

Implementation of standards

Explaining translation of the Common Language Standard in the Danish municipalities

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There is an abundance of standards in the local policy area. Such standards include: The Balanced Scorecard, LEAN Management, Common Language – just to mention a few. Standards are characterised by being well-defined formulas to be used by many actors within a field. However, standards are not necessarily being used in the same way everywhere. Standards are translatable. The article contributes with empirical knowledge about the implementation of the Common Language Standard that is used in the senior-citizen area in the Danish municipalities. It is shown that organizational as well as actor based resources can explain the translation processes. Theoretically the explanation is build on sociological new-institutional theory and insights from actor-centred institutionalism. Methodologically the analysis builds on quantitative data in the form of a questionnaire survey among Danish municipalities.

Introduction

There is an abundance of standards in the local policy area. Such standards include: The Balanced Scorecard, LEAN Management, Common Language – just to mention a few. Standards are characterised by being well-defined formulas to be used by many actors within a field. However, standards are not necessarily being used in the same way everywhere. Standards are translatable. Translation is about how externally introduced organisational standards are adapted to local conditions, as they are adopted by different organisations.

The purpose of this article is to answer the following question: What can explain how translation of standards takes place in organisations? The sociological new-institutional organisational theory has contributed insight into how organisations change – in particular in relation to how organisational standards are disseminated and embedded in organisations (Powell and DiMaggio 1991; Czarniawska and Sevón 1996; Røvik 1998; Dahl and Hansen 2006). And, relevant suggestions have been given as to how standards arise (Brunsson and Jacobsson 2000; Dahl 2006a). As said, this article focuses on the translation process. Organisational translation processes are relatively well described within the framework of sociological new-institutional organisational theory (Sahlin-Andersson 1996; Røvik 1998). However, more theoretical and empirical knowledge and insight are needed in order to explain these translation processes.

Following the purpose of explaining organisational translation of standards,

the article provides three significant contributions. First theoretically by supplementing the sociological new-institutional organisational theory with insights from actor-centred institutionalism in the policy literature (Scharpf 1997). It will to a higher degree be possible to focus on the actors who make up organisations (Etzioni 1964, 3). By emphasising the role of the actors in translation processes it will be possible to integrate suggestions for explaining variables found in the implementation literature. This generally increases the understanding of translation processes in organisations. It may seem a paradox that within organisational theory on the one hand and political science and policy studies on the other hand reference is almost never made to the work of the other party, even though there is an interest on both sides as to what happens when standards are implemented in organisations. Secondly, the article will contribute empirical knowledge about the implementation of the Common Language Standard that is used in the senior-citizen area in the Danish municipalities. The analysis builds on quantitative data in the form of a questionnaire survey among all 271 Danish municipalities in 2004 (Hansen, Hansen and Dahl 2004). This, thirdly, means a contribution to method development. Qualitative case studies are used in the majority of empirical analyses of translation processes. Such studies provide significant advantages. However, it is an underlying weakness that it is difficult to say something in general on the basis of the results found. The problem has been expressed in that the implementation research has been character-

ised by "Too few cases, and too many variables" (Goggin 1986). It has had the consequence that it has been difficult to separate the relative relevance of various explaining variables.

The article focuses on the Common Language Standard. At a general, abstract level, standards constitute "rules about what those who adopt them should do" (Brunsson and Jacobsson 2000, 4). Standardisation is a soft form of regulation, as in principle standards are voluntary and not followed up by formal sanctions (Mörth 2004). In other words, standards are a kind of formula or advice offered to many actors at once (Brunsson & Jacobsson 2000, 2). Local Government Denmark (LGDK) has developed the Common Language Standard with a view to standardising the process of providing services for senior citizens (Dahl 2006b). Common Language is thus a standardised category system; and what Common Language more specifically standardises is *communication between different actors in the senior-citizen area* (Hansen and Vedung 2005). Thus, Common Language is a general conceptual framework used to describe the overall functionality of the users as well as the services provided from municipal level. Specifically, the Common Language Standard consists of two forms that are used in practice. One form includes a functional assessment in which information on user resources are assessed in different assessment areas. The other form in Common Language describes the service catalogue of the municipalities, meaning the service that the municipalities give the citizens in this area.

In 2004 the Common Language Standard had been disseminated to 87 percent of the Danish municipalities (Dahl and Hansen 2006). LGDK has had more than one purpose in initiating the standard and offer it to the municipalities (Dahl 2006b). First, the standard should be applicable in the day-to-day work for frontline staff who refer citizens to senior-citizen care. Secondly, the standard should provide key figures for the political/administrative level in the municipalities. Thirdly, it should be possible to benchmark these key figures between the municipalities. Fourthly, it should be possible to use the categories of the standard in implementing IT systems in senior-citizen care. However, primarily the municipal referral staff use the standard. This article only looks into the implementation and translation of the standard in connection with the use of frontline staff in referrals.

Translation of organisational standards

The sociological new-institutional theory has contributed knowledge of how organisational standards are translated (Latour 1986; Sahlin-Andersson 1996; Røvik 1998). Translation of standards can take place outside as well as within organisations. Organisation-external translations take place in organisational fields (DiMaggio and Powell 1991) in which a number of actors with an authoritative status (Bourdieu 1997; Meyer 1994) work as enhancers of or filters in relation to the standard. The enhancement can be through authorita-

tive actors emphasising special parts of the standard. The filtering takes place in that some aspects of the standard are not included in what will be the field-valid version.

This article focuses on translation within organisations. It will look into translation processes in connection with standards being implemented in organisations (Røvik 1998; Czarniawska and Joerges 1996). In this respect translation means that standards will be adapted to local conditions, as they

are being put to use. It is about clarifying what the individual organisation includes in a general standard to give it concrete substance.

The first stage in the analysis is to identify via quantitative questionnaire data whether translation processes take place in connection with the implementation of the Common Language Standard in the Danish Municipalities. Here, the municipal referral staff are the relevant implementation actors. The analysis is based on the answers in table 1.

Table 1: The referral staff's assessment of their own use of the Common Language Standard. Pct. (n)

	Agree	Neither nor	Disagree	Do not know	Missing
(A) The referral group has developed a Common Language in its own way (174)	45	9	44	1	1
(B) I use Common Language, but I do it in my own way (174)	15	6	77	1	1

Source: Hansen, Hansen and Dahl 2004

Note: "Agree" is a combination of the categories "Fully agree" and "Partly agree". "Disagree" is a combination of "Partly disagree" and "Totally disagree". The analysis is based on quantitative data in the form of a questionnaire survey among leading referral staff in all 271 Danish municipalities in 2004 (Hansen, Hansen and Dahl 2004).

The table shows that 45 percent of the referral staff agree that the referral group has developed a Common Language in its own way (statement A). The statement indicates that, part of the way, the implementation of the Common Language Standard has taken place through translation procedures at the referral level. However, it is worth noting that 44 percent of the referral staff disagree with the statement. At the same time it is interesting to see that where a translation takes place, it

takes place at group level. It is possible to envisage translation processes where the individual referral staff adapts the general Common Language Standard to his or her own work situation, but only 15 percent of the referral staff agree that they use Common Language in their own way. Based on statement (A) it can be established that there are two almost equal groups of municipalities, where one has translated the standard (45 percent), whereas the other has not (44 percent). Since the intention of this article

is to attempt to explain translation procedures at organisational level, there is a variation as regards the dependent variable of the survey.

Explanations of translation

When studies within the framework of sociological new-institutional organisational theory seek to explain translation processes, these explanations often link to organisational identity management (Sevón 1996; Sahlin-Andersson 1996; Røvik 1998). Standards can thus be seen as identity markers that are central to the self-understanding of organisations and organisational actors. An underlying reasoning is that, as organisations seek legitimacy and support from the surroundings, the organisations must adapt to rules and demands that are determined by said surroundings (Scott and Meyer 1991). In other words, it is necessary to keep up to date (Abrahamson 1996; Røvik 1996). Therefore, organisations imitate other organisations that they see as being pioneers (Meyer 1994; Sevón 1996). However, as the imitation takes place through translation processes, the local identities of organisations will influence how standards are introduced and being put to practical use. The translation thus takes place as part of local identity management (Røvik 1996). A standard that is introduced in an organisation is embedded in a new context which differs from the place of origin of the standard. Therefore, local adjustments

are often needed. The need can be seen as an expression of organisations wanting to imitate trendy standards in the surroundings. On the other hand the individual organisation does not want to look like all the others and tries to maintain a local identity through translation procedures. Røvik (1998, 155-156) expresses it like this: "On the one hand the concepts tempt because, through adopting them, you strengthen your own conceptions and those of others about you resembling the other modern and successful organisations. On the other hand, the adoption of popular concepts may be seen as a threat to identity, in the sense of your distinctive character".

This type of explanation contributes an understanding that translation is not necessarily due to instrumental or rational matters at local level. However, such explanations can be criticized for not always being clear about how identity management more specifically takes place. Besides, the role of the actors in the process is often not clear. Based on this, the purpose of the analysis in this article is to make the role of the actors in translation processes clearer. Organisations consist of actors and cannot be understood independently from that (Etzioni 1964). The analysis is thus based on the fundamental assumption that organisational translation processes can always be traced to the individual actors of which organisations are made up. Therefore, this study will contribute to an understanding of translation processes by taking an actor-centred institutionalism as its starting point (Scharpf 1997). Actor-centred institutionalism focuses

on how actors are capable of acting within the frameworks of some socially constructed institutional frameworks. In this context the basic assumption is made that rational and socio-constructivist theories are not necessarily mutually exclusive (Scharpf 1997, 21-22). It is thus quite possible to operate with rational theories about the actions of actors and at the same time recognise that the institutional framework within which the actors act are socially constructed.

Scharpf (1997, 43) argues that the actions of actors must be understood on the basis of their special characteristics in the form of their orientation and capacity. The orientation of the actors is made up of their preferences and perception in relation to the interaction patterns that they form part of. The capacity is closely connected with the available resources of the actors. Along these two dimensions this article seeks to explain organisational translation processes; and the theoretical translation processes will be operationalised with a view to being tested empirically.

Actors can be individuals or groups of individuals. In the latter case, they are collective actors – for example in the form of organisations, coalitions, informal groups or the like (Scharpf 1997). In the following, distinctions will be made between the municipal organisation as an actor on the one hand and individual actors in the form of municipal frontline staff (referral staff) on the other hand. Thus, actor-centred explanations for translation processes must be sought at two levels; partly organisational level, partly staff level.

Organisation variables

At this level, possible explanatory variables are connected with the orientation and capacity of the municipal organisation. First, the capacity variable will be looked at. It will be examined whether organisational resources play a role in whether a municipality has translated the Common Language Standard or not. Resources are defined as municipal size measured in number of citizens, the municipality's tax base and the number of referral staff employed in the municipality measured in full-time equivalents. Thus the assumption is that the more citizens, the higher tax base and the more referral staff full-time equivalents, the more resources the municipality has.

The extent of resources may affect the translation variable in two directions. On the one hand there may be a positive connection between resources and translation. In that case translator municipalities will have more resources than non-translator municipalities. This is based on an assumption that a municipality must possess considerable resources in order to translate an externally introduced standard into day-to-day practice. On the other hand, this means that municipalities that have relatively few resources will be more inclined to adopt the standard without translating it. The argument is linked with results from an earlier study of the Common Language Standard, which has shown that municipalities with many resources measured in size and tax base to a higher degree introduce the Common Language Standard than municipalities with fewer

resources (Dahl and Hansen 2006). One of the explanations for this is that large municipalities possess a higher degree of "absorptive capacity" (Cohen and Levinthal 1990). This capacity is a function of available knowledge in the organisation, and it rests on the learning capacity of the organisation. This is important to the organisation's ability to incorporate new standards (Cohen and Levinthal 1990).

On the other hand the extent of resources can influence the translation variable in the opposite direction. Where implementation actors at the frontline level in an organisation experience a gap between available resources on the one hand and the requirements made of them on the other hand, they can choose to use a number of handling mechanisms when implementing standards (Lipsky 1980). Translation is such a mechanism. Another closely connected handling mechanism that the implementation actors can use is to try to avoid dealing with complex tasks. In other words, municipalities – just as all other organisations – will try to reduce the complexity in the work processes (Simon 1997; Cyert and March 1963). One way to simplify the process is to focus on status quo (Lindblom 1959). That means that a way of reducing the complexity in connection with the implementation of an externally introduced standard – in this case the Common Language Standard – is to adapt it to existing practice. The argument here will be that the fewer resources, the more an adaptation of external standards will be needed.

Secondly, the connection between translation/non-translation and the ori-

entation variable will be analysed. The orientation of the municipalities will be operationalised in the form of two management variables. It is assumed that the responses of the managers are an expression of the overall orientation of the organisation. One variable is linked with the role of different actors in the implementation process. The other concerns the management style of the superior administrative head (director of social services). As said, the Common Language Standard is mainly used at frontline level among the referral staff in the municipalities. As a starting point it is expected that the referral staff have played a more active role in the implementation process in translator municipalities than in non-translator municipalities. The expectation is based on an assumption that, where they are involved in the implementation process, the referral staff are interested in adapting the standard to the day-to-day practice; i.e. to translate the standard. Even though the referral level is in focus, it is known from a previous survey that the administrative heads of senior-citizen care have also been involved in the implementation of the Common Language Standard (Hansen, Hansen and Dahl 2004). It is expected that the administrative heads have played a more active role in non-translator municipalities than in translator municipalities. The expectation is based on an argument to the effect that, since the administrative heads do not use the Common Language Standard in practice in relation to the referral process, they will be more oriented towards implementing the standard as intended and thus to follow Local Gov-

ernment Denmark's (LGDK's) recommendations fully. In other words they do not necessarily to the same extent as the referral staff see possible clashes between externally introduced standards on the one hand and day-to-day practice within senior-citizen care on the other hand.

At the end of the day, the municipal directors of social services have the overall administrative responsibility for the senior-citizen area in the Danish municipalities. The managerial style of the directors of social services may be playing a role in whether the Common Language Standard is translated or not. Managerial style is operationalised along three variables that are related to the expressed positions of the directors of social services in connection with change processes in the municipalities in general. First, the directors of social services in translator municipalities are expected to put more emphasis on involving the employees in the change processes than in non-translator municipalities. The expectation is based on one of the arguments produced above; i.e. that involvement of employees close to the practical level, in this case the referral staff, lead to translation processes. Secondly, the assumption is made that directors of social services in translator municipalities put more emphasis on step-by-step change processes than in non-translator municipalities. The assumption builds on an expectation that translation processes will be more frequent where step-by-step changes are sought instead of comprehensive reforms. A step-by-step change can thus be effected by adapting the standard in practice little by lit-

tle, as it is being implemented. Thirdly, it is expected that directors of social services in translator municipalities put more emphasis on the integration of organisational changes in relation to a more overall strategic plan than in non-translator municipalities. It is thus expected that, where the Common Language Standard is to fit in with an overall strategic plan, it will more likely be translated. Røvik (1992; 1998) argues that organisations are built up of different elements - organisation formulas. These formulas must fit together in order for the organisation to work. Therefore, new elements - in this case the Common Language Standard - must be adapted to the other organisation formulas in the municipality. It is the municipality's strategic plan which is the foundation for how the individual elements work and interact. A strategic plan has not necessarily been written down, but may be the non-expressed ideas or visions of the directors of social services on how the senior-citizen area works.

Variables at individual level

This paragraph analyses how the front-line staff influence the implementation process. The referral staff are the central implementation actors. Above, the capacity and orientation of the municipal organisation forms the basis of the analysis. This paragraph takes the individual capacity and orientation of the referral staff as its starting point. It must thus be examined to which extent the referral staff's individual resources and preferences affect the implementation of the Common Language Standard in

a certain direction. With a view to operationalising the two dimensions that form the basis of the actions of the individuals, some concepts are found in the literature on implementation of policies (Lundquist 1987, 76-78; Vedung 1997, 226-238). The way in which the individual actors implement a standard depends first on whether the actor is capable of implementing the standard (capacity) – whether the referral staff find that they have sufficient personal resources to use the Common Language Standard in their day-to-day work. Secondly, the implementation depends on whether the referral staff understands the contents of the standard and its possible applications (comprehension). Thirdly, the will of the implementation actors play a role (will) – their personal preferences in relation to the Common Language Standard.

Capacity and comprehension concern the individual resources of the implementation actors. Just as it was assumed above to apply to the resources of the organisation, it is assumed here that the referral staff must possess individual resources in order to translate the standard. Where the individual employee possesses resources it may thus be expected that the employee is more capable of adapting the externally introduced Common Language Standard to day-to-day practice. The expectation is thus that there is a positive correlation between the variables capacity and comprehension on the one hand and translation of the Common Language Standard on the other hand. It is, furthermore, expected that where the referral staff have positive preferences for the standard, they

will be less inclined to translate it. It is thus assumed that if you are positive towards a standard, you will not find it necessary to change it with a view to adapting it to day-to-day practice. On the other hand, it must be expected that if you are not very positive or even negative towards a standard, you will be inclined to try to change the general standard in connection with its being implemented in practice.

Another factor related to the orientation and capacity of the implementation actors is the scope of training and instruction in the use of the Common Language Standard. Following the launch of the Common Language Standard in 1998 (LGDK 1998), LGDK has, in cooperation with Local Government Training and Development – Denmark, held courses in the use of the Common Language Standard for municipal employees at different levels. Besides, LGDK has had a corps of Common Language instructors who have visited the municipalities in order to train the users of the standard. Furthermore, in the individual municipalities there have been several internal courses. However, far from all employees have received training or instruction. Apart from the fact that training and instruction in using the Common Language Standard may influence the comprehension, capacity and will of the implementation actors, it may affect the dependent variable directly. It is thus expected that if the implementation actors have received training or instruction in the Common Language Standard it will mean that there will be no translation of the standard in the municipality.

The number of possible explaining variables appear from the below table 2.

Method

The analysis is based on a nationwide questionnaire survey conducted in the course of 2004 (Hansen, Hansen and Dahl 2004). The total survey is made up of questionnaires to seven different groups of actors in all 271 Danish municipalities. This article contains data from questionnaires sent to municipal directors of social services, heads of senior-citizen care and referral staff. The response rates for each of the groups are 65%, 72% and 84%, respectively. A non-response analysis has been made which shows that there are no systematic biases in the responses as regards the size of municipalities and the gender of the respondents (Hansen, Hansen & Dahl 2004). The responses can thus be said to be fully representative as regards gender and municipal size independently of organisational level.

The Danish municipalities have different organisational structures. It has therefore been difficult to identify the relevant respondents in the municipalities. As an example, not all municipalities have a person employed with the title of director of social services. For this reason it has been necessary to gather information in different ways. This has been done by finding information in the Mostrup municipal handbook 2003 combined with searching on the homepages of the individual municipalities. Besides, various minutes from

the municipal social committees have been reviewed and telephone inquiries have been made with the municipalities where it has not been possible to procure the relevant information in other ways. In that way it has been possible to find the right respondents in all municipalities. Thus, one questionnaire has been sent to the following persons in all municipalities: the person who has the overall responsibility for the social area and who has direct reference to the municipal social committee – most often with the title of director of social services – and the person who is responsible for the day-to-day running of senior-citizen care – most often with the title of head of senior-citizen care. For both these groups there is only one person in each municipality. As for the referral staff, often more than one person is employed in the municipality. In that case, the questionnaire is sent to the person whose last name is first in the alphabet.

In order to analyse whether and in which direction the explaining variables at organisational and individual level affect the translation of the Common Language, a binary logistic regression model has been set up. This type of model is used when the dependent variable – in this case “translation” – is a dichotome with two relevant values. In the logistic regression analysis focus will exclusively be on whether the referral staff agrees or disagrees with statement A; “The referral group has developed a Common Language in its own way” (table 1). Responses categorised as “neither/nor”, “do not know” or “missing”, are thus not included in the regression analysis. All the explaining

variables are also included in the model as dichotome variables. This means that for the variable “size of municipality” there is a distinction between municipalities with more or less than 10,000 citizens, and for the variable “tax base” there is a distinction between municipalities with a tax base of more or less than DKK 125,000.

Data input for the model is primarily based on the responses of the referral staff in the nationwide questionnaire survey (Hansen, Hansen and Dahl 2004). However, the variable “managerial style” is based on the responses from the directors of social services and

the heads of senior-citizen care, since this question is not included in the questionnaire for the referral staff. Data for size of municipalities and tax base has been retrieved from www.noegletal.dk. The logistic regression model is estimated by means of the SPSS statistics program.

Results

The total explanatory model and the result of the logistic regression appear from table 2.

Table 2: Overall model for explaining translation (Binary logistic regression)

Actor level	Characteristics	Explaining variable	P-value	
Organisational level	Capacity	Size of municipality	0.061	
		Tax base	0.429	
		No. of referral staff	0.503	
	Orientation	<u>Participant actors</u>		
		* Role of the referral staff in the implementation process		0.746
		* Role of the directors of social services in the implementation process		0.640
		* Role of the heads of senior-citizen care in the implementation process		0.219
		<u>Managerial style (directors of social services)</u>		
		* Emphasis on involving the employees in changes		0.368
		* Emphasis on step-by-step changes		0.097
* Emphasis on changes in relation to strategic plan		0.707		
Individual level	Capacity	Comprehension	0.416	
		Capacity	0.751	
	Orientation	Will	0.154	
	Training	Training/instruction	0.038	

As can be seen from table 2, three of the variables of the model play a significant role in whether the Common Language Standard is translated or not. The first of these variables is the size of the municipality, where a municipality with 10,000 citizens or less is more likely to translate the standard than municipalities with more than 10,000 citizens ($0.05 < p < 0.1$). One of the managerial style variables is significant too ($0.05 < p < 0.1$). For this variable, municipalities in which the director of social services emphasises step-by-step change are less likely to translate than municipalities that do not emphasise step-by-step change. As for the third significant variable – “Training/instruction” – ($p < 0.05$) if you have replied “yes” to having participated in training or instruction in the use of the Common Language, the standard is more likely to be translated than if you have not participated in training or instruction.

It is also worth noting variables that are not significant. The regression analysis thus shows that it is not significant which actors play a role in the implementation process. That means that it is not possible by means of the data material to document the expectation that the referral staff has played a larger role in the implementation process in translator municipalities and that the opposite is the case for the administrative heads. Besides, the analysis indicates that the variables that measure the capacity and orientation of the implementation actors (the referral staff) are not significant.

It has been shown that the size of the municipality has an effect on the trans-

lation variable. It is more likely that the Common Language Standard is translated in the small municipalities. The result indicates that it may be resource demanding for the individual organisation to implement an externally introduced standard as intended. Therefore, the implementation takes place through translation processes, i.e. by adapting the standard to existing practice. It must be expected that the adaptation is connected with a form of de-coupling (Weick 1976; Meyer and Rowan 1991; Brunsson 2002). A precondition for speaking of a standard as having been implemented is that there must be consistency between the actual standard and what is done in practice. In general this consistency can be created in two ways (Brunsson & Jacobsson 2000, 127-129). You can change practice to make it agree with the standard or you can change the presentation of practice to make it fit with the standard. In the latter case the standard is not actually implemented, since it is a question of doing things as you have always done them – you articulate them in a new way (Brunsson 2002).

A matter that is not analysed further and which may be considered to have an effect on the fact that small municipalities to a higher degree than large municipalities translate the Common Language Standard may be that the Common Language Standard is designed in such a way as to contribute to formalising the communication process in the municipalities (Dahl 2006b). This formalisation may fit better with large organisations; therefore these implement the standard as intended to a higher degree.

Another result of the analysis is that municipalities in which the director of social services emphasises step-by-step change processes have a smaller probability of translating than municipalities in which there is not emphasis on step-by-step change. The result can be interpreted to mean that a step-by-step implementation can make it easier to implement a standard as intended by the standard setter, i.e. without translating it. This goes against the expectation that step-by-step processes leave room for translations – the opposite seems to be the case.

The third significant result in the analysis is that training or instruction in using the Common Language Standard makes translation more probable than if you did not participate in training or instruction. Again, this goes against what is expected, since it has been assumed that translation of the standard requires training or instruction. The explanation may be that the municipalities that have offered their employees training and instruction have done so in connection with having actively sought to adapt the Common Language Standard to the practice of the municipalities. That means that there may be a connection between training and instruction on the one hand and a municipal wish to translate the standard on the other hand.

Conclusion and discussion

The purpose of the article has been to explain how translation of standards takes place in organisations. Tradition-

ally, explanations have been found in sociological institutional organisational theory. This article has attempted to supplement explanations from sociological institutional organisational theory with explanations from actor-centred institutional theory, whereby it has also been possible to build on significant insights obtained in the implementation literature within political science. The purpose has been to point out the role of the actors in translation processes in connection with implementation of standards in organisations. The analysis has shown that there are significant differences between municipalities that have translated the Common Language Standard and municipalities that have not translated it, and that these differences can be traced back to characteristics of the actors at organisational as well as individual level. Focus on the actors in the analysis has thus been fruitful in respect of increasing the insight into organisational translation processes.

Methodically, the translation processes have been analysed by means of a nationwide questionnaire survey. In this connection it has been an aim in itself to contribute to the literature on the translation processes of standards by means of a quantitative method, as the quantitative methodical approach appears very rarely in this literature. It has been demonstrated that the Danish municipalities are divided into two almost equal groups in connection with the implementation of the Common Language Standard. One group of municipalities translates the standard (45%), whereas the other group does not (44%). As said, it has been possible to

identify significant differences between the two groups of municipalities.

The results have shown that organisational resources play a role in the translation process. Small municipalities, i.e. with relatively few resources, are thus more likely to translate the Common Language Standard than large municipalities. In respect of implementation actors the individual resources play the opposite role. If the referral staff have received training or instruction in the use of the standard, and have thus been given more resources, the individual municipality will increasingly translate the Common Language Standard.

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