not only in the questions posed in research interviews, but also in the language used to describe collaboration. This normative language may also limit interview results, for example, when interviews simply reiterate the collaboration discourse taught in courses and seminars on collaboration. The conventional use of constructs and concepts is reconstructive and should accordingly be done carefully (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2011).

Aim and research questions

The overall aim of the thesis is to explain how collaboration has come to be a taken-for-granted solution and the possible consequences of this.

The four constituent papers of this thesis address these aims, individually but also when taken together and analysed both jointly and in relation to each other.

Paper I sought to review the international literature reporting research on collaboration in vocational rehabilitation. The review focused on identifying, describing, and comparing different organizational models of collaboration as well as different barriers and facilitators.

Paper II sought to describe and analyse how the FINSAM law has been translated in two coordination associations and how local institutional logics have developed, guiding the organization of these associations.

Paper III addressed two research questions: How do the coordination associations account for their practice and outcome? How are these accounts used to construct accountability? The paper aimed at exploring and understanding accounts of coordination association practice and how others hold the associations accountable. Another aim was to critically discuss these findings, especially the way in which accountability is constructed and how it may restrict or even counteract the intentions of practice.

Paper IV is a critical analysis of the normative underpinnings of collaboration, namely, its values, ordering narratives, and legitimacy.

Conceptual approaches in the different papers

In this section the theoretical concepts used in the four papers are described and discussed.

Translation

Paper II used the metaphor of translation, which describes how ideas travel between settings, in that process becoming reconceptualized and adapted to the new context (Czarniawska and Sevón, 1996). When an idea travels, it is first disembedded from its institutional surroundings in order to be packaged into an object. This object is then translated and unpacked, whereupon it is also adapted to fit the new context. Locally, it is translated into practice and then re-embedded, i.e., stabilized (Czarniawska and Joerges, 1996). What is finally re-embedded is not the idea as such, but rather specific accounts and materializations of it (Sahlin and Wedlin, 2008) in different versions in different local contexts.

Conceptual ideas not bound to a specific practice or context (in either time or place) are ideas that can travel to new settings and be reinvented for particular practices. The perceived attributes of an idea along with the perceived attributes of a problem and the created, negotiated, and imposed match between them are all part of the translation process. Czarniawska and Joerges (1996) stress that the idea, the problem, and the match between them are not antecedents to the process of translation, but instead the result of the same process. The framing – i.e., the story told about the idea and about the problem that it is supposed to solve and how – results from the process of translation. Recognizing the importance of framing both the problem and solution in order to match them has also been described as institutional transformation (Hasselbladh et al., 2008).

Institutional logics

The translation concept was used in combination with that of institutional logics. Friedland and Alford (1991) argued that it was impossible to understand individual and organizational behaviour and change without taking the societal context into account. Society is seen as composed of multiple logics that are "symbolically grounded, organizationally structured, politically defended and technically and materially constrained" (pp. 248–249). Thornton, Ocasio, and Lounsbury (2012) elaborated on the perspective of institutional logics. They argue that the principles, practices, and symbols of an institutional order shape, in different ways, how reasoning takes place and how

rationality is perceived and experienced. Moreover, they elaborate on field-level logics and emphasize the interplay between symbolic representations and material practice in their emergence. They describe language and vocabulary as essential when logics are constructed (and reconstructed). Theories increase the coherence of logics and provide "general guiding principles and explanations for why and how institutional structures and practices should operate" (Thornton, Ocasio, and Lounsbury, 2012, p. 152). Frames are more concrete but less systematic than theories. One example is rhetorical frames, in which certain keywords and vocabulary are used depending on the frame. Frames shape our attention and guide interpretation, being applicable to a variety of settings and actors. Narratives, on the other hand, confer meaning and legitimacy on specific actors, events, and practices, and relate these to the outcomes and development of organizational practices (Thornton, Ocasio, and Lounsbury, 2012). An institutional logic is materialized in the organizational structure through objectives and rules, and is expressed in the conceptions and norms of the actors. This process has a circular nature, in which actions and perceptions influence each other. The institutional logic influences perceptions of proper regulation and control. They also impact how phenomena are perceived, as well as which means are seen as feasible and rational for achieving aims. An institutional logic therefore controls the principles of organizing and action, and provides a standard for what actors in a given organizational environment can and should do (Scott, 2008).

Many different logics are available and different logics govern different settings. Moreover, organizations have access to and are confronted with many different, often contradictory, logics. A regulatory landscape is a formally organized mixture of logics in which the many possible logics in a field operate through organization or practice (Hasselbladh et al., 2008). Logics, it can be argued, are performative. They come to life when they are acted upon (Lindberg, 2014). In collaboration, one logic may take precedence over others and become dominant (Phillips, Hardy, and Lawrence, 2000). Johansson (2011) demonstrated that "hard" logics were given the interpretative prerogative over "soft" ones, i.e., judicial logics trumped treatment logics. Arman, Liff and Wikström (2014) identified a hierarchy of logics in which a managerial logic dominated a professional logic, although not completely, through the legitimizing effect of quantitative measurements.

Accountability

Paper III was based on a framework of accountability. Accountability can be described and defined as a process of being called "to account" for one's actions (Mulgan, 2000). Such accountability is external, involves social inter-

action and exchange, and implies the right of authority to impose sanctions on the one called to account. Accountability has been called a complex and chameleon-type term, commonplace in public administration literature (Mulgan, 2000). The concept has several dimensions, including answerability, blameworthiness, liability, and the expectation of account giving (Munro and Mouritsen, 1996; Power, 1997). Accountability, in its multiple forms, is changed or sustained in relation to its context. An inter-organizational setting, with multiple types of stakeholders and bases of accountability, is complex. Messner (2009) advocates shared responsibility for outcomes as a way to reduce this complexity.

Accountability can be characterized as either formal or informal (Roberts, 1996). Formal, hierarchical accountability is connected to independence and solitude and enforces individualizing effects through an emphasis on the strategic or instrumental consequences of action. Informal, socializing accountability, on the other hand, is instrumentally and morally connected to interdependence. It is rare for formal accountability and the way such accounts are presented to be questioned (Roberts, 1996), and this can be seen as related to what Kamuf (2007) describes as the two sides of accountability: narration and calculation. In general use, it almost always implies calculation, but only sometimes narration. This is because the perceived subjectivity of narration, as opposed to the objectivity of calculation, renders it worthy of being called evidence. Following the primacy of calculation, accounts of performance generally indicate quantified, numerically expressed accounts of practice, and are, as such, perceived to be more objective and more valid accounts (Arman, Liff and Wikström, 2014; Kamuf, 2007; Porter, 1995).

Performance measurements

Research or theory on performance measurements was not used in Paper III, but is mentioned here because it deepens our understanding of the findings of that study as well as the findings and analysis presented in Paper IV. The relationship between performance measurement and accountability has become an unchallenged rhetorical claim (Chan and Gao, 2009). The scrutiny of performance is intended to improve service quality and increase transparency, although this has been questioned (Johansson, 2015). Accountability is often seen as connected and interrelated to transparency. It is, however, important not to rely on transparency to achieve accountability, because then indicators risk becoming targets and transparency then masks complexity by converting it into a few indicators. Moreover, accountability understood as transparency has individualizing effects, which may undermine or subvert the interdependence between actors (Roberts, 2009).

Performance tends to be constructed as something calculable and one dimensional as well as reasonable to achieve (Radcliffe, 1999). Performance regimes perceived as successful tend to be found in organizations providing relatively simple services with low task complexity. Other values central to mission achievement are perceived and portrayed as differing from performance (Moynihan et al., 2011). When practice is more complex, for example, in a collaborative context, the mission to measure and assess performance becomes even more challenging. The many actors involved and their many interests and values make prioritizing between performance goals and measurements, a difficult task. It may also be challenging to clarify who is accountable to whom and for what (Bryson et al., 2006; Page, 2004).

In collaboration, process goals are relevant as parts of performance but are often overlooked when measures or indicators are developed (Moynihan et al., 2011). Moreover, accounts of horizontal practice and horizontal outcome may present a challenge in practice, as such accounts confront the regular hierarchical forms of organizing and thereby the regular system of accountability (Page, 2004; Roberts, 1996; Wilkins, 2002). Previous research has suggested that a broad system of accountability following input, process, and outcomes by applying various methods is suitable for collaborative settings, in order to ensure capacity to account for all relevant aspects of performance (Bryson et al., 2006).

The preference for quantifiable measures is also seen in the "evidence-based" movement. Triantafillou (2014) argues that when a certain form of "truth production" is promoted, the scope of political goals is reduced to goals that can be objectified and quantified and thus amenable to certain testing regimes in order to produce evidence. When accounts must be presented in a particular way to be considered legitimate, other ways of accounting are marginalized, and, by extension, so are other forms of practice, as the act of accounting co-constitutes the self (Messner, 2009).

Values, ordering narratives, and legitimacy

Paper IV uses the concepts of values, ordering narratives, and legitimacy, which are closely related and often directly connected with accountability and performance measurements. The three concepts used in Paper IV are seen and treated as interconnected: ordering narratives are based on values and affect as well as are intended to affect an organization's legitimacy.

The values promulgated by an organization indicate the kind of organization it wants to be (Wæraas, 2010, 2014; Wæraas and Byrkjeflot, 2012); generally, multiple values are espoused, although directed strategically towards different settings and actors (Corvellec and Hultman, 2014). Values

can be attributed to collaboration in two ways: directly or indirectly. Collaboration can be used directly as a value in itself, like related concepts such as partnership and teamwork (Wæraas, 2014). Indirectly, values can be attributed to collaboration in the form of expected effects. Generally, values are built into definitions of collaboration, which is assumed to achieve more than any single actor acting alone (i.e., synergy) (Johansson, 2011; Longoria, 2005), and positive effects are inherent in the concept. Due to the positive connotations of synergy, values are indirectly but closely connected to collaboration. When values such as efficiency, adaptiveness, or innovativeness are used to describe collaboration, these values are intended to convey what collaboration both is and is not. This description of collaboration is set in contradistinction to something else, making it possible to be cast as something new and fresh. Public organizations often invoke particular values to portray themselves as more similar to private ones, to downplay their public sector identity (Czarniawska, 1985; Wæraas, 2010). In the case of collaboration, values are invoked to show that collaboration runs counter to organizations and organizing characterized by bureaucracy and line-based structure.

The values collected and combined in, for example, the storytelling of an organization are here understood as constituting an ordering narrative (Doolin, 2003). Actions, including statements, both result from and contribute to the reproduction of ordering narratives. Ordering narratives are "means by which organization is told and performed" (Doolin, 2003, p. 756) and may be expressed through language, text, material, or technology. This means that an ordering narrative is "materially heterogeneous" (Doolin, 2003). The embedding of the social part of a narrative in the technological part creates relative stability: it is not as easy to overturn the social when it is not just language but is also embedded in technology.

Ordering narratives are also characterized as being strategic, discursive, performed, and incomplete (Doolin, 2003). They are strategic in having direction and, as such, are part of a structure of arrangements with a joint goal. Ordering narratives are discursive, having meaning based on language, ideas, norms, practice, and sense making for and by the involved actors. Ordering narratives are performed and as such constitute an ongoing process of interactions and conduct. The performance of an ordering narrative is never complete or exclusive. Instead, there are always competing narratives, and there will always be more or less resistance, as well as constant negotiation and efforts to convince, between narratives (Doolin, 2003).

The incompleteness of an ordering narrative and the presence of competing narratives create uncertainty, and part of the ongoing performance of the narrative is efforts to increase its legitimacy to decrease uncertainty (cf.

Ahrne and Brunsson, 2011). An organization, in this case a collaboration, not only needs technical and material resources; it also needs to be accepted and viewed as credible and appropriate (i.e., have discursive resources) to survive and succeed and not be replaced (Scott, 2008; Suchman, 1995; Wæraas and Byrkjeflot, 2012).

These concepts are interconnected and affect each other, and the underlying values are connected to, interrelated in, and taken for granted through the production and use of ordering narratives. The narratives are incomplete and contested, and never stable once and for all. Instead, the narratives are continually upheld and performed through practice, both discursively and materially. This performance must be accepted and seen as valid by others to enhance legitimacy, and practice may be adjusted to ensure this. Legitimacy may then be dependent on the possibility of living up to the expected effects expressed as values.

This section has presented several concepts: translation, institutional logics, accountability, performance measurements, values, legitimacy, and ordering narratives. These concepts have been used to analyse the material in each of the papers, and in this frame they function as a backdrop for understanding the combined and collected findings of the papers. Some concepts share certain features, example: institutional logics and ordering narratives are based on different theoretical understandings of organizational change, but in this setting and given the present understanding of collaboration, they explain both how a story and belief in that story guide practice, and how different aspects of practice are interconnected and interrelated. In paper III, the legitimacy concept is not used as such, but is simply an aspect of the accounts of local practice. In paper IV, the accountability concept is not used, but is simply an aspect of the performance of the ordering narratives, especially the competing narrative of evidence, and of events and actions to create evidence of the values conveyed in the narrative.

The next section describes the research process, the different kinds of material used, how this material was generated, and how it was analysed.

Research process

This thesis is a compilation of four papers. These papers examine the coordination associations and their organization and practice in different ways: the literature review identifies pooled budgets as one form of collaboration among others, whereas the other three papers examine different aspects of financial coordination and coordination associations.

The design can be characterized as emergent, which in this case means at least two things. First, the thesis starts with a literature review on collaboration in vocational rehabilitation, making its empirical focus and aim broader than those of the other papers. Second, the thesis design can be characterized as emergent due to its inductive and empirical approach using fieldwork to generate study material. The fieldwork was initiated based on the choice of site (i.e., two local coordination associations) as opposed to a case. This is what Czarniawska (2014) calls a window study, in which attention is directed by declaring "something interesting is happening there" instead of by addressing a precise research question (p. 23). The three empirical papers all start in the material generated in the fieldwork, which gave rise to questions and issues for further elaboration. The research process thus started with a broad question and interest in exploring this form of collaboration, becoming more focused as the process unfolded (Neyland, 2008; Wright, 2011).

The coordination associations are a single organizational form that can take many forms and directions locally. This is the point of departure in Paper II, which compares two translations – that is, two coordination associations. Paper III considers the many forms of assessment related to the associations. The paper compares how local coordination associations account for practice and performance and how central actors in turn make them accountable. In Paper IV, the ordering narrative of FINSAM is critically analysed. The design of the thesis and of its constituent papers encompasses the local and specific perspective, the central and general perspective, as well as the relationship between them. Moreover, the ongoing organizing of a practice as separate and special is illustrated through these different perspectives.

Inherent in the emergent design of this thesis is the qualitative approach to both material and analysis. A qualitative approach can be roughly defined as considering open and ambiguous empirical material (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2008). Following Patton (2002), a qualitative approach is oriented towards exploration, discovery, and induction. For this thesis, this means that the theoretical framework was developed after the observations started (and

sometimes even after they were finished), and is a consequence of the empirical material and not the other way around.

This section is structured as follows: The next part describes the fieldwork, including the various materials generated, i.e., observations in different settings, conversations, interviews, and various texts. The aspects of access and feedback in fieldwork are then discussed and described. The third part gives an account of the material and analysis of each of the constituent papers of the thesis. This includes the literature review (Paper I), which diverges from the others in not being based on fieldwork; instead, this study was conducted before fieldwork was initiated.

Fieldwork

The material for this study was generated through fieldwork. Fieldwork has been described as intended to provide new and different pictures of settings and practice, as opposed to describing what we already know (Neyland, 2008), indicating the importance of an outside view (Van Maanen, 2011). This may be more or less difficult during different parts of fieldwork: after initiation, relationships with the field develop and an inside perspective might emerge, only to revert to an outside perspective when the field is exited (Neyland, 2008).

Fieldwork is sometimes equated with or seen as related to ethnography (Hammersley and Atkinsson, 2007; van Maanen, 2011), and ethnographic fieldwork usually presupposes a prolonged stay in the field, in line with many anthropological studies. In this thesis, the fieldwork conducted over several years included observations of coordination association meetings, conferences, and seminars. The associations were observed over two years, but because only meetings were observed, the total time is significantly less. Included in the fieldwork are observations in various settings, conversations, and texts. The term fieldwork is thus not used only for direct contact with actual practice, but refers to all the ways in which the field was followed. Fieldwork was conducted during the 2009–2015 period, during which there was direct contact with the field from 2009 to 2013 with observations of the local associations from 2009 to 2011. The direct contact with the local associations resembled a stay in the field, whereas the period of overall contact with the field was characterized by periodic, selected visits to the field.

Observations and field notes

There are several advantages to conducting observations when generating research material; for example, observations provide a better understanding of context and do not rely on what is perceived by respondents, or what they

are willing to share (Patton, 2002). In observations, different levels of interaction can be illustrated with a continuum ranging from that of a passive onlooker to an active participant (Mays and Pope, 1995; Savage, 2000). Neither a complete participant nor a complete observer was realistic or desired for the present study. Moreover, no participation or interaction at all may be more disturbing than a low level, which was deemed a suitable approach for this study. The observations were conducted overtly, with a broad focus and performed repeatedly over a long period (Patton, 2002). The overt spectator role was also the only possible role because the observation setting in the local context was formal meetings. However, in other settings, such as seminars and conferences, the spectator role was more covert, although overt in direct interactions and conversations.

The observational data comprise the field notes from observations. In qualitative research, it could be argued that data are not collected, but rather generated (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2011). This is especially the case with observations, where field notes written by the researcher constitute the data. Angrosino and Mays de Pérez (2003) argue that "the plain fact is that each person who conducts observational research brings his or her distinctive talents and limitations to the enterprise; therefore, the quality of what is recorded becomes the measure of usable observational data … rather than the quality of the observation itself".

The observations of local coordination association meetings provide material capturing everyday practice, in a setting replete with discussions and disagreements and not just the presented final decisions, as appear in texts. These observations capture reactions to and reflections on events such as conferences as well as reports and statements. Furthermore, they capture the process and context underlying final decisions and reports, fostering an understanding of their origin. Observations were conducted in two local coordination associations and, for example, in conferences and seminars (the latter will be discussed in the section "Access and feedback").

The first local coordination association was followed for just over two years and the second one for the second year of that period. This resulted in field notes documenting about 180 hours of observations, based on participation in meetings in different forums such as board and operative group meetings. The meeting setting, in which someone was taking minutes and participants were sitting around a table examining the provided documents, made note taking by the observer easier and less obvious. I was given all the documents that the meeting participants were provided with, and the opportunity to be prepared facilitated observations and note taking.

The field notes were taken both during and after the observations and were written out after each meeting. The observations were unstructured and deliberately broad in focus, as their purpose was explorative and almost everything was seen as potentially interesting (Neyland, 2008). The notes are descriptive and contain information on meeting location and participants as well as on participant movements in the room, but the focus was on what was talked about, who said what and how (Dahlgren, Emmelin, and Winkvist, 2007).

When studying something via observations, or using any other tool or method for that matter, the researcher influences the study subjects simply by being present or in some way asking questions. The resulting change in behaviour of study subjects is called a research effect (Repstad, 2007). The research effect is likely to get smaller the longer the study or, in this case, the observation period lasts. One advantage of this study is its long observation period, which allowed the meeting participants to get used to the researcher's presence.

Conversations and interviews

During the fieldwork and in connection with the observations, I talked to many representatives, both at the time of the local association meetings and in conferences and seminars. They helped clarify specific issues that were difficult to understand during the meetings and expanded on general issues and perceived challenges in relation to the local coordination associations. These conversations constituted both short clarifications and exchanges of information, as well as longer conversations resembling short interviews. These conversations were also documented in field notes. Some formal interviews were conducted, including one focus group interview, and these were recorded and transcribed. The formal interviewees were all part of a group also observed as part of fieldwork, i.e., representatives in one of the coordination associations.

Many research projects addressing forms and reforms of collaboration have used interviews as a major source of material (e.g., Mossberg, 2014; Ståhl, 2010; Wihlman et al., 2009). At the beginning of this thesis project, the intention was to use interviews as the main data source, but this soon changed to include observations as well. During the observations, I realized that collaboration (both in the Swedish context in general, but also specifically in the financial coordination context) as a discourse is saturated with conventional terms, metaphors, and norms. Individuals starting to work in collaboration immediately learned the right terms, and I heard the same descriptions and explanations related to collaboration reiterated time and again. Moreover, I

listened to evaluators presenting evaluations of collaboration based on interviews in which the described effects of collaboration were the same as the stated aims of collaboration. This made me reconsider the previous decision to generate material mostly using interviews.

These examples illustrate the difficulty of freeing oneself from surrounding terminology, norms, and metaphors, as well as the difficulty of being (supposedly) objective about one's work. Lundquist (1993) distinguishes three levels of analysis: the actors' stated motivations, meaning the reality as described; the actors' conscious motivations, meaning the reality as the actors perceive it; and the actors' actual motivations, meaning the reality as it actually is. Interviews can only ever distinguish the actors' motivations as described, and these relate to the conscious motivations only to the extent that the interviewees are willing to share them. In an environment in which the core concept (i.e., collaboration) may be understood as a metaphor in itself, and as such gives rise to myths about what an organization is and how it works (Ohlsson and Rombach, 2014; Wæraas, 2014), this affects the information generated in interviews.

Conducting fieldwork (i.e., not relying solely on interviews) generates material and information describing the forums where accounts of practice are produced, and also describing how such accounts of the same or related practices are consumed (Czarniawska, 2014). Hall (2012) argues that we often rely too much on words and talking as a source of material when investigating public administration, and that such research should explore other sources as well.

Texts

Various types of texts have been collected and used, and this form of material was generated during the whole study period. Texts can be retrieved from before the study initiation, and reports, agendas, etc., from before 2009 have been collected and used in the research.

Texts produced by the local coordination associations comprise annual reports and budgets, as well as all working material distributed at all observed meetings. This working material was not used directly in the analysis, but significantly enriched the observations. Such texts also facilitated the observations, as the observed meetings were usually steered by these texts. Another form of text is the informational content of flyers, brochures, and websites. Texts produced by the national network of coordination associations include a report series, a website where information can be obtained on the network's conferences, and opinion pieces including debate articles and letters to the government (e.g., consultation responses and comments).

Official texts produced by the local coordination associations, are presentations and representations of them and their practice. This means that besides for the most being information they are obliged to provide, the texts are also an opportunity for them to highlight what they perceive to be important to put forth. Such texts convey what official bodies want to share with others, and may be intended to direct attention and send signals, for example, when disseminated and used in decision making processes (cf. Czarniawska, 2014, pp. 38–39).

Relevant texts produced by actors other than the local coordination associations are evaluations of the trials preceding the FINSAM reform (i.e., FRISAM and SOCSAM), the legislative proposal (Prop. 2002/03:1210), a Swedish Government Official Reports (SOU 2013:74), and agency reports, i.e., evaluations from the Swedish Agency for Public Management (2005:10; 2007:6; 2008:7; 2008:16), yearly briefings from the Social Insurance Agency to the government, reports from the Swedish Social Insurance Inspectorate (2010:2; 2011:14), and a Swedish parliament committee report. The national board of financial coordination administers an official website and texts such as recommendations for coordination association practice can be found there, as well as agendas from board meetings and information about their yearly conference. Both the national board and the national network publish reports and other text material on their websites that may be of interest to anyone interested in and/or working in/for the local associations. The primary websites continuously visited were the official sites of the national network (NNS Finsam) and of the national council for financial coordination (Finsam).

Access and feedback

A central issue when conducting observations is to access the field. Access is never granted once and for all, but instead must be continuously renegotiated (Czarniawska, 2014). The local coordination association managers acted as gatekeepers in both local coordination associations: access was facilitated by them and was fairly easy to obtain.

In the first observed local coordination association, the meeting attendance was not initially intended to constitute fieldwork, at least not the kind of fieldwork that it eventually became. Instead, the participation was a way to get to know the association as a first step before conducting interviews. In the first meetings, I was introduced as a researcher interested in coordination associations who would sit in to gain background knowledge. When I realized that I needed to pursue observations as a way to generate material, I had to reintroduce myself and negotiate access as a researcher conducting observations. The first local coordination association had three subgroups whose

meetings could be observed: the board, the operative group, and a group of coordinators responsible for each activity this association financed at the time. Continuous access was granted to only two of these, i.e., the operative group and the group of coordinators; board meetings were attended only sporadically and in relation to specific events.

In the second observed local coordination association, I was granted access to all forms of meetings, i.e., board meetings, operative group meetings, and meetings of the manager-collaboration group (i.e., a group consisting of local managers and intended to share information for a wider purpose than merely the association or vocational rehabilitation; the focus was instead on the local community). I introduced myself at board and operative group meetings and gave everyone a handout containing contact information and describing what I wanted to do. I urged them to contact me if they had any question or hesitations; they seemed to think I was making a fuss, and no one ever contacted me. The association manager introduced me to the manager-collaboration group as a "friend observing them".

Access to the second local coordination association was related to the first one. The local association that I observed first was notable because it participated in the SOCSAM trials preceding the reform and because it has a large budget. The second local association manager, along with several others (while participating in various network meetings) suggested that I should expand my observation settings. This mostly meant not limiting my observations to this particular local association due to its distinctive features.

Beyond observations of meetings, the fieldwork included both attending and participating in conferences and seminars. I presented my work in conferences organized by both the national council and the national network. For example, I held a workshop connected to the findings presented in study II. This could be seen as a way to obtain large-scale feedback from a large group of people interested in my work who welcomed me to their events. Moreover, their feedback on my presentations gave me valuable insights and helped me reflect on my work. The conferences were open events for those who registered and paid the fee, and generally only individuals connected to the local coordination associations, or invited to speak, attended. Other events such as regional network meetings and a workshop for newly elected board members were closed events. For those events, it was the association manager in the first local association who facilitated access.

While I was conducting the main and most intense part of the fieldwork, I perceived that my presence was seen as exciting and positive. With the exception of the board in the first local coordination association, I never had any trouble gaining access and I was always made to feel very welcome. On

several occasions, representatives suggested that I should expand my scope of observations to take in their local associations as well. This surprised me, but I learned that my attention to and interest in the local associations were welcomed on a general level: the representatives perceived a lack of attention to their work, and the observed associations perceived my presence as a possible resource – i.e., another eye, a fresh outlook, and, it was hoped, a source of useful feedback.

Material and analysis for each paper

The analysis of the material generated in fieldwork should not be seen as a single, discrete process divided in time from the process of generating the material. Ongoing fieldwork and analysis of the material thus generated cannot be separated: for example, the material generated from fieldwork observations comprises the field notes, and the act of writing them out is accordingly the first step of analysis (Angrosino and Mays de Pérez, 2003).

The main task of analysis is to understand and create meaning from the material (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2011). The creation of field notes, and the shift in settings were a driver of analysis. Two local coordination associations were observed at the beginning of the fieldwork; they were observed in parallel for a year, which prompted analysis when shifting between contexts. Another shift of settings spurring initial analysis was the shifting between observations in local contexts (e.g., local coordination associations or local networks) and national contexts (e.g., national or regional conferences or seminars). This initial analysis focused on generating questions for further analysis.

Paper I

Paper I is a literature review based on an April 2010 search of the following databases: MEDLINE, Cinahl, ISI, and parts of CSA (i.e., ASSIA, PAIS International, PsycARTICLES, PsycINFO, Social Services Abstracts, Sociological Abstracts, and Worldwide Political Science Abstracts). The search was limited to peer-reviewed articles in scientific journals published in 1995 or later in the English language. The aim of the study was to review the literature on various organizational models of collaboration in vocational rehabilitation as well as on the barriers to and facilitators of such collaboration. Because of the lack of conceptual consensus in the field of collaboration, a wide range of search terms was used. The process of inclusion and exclusion took place in several steps. The first step was to browse the titles, followed by reading the abstracts, and finally reading the full texts. The main inclusion criterion was that the article be about both collaboration and vocational reha-

bilitation. Furthermore, the article had to use empirical data, had to be about actual collaboration (i.e., not collaboration as a suggested solution to a perceived problem), and the collaboration had to be between different professions and/or organizations and not simply between doctors and nurses as part of their regular work. Articles were excluded when the rehabilitation targeted people not of working age or when they were about inter-professional education. The initial search yielded 13,132 articles, but after initially browsing the titles, most could be excluded because they were outside the subject area or the target group was not of working age. After this, 1005 articles were left for further review. After the initial browsing, the review process began according to the above-stated criteria. Each abstract was read by at least two persons, and if they could not agree, other members of the group were invited to weigh in. Two hundred and five abstracts remained after this, and the associated articles were read in full text according to the same procedure. This step left 62 articles, which were included in the study for further analysis. The included articles were analysed with a focus on models for organizing collaboration and on the barriers to and facilitators of such collaboration, and the material was categorized and sorted into groups. The descriptive content analysis (Patton, 2002) resulted in a synthesis of the material rather than a whole new analysis.

Paper II

The material examined in this paper was the material generated through observing the two local coordination associations. In total 40 meetings were observed (about 100 hours) and included in the analysis. This material was supplemented with the documents produced by the local associations and discussed in the meetings, for example, annual reports and budgets (including aims and strategies).

While generating the material, it became clear that the two observed local coordination associations were different. This first step of analysis was accordingly taken during the fieldwork. The analysis of difference was conducted in relation to the procedures of the local association, but also in relation to how they related and reacted to events/texts, such as reports or possibly joining the national network. Because the two local associations were observed simultaneously, it was possible to compare how they reacted and responded to the same events. In this process, it was also possible to see that there were relationships between the differences, in that the choices made in one area had implications in others.

In this stage, a theoretical framework of translation and institutional logics was introduced to help clarify how the differences in local association

organization exemplified different translations (Czarniawska and Sevón, 1996) and how the many different aspects were held together as institutional logics (Friedland and Alford, 1991; Scott, 2008). Moreover, the framework introduced by Brunsson and Sahlin-Andersson (2000) pertaining to different degrees of organization was used to illustrate, label, and further define and refine the two translations. The analysis was accordingly initially based on the empirical material, while the theoretical frame was introduced later; the analysis alternated between the empirical material and theoretical concepts.

Paper III

The material for this paper was generated through fieldwork and recurring oral and written statements on assessments of various kinds (and on frustration with the same). This was interpreted as an issue of accountability, and spurred further questions and analysis.

In this paper, accounts generated and presented in the two local coordination associations were used to analyse how accountability was constructed. These accounts of coordination practice and performance were then compared with the accounts used by governmental agencies when holding the local associations accountable for their perceived practice and performance. The material comprised official accounts such as budgets and annual reports as well as national reports of aggregated data from the local associations. The accounts were scrutinized and categorized in terms of the outcomes accounted for, the practices accounted for, and how the accounts were formulated (i.e., by calculation or narration).

The focus in analysis and interpretation was on formal, as in documented and official, accounts of practice and performance, because such documentation (i.e., accounts) is generated in every local coordination association. This makes it possible for national actors to collect and compare, as well as aggregate and compare, when reporting on the local associations and holding them accountable. The material used was the annual reports and budgets from the previous two years in the two local coordination associations observed, as well as reports on local coordination association practice and performance from the Social Insurance Agency to the government. This material was the main material for analysis. Other materials generated from fieldwork (e.g., observations, conversations, and texts) were also used to describe the various accounts of practice, including audits, evaluations, and reports.

The local and specific accounts were then compared with the national and general ones, and analysed within the accountability framework underlying the categorization of accounts.

Paper IV

In this paper the values, ordering narratives, and legitimacy of collaboration were analysed. To analyse these values, material describing collaboration practice, outcomes, and effects was gathered. In such material, counter descriptions were also found. The various descriptions were found in texts produced about FINSAM: the Financial Coordination of Rehabilitation Measures Act, governmental reports, annual reports, information flyers, recommendations and advice, websites, the content of performance measurement systems, and abstracts and titles from conference and seminar sessions.

An event does not constitute a narrative; rather, it is the ongoing and collected ordering of events, statements, and writings with a joint purpose and direction that constitutes an ordering narrative. The fieldwork was conducted in different settings and resulted in different types of material, both observations and texts. This material made it possible to see and analyse how these events, statements, and writings were connected. Moreover, it showed that their relationships were not linear but connected reciprocally and in various directions.

To analyse the ordering narratives, a timeline was made of central events in the development of the studied collaboration; such events included the issuance of critical reports, initiation of the national network and national council, and the development of indicators to measure collaboration in new ways. This contributed to the analysis in two ways, by illustrating how the values were connected to events as well as how the different events were interlinked. The various aspects of an ordering narrative (Doolin, 2003) were used in further analysing the relationships between values and events as well as between different events. In this analysis, legitimacy recurred as a theme, motif, or justification, and was therefore incorporated into the analysis. Legitimacy was introduced into the analysis as a result of the empirical material and early-stage analysis. In the analysis, the material was organized and reorganized into, for example, timelines or clusters, to fully exploit the richness of the material and to illustrate the many different aspects and their potential (inter)relationships.

Findings

In this section the findings of the four papers of the thesis are presented as short summaries.

Organizational approaches to collaboration in vocational rehabilitation

Paper I reviewed the international literature reporting research on collaboration in vocational rehabilitation, focusing on identifying, describing and comparing different organizational models of collaboration as well as different barriers and facilitators.

Seven organizational models were identified in the reviewed material, differing in degrees of complexity, intensity, and formalization. These models are: information exchange, case coordination, interagency meetings, multidisciplinary teams, partnerships, co-location, and pooled budgets. The different models can be ordered along a continuum ranging from simple organizational models to more complex ones (although they could overlap due to variation within each model). An order based on intensity or formalization would have positioned the models similarly.

Information exchange is a simple model, often based on informal contact between professionals, but can also be more formalized involving systematic consultations and supported by technology. Case coordination is a model in which different organizations collaborate indirectly through a person who coordinates the process around the individual rehabilitation subject. In interagency meetings, professionals from the different organizations involved in the rehabilitation process discuss appropriate measures. These differ from multidisciplinary teams consisting of professionals from different organizations in that the latter work together continuously over a longer period on the rehabilitation of individuals. Partnerships can have different forms and aims and be more or less formalized and structured. They are often based on some kind of agreement specifying, for example, the different responsibilities and obligations. Co-location is a way of creating favourable conditions for collaboration, more than a model in itself, although it is considered a model here. Co-location creates physical proximity between the involved professionals and can have positive effects on, for example, communication. It can also serve as a common access point to the rehabilitation actors for the individuals in need of rehabilitation. The last model is pooled budgets, in which the whole budget is merged. This model concerns a form of collaboration in which the participating actors pool parts of their respective budgets into a

joint budget, and then use this common resource in a way that they agree on together. This model is often underpinned by legal arrangements and is based on continuous negotiations.

The models are not exclusive and often appear in combination. The identified models can be grouped depending on their organizational levels (macro vs. micro) or their targets (population vs. individual). Moreover, the models could be regarded as strategies for collaboration. The identified barriers to and facilitators of collaboration in vocational rehabilitation could work either way, both as facilitators and/or barriers depending on how they are handled, and are here grouped together and called determinants. The identified determinants were communication, trust, territoriality/common ground, commitment, rules and regulations, and leadership.

Actor or arena: contrasting translations of a law on inter-organizational integration

Study II described and analysed how the FINSAM law (Financial Coordination of Rehabilitation Measures Act) was translated in two coordination associations and how local institutional logics have developed, guiding the organization of these associations.

The study was intended to build understanding of the observed differences between two somewhat similar settings, i.e., two local coordination associations. The different interpretations embodied in these associations were analysed as different translations resulting in different institutional logics. Another interest in the study was how the different translations may affect collaboration more generally in the local settings, due to their different strategies and approaches to organization.

The two local coordination associations had chosen different paths for their organization and management, resulting in two ideal types. The differences originated in different views of what role the associations could and should have in relation to the member organizations and other organizations in the local context. This was mainly seen in the perceived ideal level of autonomy: the level of autonomy the association was perceived to have, or wanted to have, in relation to the member organizations. The two translations labelled the association as an independent actor or as an arena, implying differences in autonomy and in identity, objectives, focus, rules, and organization.

The local coordination association with the role of an independent actor has created its own identity with a special name, logo, and website and, in line with being an actor in its own right, regards it as important to be known by others locally. This local association intends to build legitimacy in the

local context, as well as for associations in general in the national context, and wants to be at the forefront of local coordination associations. Its focus is local but also regional and national. This local association's rule for initiating activity financing is that the association should take initiatives either on its own or based on suggestions from member organizations. The financed activities are generally organized decoupled from the member organizations. It is sometimes impossible for the member organization to take over the implementation, financing, and management of these activities, so certain activities may be financed on an ongoing basis by the local coordination association and be regarded as implemented within its frame.

The local coordination association serving as an arena for the member organizations has a logo, but does not perceive it as important to be known by others given this role. Apart from the general objectives stated in the Financial Coordination of Rehabilitation Measures Act, the local association intends to do what the member organizations think is important. The association's local focus is widened only when doing so would have a direct perceived impact on the local scene. Its rule for initiating activities is that suggestions for new activities should always be anchored in at least one of the member organizations and then proposed to the local association. The close connection with the member organizations is also seen in the organization of the financed activities, in which activities are integrated in the regular programmes of the member organizations. In this local association, implementation was seen as important and integrating activities in the member organizations was a way to facilitate and ensure implementation of activities deemed successful.

These different translations were interpreted as local logics for the right way to organize a local coordination association. They are circular in nature, in that the norms and values of a logic affected major decisions concerning practice and organization, thereby reproducing the local association. The logics were upheld and performed through the actions taken in line with the logics. One example of this was the connection between the choice either to integrate or decouple financed activities from member organizations, and the view of implementation and of whether such decoupling was necessary or even possible. It may be easier or more difficult to implement activities that have been integrated or decoupled, respectively, and the choice of how to organize activities may be related to the view of implementation (or vice versa). The ability to implement would then be a consequence of a self-fulfilling interpretation of the role of the local association, i.e., the local institutional logic.

The two translations can be seen as different strategies for collaboration. They both aim at integrating the member organizations, but the relative independence of the actor logic requires collaboration between the local coordination associations and the member organizations as well.

Constructing accountability in inter-organizational collaboration: the implications of a narrow performance-based focus

Paper III explored how the coordination associations account for their practice and outcome, and how these accounts are used to construct accountability. Another aim was to critically discuss how accountability is constructed and how it may restrict or even counteract the intentions of practice through its narrow interpretation of relevant practice and performance. The research questions were: How do the coordination associations account for their practice and outcome? How are these accounts used to construct accountability?

The aim was based on previous findings that pooled budgets, joint leadership, and joint reporting structures are facilitators of collaboration. Shared accountability has also been emphasized as important, and facilitators of collaboration may also contribute to that.

The study demonstrates that the local coordination associations account for practice and performance in various ways using quantitative data and narratives addressing both rehabilitation and collaboration practice and performance on the individual as well as organizational levels. The accounts are presented and produced in relation to the joint reporting system, commissioned evaluations, yearly audits, budgets, and annual reports. The National Social Insurance Agency is responsible for aggregating results and reporting to the government, and its sole data collection method is the joint reporting system, which it administers. The joint reporting system emphasizes quantitative data on individual rehabilitation. The commissioned evaluations have also been criticized for not generating reliable evidence, due to their design.

The selective use of available accounts of local coordination association practice and performance by central actors deemphasizes the horizontal nature of the local associations and reconstructs them as vertical and hierarchical through a narrow construction of accountability. Accordingly, collaboration with hierarchical instead of horizontal accountability has been promoted. Narrowly constructed accountability could both result from and contribute to a narrow view of practice. Practice can then be adjusted to that view, and other practices and outcomes are then not pursued to the full extent possible. The range of possible accounts as well as forms of accountability, indi-

cating a multiple and complex accountability as well as practice, are then overlooked.

Pooled budgets, joint leadership (via a joint board), and joint reporting systems, as demonstrated in this study, do not necessarily translate into shared accountability. Instead, accountability is delegated to the local coordination associations by the member organizations. The narrow and hierarchical construction of accountability in relation to the local associations makes only certain kinds of accounts valid. The joint reporting system did not contribute to shared accountability because the accounts did not capture the whole range of inter-organizational practice within the collaboration, as accounted for by the local associations.

The circular argumentation of collaboration

Collaboration is generally described as a solution to inherently complex problems. In Paper IV it is argued that the need for, practice of, and outcomes of collaboration are part of a circular argumentation.

Organizations make certain issues or clients complex through their organizing and facilitated by their ordering narratives, and collaboration provides the organizations with an opportunity to address this complexity. Collaboration is presented as beneficial and efficient, and most of all as something different, unique and more suitable to handle complexity. Both collaboration and ordinary organizational practice benefit from such ordering narratives. This results in collaboration being the obvious solution, and there is no need or latitude to question it. The values, ordering narrative, and search for legitimacy are interwoven, creating a dynamic of circular argumentation with no latitude for problematizing. This is enhanced by the funds specially allocated to handle collaboration needs. The pooled budget is a stabilizing mechanism consolidating the need for collaboration, reducing the need to analyse and problematize the need for collaboration.

The values presented in connection with this collaboration are diverse and include efficiency, effectiveness, equality, comprehensiveness, as well as trust. This can be contrasted to descriptions of ordinary organizational practice. Such descriptions mainly concern barriers: described as boundaries and differences. Together these descriptions convey how collaboration can contribute and be a solution. Three ordering narratives were found in analysis. The first is the main ordering narrative of the benefits of collaboration based on its special features, joint decision making, and pooled budget. These features are connected to uniqueness and create the narrative of a solution that removes boundaries and differences. The second is the complementary narrative conveying what collaboration is not, i.e., it is not organized in silos, and

organizations' missions are used to illustrate the differences and how their respective clients are constructed differently. This, in turn, serves to illustrate the lack of a comprehensive view and how this may negatively affect individual clients. All of these problems can be resolved via collaboration and a pooled budget. The third and last narrative concerns evidence-based policy and how the local coordination associations are required to produce accounts of their practice and, accordingly, evidence to support their connected values. Performing this narrative through the use and development of performance measurement (capturing various aspects of collaboration) is important in order to perform the other narratives as well. This narrative exemplifies how the social and discursive aspects of the ordering narratives are embedded in material and technology. These values and narratives are interrelated with legitimacy through portraying the collaboration as something different and better suited to addressing complexity. Through claiming such a position, legitimacy becomes central, and a recurring theme is that representatives believe that legitimacy needs to be strengthened.

The values of collaboration and its ordering narratives can be seen as outcomes that collaboration promises to achieve and deliver. Disregarding the actual achievement, the values are perceived as difficult to measure and convert into evidence to be used to quantify and account for practices and outcomes affecting perceived legitimacy. New indicators are developed in the same way as general collaboration definitions, i.e., with the expected positive outcomes taken for granted. Such indicators help maintain and uphold, and perform, the associated values, and at the same time organizational identity is potentially maintained. This in turn may maintain or increase legitimacy. The ordering narratives are based on values, and an important part of these narratives entails performing the values and converting them into evidence in order to enhance legitimacy.

The ordering narratives alter the problem definition process and the problematizing of need. Instead of jointly defining problems, the collaboration jointly defines problems solvable (or framed as solvable) with the given solution: collaboration.

Projectification and lock-in of collaboration

Taken together, the findings indicate that collaboration in local coordination associations is organized in a project-like manner alongside regular organizational practice. This arrangement is strengthened through the construction of accountability and through the chosen logic of either an arena or an actor. Collaboration via pooled budgets is also construed and valued as something unique, reinforcing the demarcation of collaboration while decreasing the need to problematize it as a solution.

In this section, the findings of the papers are discussed in relation to the literature on collaboration projects, projectification, and lock-ins. These findings together confirm and supplement previous research on projectification and lock-ins in relation to collaboration. Whereas projectification describes and explains the practice of collaboration as demarcated, the lock-in phenomenon describes and explains how the idea of collaboration is singled out as not only "a" but "the" solution to perceived complex client needs.

Projects and projectification

Difficulties implementing project practices or results in ordinary organizational practice have been identified in several studies (Blomberg, 2003; Forsell, Fred, and Hall, 2013; Jensen, Johansson, and Löfström, 2012; Löfström, 2010a). Löfström (2010b) describes how collaboration projects may be a good way to improve collaboration and facilitate development or innovation within the project frame. The demarcation of the project may facilitate innovation, but at the same time be a barrier to implementing the same innovation (Johansson, Löfström, Ohlsson, 2007). Löfström (2010b) argues that collaboration in projects may be counterproductive if the aim is to improve lasting collaboration between organizations. Collaboration projects may improve collaboration, but only within the frame of the project. Implementation (in the sense of projects being taken over or transferred to ordinary organizational practice) is generally difficult to achieve and can be explained by the findings that project separation and demarcation facilitate development, innovation, and collaboration, but at the same time make implementation difficult (Löfström, 2007, 2010a,b). It can, however, be argued that implementation of any kind is difficult (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973).

The project as an ideal type is clearly demarcated in terms of time, task, aim, and resources, but in everyday organizational practice this is often not the case (Blomberg, 2003). Instead, projects are developed in response to previous projects (Blomberg, 2003; Forsell, Fred, and Hall, 2013), the

boundary between project practice and regular practice is blurred (Blomberg, 2003), and projects as such may become regular organizing practice (Fred, 2015).

Forsell, Fred, and Hall (2013) argue that public administration has become projectified: that projects have become a way to handle, and organize, the demand for collaboration in the public sector. Projects are seldom implemented, but instead new projects are initiated. Some policy areas continuously give rise to projects, often with external funding (Fred, 2015). Collaboration is difficult to reconcile with the ordinary organizational logic, and at the same time there is a political demand for collaboration. Collaboration is accordingly conducted in projects (Forsell, Fred, and Hall, 2013).

Forsell, Fred, and Hall (2013) showed that collaboration is positioned, i.e., demarcated, in projects, and Löfström (2010a,b) showed that collaboration developed in projects is difficult to implement. Paper III contributes to the projectification literature through the finding that hierarchical performance measures are used to hold the collaboration accountable, despite attempts to account for horizontal practice and performance. Such accounts are neglected and the local coordination associations are constructed as vertical through the construction of accountability, resulting in delegated instead of shared accountability. Through the construction of accountability, the collaboration is demarcated from regular organizational practice. The local associations are a permanent organizational form, but share features with projects, such as specially allocated funds, specific missions, and their own organization. This demarcation is strengthened through the construction of accountability. Moreover, the findings in paper II contribute to the understanding of the demarcation and projectification of the local associations through their logics (Scott, 2008). One logic attempts to construe the local association as an arena, and the other as an actor. The actor logic contributes to and may reinforce the demarcation from ordinary organizational practice.

One contribution of this thesis is accordingly the finding that the mechanisms of accountability and logics shape collaboration practice into a project-like organization. Another contribution is the introduction of the lock-in concept to advance our understanding of both the projectification of collaboration and collaboration as a rationalized myth (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). Following the example of the projectification of collaboration, collaboration practice is locked out of ordinary organizational practice and locked into, as in trapped in, projects or project-like organizations and organizing. In the case of collaboration and especially in the context of FINSAM and local coordination associations, this collaboration lock-in coincides with the lock in of the idea of collaboration and of collaboration as a rationalized myth.

Lock-in

Lock-in describes a situation in which new policy ideas have a hard time penetrating the combined systematic forces (Unruh, 2000, 2002) or rationales (Corvellec, Zapata Campos and Zapata, 2013) reinforcing each other in maintaining the status quo. New policy ideas, methods, and other alternatives may have been developed but are not put into play because the current alternative is strongly dominant and difficult to replace, and has been locked in, preventing other alternatives from entering. The lock-in concept is closely connected with path dependency. Both concepts underscore the importance of the past for today, but whereas path dependency emphasizes and explains how the past constrains the present, lock-in focuses on the current state (Corvellec, Zapata Campos and Zapata, 2013).

Unruh (2000, 2002) demonstrated that when something is locked in, other policy ideas are consequently locked out. A lock-in is thus when a solution (be it a technology or policy) has become the only one, when another solution is difficult to imagine, or if imagined, is difficult to suggest. When the focus shifts from why to how, there is no need for more arguments, only for action (Hasselbladh and Bejerot, 2016). Such lock-in or closure in process (Hasselbladh and Bejerot, 2016) is what Meyer and Rowan (1977) called a rationalized myth, and collaboration has been described as such in previous research (Zapata Campos, 2008; Johansson, 2011; Zapata and Hall, 2011). Moreover, research on collaboration has highlighted its potential to be a solution to a variety of problems, and studies have demonstrated that collaboration is questioned in practice but still emphasized as necessary (Mossberg, 2014) and beneficial in relation to other solutions (Schmachtel, 2015), suggesting a discursive lock-in (Borevi and Bengtsson, 2014).

Several different lock-ins are evident in the papers, lock-ins concerning both the idea and practice of collaboration. The literature review focuses specifically on collaboration, but the many examples of collaboration in the context of vocational rehabilitation indicate a lock-in towards such solutions. Based on the various models described in paper I, there are models of, or strategies for, collaboration in all settings and situations. The study, with its focus on models, barriers, and facilitators, is aligned with normative research on collaboration taking the merits of collaboration for granted. It is not stated outright, but collaboration goes unquestioned as a suitable approach to vocational rehabilitation. This in turn legitimizes collaboration as a solution or strategy in vocational rehabilitation, in research and in relation to everyday practice, where the question may be not whether but how to collaborate (Hasselbladh and Bejerot, 2016).

The logics of organizing in the local context (as an actor or arena) may be seen as examples of lock-ins in themselves, where it is difficult to organize differently after the logic has been chosen and its performance begun. This may be difficult in practice, but even on the level of ideas, it can be difficult to question and have differences of opinion with regards to what collaboration is and should be and how a pooled budget should be used. The logic of an actor may also lock collaboration into a project-like organization. The way accountability is constructed suggests a lock-in of ordinary organizational practices regarding accountability. The accountability pursued locally, which was more horizontal and narrative in structure, was locked out, and collaboration was accordingly locked into a project-like organization. The values, ordering narratives, and legitimacy, as well as the dynamic created between them, lock in collaboration as the solution: the dynamic deemphasizes problematization and it is difficult to conceive of any solutions other than collaboration.

Rationales of the lock-in of collaboration

Unruh (2000, 2002) describes a self-referential system (Unruh, 2000 p. 825); similarly, Corvellec, Zapata Campos, and Zapata (2013) conclude that a lock-in involves different but interrelated rationales that can exert impacts independently, but that also reinforce and weaken one another (p. 37). These authors develop four rationales: an institutional one with political and legal dimensions, a technical one with technological and economic dimensions, a cultural one with cognitive dimensions, and a material one with additional dimensions of space.

The solution of collaboration is institutionalized through the Financial Coordination of Rehabilitation Measures Act (SFS 2003:1210). This Act states that there is a need for collaboration and that the local coordination associations should be installed as a solution to handle individuals with comprehensive or complex needs. The coordination associations are portrayed as a unique organizational form, addressing particular issues that other forms cannot. No matter the evidence, this image of an actor accomplishing through collaboration what others cannot exemplifies cultural lock-in (through a rationalized myth). An important part of the uniqueness of this collaboration is the pooled budgets. This is an example of economic lock-in (as part of technological lock-in). The pooled budget consists of contributions from state, regional, and local governments serving a more or less local community. Moreover, once the budget is pooled, there are incentives to find problems solvable with collaboration to legitimize the pooled budget. There are needs for collaboration, and the task is to find and finance them. The dynamic of

the pooled budget is thus similar to that of a self-referential system (Unruh, 2000).

Borevi and Bengtsson (2014) describe a discursive policy lock-in in which some arguments are rejected in the process and policy becomes locked into the arguments left in play. Nair and Howlett (2016) distinguish between robust and resilient policies. While the discursive lock-in describes how one potential approach becomes policy because of a lock-in process, the differentiation of robust and resilient refers to the actual design of policies. A robust policy may exacerbate a lock-in, as it does not promote adaption and learning. Robustness may be sought in response to uncertainty, but the fail-safe design promotes lock-in when circumstances change. A resilient policy, on the other hand, is designed to adapt and change. Similarly, Unruh (2002) advocates flexible policies to allow for future evolution. Perhaps most importantly, however, new technology or policy should not be seen as the solution but instead as yet another step along the development path (Unruh, 2002, p. 324). The first step in unlocking a lock-in is to realize that there is a lock-in. Corvellec, Zapata Campos, and Zapata (2013) propose critically reflecting on the various rationales for lock-ins in order to get rid of obstacles to new solutions. Following these studies, a solution uncritically viewed as the solution may well signify a lock-in.

Together, these rationales of collaboration lock in collaboration as the solution. The rationalized myth of collaboration is institutionalized and converted into money to be spent in line with the myth. This creates stability and provides a general definition as well as a match between the problem and solution (Hasselbladh and Bejerot, 2016). Previous research into and evaluation of collaboration in Swedish public administration has identified the lack of financial incentives and of commitment as barriers to implementing collaboration, and supporting structures have been proposed to facilitate collaboration (Socialstyrelsen, 2001). The supporting structure of legally regulated joint boards and pooled budgets exemplifies a robust and fail-safe policy (Nair and Howlett, 2016, see also Reff Pedersen, Sehestad, and Sørensen, 2011). With these features, it should be impossible to fail, and the issue is not whether or why but how to achieve collaboration.

Conclusions

Previous research has suggested that large-scale organizational change consists of various types of interventions: political and legal interventions, audits and inspections, management measures, and interventions targeting professional practice (Bejerot and Hasselbladh, 2013). These interventions should all be taken into account and seen as influencing each other and the outcomes of policy and practice. This research contributes the finding that a finer-grained grid is needed in order to understand the development of policy and organizational practice. Using such a grid, it is possible to understand the underlying normative aspects, and how they influence and can result in lock-in. This in turn makes it easier to understand how the discussion can be closed and the solution taken for granted. The findings and conclusions of this thesis, especially with regards to the pooled budget, also lends support to previous research suggesting that coordination is facilitated by flexibility, and that institutionalization of stable coordination mechanisms "makes less sense than ever" (Reff Pedersen, Sehestad and Sørensen, 2011, p. 789).

Running counter to ordinary organizational practices, collaboration cannot be fully validated as a rational solution using conventional performance measures, and its legitimacy is accordingly perceived as weak. Collaboration is nevertheless still seen as the only conceivable solution to certain problems and, moreover, is locked into a project-like organization. It is thus locked in both in the sense of being stabilized and being trapped. Both forms of lock-in are based on an understanding of collaboration as different and unique, demarcated from regular organizational practice. Through this uniqueness and the lock-in of collaboration as the solution, the lock-in of collaboration into projects or project-like practice is reasonable. The two forms of lock-in are thus connected and interrelated, and feed off each other. The conclusion of this thesis is that the rationalized myth of collaboration is locked in as the solution to complex or difficult-to-handle problems through a robust policy. Moreover, the lock-in of collaboration into project-like organization is connected to the lock-in of collaboration as the solution based on the rational myth.

Implications and further research

This research contributes a critical discussion of collaboration based on the finding that collaboration is locked into a project-like organizational structure and locked in as the taken-for-granted solution, i.e., the rationalized myth of collaboration has been locked in as the solution to problems framed as complex. Such lock-ins have implications on several levels.

For an individual in a situation framed as complex, this lock-in may result in receiving a certain kind of treatment, based on his/her needs, differing from that received before. Paradoxically, the opportunity to receive such adapted treatment is based on being labelled as having complex needs and in need of coordinated rehabilitation.

For organizations, the lock-in results in issues or target groups being framed as complex and referred to collaboration. This connection between complexity and lock-in is strengthened by the existence of the pooled budget. A first step towards unlocking the situation would be for organizations and the professionals working in them to ask themselves whether solutions, and how complexity is framed, are the result of a lock-in. If so, further measures should be taken to unlock the situation. As a lack of problematizing can emerge in a lock-in, one step to start the unlocking process could be to problematize the framing of problems and, in an unbiased manner, to search for solutions without presupposing the solution in question.

Implications at a societal level are that collaboration is habitually proposed as the solution, removing potential alternatives from the table, such as reorganization and policy changes. Instead, when problems prove difficult to handle and solve, collaboration or the like is called for, masking potential deficiencies in ordinary organizational practice and existing policy. Following this, some groups in the population are labelled complex and in need of special treatment. This in effect recognizes that welfare organizations do not meet everyone's needs, and that special solutions legitimize the prioritization of a core group in the population, leaving in the periphery those cases perceived as complex.

Contemporary research takes a normative and evaluative approach to collaboration, as it is important to provide answers regarding how to make it work and how it solves the problems at hand. There is reason to consider that collaboration may have become locked in as a relevant and suitable solution in research as well. Scholars of collaboration should apply a critical approach to collaboration, and consider collaboration as potentially locked in. Future research should approach collaboration as such broadly and critically, con-

sidering how collaboration and the need for it is understood, how certain target groups have come to be construed as complex or as having complex needs, and how this situation can be understood in relation to ordinary organizational practice and its priorities. Studies of collaboration in service delivery should focus on clients and how their needs are understood and framed as complex and calling for collaboration.

This study applied an ethnographic approach, which proved a fruitful way to understand this form of collaboration. Research into collaboration and collaboration processes calls for a broader approach than merely interviews, and ethnographic approaches should be further explored in future studies in other settings.

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