

**Title:** Tensions and Contradictions in Information Management: An Activity-Theoretical Approach to Information Activities in a Swedish Youth/Peace Organisation.

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The thesis aims to contribute to the research on the management and use of information in organisations by providing a holistic understanding of the various information practices and needs as well as attitudes toward information at different levels in the broader socio-historical context of a specific organisation. To this end findings and approaches from research traditions in library and information science, management studies and organisational theory are combined in an activity-theoretical approach with some neo-institutional aspects. An empirical study using this theoretical framework investigates information activities in a Swedish youth organisation with the aim of contributing to peace and democracy. This study aims to answer research questions concerning the individual and collective information practices of its Board members and the development of organisational strategies and routines for information activities are related to each other and to the socio-historical context of organisations.

The empirical data was gathered, firstly, through a qualitative case study of one youth/peace organisation, in which 14 members from two Boards were interviewed, 6 meetings were observed and e-mail communication and organisational documents were studied. The results were used in two questionnaires to Board members in a sample of 9 similar youth/peace organisations to explore the assumption that a common socio-historical context would result in similar activities and constraints. Environmental scanning, seeking information, storing and retrieving information, creating information products, disseminating information to the environment and sharing information within the organisation are identified as distinct information activity systems in the case organisation that could be combined in a broader information management activity system. The outcome of Board members' individual, collective and organisational actions within these activities is mediated by a combination of how they perceive the objects, the available tools and resources, the chosen or emerging division of labour, organisational and collective aims and individual goals, and the explicit rules and implicit values that could be applied to action in an organisational context. Most strategies are emergent in nature and start in a bottom-up process. A contradiction stemming from the socio-historical context of youth/peace organisations underlies the tensions in information activities. Board members have to make sense of contrasting identities in which empowerment is contrasted with professionalism as a basis for the organisations' legitimacy.

The theoretical contribution of this study is the creation of two activity theoretical models for the analysis of information activities in organisations. The models provide a way to discuss the links between individual and collective information behaviour and organisational information management in a holistic perspective. The questions about the nature of these relationships and encompass the contextual aspects of information practices thus leading to a greater understanding of the ways in which information management develops in specific organisational contexts.

**Keywords:** information management, information behaviour, information strategies, activity theory, youth organisations, peace organisations, voluntary organisations, Sweden, library and information science