



INSTITUTIONEN FÖR SOCIOLOGI
OCH ARBETSVETENSKAP

Standardiseringsarbetets kollektiva praktik

*En studie om att kvalitetssäkra integrationssatsningen
Samhällsorientering för nyanlända*

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Abstract

Societal efforts to support the integration of newly arrived immigrants have been repeatedly highlighted in the political debate in Sweden and they are described as inadequate and ineffective. Demands have been made for improvements and one of the designated efforts is Civic Orientation (CO). The Civic Orientation programme is a course about Swedish society, targeting newly arrived refugees and their relatives who have received a residence permit. It provides basic information about Swedish society to aid and expedite integration (SFS 2010:1138). The criticism has led to the production of written, national instructions containing correct information that should be provided by the civil servants in CO. The aim is that quality should be high and equal across the country.

The overall aim of the dissertation is to deepen the understanding and knowledge of the work-process to develop standard guidelines, that will be used in a welfare sector, where it is difficult to establish definitive knowledge. The dissertation's purpose is also to deepen the understanding and knowledge of instruction work as a collaborative activity. The term 'instruction work' covers both work that experts and managers undertake when they develop written guidelines, and work done when implementing these guidelines in local practice. The thesis is rooted in activity theory where work is viewed as a collaborative activity aimed at taking on a task, event or object, such as interpreting, paying attention, participating, thinking, and performing. The study involves five different categories of actors: a representative from the county administrative board, experts from various authorities and universities, coordinators and the head of a unit from a management group in a municipality, and integration workers, who are the local civil servants. The study is based on a field study where video recorded observations of meetings, lectures and workshops have been conducted. Semi structured interviews and written communication have also been used.

The result shows that there are different perceptions of what work needs to be done to ensure that the instructions are correct. A variety of, sometimes contradictory, tasks developed: to make the information scientifically correct with multiple perspectives on social phenomena, to make educational simplification, to provide an ideal image of Sweden according to policy, or to describe Swedish society as irrational with hindrances and obstacles (**papers 1- 3**). Another major task was to make the instructions politically neutral which meant producing information that was not offensive for external readers such as politicians and the general public (**paper 1**). When guideline models have been used for other welfare activities, the work is usually based on analysis of the needs of the target groups. That task took on an obscured role and was first noticed as important by the civil servants in the latter part when the material was used during implementation (**papers 1, 3**).

A further result concerns the work of developing standard guidelines. The study shows that there is *formal instruction work* (**paper 1**) which is the planned work, most often done by experts and/or researchers, and *informal instruction work* (**paper 2**) often hidden and performed by civil servants in the implementation phase. This informal work is about transforming the instructions to be useful for the individual in the local situation. But the study also shows a third type of work - *semi-formal instruction work* (**paper 3**) that is also carried out by the local civil servants, where they, with their biographical and informal instruction work experience, try hard to influence formal instruction work. One conclusion is that it is more fruitful and accurate to perceive standardized instructions as dynamic and integrated in the practical work, than to see them as fixed by an externally controlled process. Developing standards to be used to improve practice is an ongoing fluid process that never ends, and that involves tensions and conflicts that need to be addressed.

Key words: Civic Orientation, Integration effort, Standard, Evidence Based Practice, Guideline model, Activity theory, Instruction work