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Trust in safe public e-services: Translating policies into use.

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Trust in Safe Public e-services. Translating Policies into Use.

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Abstract

The emerging information society changes the relations between public agencies and citizens in many ways. Public e-services are information technological applications for interactions between public agencies and citizens. Public e-services are forms of e-government. E-services as such are innovations – even if the service as such has been there before – it is a new way producing and organizing the service. For successful implementation of innovations the innovations has to be considered as legitimate by all involved actors.

On a European and national level there are some policies and some standardization of public e-services. Thus policies are translated both to other levels of Governments in the multi-level Governance chain and from technical to administrative settings. Since the Swedish public administration rely on a double steering approach with strong constitutional regional and local autonomy such policies cannot be forced out into regional local public agencies. Instead such European and national statements become soft policy instruments in the local context and the implications from them rely on the local context and not at least the competences of the professionals in the administration.

Since this is a new field of innovative practice it will build on an inductive methodological approach. Theories of translation will be used to emphasis both translations over levels in multi-level settings and interpretations of safety. The conclusion is that the translation over levels from policies to praxis appears to be more critical than the technological imperative.

1. Introduction

The emerging information society changes the relations between public agencies and citizens in many ways. One of the most used is the use of public e-services for interactions between public agencies and citizens. Public e-services are information technological applications for interactions between public agencies and citizens. Public e-services are forms of e-government. Public e-services as such are innovations – even if the service as such has been there before – it is a new way producing and organizing the service. For successful implementation of innovations the innovations has to be considered as legitimate by all involved actors. They have to trust the organization and not at least its safety aspects. Safety in web-innovations is created through both the practical real technical arrangement and practical experiences of the use of the innovation.

Public e-services are provided on different levels of the society and through the systems multi-level government that is common in all European member states to different degrees there is also a complexity of trust towards different levels. When government contacts are made in electronic contexts the level they belong to appear to be less obvious. National or even European government agencies appear to be as local as local governments on the Internet. There is no difference on clicking on an e-service provided from Brussels, Jönköping or even Ramsfall or Lönneberga (remote villages in the county of Jönköping).

Thus the geography of public e-services is important for the very grounding of trust in the e-service and in e-governmental bodies in general. Even if e-government gives an impression of being virtual it is indeed localized and it is about geographical area governments on the net. Governmental power grounds its legitimacy from its territory – the geographical area. A government is legitimate within a specific area, based on the citizens there and the activities that take place there. Thus are also multi-level governments an issue of territorial area division. The different levels are on both organizational levels and territorial levels.

Public e-services and citizen satisfaction with online governance are to be considered along the concept of trust in safe public e-services. According to Holmberg & Weibull (2008) there is a long-term trend in most democracies that citizens' trust in public institutions has been declining. The concept of trust within the e-governmental context has recently emerged from a purely technical into more social and organizational dimensions. These organizational settings of e-government are crucial for the development of public administration on all levels

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and the authors argue that trust in government and the society at all is one driving force (Nordfors et al. 2009).

Aim

The aim of this paper is to analyze multi level governance translation of policies into praxis regarding public e-services and how this process of constructions of meanings promoting safety and citizens trust to public e-services.

The translation of European policies falls down through nation states into regions and local authorities through the multi-level setting of contemporary European policy making. In this case study the constitutional autonomy of Swedish counties and municipalities has a critical influence on the translation process, since they are part of a multi-level governance chain but still independent.

Methods

The tracing of translation of e-government in the European and Swedish context took off from the most recent European Action Plan the *Ministerial Declaration on e-government (2009)*.

The policy aims presented here are related to policies on national, regional and local level.

Policies are formed in the interplay of written statements and the analyzed meanings formed in discursive practices. WE have also conduced complementary interviews on local and regional levels.

The practices on national, regional and local levels are, however, described only based on interviews and some indeed brief participatory observation situations. All informants are chosen as key-actors in the specific organizational setting. All interviews have been made at the informants' offices or similar locations. We approached the organizations openly and key actors where pointed out to us by the top-level. The cases of public administrative bodies are chosen to illustrate the different levels of government. Thus they are not direct inter-related. We do not analyze the inter-play between them, nor make any generalizations between the levels as such. The focus of analysis is rather the translation of values and construction of meanings in policy and practice in each case (Bogason 2000). We also focus on how such constructions of meanings are related, but still independently of each case since the cases are chosen from different policy areas. In spite of this we hope that there will be indications of characteristics that may be taken to a further step in broader analytical settings.

Outline of the paper

This paper proceeds as follow. In the next section we give a general background on e-government in the European multi-Level Governance setting and theories on translation. Secondly, the analysis of policy translation takes on by focusing on the European, national, regional and finally the local level. Thirdly, the analytical discussion combines the theoretical outline and the policy and practical implications. Finally some general conclusions are discussed.

2. Translation of e-Government

The emerging e-society has implications on most activities in daily life and not the least on the political and democratic arrangements of the contemporary welfare states (see for ex Baldersheim & Ögård 2008). Thus the concept e-government becomes more and more common in relation to governmental activities in the e-society.

E-government

E-government is a common but still broad and quite diffuse concept. Its key dimensions can be divided by its position in relation to different actors. These are e-democracy (relations between electorate and elected) e-services (in the relations between public administration and citizens, firms and other originations) and finally e-administration for the internal usage of information technological tools within governmental originations. The European Union stated the importance of improved e-government in November 2009, through the ministerial declaration for e-government, in which EU governments will:

“... use eGovernment to increase their efficiency and effectiveness and to constantly improve public services in a way that caters for users’ different needs and maximizes public value”

e-government is the governmental bodies’ use of tools and systems made possible by information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to provide improved internal efficiency as well as better public services to citizens and businesses. The use of e-government applications even outside government bodies, like households and private firms has to include the networked interplay of actors and organizations. Such analytical approaches have lately been handling by considering public governance rather than government. Governance is processes where organizations (such as governments) implement decisions and decide whom they involve and how they render account. The development and implementation of e-

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governance has potential to improve economic efficiency, democratic legitimacy and trust. But there are also social and digital divides, new and inequalities and vulnerability built into the systems (Heeks 1999).

According to Homburg (2008:87) e-government refers to “the strategic use of ICT in and around public administrations, for the purpose to create a “wired” or “digital” government”. E-government is in this context further referred to as the redesign of information relationships between administration and citizens, in order to create some sort of added value. The origins of e-government can be found not only in motives for cost-cutting, but also in the realization of new public management-type of reforms. It aims at making public administration more citizen-oriented, efficient, transparent and responsive to the needs of the public (Wihlborg 2005; Bock Seegard 2009). Moreover, an important stimulus for e-government is to bridge the gap between the government and the citizens (Homburg 2008: 90-91). There is also a strong emphasis on internal administrative efficiency in the development of e-government (Schuman 2007).

In this interplay the interpretations of safety is formed in the interchange of the actual technical safety arrangements and the experienced safety. The experienced safety is a consequence of organizational arrangements, individual competences and experiences as well as the specific situation (Woolgar 2002). Safety is hereby seen as a translation in between actors, their organizations and the technical arrangements. The main organizational arrangements in public administrative settings are the multi-level governance and the communication between these levels (Wilson 2007).

Multi-Level-Governance – an arena for translation

Multi-level governance is a theory developed from the changing setting for policy making and public administration within the European Union. It focus on the interplay of and changing characterizes in relationships between actors at different territorial as well as organizational levels, both from the public and the private sectors. The multi-level governance is both a practice and a theory that crosses the traditionally separate domains of domestic and international politics (Wihlborg & Palm 2008).

An early explanation referred to multi-level governance as “a system of continuous negotiation among nested governments at several territorial tiers” (Marks 1993:XX) and described how *supranational, national, regional, and local governments are enmeshed in territorially overarching policy networks*. The MLG-model can be seen as a theory

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emphasizing both the increasingly frequent and complex interactions between governmental actors and the increasingly important dimension of non-state actors that are mobilized in cohesion policy-making and in the EU policy more generally. As such, multi-level governance raised new and important questions about the role, power and authority of states.

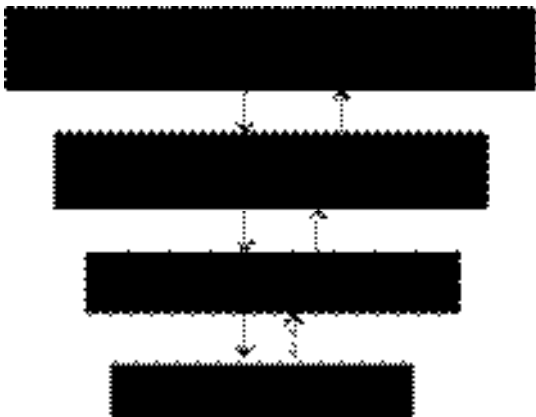


Figure 1: Multi-level governance policy making

The arrows above are stronger going down-wards than up-wards since there in most policy fields are a hierarchy from top-down. But there are indeed also influences from bottom-up, as indicated by the arrows pointing up-wards.

Multi-level governance is formed through both a policy formulation and the administrative practice of implementation and realization of policies. Thus also the administration is divided in similar level and even these have an inter-relationship, which may be more integrated since professionals have tendencies to learn from each other and interact when developing competences, as shown in figure 2.



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Figure 2: Multi-level governance public administration as integrated organizational setting.

The single individual meets the public administration on different levels at the same time. There can be flight regulations based on a European directive on volcanic ashes as well as local regulations at the municipal airport regarding the same issue. Thus the levels of multi-level governance may not always appear as distinctive from outside. Thus the individuals' relations as a citizen or a customer are interesting to relate to.

The individual on public and private arenas - citizens and customers

There are different denominations of citizens who are receiving service, e.g. clients, customers and users in relation to e-government (SOU 2008:97). This not at least since most e-application has developed as markets tools in e-commerce, e-marketing, e-buy etc. However, some argue that by considering citizens as customers the perspective shrinks to only include customization relations instead of the participation in a political system and a holder of "rights" which they have the right to receive (Collins & Butler, 2002; Michel, 2005). They ask for a more customer oriented focus on public administration in line with new Public administration.

McDonald et al., (2007) on the other hand argue that efficient public e-services can only be developed if governments offer citizen-centric services. A marketing perspective may help public organizations to keep the citizens in focus and provide tools for identifying citizens demands. When considering the citizen from a strict service perspective, it can be argued that using the concept customer can be useful. When considering the citizen from a strict service perspective, it can be argued that using the concept customer can be useful (Lindblad-Gidlund, 2010). Safety as a concept is given different meanings on the flexible market and the more right and obligation focused governmental arena.

Policy translation – a theoretical approach

The concept of translation appears to be an emerging and growing approach towards implementation since includes and problematize the local context as well as it opens local actors' interpretations of a policy. It has a pure process orientation. Translation theories in this meaning build on Actor-Network theory (ANT) (Callon 1991; Latour 2005), it has been developed into the policy analysis through organizational studies (Rövik 2000; 2008). The term translation there refers to processes when actors exercise some authority over elements – like policies – in the network. Callon (1986) saw this process as a strategic practice through

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which network identities was constituted and translated, that identity the embedded a set of possibilities in which both might be invested. So, translation points to the way others aspirations are borrowed to support the endeavors of the enrolling actor.

ANT theorists have developed a particular vocabulary with which to identify the participants in a network and to conceptualize the means by which these participants are maneuvered, coordinated, aligned and rendered stable (Latour 2005). Even without taking on the fully language of ANT, the actor – here e-government – can be followed to un-cover policy making to analyze general contextual factors of translation in implementation as well as differences in European praxis. In our initial tackling of the process description this will be an important tool to combine the modeling of multi-level-government regimes to e-government.

Multi-Level Governance as the dispersion of decision making competencies away from the central state and spreading over multiple centers of authority have the last couple of years been increasingly in focus within political science (Hooghe and Marks 2001:3). It is, however, important to recognize that this paper does not claim that governance has replaced government – rather, government provides the framework for which governance exists within (Jordan et al 2005).

When policies are translated into local contexts and promote new practices they become settled in the institutional milieu there and then. An institutional framework includes rational, normative and cultural-cognitive elements (Scott 2008). The institutional approach emphasis the contextual aspects of explanations. Multi-level governance is indeed an institutional setting design the limits of and responsibility for different levels of governments. In the Swedish case – as studied below – the constitutional local autonomy is defining the institutional levels.

Analyzing translation of e-government in MLG-contexts

As discussed above e-government are both a contemporary policy development and an emerging practice in public administration as well as related organizations. It opens for an integrated analysis of technology in its context on different levels. Safety is constructed technical (through technical innovations) and organizational (through institutional/organizational innovations).

In the following sections we will present e-government policies and practices from one area each on different levels of MLG. First we take off from the European policy setting. Secondly

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we will focus on a specific national authority – The Swedish Transport Agency, formed to meet several different actors through e-government arrangements. Thirdly the regional level is in focus through an arrangement of collaboration between schools for student counseling applications for secondary high schooling in West Sweden. Finally, the local level is represented by a project on developing a one-stop shop. Our concluding remarks highlight the integrated formulation of policy and praxis in e-government development in Multi-Level Governance.

3. The European contextualization – the policy take off

The Council of Europe's recommendation on e-Government from 2004 is intended to provide assistance to member countries in preparing strategies for e-government. It deals e.g. with principles of access, inclusion, trust and efficiency (SOU 2010:20).

The European Union (EU) has launched several policies regarding e-government. EU Commission's Action Plan on e-government, adopted in 2006 in order to accelerate the development of e-services that are useful for everyone, stated that in 2010, no citizen should be left out, which meant that there should be better supported inclusion of e-government so that citizens can take advantage of secure, trusted and innovative services and easy access for everyone. The Action Plan focus on the European Commission's contribution to supporting Member States' objectives and Community policies, in particular the Lisbon Strategy, internal market, better regulation and European citizenship.

This European Commission's (2006) e-government policy *Action Plan i2010* is currently being renegotiated, starting in November 2009 when the EU ministers unanimously agreed on a declaration for e-government, in which EU governments will:

“(...) use eGovernment to increase their efficiency and effectiveness and to constantly improve public services in a way that caters for users' different needs and maximises public value (...)”

(Ministerial Declaration, 2009)

This current European declaration spells out visions and strategies for collaborative e-government implementation in an EU-wide context and illustrates a great optimism regarding enhanced efficiency and citizen value until the year of 2015 (SOU 2010:20 p 51).

Traces of the EU policy are evident in national policies on e-government, both on state, regional and local levels. However, there are conclusive differences in implementation among

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the EU-states. The Swedish policies on e-government are the result of a translation of general European policies and thus an implementation of the EU Action Plan but also a creative and essential contextualization into the Swedish welfare state regime (SOU 2010:20). However, in other European member states there are other paths to gain legitimacy when implementing e-government and entering the e-society.

Nevertheless, despite the uniform rhetoric, the declaration recognizes the discretion of national and local actors in implementing e-government. What is clear is thus that the EU rhetoric on e-government has appeared across the Member States while the implementation is to be driven by the Member States themselves. However, this uniform rhetoric often hides the great differences between the member states in terms of political structures and cultures as well as different traditions of delivering public services. These formal and informal structures guide and design how public e-services are to be delivered.

It is worth noticing that the concept of safety is not in focus in this new EU policy, neither as a technical issue nor as an organizational issue. Instead the key words in the European policy until 2015 appear to be inclusion, trust, extended accessibility to public information and (economic) efficiency (support a sustainable economy). In our coming analysis of the “lower” levels of government we will try to see if and in that case how these concepts are translated into other policies and become praxis.

4. e-Government on national level in Sweden

The Swedish Government has for some time not had a united policy for usage of IT-solutions in the public administration. In 2007 a group of State Secretaries was formed with the mission to investigate how the management of the Swedish e-government could be improved. One of the results from the workings of this group was the National Plan of Action for the E-government from 2008. This was the first time all the e-government policy was presented in a single, unified document. The main objective of the action plan is to make it: ”as simple as possible for as many as possible”. Some of the other explicit objectives of the action plan is to improve the quality of exercise of public authority, and to ”slim” the administration in order to economize the limited resources. The aim of the plan itself is to coordinate the management of e-government across organizational borders of ministries and authorities. There were also explicit ambitions to harmonize the IT-systems used both within the former authorities and towards customers/citizens (Governmental bill: Prop 2008/09:31).

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The now proposed new policy has been formed in the governmental policy proposal “As simple as possible for as many as possible – from strategy to actions for e-administration” (Governmental official investigation SOU 2010:20). The e-delegation translates the concept of e-government as a part of the development activities of public administration which not only benefits from ICT, but also ensures that the development is leading to necessary organizational changes and training of employees within public administration. The policy aims are: “simple, open, accessible, efficient and secure e-government” (Governmental official investigation, SOU 2010:20 p. 9).

The purpose of different e-government projects, according to the Governmental investigation (SOU 2010:20, p. 28) is to improve service to individuals, businesses, organizations and actors within the administration. It also aims to implement long-term economic savings and joint management while maintaining the rule of law and protect privacy. Thus we focus on a newly formed national authority with such an integrative approach.

Praxis in the Swedish Transport Agency (STA)

When the former national governmental agencies for all transportation (rail, road, sea and air) were promoted into a new common authority the development of public e-services became a crucial organizational as well as technical innovation. It was indeed inspired by the national Swedish Tax Agency that has been the most outstanding national authority regarding e-services in Sweden.

When establishing The Swedish Transport Agency (Prop 2008/09:31) the discussion of IT-usage has an unobtrusive role. The main argument is that modern technology probably will facilitate the citizen contact with the authority. The formation and planning of STA has been discussed since 2004, aiming to reach an overall view on policy-making, supervision and authorization within the transportation sector. In 2007, an official report stated that the supervising capacity of the different modes of transportation should be established within a new authority. However, at the time it was acknowledged that this could not be done without further investigation. The responsibilities of the new authority should be regularization, authorization, supervision and policy-making in the different modes of transportation, and to represent the Swedish Government in international developmental policy-processes within the transportation sector.

In fact Swedish Transport Agency is a complex mix of former different authorities, with the different organizational and information technological (socio-technical) bodies already having

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distinct ideas about how to run things. The challenge for the new authority is thus to overcome the old routines, and establish a joint comprehension of goals, routines, and identity. A challenge which often proves to be easier said than done. The Swedish government's intentions of establishing an all-embracing transportation agency was to collect, clear and render the supervision assignments of the different modes of transportation more efficiently. A condition for achieving this is that the new authority has the capacity to act jointly. E-governance and especially e-services for citizens and other users of the authority's services became a key element of the new combined authority.

“A common face to the public on the Internet, and at least related e-service application was an important first step when we became a new authority. Even if we have not yet reach that, I think it is important for promoting knowledge in the society on what we do. So people see us as one authority.”

(Interview, IT-manager at STA)

The central management at the national authority was struggling with the implementation of the national e-policy through the merging of the new authority. The double change – a new policy and a new organization – may enforce the process here. Changes of praxis were made easier in the process of changing organization (Rövik 2008). The translation of policy into praxis here also developed as a new situation opening up for new interpretations of safety, trust, effectiveness and accessibility.

5. A Regional Translation - Educational Application Systems as policies and praxis

A regional illustration of the arrangements of e-government practice is the Application Systems for secondary high schools in western Sweden. It is an integrative service that builds on collaboration among administrative bodies and innovative technology. It builds on the more general regional e-government policy regarding efficiency and accessibility.

The focus of the IT-policy of West Sweden is the possibilities provided with IT and how electronic communication can create added value for inhabitants, patients (since the main regional responsibility is health care), professionals and all others. The policy as technology positive focus that is almost deterministic when describing information technology as a “tool for development and democracy” (Action plan for ICT, Region West Sweden).

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The design of the regional common application system to secondary high schools is made in line with such ideas. IT is seen as a tool for students, the student counselors and the admission administration office. The application systems are regionalized in Sweden and the arrangements illustrates the arrangements and characteristics of the regional government level in Sweden (Bernhard & Wihlborg 2011). But the schools are arranged locally or by private firms, thus the regional systems do not relate to funding or content of the education program.

As we have shown before (Bernhard & Wihlborg 2011) the e-government arrangements for educational application improved trust among students and also, surprisingly, gave the professional student counselors new collaged and improved their work satisfaction. But there are still security issues to consider, not at least since most applications are submitted in the very last minute. Also the idea of 24-7 accessibility is complicated to meet with qualified counseling. The students also actually seemed to expect the professional student counselors to be on-line more or less 24-7 for counseling, and when this was not the case the trust in the system as such decreased. This may indicate that the younger generation has other expectations of service through e-government. The students thereby act more as customers than citizens, but if this is a consequence of the improved e-government tools or a consequence of the general trends of new public management cannot be verified based this case study. The interesting indication of this is, however, that even simple e-government applications make citizens ask for even more and better e-services. The translation of e-government policy into praxis opens for a pull of e-government meeting up the policy push of e-government.

Most students do also consider this application as very important step in life. It is expressed through statements like: “This is about choosing future” or “It is about the rest of my life”. Thus the students also were worried to make the right choice and make it correct in the e-government system. Therefore some of them actually made use of the e-government service at the student counselors’ office. One student counselor described this as:

”... there are students that are afraid of making mistakes. They want to make the application at my office and they ask me to check that they made it correctly. They give an impression of not completely trusting the system”

(Focus group interview student counselors)

This on the other hand was complicated since not all student counselors had very high IT competence themselves. One student counselor described this as:

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"I'm not so good at computers and such things. I use them and I'm really good at this system that helps out a lot. I trust it and just expect it to work, but I cannot handle network problems and such things."

(Focus group interview student counselors)

The emerging praxis builds on a strong emphasis of the technological system of e-government as designed by the technical system. The organizational security is also promoted by the technical system in socio-technical interplay. The e-application system made the application process more open and accessible compared to the former paper based process.

"... now students, teachers, student counselors and the admin staff can check out the web-site and get all statistics. It is so simple. I always get a call from the regional newspaper this time of the year, but now I was so happy to tell them that all info they asked for was publicly available on the web-site"

(Interview head of the regional admission office)

Hereby they again point at the importance of access to open information as a crucial dimension of experienced security. From different perspectives in the organization security is created in relation to the technical system as well as the organizational arrangements. The actors of the process of creating safety are humans, organizations, technology and policies.

The trust in the system is primarily technical, but it also arranges how the admission process is handled and what can be conducted. A basic safety issue regarding the system is that the student counselors have access to all the usernames and passwords of all students. The individual password is sent in a paper letter to the parents since the students are underage. In the group interview the student counselors discussed this and agreed that they had not meet any problems with this arrangements, and one of the said "it is not about money or so, therefore it is not seriously either". This is interesting since electronic identification appeared to be a key issue both in policy and practice on national level and partly also on the European level.

6. Customers centers – Local one stop e-government

At the local level in Sweden there is a strong constitutional municipal autonomy. There are national regulations and policies, but the actions space for the municipalities are essential both regarding local policies and contextualized praxis. The municipal administration handles a

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complex palette of services as child care, social care, public transportation, water and sewage just to mention a few.

The focus on citizens and their access to public administration through customer-like roles have become common in municipalities. Several municipalities have opened customer centers to meet the citizens' demands of improving the quality of public service and also a way of improving efficiency within the municipalities (SOU 2008:97). There are similar e-governmental tools available as different applications like "my page" or "my health care contacts". The aim is to provide a single simple entrée the local public administration independently if it is IRL or on the net.

The Swedish government stresses in the action plan the importance of using ICT in order to effectively develop the Swedish public administration in general and municipalities especially. This can be done by combining organizational changes and new skills within the municipalities with improved accessibility for the citizens. The aim is to: "make it as simple as possible for as many as possible" (SOU 2008:97, p 3). Here it is essential to stress that the municipalities in Sweden make up 70% of the total public administration and services and they are considered to be the closest to the citizens in terms of public service (ibid).

An increasing number of e-services are implemented, mainly with an internal efficiency argument but also accessibility. When seen from a management's perspective they reduce some of the earlier manual work tasks and also transfer some of the earlier work tasks to the customers. The main function of a municipal one-stop shop (customer centre) is to supply services to the citizens more efficiently by primarily using telephone and ICT in order to handle customer contacts. The employees at the customer centers are educated in different subject areas in order to being able to directly answer and solve routine questions and tasks from the citizens that are not too complicated without having to send the questions to the back office of the organization.

The Jönköping case

One Swedish municipality that appears to be in the fore front of the development of e-services through a one-stop model is Jönköping municipality in southern Sweden. Jönköping municipality consists of about 124 000 inhabitants and is regional centre for trade and industry. The municipality collaborates highly on development on e-government in the municipal network organization SAMBRUK and they run a specific project on information security. They established a municipal Contact Center based on a one-stop model in 2009.

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The contact centre provides several contact ways. Access through telephones has been problematic, both by waiting time low competence in switch boards (Bernhard, in Remenyi, 2009:34). The Swedish government has, within the e-Government project, expressed demands that municipalities to give priority to improving the accessibility for the citizens to public service (SOU 2008:97). This is also an international phenomenon as the European Union, OECD, AESAN and the World Bank all support and push for the development of e-government (Lahlou, 2005).

The improved access through the Internet and direct e-services are also responses to this type of problems. But here are other forms of security problems in e-services than in personalized switchboards and telephone services. The municipal policy (Jönköpings kommun, 2008) regarding information security states: “that the system must have a high reliability, confidentiality when requested In addition, in many cases open for cooperation with other authorities.” The aim of the policy is to:

- “Promote information security that is effective and contributes to greater protection and support employees, collaborative partners and all third parties,
- Keep up high legitimacy and trust among citizens”

The IT-security manager at the municipality pointed at their unfulfilled attempts to relate to national authorities regarding this collaboration and development of security. The impression was that as long as the national level lacked a comprehensive policy they did not communicate any directives to municipalities. Instead all municipalities had to develop their own tools and solutions. One of the most common is to improve the degrees of integrative e-services. Not just provide forms to fill in on internet, but fully integrative services. A key issues in these situations is the integrity and identification capacity of individuals. These have mainly appeared as technological problems according to the IT-security manager in Jönköping. The local arrangements are based on the national network SAMBRUK, local arrangements and a mix of different technological solutions as the telephones, Internet and personal meetings.

Concluding Remarks

This study has given indications that the multi level governance arrangement makes the translation of policies into praxis regarding public e-services even more complex. The cases we have chosen to illustrate the different levels may however be the reason for this even if the general type of differences does not support such an argument.

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The cases indicate that there are more actors involved than if there had been a more strict one way form of governance. Thus the main impression is that these processes are complex and focus on translating innovations into the geographical divided levels of governance. However, another way of looking at this complex process of governance is to see how it opens for local adoptions and contextualization. All cases indicate that there have been great openings for a local construction of meanings promoting safety and relating to citizens trust in that context and the specific public e-services. This is obvious that the local entrepreneurs within public administration use the opportunities for local translation and adoption into the specific context where they act.

In general terms these cases indicate that policies are translated and given a contextualized meaning in the situations where they become praxis. The local knowledge – of both technology and government – is indeed critical for the creation of what is seen as safety in the specific context. The conclusion is that the translation over levels from policies to praxis appears to be more critical than the technological imperative. Risks and safety are rather presented as organizational policy problems. The key-words of efficiency, accessibility and openness are presented as improved in an e-government context but provided through the organizational setting.

The processes of translations are double in a technology policy context, as illustrated by the e-government praxis analyzed above. Firstly, there is a translation from technology to policies and secondly from policies to praxis. The first step of relating to technological development is quite often made independent from other levels of Multi-level governance, as indicated by the tentative picture three, below.

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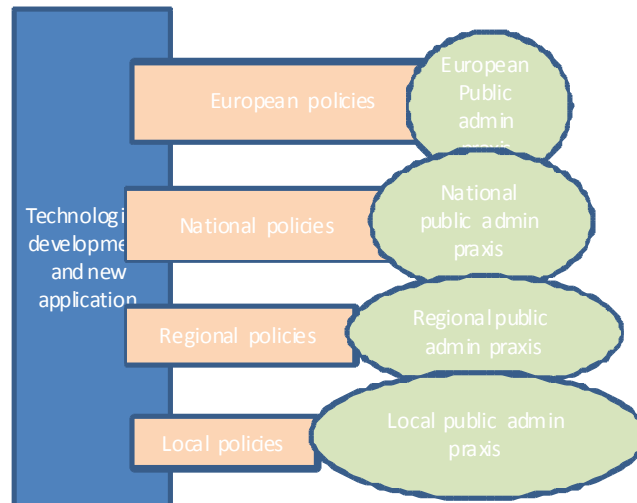


Figure 3: Multi-level governance public administration as integrated organizational setting for e-government translations – a tentative analytical approach.

By this model we will point at some general ideas from these case studies that we will take further on.

- Technology in general and applications for e-government specifically are developed more commonly and similar applications are offered on all levels and in different geographical areas. We will argue this in spite of the number of specific systems developed for, or rather adopted to different organizational.
- Policies are more divide on the different levels since the strong emphasis on MLG, thus they become separated, even if we have seen inter-relations between them.
- The implementation in public administration is more integrated than the policy levels and hereby the professionals may develop more integrated competences and networks.
- e-government as public administrative innovations promotes both organizational and relational changes. The processes of building legitimacy and coherence in MLG contexts have to be clarified since it may even open for a re-configuration of democratic governance.
- ...

There are no clear hierarchical models of translations of policies, even if the MLG model could give such an impression. The municipalities the lowest level in the model, but the level closest to the citizens seems to translate all other levels of policies into their praxis and thereby they have the most complex process of translation.

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E-government is given meanings both in a political process of forming policies and in the daily practices of conducting the objectives of the authority.

In the praxis that is formed on all different levels of government there are translations both of the technological design and setting and the policies. From an Actor-Network-Theory (ANT) it is simple to consider the technology as a co-actor in the forming of the networks that make praxis. However, when policies are taken in to consideration it is also obvious that the policies as such become actors participating in the networks of praxis. The re-formulation and localization of general policies are realized through the praxis. The policy ideas are co-producing through networks of technology, human-actors, organizations and governmental structures.

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