

Personalarbete och HR-transformation

- om samspel och relationer mellan
linjechefer och HR-medarbetare

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ABSTRACT

Personnel work and HR transformation

– the interplay in the relationship between line managers and HR professionals.

A new delivery model — the shared service organization — is transforming the work of the HR function. This packaging and marketing change in HR, however, has been criticized because of its underestimation of the complexity required to effect change in personnel work in practice. A difficulty in personnel work is differentiating between the individuals in an organization (e.g. HR professionals and line managers) who are expected to do this work and those who actually do the work. In the redistribution of responsibility for personnel work among various actors, the aim of HR transformation is to eliminate unnecessary personnel work and thereby reduce costs.

This study, with its setting in the reorganization of personnel work in a Swedish government agency (the Armed Forces), focuses on the effects of the interplay between line managers and HR professionals. The study uses interviews, observations and document research, in close interaction with local representatives, to describe how the expected and actual changes in personnel work affected the above-mentioned interplay when a significant organizational change was made.

The results of the study show that the new organization of the HR function, the new delivery models and the new IT systems did not function as expected in the studied setting. Nor did the proposed action and interaction patterns between line managers and HR professionals. The study proposes that personnel work is not easily transformed using rational ideas and change methods. Rather, personnel work requires a mutual co-dependency, manifested in established action and interaction patterns *between* actors who continue to reproduce them rather than to change them. Thus, transformation of personnel work involves the adoption of a relationistic interaction perspective toward personnel work in which the actors construct perceptions and organizational beliefs about management roles and personnel work. Their perceptions and beliefs both create and are created by different institutional logics.

Keywords: Personnel work, line managers, HR professionals, interaction, interplay, HR transformation, shared service, institutional theory, rationalism, relationism, case study, armed forces.