MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES AND MEDIATIZATION OF GOVERNMENT AGENCIES – TRANSLATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

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Media

- Third branch of government - function as a *watchdog*.

- Set to scrutinize and critically examine the actions of agencies and their representatives to uncover policy failures, corruption, inefficiency and other forms of malfunctions.

- Assist citizens in their legitimate right to control, evaluate and hold public officials accountable for their actions.

Mediatization

- Media emerge as an autonomous institution with its own set of rationalities

- Other institutions adapt to media's rationalities

- The norms, values, principles and working routines of the media become central for the way they – and organizations within - are governed and organized.

Previous work…

- Has shown strong empirical support for mediatization in different fields (politics, business, religion, culture, sports, everyday life)

- tend to be deterministic

- often assumes that there are few possibilities to resist or avoid the pressures from mediatization.

- often assumes that organizations populating the same field conceptualize and respond to mediatization in similar ways

However…

- existing literature does not provide a satisfactory explanation to variations and differences between organizations in the same field.

- Current writings are primarily preoccupied with macro-determinants (changes in politics, commercialization of the media).

We would argue that…

- there is reason – both empirical and theoretical - to believe that the extent of adaptation to media varies between different types of agencies

- mediatization unfolds unevenly as it gets translated into specific contexts

- this might lead to varying consequences for how agencies are organized and perform their activities.

Translation

- New organizational practices come to organizations as models or recipes

- They are contextualized, modified and specified to fit local conditions.

- This is an active process where organizations are assisted by consultants, professional bodies or academics who promote novel models and practices to organizations across different fields and industries

Media as a model

- Media is seen as the most important form of communication between actors in different fields

- Media promotes certain ways of "seeing and interpreting social affairs".

- Content edited according to journalistic principles

- Understandings of *what* media will portray, *who* it will portray, *how* actors will be portrayed and how these components are put together.

- Promotes certain principles, values and routines concerning media source interactions, news production and evaluation of newsworthiness

Media and managament

- The model of media is closely connected to new public management reforms

- Professionalization and individualization of leading personnel

- "company-like" behavior (branding, visibility, media exposure).

- Want to behave as a real organization with clearly defined structures, goals and identities.

Our questions

1. what are the dominant ideas about media among members of senior management in government agencies

2. how and why are these ideas defined as central for the agencies' ability to conduct their duties and responsibilities

3. how do these ideas relate to and compete with other 'logics' permeating the agencies

Our questions

4. how and to what extent do the ideas about media in practice enable, facilitate, reshape, hamper and/or prevent activities performed by the agencies

5. to what extent and how do management structures influence the way in which different parts of the agencies' organization work with media

An ethnographically inspired study

- Five organizations (Council agency, board agency, single-director agency / degree of mediatization)

- Interviews with general directors, chairmen and members of the boards. Members with different professional backgrounds, working experiences and primary responsibilities (10-15 interviews/agency)

- Observations of everyday work in different departments responsible for different forms of activities

Understandings of media

- How media is conceptualized and obtain meaning (significance, roles and symbolic values)
- The means and ends of media activities and the motives for stances, approaches and activities
- The interplay between ideas of media and positions, work assignments and professional backgrounds
- To what degree mediatization is supported, challenged or resisted
- To what extent resource allocation, organizational structures, distribution of responsibilities and other aspects have been adapted or even accommodated to media.

Consequences of mediatization

- How and to what extent mediatization enables, facilitate, reshape, hampers and/or prevents activities performed by the agencies (1) *exercise of public authority,* 2) *auditing,* 3) *providing information and instructions,* 4) *produce services and products,* 5) *produce knowledge,* 6) *planning, control and coordination* and 7) *policy formation).*

- How different understandings of media are (not) connected with different types of activities, and how these connections are influenced by parallel or competing values and practices

Point of departure

- Swedish government agencies are in general highly mediatized

- Major differences between different types

- The agencies tendency to adapt to mediatization and the media logic is determined by the management structure

- Single-director agencies and board agencies are significantly more mediatized compared to council agencies even when control variables - such as media coverage of the agencies, size, geographic location, and extend of political salience – are included in the analysis.

Criteria for our first case…

- A highly mediatized agency

- An agency with single director management

- Visible in the Swedish media.

- An agency that actively relate to the media and where the media is a central part of the agency's activities.

- An organisational context where different professional groups are represented.

The selected agency

- Extensive responsibilities for public information
- Responsible for the sector's crisis and emergency planning.
- Frequent cooperations with other agencies
- Assigned administrative, advisory and regulatory responsibilities
- Support entrepreneurship and assist exports
- Provide legal support to companies.
- Strong professional groups
- 500 employees

Media is conveyed by four carriers

- Artefacts

- Routines

- Symbolic systems

- Relational systems

	Management	Science	Civic
Aim	Producing news	Developing knowledge	Providing public good
Format	Popular	Objective	Relevant
Principles	Journalistic and result-driven	Scientific and evidence-driven	Bureaucratic and utility-driven
Concerns	Agency and its identity	Academic profession and its results	General Public and its needs
Rationales	Strategizing	De-contextualizing	Contextualizing
Translating of media logic and its different elements	Local meaning of media logic and its all four elements (products, routines, symbols and relations) converging with the value system of senior management and communication personnel	Translation of media logic concerned predominantly with products and routines where these are given meaning in a context of scientific scrutiny and integrity	Translation of media logic concerned predominantly with symbolical and relational systems where these are given meaning in context of tax-payer utility

Publications

- Pallas, J.; Fredriksson, M. & Wedlin, L. (in press) Translating institutional logics: When the media logic meets professions. *Organization Stuides*

- Fredriksson, M. & Pallas, J. (in press) Much ado about media: public relations in public agencies in the wake of managerialism. *Public Relations Review*

- Fredriksson, M.; Schillemans, T. & Pallas, J. (2015). Determinants of organizational mediatization: an analysis of the adaptation of Swedish government agencies to news media *Public Administration 93* (4), 1049-1067