

CROSSCUTTING COLLABORATION IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Background

There is a growing political focus on crosscutting collaborations in the public sector. This reflects a recognition that solutions to particularly complex policy issues calls for greater coherence in the services provided by different organizations. To ensure value creation "the citizen must be at the center", as the Danish Leadership Commission summarized in 2018.

Crosscutting collaborations can for instance be a school and a kindergarten working together to ensure that challenged children have as smooth a transition into school life as possible. It may be different departments and units in a hospital, who in combination must ensure that patients with several diseases receive comprehensive and coherent treatment(s). Or it could be a job center officer and a general practitioner who jointly assess how citizens that experience challenges with both illness and employment readiness are helped the best. Common to these situations is that both leaders and employees from the various public organizations must prioritize and contribute to the solution of tasks that are not solely their own responsibility.



Objective and methods

The purpose of the research project is to provide knowledge about how public leaders and employees prioritize and contribute to the solutions of crosscutting tasks. How do public leaders understand the role of their organizations in relation to crosscutting tasks? And how do they influence employees' willingness and ability to contribute? In addition, the project examines the importance of dynamics internally in work groups for collaborative efforts as well as how employees' prioritization of crosscutting tasks changes over time.

The project connects insights from existing management and organizational research as well as social psychology. It is well known that management is central to employees' motivation and behavior, and that individuals may experience challenges in understanding each other because of different work processes, group affiliations and identities.

The project investigates, e.g., crosscutting collaboration in the healthcare sector and is based primarily on quantitative survey methods, including field experiments, survey experiments and longitudinal survey designs. Based on this, the following questions are highlighted in the project:

1. What is crosscutting management in the public sector?
2. How does crosscutting management affect employees' prioritization of the crosscutting task solution in the public sector?
3. What significance do group dynamics and socialization have for employees' prioritization of crosscutting tasks in the public sector?

Additional information

The project is led and implemented by PhD student Anders Barslund Grøn (abg@ps.au.dk). Christian Bøtcher Jacobsen is the main supervisor and Vibeke Lehmann Nielsen is the co-supervisor.