

Projects as interaction in context

Managing public health issues within public sector organisations

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Erik Söderberg



UNIVERSITY OF
GOTHENBURG

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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University of Gothenburg

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School of Public Administration
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In memory of Mats Söderberg (1945–2019)

Abstract

The increasing use of projects has been one of the most important developments in the public sector over the past decades. In tandem with the proliferation of projects, the traditional view of projects as demarcated from their environment using the four concepts of task, time, team and transition has, without attracting much attention, also trickled down to public sector organisations. This traditional view may be suitable for projects in an industrial or commercial context, where they are often designed for well-defined problems and in order to deliver a technical installation. However, public sector projects are often more value-driven, with the aim of creating ideological change. An example of this is public health initiatives to promote physical activity and healthy eating habits. The aim of this thesis is to contribute to the understanding of value-driven public sector projects by focusing on what characterises the interaction between a value-driven project and local public sector organisations in developing and embedding public health issues into everyday organising.

Different theoretical concepts have been used in the thesis's four papers to understand what characterises the interaction between a public health project and two local public sector organisations. Paper I uses the theoretical framework of Multiple Streams Theory to analyse the policy process, following the project's task. In Paper II and Paper III, boundary work is used to analyse the interaction between temporary and permanent organising. Paper II focuses on the interaction at the local level, at schools, while Paper III focuses on the project team's boundary work in different arenas. In Paper IV, the concept of frame is used to study how the policy was implemented. The field material consists of interviews, observations, field note documentation from meetings and activities, as well as textual documents illustrating the course of the project at different organisational levels during the three years.

The papers' findings demonstrate how important it is that value-driven projects in a public sector context are continuously engaged in interactions throughout the entire project as a way to achieve transition. This is in contrast to trying to demarcate projects in relation to the surrounding environment, and developing and embedding results at the end of the project. This leads to the conclusion that transition, instead of constituting a single concept, is also an important mean within the concepts of task, time and team. In fact, the results of the papers show how transition, through interactions between actors in the project organisation and actors in organisations involved, occurs through each of the three concepts of task, time and team. This perspective on creating transition by means of value-driven public sector projects requires another view of projects in interaction with their context, which can be an important consideration when planning and managing projects.

List of papers

This thesis is based on the following four papers, referred to in this introduction by their Roman numerals.

- I. Söderberg, E., & Wikström, E. (2015). The policy process for health promotion. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, 43(6), 606–614. Published by Sage Publications, Ltd:
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1403494815586327>
- II. Söderberg, E. (2020). Project initiation as the beginning of the end: Mediating temporal tensions in school's health projects. *International Journal of Project Management*, 38(6), 343–352. Published by Elsevier Ltd:
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2020.08.002>
- III. Söderberg, E., Abrahamson, C., & Wikström, E. (Under review). The project team's efforts to embed a health promotion project into different arenas in the public sector.
- IV. Söderberg, E., Liff, R., (2023). Reframing practice through policy implementation projects in different knowledge contexts. *International Journal of Project Management*, 41(2). Published by Elsevier Ltd: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2023.102452>

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Sävedalen, April 2023

Erik Söderberg

1

Introduction

The increasing use of projects has been one of the most important developments in the public sector in recent decades (Hodgson et al., 2019; Jakobsen, 2022). Some policy fields, public health for example, can be described as fully projectified, as projects are used as the organisational solution to address different public health issues (Fred, 2015). These public health projects often deal with the implementation of policies, with the involvement of actors from different levels in the welfare sector, ranging from municipality to regions and the state, all with their different professional identities, interests and power structures (von Danwitz, 2018). As these projects are situated within a bureaucratic context in public sector organisations, they often have to address specific norms, rules and governance principles (Godenhjelm et al., 2019). In contrast, project-based arrangements are often perceived to be more flexible and innovative, and seem to offer an attractive way to try new working methods and integrate new values and perspectives in local government (Hodgson et al., 2019). Further, the view of projects as tools that offer the possibility of delegating responsibility for policy outcomes makes them politically attractive (Fred, 2018). However, the increase in projects has consequences for opportunities to find long-term solutions to multifaceted societal problems (Bansal & DesJardine, 2014; Sjöblom, 2009). This raises questions regarding how knowledge created in a temporary organisational form, like projects, can be transferred to and sustained in more permanent organisations such as public sector organisations (Bakker, 2010; Sjöblom et al., 2013).

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The traditional view of projects affects understanding of public sector projects

A rich literature exists concerning project organisation and management, much of it based on field material from industrial environments, and which still dominates the field of study (Gerald & Söderlund, 2018; von Danwitz, 2018). Projects in an industrial or commercial context are often designed for well-defined problems and in order to deliver a technical installation, for example a new bridge. This is in contrast to many public sector projects that are more value-driven, i.e. that have the aim of creating ideological change (Munck af Rosensköld, 2019; von Danwitz, 2018). Hodgson et al (2019) contend that there has been limited critical attention directed towards the effects of project spread from private to public sector organisations, especially regarding how the influence of the widespread association of project management with the hard disciplines of engineering and technology affects project practice in public organisations.

In her review of public sector projectification literature, Jacobsen (2022) identifies the necessity to view projectification in the public sector as a separate phenomenon, with specific norms and institutions. This is also highlighted by Sjöblom (2009), who suggests that there is insufficient theoretical understanding of project proliferation within the public sector. This is in contrast to focusing on demarcation in relation to the surrounding environment as a critical condition in technically driven projects in private sector organisations (Hodgson et al., 2019). Rather, the critical question in using projects to create change within public sector organisations is how to embed these value-driven projects within local public sector organisations (Godenhjelm et al., 2019). Previous studies have highlighted the complexity involved in embedding new values and perspectives in local government through projects (Fred, 2018; Godenhjelm, 2013; Jakobsen, 2022). A possible reason that projects in the public sector are often conducted in parallel with permanent, pre-existing activities is that public sector projects operate in a highly political, administrative and rule-based structure. This differs from more traditionally project-based organisations, such as the construction industry, where the project mind-set, techniques and vocabulary are predominant (Godenhjelm et al., 2019). Consequently, the success or failure of projects within a public sector context is frequently regarded as an implementation problem, as the results of projects are rarely transferred to and implemented by the target organisation (Forsell et al., 2013; Jakobsen, 2022). If the project enhances integration between the responsible authorities, that integra-

tion stays within the project and does not extend to the rest of the organisation (Löfström, 2010). Public health projects are an example of how the traditional and technical view of projects has affected the way these projects are managed, which is addressed in more detail in the next section.

Project management and value-driven projects

Public health activities are supposed to permeate across boundaries, but are simultaneously situated in the bureaucratic context of public sector organisations, which traditionally manage issues within boundaries (Fred, 2015). Not surprisingly, in order to obtain temporary resources to be able to cut across these boundaries, projects are widely used to organise initiatives in relation to change and development in the field of public health, such as promoting physical activity and healthy eating habits (Weiss et al., 2016). However, as Bernier and Clavier (2011) point out, within public health, evidence-based medicine shapes how the problem is identified, thus focusing on the policy as the ‘law’ or ‘plan’. This has the consequence that policy analysis in public health is largely concerned with measuring and evaluating policy outcomes, with little attention paid to the complex process of converting scientific results into action, i.e. integrating public health issues through value-driven projects within public sector organisations. Studies focusing on public health management at the local level are largely about finding barriers and enablers for interventions that target lifestyle-related diseases (Weiss et al., 2016; Nilsen & Feiring, 2022). Most of the studies are permeated by a will to succeed, to learn from failures and be better next time. For instance, a common assumption is that if politicians and professionals had the right knowledge and competence regarding health promotion, municipalities would get the political and financial support needed (Weiss et al., 2016).

Even though project management can be viewed as an appropriate way to manage public health issues, previous studies have revealed the difficulty in managing complex, inter-organisational problems in the form of short-term projects (Johansson et al., 2007; Forsell et al., 2013; Fred, 2018). For example, characterising projects as existing in a kind of temporal bubble, “decoupled from other past, contemporary, or even future sequences of activities” (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995: 446), runs the risk of focusing on a rather linear change process and the implementation challenges regarding the project’s re-attachment to the more permanent organisation (Johansson et al., 2007; Söderlund, 2011).

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Understanding how the traditional view of projects has also affected the way that organising value-driven projects, like public health initiatives, is understood, requires a supplementary discussion of barriers and enablers, and a focus rather on how the projectification of the field affects these projects. Accordingly, it is essential to address issues concerning the project's contexts in relation to what are seen to demarcate a project from its environment (Song et al., 2022). An improved theoretical understanding that takes into account the specific features of the public sector is particularly necessary (Hodgson et al., 2019; Lundin et al., 2015; Jakobsen, 2022; Voros et al., 2022). This is in order to facilitate a discussion of what makes projects' intentions have an impact on everyday organising, and thus how long-term outcomes can be achieved by means of temporary organisations. One way of doing this is to start from the almost paradigmatic, and hitherto predominant, view of what is a successful project – as demarcated from its environment by employing the four concepts of task, time, team and transition (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995). In the following, I use these four concepts as a starting point in further developing the contextual understanding of value-driven public sector projects.

The project's context and its relation to task, time, team and transition

Projects in public sector organisations have to deal with different contexts, and contextual insights are important to enrich the understanding of activities in complex and dynamic project contexts (Godenhjelm et al., 2019; Song et al., 2022). Projects can take place in specific organisational contexts, for example schools, which can be relevant for how the project proceeds. Projects are also situated in a wider social context, which includes conceptions, norms and values from project actors, but also from actors in the organisation that the project intends to affect (Manning, 2008; Bakker, 2010; Söderlund & Sydow, 2019; Godenhjelm et al., 2019). The project can be seen as a meeting between a policy and at least one domain of professional knowledge – the knowledge context. This knowledge context includes the norms and values of a vocation or profession. Project integration thus needs actors to consider what is happening during the project, the interplay between actors from the project and actors from the local organisational setting and how they together work to interpret the consequences of the wider social context. Consequently, this means that it is important to consider how the concepts constituting a

project – task, time, team, transition – interact with the context in which the project is situated.

Public project tasks are anything but isolated islands

As Lundin & Söderholm (1995, p. 441) point out, the task legitimises a temporary organisation, focuses on action and “the creation of a temporary organisation is motivated by a task that must be accomplished”. As early as 2003, Engwall questioned the project organisation as an isolated island and emphasised projects as open systems, influenced by both historical and organisational context. He suggests that the project’s strategic importance for – and fit into – the organisation it intends to affect is important in understanding the impact of projects in everyday organising (Engwall, 2003; Jensen, Johansson & Löfström, 2017).

Projects are often used in order to take action within the realm of public sector organisations, not least for managing societal problems. However, the problems of implementing project intentions within public sector organisations (Fred, 2018; Godenhjelm, 2013) prove the difficulties inherent in viewing projects as a “task that must be accomplished”. Rather than the project task being demarcated in relation to its environment, for the project to be able to influence the context, it is important to understand the context in which value-driven public health projects take place (Godenhjelm et al., 2019; Song et al., 2022). The next section discusses the temporal aspects of temporary and permanent organising.

Developing the temporal aspects of public projects

Dealing with tensions between the inherent transience nature of projects and the planned permanence of project outcomes in public sector organisations highlights a fundamental paradox of strategic change in public sector organisations: “How is it possible to create change when routines and temporal rhythms are oriented towards stability and continuity” (Braun & Lampel, 2020, p. 8)? With its interactions between the more bureaucratic structure compared to innovations from the project, this paradox can be perceived as a continuous balancing act in its effort to implement strategic change in organisations. This balancing act produces temporal tensions, between short- vs. long-term goals (Kim et al., 2019), for example. The temporal dimensions of public policies are therefore of interest for several reasons. First, while the policies tend to become increasingly time-limited and projectified

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(Godenhjelm, Lundin & Sjöblom, 2015), there is simultaneously a demand for longer-term perspectives in terms of outcomes (Marsden et al., 2012). Second, while research into temporary organising has gained momentum since the mid-1990s, the understanding of temporal organising is still partial at best (Braun & Lampel, 2020). For example, value-driven projects are often inserted into existing development processes in organisations, and thus in order to be relevant need to consider ongoing challenges as well as historical problems and future hopes for improvements. In order to achieve a temporal alignment, the time-limited project thus needs to consider the temporal course of the organisations that the project intends to affect (Stjerne & Sveje-nova, 2016). These tensions that emerge between the project organisation and the permanent organisations need to be better understood (Bakker et al., 2016), especially for public sector organisations (Jensen et al., 2017). Having addressed the meaning of task and time, the next section describes the concept of project teams.

Project teams can be used to create junctures and stimulate collaboration in public sector organisations

According to Lundin and Söderholm, “the team forms around the task at hand and the time available, thus focusing on individuals both as resources and as bearers of such things as conceptions and attitudes” (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995: 439). In contrast to task and time, project teams comprise individuals as resources, and are therefore considered to be an important concept in further defining the temporary organisation (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995). While project studies often focus on relations within the team, as actors working together, the project team runs the risk of being demarcated in relation to the organisation (Bakker, 2010). A strong project team is therefore no guarantee of achieving change, or transition, in the public sector organisation. The project team’s demarcation in relation to the organisations involved might instead result in a focus on boundaries as barriers, instead of treating them as junctures to stimulate collaboration between groups (Quick & Feldman, 2014). However, earlier research has regarded individual team members and their boundary work as central to success in delivering expected project outcomes (Gadolin & Wikström, 2016; Stjerne et al., 2019). In contrast to a focus on boundary work within the project team, the team’s ability to act as boundary spanners in relation to the project’s environment becomes important. Hence, the ability to understand and interact during the ongoing project and involve actors outside the project becomes crucial in order to establish relations and transfer the project’s intentions to arenas outside the

project. This theme is further developed in the next section, which addresses transition as the ability to interact with the context.

Transition – The ability to interact with the context

While task, time and team describe the project's demarcation in relation to the context, transition can be understood as 'the actual transformation in terms of the distinctive change between "before" and "after"' (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995: 443). Transition puts the focus on a final outcome that the project must achieve within its time frame. In such projects, the traditional definition admits context as a parameter that must be taken into consideration. Typical examples include large-scale construction projects (Von Danwitz, 2018), often concerning coordination issues between the collaborative organisations (Jones and Lichtenstein, 2008). In contrast to public sector projects, it is not as important for these kinds of projects to manage the wider social context in order to make an ideological impact (von Danwitz, 2018; Söderlund & Sydow, 2019). Policy actors within public sector projects face different professional environments, each with their own knowledge contexts, and they need to manage them to be able to work on changes and development. When implementing value-driven projects, it is consequently important to take into consideration the necessity of being more oriented towards including an ongoing interpretation of the context and moving beyond the idea that projects are only influenced by their context.

Aim and research question

To summarise, the seminal definition of the project as demarcated from its environment using the four concepts of task, time, team and transition (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995) has clearly influenced the realm of project organisation and management. This traditional view, which often characterises technical projects has, without attracting much attention, also trickled down to public sector organisations, in line with the increasing proliferation of projects (Hodgson et al, 2019; Sjöblom, 2009). The focus on demarcation in this traditional view of the concepts of task, time and team has resulted in less focus on the concept of transition as part of the meaning of these three concepts. In turn, this has probably resulted in the need for a separate concept for transition. However, actors in value-driven projects in contexts that have long been institutionalised, such as schools and social services, may be assumed to have the ability to work on an ongoing basis to interpret the context

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in order to enable interaction and to influence the different knowledge and organisational contexts. To understand how the traditional view of projects has also affected the management of value-driven public projects, an improved theoretical understanding of the specific features of public sector projects is necessary (Hodgson et al., 2019; Lundin et al., 2015; Jakobsen, 2022; Voros et al., 2022).

Accordingly, by using the four concepts that define a project as a starting point, *the aim of this thesis is to contribute understanding of value-driven public sector projects*. The overall question is: What characterises the interaction between a value-driven project and local public sector organisations in developing and embedding public health issues into everyday organising?

To achieve this, I examine each of the four widely used original concepts defining a project in relation to the interaction between a public health project and two municipal schools. This longitudinal and qualitative study compares the organisation of a public-health policy at two Swedish primary schools. The policy intentions were to promote physical activity and healthy eating habits, and it serves as an example of a value-driven project with the aim of creating ideological change. The research context and study design facilitated a comparison of how project activities were organised in two different school contexts. Table 1 illustrates the thesis's overall research design, presenting the focus of each paper in relation to the concepts that constitute a project.

Table 1. Overall research design of the thesis

Paper I (Task) Paper I focuses on the characteristics of the policy process in health promotion and how the task was influenced by actors in the project.	Paper II (Time) Paper II investigates how the actors in the temporary and permanent organisations worked to connect, transcend and reshape competing temporal structures in their attempt to make project intentions impact on permanent organising.
Paper III (Team) In Paper III, the focus is specifically on how the interplay between the project teams and different contexts affected the dynamics of embedding the project into the everyday settings in different arenas.	Paper IV (Transition) Paper IV studied how the intentions behind the public-health policy influenced the two differing school contexts. The actors' contextual understanding of the project was investigated in order to understand the aspects that facilitated or enabled the transition.

2

Conceptual Background

In this chapter, I describe the ontological and epistemological assumptions that inform the studies and the three theoretical concepts used in the four papers.

Project research embraces a broad organisational perspective

Research into projects encompasses a wide range of theoretical, empirical and methodological stances. The nature of project research has changed over the years, from a more deterministic and technical view to embracing a more explanatory and broader organisational perspective (Padalkar & Gopinath, 2016). This also mirrors the recent arguments to “reconsider the ontological assumptions in the projectified society” (Jacobsson & Söderholm, 2022: 318), which entails embracing epistemological perspectives other than those suggested by administrative and rational decision-making ontologies. Rather than treating individuals and projects as “black boxes”, i.e. as technical instruments independent of specific contexts, actors in projects should be seen as enabling actions and interacting with the context, affecting both the project context and beyond (Jacobsson & Söderholm, 2022). This also appeals to the concept of structure and agency and the different levels of analysis. The structural features place emphasis on institutional rules and norms that affect the behaviour of individuals in the organisation. Agency, on the other hand, places greater emphasis on individuals and their personal resources and actions as key vehicles of change (Layder, 2006).

For example, the structural parameters found at the macro level of analysis includes factors that shape policy. Regarding public health, broad parameters such as the composition of the population, the disease burden, economic development and equity are all important input when developing policies to

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improve health in society. These inputs influence global as well as national public health objectives, which are in turn often used as input when producing policies at different levels. Agency and micro-level analysis function at the other extreme in comparison with macro-level analysis, and deal with individual people and their influence on the policy process. These individuals can be politicians, officials and other street-level bureaucrats. The micro-level activity is a crucial part of the policy process, where the influences of street-level bureaucrats in shaping policy outcome are well known (Lipsky, 2010). However, rather than going to the extremes and separating structure and agency, reality is often best understood through a combination of the two (Granovetter, 1985).

Ontological assumptions generate different types of epistemological assumptions and knowledge interests in project studies

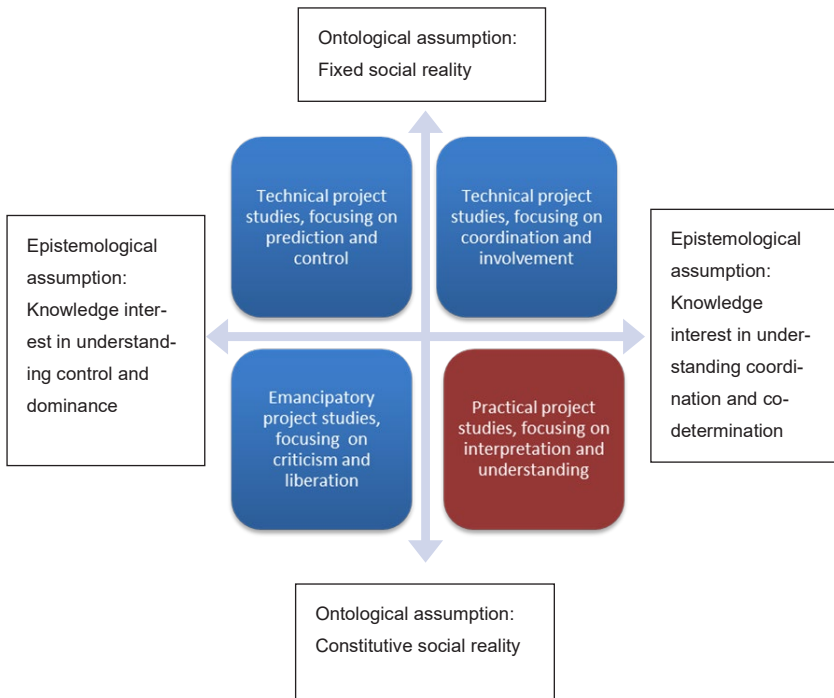
Ontological assumptions, prompted by questions concerning the nature of reality, do not generally generate major interest in project studies (Jacobsson & Söderholm, 2022). However, attempts have been made to categorise different types of knowledge generated from project studies, building on Habermas's theory of knowledge-constitutive interests (Geraldi & Söderlund, 2018). These different views of knowledge; Technical, with a focus on prediction and control; Practical, with a focus on interpretation and understanding; and Emancipatory, focusing on criticism and liberation, have also been described and used in other organisational studies (e.g. Alvesson & Wilmott, 2012). In terms of projects, studies characterised by a focus on causal explanations and criteria for success are labelled Type 1, while Type 2 are often critical of Type 1 studies, focusing more on trying to understand the dynamics and nature of social systems. Studies exploring, for example, ethical dilemmas and that challenge political and gender-related assumptions within the field are considered to be Type 3. However, project studies and scholars can include aspects that cut across more than one type. In addition, project studies are also found at different levels, ranging from individual/team to project and further to society/organisation. Rather than being viewed as distinct levels, moving from micro to macro is considered to be a spectrum of analysis, including different levels of analysis within one level, e.g. individuals and teams in the micro level (Geraldi & Söderlund, 2018).

Regarding the ontological and epistemological assumptions and knowledge interests in my studies, I would position my papers and the theo-

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retical concepts principally in Type 2 research – with the focus on actors’ involvement and interpretation, and how their actions contribute to constructing and reproducing the project context within which they are located (Deetz, 1994). This is in contrast to the perspective on reality that is taken for granted in the Type 1 project tradition, with its focus on the project as an object that can be planned and controlled (Geraldi & Söderlund, 2018). Figure 1 is inspired by Geraldi and Söderlund (2018) and Deetz, (1994) and is an attempt to illustrate the interaction between the ontological and epistemological assumptions and how these relations create different types of knowledge in project studies. The vertical arrow addresses the ontological assumption, from constitutive social reality at the bottom to fixed social reality at the top. The horizontal arrow, on the other hand, illustrates the epistemological assumption, positioning my study at the bottom right within practical project studies, with the focus on interpretation and understanding.

Figure 1. The interaction between ontological and epistemological assumptions and how these relations create different types of knowledge in project studies



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Theoretical perspectives chosen

In this thesis, I have used various theoretical concepts to enable an understanding of what characterises the interaction between a public health project and two local public sector organisations. To understand the influence of structural aspects, which concern the dynamics of policy processes such as decision-making and agenda-setting, I have used Multiple Streams Theory. Goffman's (1974) framing theory was used to understand the actors' influence on the context and how they interpreted and made sense of project intentions. Boundary work as a theoretical perspective enabled me to focus on the process, the practice and the activity, and how the temporal boundaries were constructed and reworked in different arenas and at different levels of the project.

Multiple Streams Theory and to some extent boundary work, fit well into the perspective of understanding social systems, in this case, the relationship between temporary and permanent organising. These studies are primarily related to the project level. Framing relates more to the individual and team level and the discretion and potential to act that individuals in the organisation have. However, taken together, the use of theoretical perspectives also reflects the cumulative process developed while working on the thesis, particularly in trying to explore and understand what characterises the interaction between a public health project and two local public sector organisations from different perspectives. Each concept is summarised below and described more comprehensively in the papers. Three of the papers (I, II and IV) focus on understanding how coordination and organising takes place, while paper III also highlights power and influence in the interactions between project actors and organisational actors in different arenas.

Multiple Streams Theory

Paper I used the theoretical framework of Multiple Streams Theory (MST) to analyse the policy process through the project's task (Sabatier, 2007). Kingdon (2003) describes the outline of MST, which views choice as collective decision-making and the result of the pull and push of several factors. The policy process is described as three mostly unrelated streams: a problem stream, a policy stream and a policy stream (Zahariadis, 2014). With relevance to Paper I, the three streams were used in the analysis of the policy

process. In response to a problem (child obesity), the policy actors in the form of municipality and region prepared a proposal that was financially and technically feasible (physical activities and healthy eating habits were recommended). The politicians promoted the proposal because of the clear health benefits (Sabatier, 1991). Besides these three streams, policy entrepreneurs and policy windows are other basic elements of the MST model. Policy interventions are possible when an opportunity to join the three streams appears. These opportunities - to join the three streams - are called policy windows or “windows of opportunities”. When these windows open, policy entrepreneurs must then take the opportunity to act, based on their established networks and organisational knowledge (Reay et al., 2006; Zahariadis, 2014). Policy entrepreneurs can thus play an important role in connecting elements from the project organisation with the public sector organisation. This interaction between temporary and permanent is explored further in the coming papers, using the theoretical framework of boundary work and frame alignment strategies.

Boundary work

In Papers II and III, boundary work was used to analyse the interaction between temporary and permanent organising. Paper II focused on interaction at the local level, in schools, while Paper III focused on the project team’s boundary work in different arenas.

Projects are often initiated in order to achieve some kind of change, often involving the creation, moving or consolidation of boundaries (Hernes, 2004). Boundaries can act as borders or lines of demarcation, and can be described as “ambiguous, flexible, historically changing, contextually variable, internally inconsistent and sometimes disputed” (Gieryn (1983: 792). Hence, rather than static, boundaries emerge that are modified and reproduced through interactions (Hernes, 2004; Meier, 2015).

Boundary work makes boundaries come to life and “is not a label for just anything to do with boundaries, it is about process, practice and activity” (Langley et al., 2019: 67). The notion of boundary work is useful in developing a processual view of organisations, with the potential to integrate temporality, agency and power dynamics into the study of organising (Weick, 1979).

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

To overcome organisational boundaries, actors have to perform different boundary roles, boundary spanners and mediators for example (Braithwaite et al., 2013; Stjerne & Svejenova, 2016). In the interaction between the temporary project and the public sector organisation, frequently analysed boundaries include physical, social and temporal. If the boundary work succeeds, it can thus lead to a reconfiguration of patterns and establish new working methods in the public sector organisation (Langley et al., 2019).

Moving on from policy entrepreneurs and boundary work, Paper IV uses frame alignment strategies emanating from Goffman's frame analysis (1974) to explore if and how the policymaking actors applied any framing strategies and how it affected policy implementation.

Frame alignment strategies

Paper IV uses the concept of frame to study how policy is implemented. Frames can be used to structure and give meaning to actors' experiences and behaviour (Goffman, 1974). To influence, as in this case, the public sector organisation, the project actors need to enable people's willingness to act, which, according to Goffman, requires expanding their conceptual frame. The framing process can be defined as 'the process by which people develop a particular conceptualisation of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue' (Chong & Druckman, 2007:104). This is an active process in which actors come to understand their world and its activities and make their world meaningful in interaction with other actors (Weick, 1995).

This process of influencing individuals' frames - frame alignment - is often used to achieve a specific purpose, such as when policymaking actors try to link the project's frame to the interests of actors belonging to the public sector organisation (Benford & Snow, 2000). Four alignment processes have been used to analyse the empirical data in Paper IV: frame bridging, frame amplification, frame extension and frame transformation. In identifying these frame alignment strategies, it is useful to explore whether and how the policymaking actors applied any of the framing strategies and how it affected the frames of actors in the two local public sector organisations. Successful frame alignment (Snow et al., 1986) can thus motivate actors in the public sector organisation as policy agents to influence and affect implementation. The next chapter describes the research process, including the research context and site and how the material for the thesis was generated.

3

The research process

The research process started while I was teaching at university and I met a health planning manager who was about to initiate a local public health project. This project aroused my curiosity, probably due to my previous studies in public health and my involvement in a non-profit sports club and the Swedish Sports Confederation. These experiences had led me to note the preference for organising health promotion activities in projects, often in parallel with the permanent organisation. Further, I had noticed how these projects barely had time to start before it was time to finish, leaving the public sector organisation with more questions, rather than any impact from the project. However, eager to find out more, I applied for a doctoral position in order to have the opportunity to follow this local public health project.

The design of the study can be characterised as emergent due to its inductive and empirical approach to generating study material (Czarniawska, 2014). As a consequence, the theoretical framework is developed after the interviews and observations, and is based on the analysis of the empirical material. Starting with a rather imprecise research question led me to a number of interesting sites in following the project process. From the initial phase and the political committee, through the decision-making process with the formation of project teams and finally the setting up of activities in two primary schools, with the aim of achieving the project's targets. However, following the train of events evolving from the project turned the emergent design into a case study (Czarniawska, 2014). Qualitative case studies are an appropriate research methodology when exploring how- and why-questions in emergent and dynamic empirical settings (Yin, 2015). The next section describes the research context, including a short description of definitions and denominations within the field of public health. The research site with the project organisation and its roles are subsequently presented. The third section provides an overview of the methods of data collection and analysis, while the fourth section describes ethical considerations.

Research context

The study took place in a Swedish welfare state setting, based upon the principles of equal access to services such as education, health and elderly care. The Swedish welfare model is based on general taxation and divided into three administrative levels: the state, 21 regions and 290 municipalities. The role of central government in the welfare model is characterised by a high degree of political, financial and operational decentralisation to municipalities and regions, with the role of central government to establish principles and guidelines. Issues regarding health promotion, such as the project studied in this thesis, fall under the responsibility of both municipalities and regions.

Public welfare and healthcare is provided by the 21 regions, each within its geographic area. The responsibility for health promotion is set out in the Health and Medical Service Act (SFS 2017:30), which stipulates that every region must work to promote good health for the entire population as well as provide its residents with good-quality health and medical care. Swedish municipalities are responsible for several key policy areas related to healthcare and public welfare, including education, social services, childcare and elderly care.

Within the context of the project, the primary school falls under each municipalities' administrative responsibility, and the principals are employed by and receive resources from the municipality. However, the educational programme is determined by the state as outlined in the principles of the National Education Act and the detailed goals and guidelines specified in the curriculum for the primary school. The curriculum specifies that health and lifestyle issues should receive attention, and the educational programme should contribute to an understanding of how physical activity can affect health and well-being. Since all children attend primary school, it is a location that is frequent utilised for different interventions, including a range of initiatives to promote health. The frequency of health promoting initiatives is also a consequence of the regions trying to implement their responsibility for public health in the local context. However, besides the curriculum, there is also a nationally specified syllabus for each subject, guiding the teachers in their pedagogical activities. In summary, schools need to consider various targets. While the educational programme is determined by the state, issues of public health are governed both by the region and municipalities, and the resources are allocated by the municipalities. The next section describes the context of public health with its definitions and denominations.

Public health and health promotion policies

Public health refers to organised measures to prevent disease, promote health and prolong life among the population. Public health consists of two basic theorems, health prevention and health promotion. The aim of health prevention is to eliminate or reduce risk factors for injury or disease, such as accidents or the spread of infectious diseases (Pellmer & Wramner, 2007). Health promotion is defined as “the process of enabling people to increase control over their health and its determinants, and thereby improve their health” (WHO, The Bangkok Charter for Health Promotion, 2005: p. 1). Health promotion thus entails promoting and developing factors that create and support health instead of simply counteracting the risk of disease or injury. Examples of health promotion might be activities that address health risk factors such as obesity, physical inactivity and poor nutrition, but also screening programmes (e.g. breast cancer, cervical screening) or taking public health into account in urban planning.

There is not always a clear distinction between health prevention and health promotion activities. In the literature on how public health is managed, health promotion is a concept that is widely used to describe the process of working with public health interventions, targeted at the entire population or vulnerable groups (Pellmer & Wramner, 2007). Another frequently used concept is healthy public policies, which refers to one of the main public health functions, the formulation of (healthy) public policies, designed to solve identified local and national health problems and priorities (Harris and Wise, 2020). Some literature also calls it welfare policy or public health policy. Health promotion policies focus on the determinants of health through cross-sectoral approaches at the local, regional, national or international level.

Research site

The health promotion project studied was initiated, funded and conducted by a Swedish region. The aim of the project, ‘why’, was to reduce the percentage of obese and overweight children and was approved in an agreement between the region and one municipality. The project’s ‘what’ was described in an agreement to ‘promote physical activity and healthy eating habits among children in primary schools and act as a link between the focus of medical treatments in healthcare and the health promotion perspective in the municipality’. The project was approved by the municipality and its districts.

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The project's 'how' was not developed in detail in the agreement but expressed as 'the project team needs to develop a process that includes both general and specific achievements'.

The project organisation evolved during the organising of the project and included traditional project management roles such as project owner, project managers and project team members (see overview table 2). The region used a purchaser/provider healthcare model and the project owner was an official representing the purchaser and acting as health planning manager. Representatives from the provider were included in the project organisation as project team members in roles such as project coordinator, project managers, physiotherapists and dieticians, as well as business developer for public health. As the project organisation evolved, it came to constitute three different teams, active in different arenas. Arenas is defined here (specifically in Paper III) as organisational locations where the project team and various organisational members from the permanent organisation meet. The project's steering team in the regional arena, the project leader team in the regional/municipal arena and the local operational teams in the municipal local arena.

The project's steering team initially consisted of the health planning manager representing the purchaser, the business developer for public health, and the physiotherapist, representing the provider. This group was responsible for setting up the project and recruiting a project coordinator and another physiotherapist. Two project managers from a similar, ongoing project were included in the project steering team during this period, subsequently taking responsibility for the planning and initiation of measures to promote health at the primary schools.

The project leader team included the project coordinator and physiotherapist who were recruited, along with the two project managers from the project steering team. Public health workers from the municipality also occasionally participated in the meetings. While the project coordinator and physiotherapist focused on healthcare settings and reaching at risk individuals, the general health promoting work was the responsibility of the two project managers. To complete this task, the two project managers tried to establish contacts with schools and later worked to set up local teams in each primary school to implement the project's intentions. The senior project manager, a registered dietician and Doctor of Medical Science, participated mainly in planning and coordination meetings, while the operational project manager,

hereinafter referred to as the project manager, with a degree in public health, participated in the majority of meetings at both schools.

A local operational team was set up in each primary school comprising the principal, the project manager and the school nurse. The principals had approved the project, and the local operational teams were involved in setting the focus of project activities together with the project managers. Besides this operational team, teams were set up at each school to develop and work on project activities, mainly comprising teachers in School A and kitchen staff in School B. The schools were of average size in the municipality with around 350 students and employees consisting of teachers, kitchen staff and students' health team.

Methods of data collection and analysis

The study is based on a multi-method study of the project's process to promote physical activity and healthy eating habits. The embedded case study design, studying one project with two sub-units, provided opportunities for a more detailed and comparative analysis of sub-units, compared with a single case analysis (Yin, 2015). The project lasted for 3 years, but the empirical work started before the initial decision of the political committee, through conversations with the health planning manager who formulated the basis of the project idea. The fieldwork followed how the project's policy activities developed, first the work to set up project teams and later in each of the two participating primary schools. Focusing on the process is appropriate in addressing temporary phenomena, as it observes how changes evolve and are implemented in practice, and how it interacts with existing organisational contexts (Langley, 2009).

The field material consists of interviews, observations, field note documentation from meetings and activities, as well as textual documents, which illustrate the course of the project at different organisational levels during the three years. The papers' use of empirical material was as follows: Paper I focused on the initial phase of the project process, including interviews, documents and meetings during the first year of the project. Paper II, Paper III and Paper IV included empirical material from all three years of the project. Paper II and Paper IV focused primarily on the local project context and the interactions between project organisations and the primary schools. Paper III focused equally on the regional and municipal arenas from the perspective of the project teams.

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During the thesis's first period, I focused on documents, interviews and observations of meetings from the initial project process. These meetings took place in the project steering team and project leader team. Relevant documents were considered in order to identify political goals and plans for the realisation and monitoring of the project. The documents identified dealt with the Purchasing Board's decisions concerning the project and they were identified based on discussions with the health planning manager, as well as a review of the agenda for the Purchasing Board's meetings. In addition, budget and goal documents for the Purchasing Board were analysed and subsequently also annual reports on the project's progress.

Interviews were carried out with respondents from both the regional project organisation and at project sites in the permanent organisation. Altogether, 24 interviews were performed with 55 respondents. See Table 2 for an overview. The length of the interviews varied between 27 and 118 minutes, but typically lasted for about an hour. The project manager and I were involved in interviewing respondents in the study, with the majority of the interviews performed by me and recorded and transcribed verbatim. However, the project manager also interviewed kitchen staff and three of the teacher groups at project sites. These interviews were documented in field reports. The interviews were performed in a semi-structured way (Kvale, 2008), and the interview guides were based on the role of the respondent and whether previous interviews had been conducted with the same respondent.

Table 2. Overview of interviews

Regional project organisation			
Role	No. Int.	No. Resp.	Year(s)
Project owner	2	2	2013
Politicians	2	4	2013
Project managers	2	4	2013, 2015
Project team members	6	8	2013, 2015
Project sites in the permanent organisation – School A			
Role	No. Int.	No. Resp.	Year(s)
Headteacher	2	2	2013, 2015
Student health team	1	4	2013
Teachers	2	11	2014
Kitchen staff	1	3	2014
Project sites in the permanent organisation – School B			
Role	No. Int.	No. Resp.	Year(s)
Headteacher	1	1	2013
Student health team	2	6	2013, 2015
Teachers	2	5	2013
Kitchen staff	1	5	2013
Total	24	55	

In addition to documents and interviews, the meetings of the project steering team and project leader team were observed by me. Altogether, these teams held 22 meetings over the three years, lasting between 45 – 120 minutes. The meetings were documented by taking notes during and after the observation. Although my role was that of a passive observer, I tried to blend in (Czarniawska, 2007) by talking and interacting informally during breaks and in between activities and meetings.

While studying the project teams, the design of activities at local level in the schools was documented by the operational project manager according to a template that was developed by the project manager. This documentation of activities in the primary schools mainly focused on capturing the process and content of the meetings. Altogether, 67 meetings and activities took place (28 in school A and 39 in school B) to develop and implement the project at schools. See Table 3 for an overview.

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Table 3. Overview of field note documentation from meetings and activities

Project sites in the permanent organisation – School A		
Type of meeting	No. of meet-ings	Year(s)
Local operational team	9	2013, 2014, 2015
Teachers to be inspired in their work on healthier eating habits and increased physical activity	13	2014, 2015
Health lessons with students	2	2014
Health theme days with activities for students, parents and school staff	4	2014, 2015
Project sites in the permanent organisation – School B		
Type of meeting	No. of meet-ings	Year(s)
Local operational team	7	2013, 2014, 2015
Working meeting with kitchen staff	1	2013
Health lessons with students	3	2013
Reference group to improve the environment in the school canteen	5	2014, 2015
Health theme days with activities for students, parents and school staff	2	2014
Observations of the kitchen environment during student lunchtime	5	2014
Healthy breakfast and talk with students	5	2014
Conversations with students about how to improve the environment in the school canteen	9	2014
Parents meeting to provide information about activities	2	2014, 2015
Total	67	

The analysis of the material reflected an ongoing process, moving back and forth from the field to the desk (Czarniawska, 2014). Using three data sources enabled information and impressions to be gathered from multiple perspectives (Malterud, 2001). However, the meaning of the material did not evolve solely as a movement between field and desk, but also as a result of analysing the material through different conceptual frameworks in the different papers. This opportunity to work with the same field material but with different analytical foci enabled me to be reflexive and look at the project process in different ways.

Ethical considerations

The fieldwork over the course of the thesis involved participants from schools and actors from the municipality and region. Schools are places where multiple initiatives and projects take place, and an important ethical consideration is whether there is enough room for yet another project or activity. An important criterion was therefore that each school was able to decide on their participation, but also that they were involved in setting the focus of project activities together with the project managers. Another part of the ethical considerations was an application to the Swedish Ethical Review Authority, which was approved (Ref. no. 660-13). This application was made as a part of the coordination with the similar, ongoing project mentioned earlier, where the two project managers took on the responsibility of planning and initiating health promoting actions at the primary schools. The study complied with the ethical guidelines from the Swedish Research Council (Swedish Research Council, 2002; 2017). Written information was provided to individuals included in the study, who consented to their participation. The written information described the purpose of the research and how the study was supposed to be carried out. Further, the information emphasised that participation is voluntary and that empirical data collected is processed and stored with respect to the participants' privacy. The interviewees, schools, municipality and region were anonymised, which means that the working material used pseudonyms for these categories.

Observational studies can be used in a variety of situations, but are also associated with ethical challenges (Swedish Research Council, 2017). Although it is necessary to try to blend in (Czarniawska, 2007), it is also important to create awareness of our role as researchers when observing. I therefore always introduced myself as a researcher to members of the participating organisations that I met. Further, in both interviews and observational situations, it is important to remain sensitive to the participants' situation and the context into which you are invited. However, I did not experience meetings that dealt with individual or sensitive issues. Rather, the meetings of the project steering team and project leader team that I observed focused on how the project was progressing and discussed trade-offs within the project. Another challenge regarding both observational and interview studies is how my preconceptions as a researcher of the field influenced the research subjects and how I translated the results. As Kvale (2008) mentions, the interview situation is not a mutual interaction between equal parties, it is the researcher who defines the topic and selects questions as well as interprets data and

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draws conclusions. While the complete neutrality of the researcher is unachievable, the project started with an open approach and I tried to leave space for actors to express their opinions. Nevertheless, more specific questions were formulated in follow-up interviews as the project progressed so that participants could provide further elaboration of issues that I thought were of particular interest.

4

Findings

This chapter presents the thesis's four papers as short summaries. Before going into each paper, it is worth mentioning that although the project had an overall aim, the approach and realisation varied between the two schools. Project activities in School A mainly involved teachers and in School B, mainly kitchen staff. After a slow start in school A, the operation continued to be fairly passive in Year 2 and the project was dissolved in Year 3. In School B, it moved from enthusiasm and commitment in the beginning to slower progress in Year 2, culminating in increased progress and changes to the canteen environment in Year 3.

Paper I: The policy process for health promotion

In line with the project's task, Paper I focuses on the process of using the health promotion project to change and develop the policy area focusing on health promotion among children. The paper addresses the generally held belief in top-down management that characterises the politics of public health.

While centrally developed recommendations and guidelines are intended to guide and respond to challenges concerning the health of the population, Paper I shows that it is important to consider the interaction and negotiations between actors in the policy process, as well as the role of policy entrepreneurs throughout the process. The policy entrepreneurs in this case were representatives for the project owner, such as the health planning manager. These interactions between actors in different organisational contexts were shown to have implications for the design of the project and the time required for the possible implementation of the project's task. Further, the demarcation and transition of the project's task was characterised by uncertainty due to the challenge of managing multiple perspectives and the indistinct organisational boundaries. The results showed the role of policy

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entrepreneurs in seizing windows of opportunity to realise the project task and intentions. However, to be able to realise the opportunity and help to embed the project's task in permanent organising, the policy entrepreneurs needed to have both in-depth knowledge of the context and a good sense of how the policy's intentions were related to the different organisational contexts within the local setting.

Paper II: Project initiation as the beginning of the end: Mediating temporal tensions in school's health projects

As Paper I indicated, project actors seemed to play an important role in connecting elements from the project organisation with the two local public sector organisations, both initially and throughout the policy process. Paper II explores these interactions further, focusing on what significance project initiation and temporal dimensions (time) have in explaining the impact of project intentions in permanent organising. The paper reviews the literature on public projects and shows what distinguishes them from projects in an industrial and commercial context, focusing in particular on the adaption between temporary and permanent.

The results from the paper show how the project organisation had to manage different temporal orientations, for example different planning periods and short- vs. long-term goals and deadlines, both in relation to its own regional organisation as well as in relation to the two primary schools, located within the municipal organisation. As the project developed, this turned out to be a difficult balancing act – with the project being receptive to local conditions and motivations in each school, and still maintaining its innovative working methods in relation to physical activity and healthy eating habits. An important conclusion from the study is that the start of the project seemed to be the beginning of the end, because the ongoing organising process had difficulties in mediating temporal tensions between actors and aligning the project's intentions with structures in the two local public sector organisations. Another of the study's contributions is that project actors need to take advantage of the flow of the ongoing organising process, in the schools in this case, and its relation to past and future activities. This is because the project activities are not in themselves sufficient to create long-term change. However, this temporal alignment seems to be more challenging within a public sector context compared to an industrial context due to the large range of goals and strategies in the public context.

Paper III: The project team's efforts to embed a health promotion project into different arenas in the public sector

The aim of Paper III is to contribute knowledge concerning difficulties and opportunities for project teams to embed health promotion projects into different arenas in the public sector. While previous studies have focused mainly on boundary work within the project team, the focus on the interplay between the project team and the broader social context opened this view up to include the different arenas and their contexts, in which the team members interacted.

The paper shows how the project teams' boundary work developed in three different arenas: the project steering team in the regional arena, the project leader team in the regional/municipal arena, and the local operational teams in the local municipal arena. The paper demonstrates how boundaries in these arenas can appear as both barriers and junctures. One contribution that the study makes is its analysis of the material through the conceptual frame of boundary work, focusing on how the project's intentions were progressed through the work of creating junctures between project actors and arenas. The work of identifying possible junctures involved relational processes. As a consequence, rather than focusing on the composition of teams, it is thus more fruitful to focus on team members' ability to work with such boundary work processes, rather than choosing members based on their different fields of knowledge. The paper also contributes to showing how strategic and operative junctures can facilitate the connection between project goals and operative agendas, but also to historical and professional contexts – making it easier to embed the health promotion project in the local context in the public sector organisation.

Paper IV: Reframing practice through policy implementation projects in different knowledge contexts

Paper IV uses Goffman's frame analysis (1974) to enhance understanding of the challenges the project encountered, as described in Papers I, II and III. Paper IV thus has the aim of investigating how it is possible for policymaking actors to mobilise operational actors within the framework of a project to become policy agents so that policy intentions have an impact on the public

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sector organisation. The goal was to understand the relevance and implication of the actors' contextual understanding in policy implementation projects, i.e. how the transition occurs in terms of the influence of policy on ongoing practice in the two-way process of a project's interaction with its context. The paper describes the fact that policy implementation projects constitute a meeting between a policy and at least one domain of professional knowledge (the knowledge context), i.e. the implicit knowledge garnered by members of a vocation or profession as they learn the norms of that occupation during their education and in their interaction with senior colleagues.

The concept of framing is used to explain the ways in which the school actors made sense of the policy. The results showed how actors needed to understand the ideological content and the instrumental consequences that the new policy would have on their practice. The study extends the understanding of ideological and instrumental efforts in the implementation of policy, but also shows the difficulty in upholding the conditions of a project. It also questions the idea that a project can be regarded as a success simply because the demarcation is successful.

Summary of the four papers – projects as interaction in context rather than demarcation

Returning to the research design, Table 4 provides a summary of the papers in relation to the seminal concepts that constitute a project. First, all findings point to the importance of focusing on the continuous interactions in the project process, in contrast to the impression of the concepts, especially task, time and team, as somewhat fixed and isolated.

Table 4. Summary of conclusions from the papers in relation to the seminal concepts that constitute a project

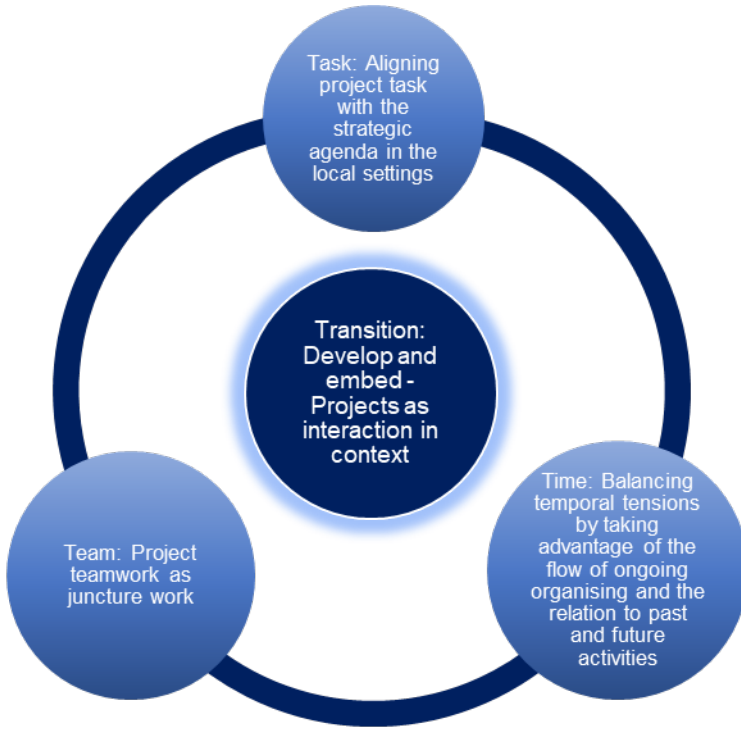
Projects as demarcation	Projects as interaction in context
<p>Task</p> <p>Project task viewed as isolated and decoupled from the permanent organisation.</p>	<p>Task</p> <p>Policy entrepreneurs in seizing windows of opportunity and the importance of in-depth, contextual knowledge to align and embed project tasks within the local setting.</p>
<p>Time</p> <p>Time emphasised as the most important of the basic concepts. Used in a linear form, from a clear starting point to project termination.</p>	<p>Time</p> <p>Mediating temporal tensions between actors and aligning the project's intentions with structures in the local public sector organisations. The importance of project actors taking advantage of the flow of ongoing organising processes and the relation to past and future activities.</p>
<p>Team</p> <p>Project team as focusing on relations within the team and the demarcation in relation to the rest of the organisation.</p>	<p>Team</p> <p>Project teamwork as juncture work, i.e. creating strategic and operational junctures in embedding the project in different arenas in the local public organisation.</p>
<p>Transition</p> <p>Transition understood as the transfer of project results at project end, focusing on the final outcome.</p>	<p>Transition</p> <p>Transition as developing and embedding through interaction in context. The project members ongoing interpretation of project results in relation to their different knowledge contexts.</p>

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The findings from the papers with regard to *task* imply that the project actors need to be sufficiently embedded to be able to couple the different streams in the policy process, and thus align the project's task with the context and tasks of the local public sector organisations. In a multi-goal context, *time* places the focus on balancing temporal tensions between actors involved and the temporal alignment – to ongoing as well as past and future activities – to ensure that project intentions influence permanent organising processes. Rather than focusing on the composition of project *teams*, the work of project teams creates strategic and operational junctures in different arenas in the project process. Finally, *transition* is about the ability of project actors to continuously develop and embed policy intentions through interpreting the different knowledge context involved in the project and thus to achieve a necessary expansion of the frame to convince organisational actors to regard the policy as an integral part of their assignment.

In relation to the view of a successfully undertaken project – as demarcated from the context by employing the four concepts of task, time, team and transition – the findings focus on the continuous interaction in the project process in relation to all four concepts. This leads to the conclusion that transition, instead of a single concept, is also an important mean within the concepts of task, time and team. In fact, the results of the papers show how transition occurs in each of the three concepts - task, time, and team - through interactions between actors in the project organisation and actors in the organisations involved. This consequently also means that transition needs to have a meaning other than its current definition, understood as 'the actual transformation in terms of the distinctive change between "before" and "after"' (Lundin and Söderholm, 1995: 443). Instead, transition in the thesis's papers highlights the ongoing interaction and change during the project, not after it ends. Transition then includes continuously developing and embedding values and conceptions in the wider social context. A new conceptualisation emerges in Figure 2 from the summarised findings. This figure shows the modification of the meaning of the four original concepts defining a project in relation to how the three concepts of task, time and team all have the goal of an ongoing interaction with the context. As a consequence, transition then becomes the overarching aim to which value-driven projects strive, the development and embedment of the project's intentions in relation to all three concepts, but with the sense of delivering change during the project instead of after it ends.

Figure 2. Transition as the ongoing interaction with the context during the project process



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5

Concluding discussion

The findings of the four papers were summarised in the previous chapter and correspond to specific research questions and themes in each paper. In this chapter, I will elaborate on these findings from the basis of the overall research question for this thesis: *What characterises the interaction between a value-driven project and local public sector organisations in developing and embedding public health issues into everyday organising?*

The value-driven project studied is similar to many other projects that often have a legitimate aim and goal on which the actors involved could agree. Despite the recognised importance of the field and its suggested activities, the results from the thesis show how challenging it is to relate projects to regular, more ongoing activities in the public organisations involved. The findings demonstrate how important it is that value-driven projects within a public sector context endeavour to continuously produce interactions throughout the entire project as a way of achieving transition. This is in contrast to trying to demarcate projects in relation to the surrounding environment and developing and embedding project results at the end of the project. The complexity involved in embedding new values and perspectives through projects confirms earlier studies regarding the challenge for projects to achieve change in local government (Fred, 2018; Godenhjelm, 2013). However, the results also deviate in relation to the focus on the project end, for instance the focus on interlinking mechanisms in the final phase of the project that are sensitive to contextuality (Godenhjelm et al., 2015). Moreover, they contribute to an enhanced theoretical understanding of value-driven public sector projects (Hodgson et al., 2019; Lundin et al., 2015; Jakobsen, 2022; Voros et al., 2022) and the discussion concerning the influence on ongoing practice in the two-way process of a project's interaction with its context (Song et al., 2022). Specifically, the contribution - based on all four studies included in the thesis - highlights the importance of interactions and negotiations between actors throughout the entire project process. These interactions with actors from different organisational and knowledge contexts, were shown to have impli-

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cations for the transition. Actors involved in the project tried to achieve transition during the project process in four different ways in order to develop and embed public health activities in everyday organising.

First, *transition was performed in the initial phase of the project by aligning the project task with the strategic agenda in the local public sector settings*, which depended on sufficient knowledge and interaction with local project actors. This required policy actors to use their established networks and to act when they spotted an opportunity to implement the project. This deviates from and questions the focus on policy outcome and implementation problems in the final sequence of the project lifecycle (Sjöblom et al., 2013; Weiss et al., 2016). Rather, working on transition during project initiation supports the focus on project front end (Lehtonen & Martinsuo, 2008; Martinsuo & Lehtonen, 2007; Zwikael & Meredith, 2019). Further, it also emphasises the importance of having close access to actors engaged in the policy process (Zahariadis, 2014), as well as the fact that such networks and knowledge can provide a platform for action (Reay et al., 2006).

Second, *an attempt was made to achieve transition through balancing the temporal conditions during the project*. The results showed that the project actors had to work in relation to and manage different temporal orientations between the project organisation and the schools during the project. For example, this entailed different planning periods in relation to goals and deadlines, but also project synchronisation in relation to political goals and decisions. The project actors' timing in aligning project activities with past, present and future activities within each school was important for the project to be considered relevant, but concomitantly difficult to achieve. An explanation for these difficulties in aligning project activities is the multi-goal context inherent in the public sector (Lundin et al., 2015). This outcome deviates from projects conducted within a commercial context, where past and future projects can to a greater extent be evaluators for new projects (Stjerne & Svejnova, 2016).

Third, *transition was performed through project teams creating junctures in different arenas*. In that project members interacted in different project contexts, they were able to create strategic and operational junctures and thereby try to embed the project within the context of the two participating schools. This confirms the work of Comeau-Vallée and Langley (2020) concerning how the creation of junctures can support collaborative boundary work. However, it also extends the work of Quick and Feldman (2014) by

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showing how project team members can act as boundary spanners, creating different junctures in different arenas. Junctural teamwork in different arenas depends on a contextual dynamic between not only future and past orientation, but also social position, for example, status and hierarchical relations.

Fourth, *Transition was achieved through different framing strategies that made the actors view the policy as part of their task*. The results showed how the project actors' ideological framing, compared to their instrumental framing, was not strong enough for the local actors to view the policy as part of their task. This deviates from other studies, which usually recommend talking about the content of the policy before taking concrete practical (instrumental) action (Näsänen & Vanharanta, 2016; Vihma & Wolf, 2022). In addition, project members need to understand how the knowledge context of the organisational actors involved is constructed to be able to change the actors' professional practices and make sense of their project results. This is in line with how project actors can construct and modify the context during the project (Martinsuo & Geraldi, 2020) and the importance of human agency in reshaping the wider social context (Song et al., 2022).

In addition to achieving transition during the project process, timing the window of opportunity seems to be important in being able to engender change in several perspectives. Whether it concerns initiating and bringing projects to fruition by joining different policy streams (Paper I), creating interactions and mediating temporal tensions between actors in the policy process (Paper II), or the project team's creation of junctures in order to develop and embed the project in different arenas in the local public sector organisation (Paper III) or reframing knowledge contexts to change practices in the canteen (Paper IV). Acting strategically when the window opens involves relational processes and negotiations (Godenhjelm et al., 2019), and the results of the thesis show how these negotiations and interplay between actors facilitate the project process. This provides additional insights for the discussion of how to establish the right preconditions for a successful project (Bos-de Vos et al., 2022; Tukiainen & Granqvist, 2016; van Marrewijk & van den Ende, 2022).

Implications for practice

Having followed a project process for some years, the findings of the four studies offer practical implications for decision makers and practitioners to manage value-driven projects. Taken together, the findings can be seen as different strategies to create change and embed value-driven projects in public sector organisations. These three strategies overlap and interplay, but at the same time focus on the ability of project actors to embed and develop policy intentions in public sector organisations, to be able to create change:

1. To consider *Task* as project members aligning and embedding the project with the strategic agenda in the local settings.
2. To consider *Time* as mediating temporal tensions between actors and aligning the project's intentions with structures in the local public sector organisations.
3. To consider *Team* as juncture work, i.e. teamwork to create strategic and operational junctures in embedding the project in different arenas in the local public organisation.

Within all these three strategies, project actors continuously develop and embed conceptions and values through interaction in context. This perspective on creating transition by means of value-driven public sector projects requires an alternative view of projects in interactions with their context, which it can be important to consider when planning and managing projects. Interactions at a structural level are about synchronising the project task with structural issues in the local strategic agenda, which requires knowledge and understanding of the local context. However, focusing solely on the local context in a bottom-up approach runs the risk of the project proceeding slowly and insecurely. Rather, the different organisational layers within the public sector call for a combination of top-down and bottom-up methodology, with face-to-face interactions, in order to understand each other's contexts.

Interactions focusing on structural issues are followed by interactions on a more relational level, often developed between project members and actors at the local level. These interactions concern the framing and reframing of project activities, to be able to relate to ongoing activities in organisations involved and what involved actors consider as important and relevant. This work to co-create goals and reframe practices requires a low level of intensity in the initial phase of the project so that each actor's context can be adapted. Further, it seems to be important for project actors to not just talk about ideological change. Rather, to make something happen, they need to talk about

and understand how to initiate instrumental and practical change. To enable project members to understand and interact with the context of the organisations involved requires face-to-face dialogue over time between actors in order to comprehend each other's background and settings. If the project owner can prove how the project can contribute to resolving the public sector organisation's own challenges, there is a great chance of the project having an impact.

Ideas for future research

The longitudinal and participatory approach that the project utilised in its process of promoting physical activity and healthy eating habits provided data on interactions in a multi-level organisational context (Yin, 2015). Ideas for future research are that it could be based on identifying different aspects concerning contextual conditions, policy characteristics or different empirical and methodological approaches.

The contextual conditions in which the study was undertaken was local schools where the teaching profession has long established norms and rules regarding tasks that should comprise staff workloads. Studies in different organisational contexts within the public sector could provide an extended understanding of how different knowledge contexts can be affected. For example, the organisational context in other public sector organisations might be dominated by a hierarchical or administrative logic that replaces the professional logic. Another possibility in future studies might be to examine whether management of public health through value-driven projects is facilitated in situations and contexts characterised by organisational instability. It can also be of interest to study value-driven projects that focus on public health issues within other types of contexts outside the public sector, for example non-profit organisations or private organisations, to see whether these contexts would produce different results.

With regard to policy characteristics, the character and the starting point of the project may influence the process and outcome of the study. The starting point in following the project process was a focus on project actors, which can influence the perspective of the project's interaction with involved local public sector organisations. Another starting point can be actors in the organisations involved in order to provide a more in-depth insight into why they participated in the project and how the project affected their organisation and their commitment during the project process.

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Rather than studying one project with two sub-units, a different empirical and methodological approach would be to include different types of value-driven projects. These might for example be increased equality or sustainability in order to compare projects and to ascertain whether the ideological content of the policy affects project interaction and the work of implementing policy intentions. While the ideological content of the policy to introduce public health aspects in the schools' tasks seems relevant and uncontroversial, other policy content might be more challenging or demand a greater change. More empirical data from actors in the organisations involved who were not directly engaged in project work teams could enhance understanding of how the project is perceived in the school and among colleagues. Another approach might also be to take a longer time perspective and return to project sites some years after the project ended to follow-up and observe possible imprints of the project at schools.

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Swedish summary

Den ökande användningen av projekt och projektstyrning har varit en betydande utvecklingstrend inom den offentliga sektorn under de senaste årtiondena. I takt med att projekten har ökat har den traditionella synen på projekt som avgränsade från sin omgivning med hjälp av de fyra begreppen – uppgift (task), tid (time), team (team) och förändring (transition) – även sipprat ned till offentligt styrda organisationer utan att väcka särskilt mycket uppmärksamhet. Denna traditionella syn kan passa för projekt i en industriell eller kommersiell kontext, där de ofta är utformade för väldefinierade problem och för att exempelvis leverera någon form av teknisk installation. Offentliga projekt är emellertid ofta mer värdestyrda, med syfte att skapa ideologisk förändring. Ett exempel på detta är folkhälsoarbete och initiativ för att främja fysisk aktivitet och hälsosamma matvanor. Syftet med denna avhandling är att bidra till förståelsen av värdestyrda offentliga projekt genom att fokusera på vad som kännetecknar interaktionen mellan ett värdestyrt projekt och lokala offentliga organisationer i att utveckla och integrera folkhälsofrågor i den dagliga verksamheten.

Tre teoretiska referensramar har använts i de fyra artiklarna i avhandlingen för att förstå vad som kännetecknar interaktionen mellan ett hälsofrämjande projekt och två lokala offentliga organisationer. I artikel I används Multiple Streams Theory som teoretisk ram för att analysera projektets uppgift i policyprocessen. I artikel II och III används Boundary work för att analysera interaktionen mellan temporär och permanent organisering. Artikel II fokuserar på interaktionen på lokal nivå, på skolorna, medan artikel III fokuserar på projektteamets gränsarbete på olika arenor. I artikel IV används den teoretiska referensramen Frame analysis för att studera hur policyn implementerades. Det empiriska materialet består av intervjuer, observationer, fältnoteringar från möten och aktiviteter samt styrdokument som illustrerar projektets förlopp på olika organisatoriska nivåer under tre år.

Resultatet från de fyra artiklarna visar hur viktigt det är att värdedrivna projekt i offentlig sektor kontinuerligt arbetar med interaktion under hela projektprocessen, för att lyckas sprida projektets ideer till involverade organisationer. Detta i kontrast till att försöka avgränsa projekt i förhållande till omgivningen, för att sedan utveckla och implementera resultat i slutet av projektet. Att kontinuerligt jobba med förändring genom interaktioner mellan aktörer i projektorganisationen och aktörer i involverade organisationer visade sig viktigt i förhållande till de koncept som vanligtvis avgränsar projekt som uppgift, tid och team. Denna syn på interaktion i projekt, i relation till var och en av de tre begreppen uppgift, tid och team kräver en annan syn på projekt i relation till dess omgivning, vilket kan vara viktigt att överväga vid planering och hantering av projekt i offentlig sektor.

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