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Project and process management of public-private partnerships: Managerial tensions and coping strategies

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1. Introduction

In Western societies, honor-based violence and negative social control in vulnerable communities is an emergent and intractable problem that attracts increasing political attention (Keskinen, 2011; Mayeda & Vijaykumar, 2016). Due to its complex and socially embedded nature, governments cannot effectively solve the problem through classical forms of policing (Verhage et al, 2010; Webster, 2015). Instead, they must collaborate with private actors through various forms of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in order to develop effective, innovative and sustainable solutions that enjoy legitimacy and support from the local community (Eshareturi et al., 2014; see also Crawford & Cunningham, 2015; Webster, 2015).

An illustrative case is found in Denmark. In the spring of 2019, the Ministry of Immigration and Integration funded five municipal PPPs for preventing negative social control in various immigrant communities. Launching the partnership initiative, the Ministry stressed the need for cross-sector collaboration between public authorities and civil society organizations in order to effectively tackle the emergent, elusive and inherently complex problem of negative social

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control (Ministry of Immigration and Integration [MII], 2019). Through its funding requirements, the Ministry charged the partnerships with the ambitious goals of building resilient communities and developing long-term solutions that enjoyed the support and ownership of local community actors. At the same time, however, it required the partnership managers to formulate SMART-goals and detailed plans for obtaining them within a two years period.

The example goes to illustrate a central managerial clamp in government-funded PPPs addressing wicked problems of crime and vulnerability. Though central and local governments increasingly recognize the need for localized and collaborative processes of mutual trust building and open-minded exploration in developing innovative, legitimate and tailor-made solutions, they still expect expedient goal attainment, value-for-money and performance efficiency when launching new PPPs (Weihe, 2008; Edelenbos & Klijn, 2009). Public managers of these PPPs thus find themselves caught in the crossfire between opposing managerial demands. On the one hand, they must conduct new forms of facilitative process management in order to build community resilience and broad ownership to robust solutions that fit the dynamic development of the intrinsically wicked problem (Rittel & Webber, 1973; Head & Alford, 2015; Krogh & Torfing, 2015). On the other hand, they must perform classical project management in order to ensure strict financial control, decisiveness and speed in the PPP projects (Verhoest et al., 2015; Van den Hurk et al., 2016; Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2011; Andrews & Entwistle, 2010).

Focusing on efficient project management and collaborative process management as two distinct forms of management appropriate for different types of PPPs, previous PPP research has examined whether project management or process management is the most effective in producing (perceived) outcomes in PPPs (Edelenbos & Klijn, 2009; Alam et al., 2014; Nederhand & Klijn, 2019). Along the same lines, the budding literature on public-private innovation partnerships (PPIs) has connected the PPP literature to theories of collaborative innovation in the public sector, examining how governments support collaborative development of novel solutions to wicked problems through PPPs (Brogaard, 2021; see also Rangel & Galende, 2009). Despite its preoccupation with different forms of PPP management, the existing PPP literature

has largely neglected the question of managerial tensions arising in PPPs where various forms of partnership governance and institutional cross-pressures urge partnership managers to perform both project and process management simultaneously. This stands in stark contrast to the broader field of public administration and public governance research, which is increasingly interested in managerial tensions arising in hybrid governance regimes where multiple governance paradigms co-exist, not least in the tensions between New Public Management and collaborative governance (Denis et al., 2015; Torfing, Andersen et al., 2020; Koppenjan et al., 2019).

In order to contribute to both the PPP management literature and the surging public governance hybridity research, this article addresses the following research question: *How do public managers handle conflicting demands for project and process management in PPPs?* Building on theories of project management, process management and paradox management, we first develop an analytical framework for studying the tensions between the two management styles and managerial strategies for handling them. Then we apply the framework in a multiple-case study of partnership management practices in three of the government-funded PPPs for preventing negative social control in immigrant communities in Denmark mentioned above. Finally, we discuss the contribution of the study to PPP management research and hybrid public governance research.

2. Theory

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) come in many shapes and sizes, but they generally involve structured cooperation between public and non-public actors who develop mutual products or services and share risk, costs and benefits (Nederhand & Klijn, 2019; see also Weihe, 2008). For decades, governments throughout the Western world have relied on PPPs as an instrument for developing a public sector that delivers *more for less* (Hood & Dixon 2015; Verhoest et al., 2015; Van den Hurk et al., 2016; Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2011; Andrews & Entwistle, 2010). Ever since the 'reinventing government' movement of the 1990's and its harsh critique of the

inefficiencies of public bureaucracy, the New Public Management (NPM) reform agenda has pushed PPPs while emphasizing the need for financial control, goal attainment and performance management in the quest for efficiency and value-for-money in the public sector (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011; Christensen & Lægreid, 2011). The use of PPPs has thus been tied to, and heavily influenced by, the management norms, values and structures underlying NPM (Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2011; Andrews & Entwistle, 2010).

While the focus on public sector efficiency remains, the types of problems that governments use PPPs to address have changed significantly in recent years. Traditionally, central and local governments have primarily used PPPs for large infrastructure projects where public agencies entrust private contractors to provide, support and deliver services for public infrastructure (Weihe, 2008; Petersen, 2010). More recently, however, public authorities have increasingly used PPPs as a response to wicked problems that are dynamic, non-linear, and emergent in nature and that no single actor can handle alone (Rittel & Webber, 1973; Head & Alford, 2015). For example, public organizations set up PPPs to convene and facilitate close collaboration with community actors in developing crosscutting solutions to unruly urban problems of unemployment, gang violence and drug use through local regeneration projects (Weihe, 2008; Krogh and Torfing, 2015).

The enduring focus on cost reductions and efficiency in the public sector continues to call for conventional forms of project management that ensures financial control, decisiveness in the process, and expedient goal attainment through efficient management of finances and labour (Provan and Milward, 1995; O'Toole & Meier, 2004). At the same time, however, the more recent focus on effectively resolving wicked problems requires partnership managers to conduct collaborative process management that builds long-term commitment, support and ownership among a wide variety of stakeholders through flexible and open-ended processes of mutual exchange (Edelenbos & Klijn, 2009; Head & Alford, 2015). The simultaneous demands for project management and process management produces managerial tensions that call for further investigation.

Previous research has distinguished between the two PPP management styles, but without considering the tensions arising when demands for both co-exist. Drawing on the wider public management literature, the following sections develop an analytical framework for studying the tensions between the two management styles and managerial strategies for handling them.

2.1 Project management versus process management

While reality is always messy, we find it useful to make a clear conceptual distinction between project and process management for analytical purposes. Table 1 provides an overview of the key distinctions between each management style in terms of three major partnership management tasks: managing partnership goals (formulation and tracking), actors (in-/exclusion and strategic activation), and activities (development and implementation). In the remainder of the section, we expand on the two management styles and compare them in order to capture some of the key tensions between them.

Table 1: Key aspects of project and process management

	Project management	Process management
Goals	Pre-defined goals, targets, output measures and milestones	Emerging outcome goals, solutions and strategies for action
Actors	A narrow set of partners with aligned perceptions and needed capacity to fulfil goals	A diverse set of actors with different world-views and complementary resources
Activities	The public actor defines the tasks, and the private actors deliver the services	Public and private actors co-develop, -implement and -adjust activities through iterative processes of innovation

Primarily concerned with internal relations and project execution, project management attempts to achieve results by breaking up the project into consecutive phases and attempting to control

the phases according to the quality of content, costs, time, organization, and information (Edelenbos & Klijn, 2009). Concordantly, project managers start out by defining clear goals, targets, output measures and milestones as indicators of success, preferably expressed in quantitative terms (Hood, 1991). Second, they identify and partner with a limited set of competent and credible actors capable of delivering on time (Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2011). Third, they clearly define the tasks and responsibilities of the private partners and monitor the delivery of the planned activities (Hood, 1991; Ferlie et al., 1996).

Process management, on the other hand, does not approach partnership management as a unilinear process, but acknowledges and even promotes iterative cycles of problem formulation, idea generation, testing of solution and implementation. First, process managers continually engage existing and new partners in defining and refining common goals, acknowledging that their sentiments and motivations are heterogenic and subject to change over time (Huxham, 1996; Koppenjan & Klijn, 2004). Second, they do not simply stick to well-known collaborators, but constantly keep an eye out for new actors who can expand the width of perspectives, contribute with complementary resources and competencies, and strengthen the social embedding of the partnership initiative (Edelenbos & Klijn, 2009; Torfing, Krogh, & Ejrnæs, 2020). Third, process managers facilitate creative interactions by engaging actors in dynamic, iterative and open-ended processes, which involve experimentation, learning and adjustment of the partnership initiative to changing circumstances in the surroundings (Krogh, 2022).

As the juxtaposing of the two management styles reveals, they are not only markedly different from one another; they are also directly opposed in some respects. Placing emphasis on financial control and performance management, conventional project management largely focusses on goal attainment and partnership efficiency. The crux of the output-oriented approach is to make the partnership deliver more for less. Process management, on the other hand, is less preoccupied with efficient service provision and more concerned with developing effective, sustainable and innovative solutions to complex problems. While project management aims to avoid too many hitches on the road to goal attainment, process management allows for, and

even promotes, disruptions, evolving problem-definitions, and emerging goals and solutions (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015; Krogh & Torfing, 2015). Project management attempts to lower complexity and only involve a few partners with the capacity to deliver the defined services on time, while process management aims to involve a range of relevant and affected actors in order to ensure broad ownership to emerging solutions (Skilton & Dooley, 2010; Bentzen et al., 2020). Largely viewing the public-private relationship as an exchange relationship between commissioner and supplier, project management focuses on incentivizing and monitoring the delivery of services detailed in the partnership contract (Brogaard, 2021). Process management, on the other hand, views the partnership as a reciprocal relationship between interdependent actors and thus focuses on building trust and involving partners in developing new initiatives (Weihe, 2008).

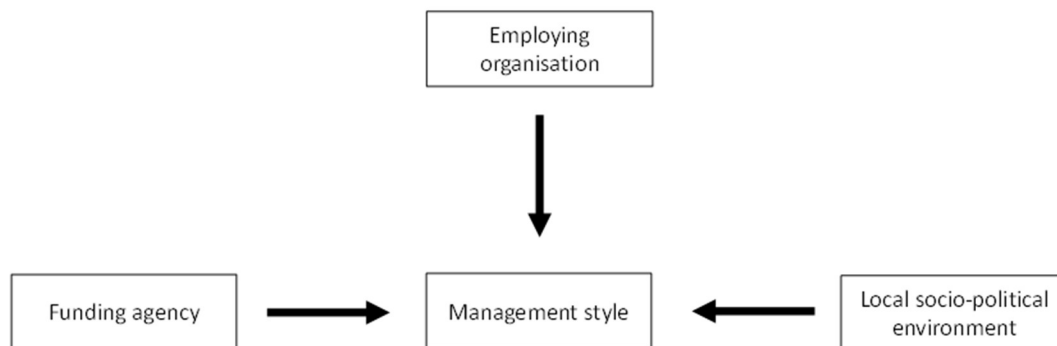
In sum, the differences between the two management styles makes it inherently difficult to apply both management styles at the same time, which is at the core of the managerial dilemma to which we now turn.

2.2 The managerial dilemma and its conditioning factors

Partnership managers do not operate in a political-administrative vacuum. Managerial tensions arise when partnerships are entangled in structures, rules and norms that directly or indirectly prescribe conventional project management and collaborative process management at the same time. The managerial cross-pressures derive from several sources. First, sponsoring departments, e.g. Public Works Ministries and governmental departments, and governmental agencies generally retain a central role in the development and regulation of PPPs (Jooste & Scott, 2012). They structure the management of PPPs through funding requirements, active facilitation of partnership development and other forms of partnership governance (ibid.). Second, the public organization employing the public PPP manager directly or indirectly guide and instruct the partnership to pursue specific goals, include certain partners or carry out specific tasks and activities (cf. Krogh, 2022). Third, the agendas, attitudes and expectations embedded

in the local socio-political environment more broadly speaking, e.g. clusters of local stakeholders, come to affect the partnership management and its orientation (Nederhand & Klijn, 2019). Figure 1 illustrates the various sources of managerial cross-pressures and how they influence the degree of managerial tension experienced by partnership managers.

Figure 1: Sources of managerial cross-pressures in PPPs



Tensions may arise from within the same source (e.g. in the governance of the funding agency) or in the clash between several sources (e.g. between the funding requirements and expectations of the organization employing the partnership manager). To the extent that New Public Management norms, values and structures have influenced the public sector and intensified the push for efficiency, financial control and rapid goal attainment in PPPs, for instance, funding agencies are likely to push for project management. At the same time, however, employing organization may initiate and support the PPP in order to spark enduring collaboration between public authorities and community actors around the development of crosscutting solutions to wicked problems that no single actor can handle alone. In those cases, partnership managers find themselves caught in the crossfire between the opposing aspects of the two management styles since (parts of) the institutional PPP framework demands project management while meeting the purpose of developing effective and durable solutions to the wicked problem at hand requires collaborative process management.

Moreover, the local socio-political environment may push or pull the partnership towards one or both of the opposing management styles. If the partnership addresses a problem to which local constituencies have for long worked on sustainable solutions, then effective and socially embedded problem solving is more likely to become a priority, increasing the push for process management. If the problem is put on the agenda 'from above', e.g. due to an increasingly polarized or politicized debate, then the push for efficient project management that show quick results will *inter alia* be greater than collaborative process management. Both of these scenarios may occur at the same time, creating a local push for both project and process management and intensifying the managerial dilemma.

In sum, the partnership governance of sponsoring departments, the demands and expectations of the employing organisation, and the socio-political conditions in the local environment influence the intensity of the tensions between project management and process management in a PPP. Incongruent goals and requirements emanating from the same source or from different sources at the same time can produce tensions. The level of tension experienced by a partnership manager is thus contingent upon the partnership governance, organizational demands and local agendas surrounding the PPP. The question remains how managers experiencing tensions from one or several sources may resolve them.

2.3 Handling the managerial dilemma: Opposition, separation or synthesis

The literature on paradox management has conceptualized a range of different strategies for handling key paradoxes of organizing such as efficiency-empowerment, control-flexibility, discipline-trust and order-creativity (Lewis, 2000). In their seminal and much-cited text in the field, Poole and Van den Ven (1989) develop three generic and logically exhaustive ways of handling paradoxes: opposition, separation, and synthesis. These fundamental paradox management strategies provide a suitable lens for studying and understanding how PPP managers deal with opposing pressures for project and process management.

Strategies of opposition do not resolve the tension, but simply prioritize one side of the paradox over the other, satisfying only one demand while neglecting the other. In our case, partnership managers pursuing such strategy would go all-in on project management and neglect the need for collaborative problem-solving; or exercise collaborative process management while ignoring the demand for efficient project management. Given that the various sources of cross-pressure produce a significant level of tension in the PPP, however, the result of such strategy would fail to live up to (some of the) institutionalized demands and expectations and disappoint one or more key actors in the funding agency, the employing organization and/or the local socio-political environment. In return, the actors may impose various forms of sanctions on the partnership and/or the partnership manager, e.g. withdrawing funding, firing the manager or limiting access to human and material resources in the local context. In terms of their possible implications for praxis, strategies of opposition are thus the most risky and least attractive way of handling the tensions.

As opposed to strategies of opposition, *strategies of separation* attempts to satisfy both demands by applying the management styles in different phases of the partnership (temporal separation) or at different levels/locations (spatial separation). For instance, partnership managers may pursue a *strategy of temporal separation* by first formulating clear and quantifiable goals in the project phase and then involving a diverse set of actors as co-designers and -implementers of actions that meet the predefined goals. Alternatively, partnership managers may pursue a *strategy of spatial separation* by applying the two styles of management simultaneously, but in different forums. For instance, they may work with core partners on reaching the predefined goals within the defined project period, while at the same time involving a broader coalition of local stakeholders in formulating new goals and co-developing innovative solutions. When effectively executed, strategies of separation hold the promise to satisfy demands for both types of management. However, they do so without alleviating the basic tension, leaving it to the manager to develop creative ways of avoiding goals and actions coming out-of-tune or local decoupling where central and local levels work in each their direction (cf. Meyer & Rowan, 1977;

Bromley & Powell, 2017). Especially spatial separation involves a risk of strategic fragmentation and a hierarchy of involvement that diffuses the very essence of collaboration. In order to avoid such strategic and collaborative dissolution, the manager must act as a boundary-spanner and create institutional linkages between the arenas (Krogh, 2022) while exercising various forms of integrative leadership that foster common visions, goals and understandings that tie stakeholders at different levels together and drive collaboration forward (Page, 2010).

Finally, *strategies of synthesis* attempt to overcome the tensions by finding some new perspective that eliminates the tension and overcomes the paradox entirely. The partnership manager would have to develop an integrative approach that serves the needs of project and process management simultaneously without assigning them to each their separate forum. In theory, strategies of synthesis come across as the most appealing of the conceptual strategies since they reduce the strain on the manager, allow for consistent management on all levels throughout the partnership, and even involve a "positive potential of transformation" (Lewis, 2000). However, it is likely the most difficult strategy to practice due to the obstacles to integration inherent in any paradox (Poole & Van den Ven, 1989).

Based on the theoretical understanding of these generic paradox management strategies, the empirical case analysis will examine the contingent strategies pursued by public managers in their attempt to handle the conflicting demands for process and project management in PPPs for preventing negative social control.

3. Case selection and methods

To gain insight into how managers handle conflicting demands for process and project management in PPPs for preventing negative social control, we designed a 'nested' case study (cf. Teddlie & Yu 2007, pp. 93ff). In the fall of 2019, we contacted the partnership managers of the five PPPs that the Danish Ministry of Immigration and Integration (2019) had funded as part of their new partnership initiative. Based on the background information that they provided us

with, we selected the three cases with the most similar target areas and demographics for the qualitative case study.

Table 2: Background information on the three cases

	<i>Municipal population size</i>	<i>Party of the major</i>	<i>Geographical target areas</i>	<i>Prior prevention of negative social control</i>	<i>Expected impact (number of citizens)</i>
Case A	50.759	Conservatives	Four, incl. one officially listed ghetto	None	1185–1500
Case B	74.220	Social Democrats	Four, incl. one officially listed ghetto	Some	810–1125
Case C	90.966	Social Democrats	Two, incl. one officially listed ghetto	Extensive	180–250

All partnerships operate within larger Danish municipalities that have had the same political majority for more than 10 years, indicating a considerable degree of political stability over time. They target similar geographical areas, namely neighbourhoods characterized by relatively high levels of unemployment, low levels of education, and large ethnic diversity. Each of the cases target one area officially listed as a ‘severe ghetto’ by the Ministry of the Interior and Housing. In their partnership applications, all three municipalities describe the problem of negative social control as a serious issue in the targeted areas, but none of them has conducted any studies to elicit the exact magnitude of the problem. The municipality of case A uses the partnership as a spearhead in an initial effort to understand and prevent the issue, while the municipalities of cases B and C have both addressed the problem in the target areas before, albeit to various degrees. They have different expectations to the impact of the partnerships in terms of magnitude and depth. Partnerships A and B expect their endeavor to benefit more individuals than partnership C. However, the latter stress that they have indicated an absolute minimum number of people and that they expect the number to grow during the partnership period (partnership application, case C). Table 2 provides an overview of the background information on the three cases.

Selecting PPPs within the same governmental PPP initiative, we keep the funding agency variable constant (ibid., cf. figure 1 above). The studied cases are thus similar in terms of target area demographics and subject to the same funding requirements and regulation of the government agency. Hence, the case study design enables us to study and compare how different PPP managers use their specific set of experiences, competencies and resources to handle similar managerial cross-pressures. The case selection method does not ensure that the sample of cases is representative of all five PPPs, let alone the entire population of PPPs for preventing negative social control in Denmark or internationally; nor does it allow for statistical generalization of the results (Yin, 2018). However, the cases provide an apt empirical context for studying our phenomenon of interest (Bryman, 2016), i.e. for exploring the managerial tensions and strategies for handling them in PPPs for preventing negative social control, which is the aim of the empirical study.

To gain insight into the managerial cross-pressures and strategies of the three partnership managers, we: A) gathered a wide variety of relevant documents, including partnership applications, partnership contracts, stated theory of change, etc., and B) conducted qualitative interviews with each of the three municipal partnership managers and the responsible coordinators from each of their main collaborating partners (six interviews in total). We selected these interviewees based on their central positions in each of the three partnerships and their ability to provide significant information and perspectives on the partnership management that detail the managerial strategies. Based on our theoretical framework, we formulated an interview guide for the managers and one for the coordinators from the partnering organizations, asking them about the potential sources of managerial cross-pressures and their interplay as well as the ways in which the managers resolve them. In order to avoid social-desirability bias, we did not introduce the theoretical terms of strategies of opposition, separation or synthesis in the interviews since the interviewees could perceive "synthesis" as a normatively desirable label for their partnership management practices. For the same reasons, we promised all interviewees

full anonymity and stressed our research-based interest in the tensions and dilemmas of partnership management.

Processing the data, we first transcribed the interviews. Second, we read all written material to gain an initial understanding of patterns within and across cases. Third, we systematically coded the data in NVivo in accordance with the theoretical framework, screening the data for key aspects of project and process management (cf. table 1 above), sources of managerial cross-pressures (cf. figure 1 above), and the paradox management strategies of opposition, separation and synthesis. In the process, we triangulated the interview statements made by the partnership managers with statements made by the partners as well as various relevant documents in order to enhance the internal validity of our findings. Fourth, we identified the variance in cross-pressures and managerial strategies across cases based on out coding. Finally, we selected particularly illustrative interview quotes and translated them into English to ensure sufficient citing of the case study data in the reporting of the results (Yin, 2018).

Drawing together information and analytical results, the following section presents the study findings in accordance with the theoretical framework: first, we analyze the partnership governance of the ministry and its agency across cases, focusing on the extent to which it creates as push for project and/or process management in the partnerships. Then we examine the individual cases for the other sources of managerial cross-pressure and analyze the managerial strategies pursued in each of the three partnerships. Finally, we sum up the individual case study results, compare the findings across cases, and draw cross-case conclusions.

4. Findings

The purpose of this study is to examine how public managers handle conflicting demands for process and project management in public-private partnerships (PPPs) for preventing negative social control. In the presentation of our findings, we first analyze the meta-governance exercised by the Ministry of Immigration and Integration and its Agency for International Recruitment and Integration, which applies to all of the three surveyed partnerships, before

exploring the locally conditioned sources of cross-pressure and the partnership management strategies for handling them.

4.1 The partnership governance of the funding agency

Several public and private actors may attempt to influence and direct a PPP through various forms of storytelling and framing, economic incentives, and active facilitation. The Ministry of Immigration and Integration and its Agency for International Recruitment and Integration are particularly active in regulating the three partnerships. The ministerial funding requirements define the overall PPP purpose in relatively broad terms, recognizing the need to move beyond individual case management in order to build resilient communities. According to the application guidelines, the successful partnership works to enhance individual and community resilience towards negative social control and to foster positive, supportive and preventive communities (MII, 2019). The focus on long-term community building suggests that partnership managers should engage in process management in order to involve a wide variety of community actors in developing new understandings and practices in the local context.

When it comes to goal setting, however, the ministerial guideline pushes for a different type of management. In order to be eligible for funding, the applicants were required to break down the overall aim of preventing negative social control into SMART-goals, i.e. specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound goals (ibid.). While the municipalities and their partnering organisations formulated the goals in the application process, they did so under facilitation of the Agency for International Recruitment and Integration who contacted all partnership managers and helped them further specify the goals, develop measurable parameters and formulate success criteria for each one of them within a two-year period. As one of the managers explains, the government agency was exceedingly thorough in their evaluation of the proposed partnership goals, their exact wording, and the plans to fulfil them:

We developed the project goals and formulated a proposed partnership agreement based on a theory of change, which defined roles, goals, expectations, and strategies. We then sent it to the

agency and an external consultant firm. I have been involved in many projects, but never one so closely monitored as this one. (Partnership manager, case A)

In terms of actors, the ministry required the public applicants to partner with one or more civil society organisations capable of reaching the vulnerable and closed communities that the partnerships target (MII, 2019). Leaving it open as to how many organizations, this criterion does not particularly push any specific type of management. Evaluating the SMART-goals, however, the agency considered the credibility and competencies of the partnering organization(s) in terms of the partnership's capacity to deliver on the stated goals. Moreover, the funding requirement stated that roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined (ibid.). Hence, the ministerial governance of the partnerships' actor setting did push the management style towards project management to some extent.

In terms of development and implementation of activities, the ministry would only fund partnerships with clearly stated role definitions and task divisions. For that reason, the agency convened and facilitated multiple applicant workshops that aided the partnership managers in allocating tasks and clearly stating which activities each partner should engage in. While the partnership purpose of building resilient communities prompts more collaborative forms of process management, the ministerial governance of partnership goals, actors and activities incentivised more classical forms of project management. Suggesting a purpose that is difficult to fulfil without (some measure of) process management, but heavily weighing project management in its more hands-on partnership governance, the ministry and its agency placed the partnership managers in the managerial clamp described in the theoretical framework.

4.2 Managerial tensions and coping strategies in the three PPPs

While the partnership governance of the ministry and its agency produces managerial tensions by pushing for both project and process management, the local socio-political environment strengthens or eases the managerial cross-pressures in the three PPPs. In accordance with the theoretical framework, the following sections analyse and explain the locally conditioned cross-

pressures in each of the cases and how each of the managers resolves the managerial tensions through contingent paradox management strategies.

4.2.1 Partnership A

The local socio-political environment in case A places few expectations on the PPP and its manager. The manager explains how serious political interest has only recently surged and that the partnership is an initial attempt to target the issue. Accordingly, she emphasizes that the main purpose of the partnership is to show some action and demonstrate that the local politicians and administrators are now concerned about honour-based violence and negative social control:

The previous integration policy did not even mention negative social control. It has become a focal point in the new one, but to properly implement it, the authorities must take ownership of the processes. (Partnership manager, case A).

Thus, the manager highlights the importance of proving a feasible course of action within a local political climate where knowledge of the issue is limited and no previous local work has been done. This environment does not create a push for extensive collaborative process management, but rather a more limited and controlled approach that underpins the project management promoted by the government agency in and through its hands-on governance of the partnership. Since the external requirements, demands and expectations mostly align with a project management approach, the cross-pressures and managerial tensions are low in case A, limiting the need for coping strategies of separation or synthesis.

In line with the conditioning partnership management factors, the manager of partnership A loyally prioritizes and adopts the central and local pushes for project management. In her management, she thus focuses on fulfilling the goals defined in the partnership agreement with the ministry, namely to educate and deploy a number of volunteers in peer-to-peer work and community presentations (partnership agreement, case A). She conceives of the volunteers as receivers of knowledge and implementers of program activities rather than a possible part of collaborative idea generation (interview). Instead, she attempts to stick to the pre-defined line

of action throughout the project period without developing new goals, involving new actors, or diverging from the planned activities.

In principle, the manager is open towards involving a wider set of stakeholders, but she is not convinced that they are able to contribute towards reaching the predetermined goals and making the desired impact:

If collaboration [with local stakeholders] can contribute towards our goals, it is of course desirable. But we should not simply collaborate for the sake of collaborating. There are plenty of possible local collaborators, but none of them can contribute to the scope and purpose of the partnership.
(Partnership manager, case A)

Put differently, the managers consider the involvement of more actors as a source of digression and higher coordination costs without increasing performance and producing the desired results. The quote illustrates the mentality of the partnership manager, which is more aligned with a project management approach than a process management approach.

To the extent that narrower project management conflicts with the broader PPP purpose of building resilient communities, the manager handles the tension through a strategy of opposition that privileges the project management side of the dilemma. We cannot rule out a managerial shift through a temporal strategy that include process management in later stages. However, the external cross-pressure is low in the local context since neither the employing organization nor the local socio-political environment significantly encourage experimentation and development of long-term solutions to the problem. It shows how local conditions ease the inherent tensions in the partnership governance of the funding agency and leaves the manager with an easier choice of project management over process management.

4.2.2 Partnership B

In terms of overarching goals, core partners and activities, partnership B is similar to partnership A (Partnership application, case A; Partnership agreement, case B). However, the employing

organization exhibits a more well-developed perception of the issue as a wicked problem, increasing the push for process management:

The municipality has already put great focus on the issues of parallel societies and they are aware of the complex nature of the issue. (Organisation coordinator, case B).

While the partnership is the first effort directly targeting the issue of negative social control, the local environment prompts the manager to mobilize a wider network of local actors in formulating long-term goals of enhancing the systemic problem-solving capacity of local government and community organizations and *"to better equip the system to tackle the issue"* (Partnership manager, case B). Compared to case A, the local socio-political environment in case B thus pushes for collaborative process management. In concert with the partnership governance of the government agency, which pushes for project management, it increases the managerial cross-pressures in the PPP.

Aware of the partnership members' similar views on the issue, the partnership manager has searched out new relations and perspectives that can contribute to the fulfilment of both predefined end emergent goals. The partnership operates with an understanding of negative social control as a problem that includes multiple aspects of life, which both supports and necessitates a broader inclusion of public and private actors. A partnering coordinator echoes this perception:

The effort should expand to encompass and enable citizens and local organisations since neither the manager nor I have the solutions. The solutions lie with schools, institutions and of course the volunteering mothers and fathers as well as others who are in touch with the issue daily. (Organisation coordinator, case B).

In order to expand the set of involved actors while still adhering to the central governments requirements, the manager has set up a steering committee with the core actors, which aims to ensure partnership progress according to plans, and an advisory board of local stakeholders such as schools, youth centres, immigrant reverends and local community organizations, which develops new goals and activities that go beyond the partnership agreement. The institutional

separation enables her to bolster the innovative capacity of the partnership while dampening the potential negative effects that collaborative innovation might have on efficiency. The supplementary advisory board also encourages local engagements and provides local stakeholders with a formal meeting place:

In meetings with the advisory board, we discuss how local stakeholders can help recruit and engage volunteers. However, it is should also bring forth their knowledge and opinions. They have seen negative social control many times before. They can see issues and challenges that we cannot and they can address the partnership focus more accurately. (Partnership manager, case B)

Hence, the manager simultaneously uses the advisory board as a forum for ensuring that the partnership targets the issue in an acute and precise manner and a platform for development that shifts the focus from delivering on specific activity goals to more sustainable outcomes of the partnership beyond the government-funded period. This is based on a common partnership perception that the partnership "*could and should not conceive of it as an isolated project, but must be rooted in and across all relevant administrative units in the municipality as well as local stakeholders*" (Partnership managers, case B). However, instead of replacing the goals and processes initially made, the partnership manager has integrated it to fit local capacities and further elaborate upon them. The advisory board enables the manager access to a wide array of local stakeholder who can deliver alternative and potentially disruptive perspectives while still ensuring efficient project management through steering committee since "*it eases the management of the project to limit the number of core actors*" (Partnership manager, case B).

All in all, the combination of the partnership governance of the funding agency and the expectations in the local context produces managerial cross-pressures. The manager attempts to resolve the tensions through a strategy of spatial separation that applies project management and process management in different forums. The applied strategy also entails an aspect of temporal separation to the extent that the management in the initial phases focused on clear goal formulation while facilitating greater degrees of idea development and experimentation in different

arenas in later phases. It shows a possible line of action that fulfils contradictory requirements and expectations simultaneously.

4.2.3 Partnership C

In partnership C, the employing organization and local socio-political environment not only enable an experimental partnership approach, but directly encourage it. This mandate produces a significant level of tensions that the manager alleviates by synthesizing opposing expectations:

From above, we were told that 'this is unknown territory for us' and they [the local politicians] encouraged us to think outside the box, to develop new solutions and to try different things. It has worked well and given me and the partnership a freer role under less restricted frames to decide who we want to work with and how. (Partnership manager, case C)

Following a wave of immigration from Syria in 2015, the issues of integration have topped the local political agenda for some time and the politicians have gained a greater understanding of the complexities in immigrant communities. In turn, this has granted the partnerships with greater latitude to develop sustainable solutions to the issue of negative social control. It has also promoted further collaboration with local stakeholders who are seen as valuable assets and collaborators by local politicians and partnership members.

However, the local government still expects the manager to fulfil the funding requirements of central government, placing him under managerial cross-pressure of concurrent pushes for project and process management. The manager himself acknowledges the tension of simultaneously involving a wider set of local actors to obtain knowledge, creativity and perspectives and ensuring partnership progress and performance that will satisfy the funding agency. He has attempted to relieve the tensions by finding new perspectives that factor in both the central government requirements and the local push for collaborative process management. As he explains:

Many ideas come from residents in the area – so from below – but other ideas originate from us in the partnership management [...] The trick is to join the two sources to produce some activities

that are both realistically doable and have a positive effect on the vulnerable communities.

(Partnership manager, case C)

Instead of replacing the pre-defined goals with new outcome goals, the manager has made use of the considerable political mandate to adopt a collaborative and explorative approach to generate ideas for new activities that contribute towards the original partnership goals. Through meetings and interviews with citizens and local stakeholders such as the local mosque, churches, and minority community organizations, he has explored different stakeholder ideas for possible lines of action that help fulfil the partnership goals. Their input is then translated into suggestions for activities that the local government and the partnering organization can implement within the project framework.

Hence, the manager attempts to evolve the partnership and its core understanding of the issue, not abandoning the original goals, actors and activities, but rather elaborating upon them. Through the managerial strategy of synthesis, the manager thus aims to combine top-down management with bottom-up idea generation. For instance, he has attempted to bring in a local community perspective when deploying professionals in dealing with issue of negative social control:

I have attempted to move the professionals closer to a view of the phenomenon that does not demonize people who exercise negative social control. I have emphasized that we need to understand the parental perspective and why they feel under pressure to exercise negative social control. (Partnership manager, case C)

In sum, the simultaneous needs to fulfil central government requirements and to develop novel approaches to the issue in the local context produce a significant level of managerial cross-pressure. The manager has developed a way to avoid local decoupling and instead serving both needs simultaneously. Tellingly, the manager frequently refers back to the 'upper level' of government as a way of legitimizing his integrative management approach (interview). The managerial strategy entails periods and phases with greater emphasis on project or process management, respectively, hence giving the strategy a touch of temporal separation. However, the

managers' integrated application of both forms of management is evident throughout the studied partnership period despite changes in the exact mix over time. Hence, the case findings show how partnership managers can synthesize opposing requirements and expectation, thus alleviating the tensions between project and process management.

4.3 Cross-case conclusions

Despite being subjected to the same partnership governance of the Ministry of Immigration and Integration and its Agency for International Recruitment and Integration, the three partnership managers have pursued markedly different strategies. Comparing the findings across the three distinct cases leads us to draw three main conclusions concerning the production of managerial tensions in the partnerships and the managerial strategies for handling them.

First, the case analysis shows how the variation in management strategies is partly a result of differences in the demands and expectations of their employing organizations and in the local socio-political contexts of the partnerships, which produce different levels of managerial tension. In partnership A, the combined push for project management is high, while the push for process management is low, thus decreasing managerial tensions in the partnership and prompting the manager to prioritize project management over process management. In partnerships B and C, on the other hand, a local push for process management combined with the government agency's push for project management creates stronger cross-pressures that produce considerably higher levels of managerial tension than in partnership A. The managers in partnership B and C thus find themselves in a situation with a greater need to find ways of meeting demands for both project *and* process management, making a strategy of opposition less feasible. In partnership B, the manager relieves the managerial tensions by pursuing a strategy that mainly relies on spatial separation, exercising project and process management in separate forums, whereas the manager in partnership C resolves the tensions through a strategy of synthesis that combines bottom-up idea generation with top-down management.

Second, we notice how all of the partnership managers exercise project management in some form. It indicates that the partnership governance of the funding agency in the initial phases of the partnerships has significant influence on the subsequent style of management. Completely ignoring the funding agency's push for project management simply appears difficult or even impossible. A more feasible course of action is either to disregard the need for process management or to find ways of doing both. The two managers who do engage in some form of process management have found ways of doing so without compromising the initially established framework. Rather they have adapted partnership goals through the active involvement of the knowledge, perspectives and ideas of local stakeholders.

Third, while the manager of partnerships B and C do vary their respective emphasis on project and process management in different phases of the partnership, none of the managers pursues an exclusive strategy of temporal separation. In the interviews, the managers point to the fact that the limited project period does not allow for fully fledged process management in any of the partnership phases, which precludes a fully evolved paradox management strategy of temporal separation. Instead, the managers must perform some level of project management all the way through the partnership period with the option of engaging in parallel or integrated pursuits of process management. All strategies attempt to keep the partnership on track to goal attainment within the two-year period, while potentially adding or integrating contained collaborative idea generation and implementation of activities.

All in all, the findings of the nested case study show how the partnership governance of the funding agency is highly influential with respect to the type of management exercised in the PPPs. However, it also shows that the central regulation of the partnerships is not all determining since the local socio-political contexts of the partnerships co-determine the level of cross-pressure in the partnerships. Even in the two partnership with relatively high levels of managerial tensions, the individual managers apply different paradox management strategies in order to handle them. This shows how the management style applied in the individual partnership develops through complex intersections between central partnership governance, demands and

expectations of employing organizations, local socio-political environments, and contingent dispositions of individual partnership managers.

5. Discussion

The findings of the case study adds to existing research on hybrid governance, partnership governance and PPP management in a number of ways, especially within the field of crime prevention and vulnerability.

First, the study confirms the proposition of fundamental tensions in hybrid governance regimes where multiple governance paradigms co-exist (Denis et al., 2015; Torfing, Andersen et al., 2020; Koppenjan et al., 2019). Specifically, it adds to the growing literature examining the tensions between New Public Management and cross-sector collaboration in the field of crime prevention and vulnerability. Previous studies have shown the negative effects of the NPM reforms on cross-sector collaboration and partnerships, e.g. how they have prompted the Dutch police and local government administrators to withdraw from local security networks in which they played a key co-ordinating role (Terpstra, 2005, p. 43). Introducing output-oriented performance measures of police response times, detection rates and arrests rather than preventive outcomes of collaborative activities, the reforms have strengthened the intra-organizational focus of the police, the social services and other key actors and thus challenged the development of inter-organizational relations and partnerships in the field (Verhage et al, 2010; Loveday, 2005; Webster, 2015; Crawford & Cunningham, 2015, pp. 80ff). Our study shows that the NPM-related orientation toward quantifiable output measures, goal attainment and performance management also affects the institutional framework of PPPs and creates tensions in the management of the cross-cutting partnerships. However, our study also suggests that the degree to which the latter limits cross-sector collaboration depends on the managerial strategy of the partnership manager and that it is indeed possible to combine NPM-related project management with New Public Governance-related process management.

Second, the study shows a promising path of integrating paradox management theory in public governance hybridity research, which enables a more careful and detailed understanding of the role of public managers in bridging opposing logics of governance. Thus far, the developing research and theory building on public governance hybridity has primarily focused on capturing and conceptualizing the differences between co-existing governance paradigms. To the extent that hybrid arrangements evolve as a syntheses between different paradigms, scholars have mainly observed and theorized the hybridity as a more or less mechanic process on the level of governance. The existing literature simply lacks theoretical frameworks and conceptual tools for capturing and understanding the creative role of managers in developing hybrid arrangements that connect contradictory modes of governance and make ends meet through new and innovative solutions. As our study has shown, paradox management theory offers useful theoretical perspectives and analytical handles for opening and examining the blackbox of managerial strategies that alleviate tensions and overcome conflicting demands in and through hybrid governance arrangements.

Third, the study demonstrates how multiple levels of partnership requirements, demands and expectations create an intricate relationship between central partnership governance and local management. We observed the conflictual dynamic across levels in the partnerships: when the local partnership organizations and the local socio-political environment expect the partnership to develop socially embedded solutions that enjoy the long-term commitment, support and ownership of local stakeholders, then the push for process management increases along with managerial tensions vis-à-vis the central demand for project management. As such, our study relates to the evolving research on social embedding of generic governance instruments that are designed and launched 'from above' and applied in local settings (Torfing et al., 2016; Krogh, 2022; Ansell et al., 2020). Previous research suggests that the most effective institutional designs of partnerships, networks and collaborative platforms strike a balance between stability and 'evolvability' (Ansell & Gash, 2018). They allow and enable managers to adapt the collaborative arrangement to local conditions and serve as collaborative infrastructures that

connects centralized resources to distributed action of local stakeholders (ibid.). When it comes to PPPs addressing wicked problems such as honor-based violence and negative social control, the findings of the study suggest that government agencies should consider how their funding requirements and facilitation push the partnership management style towards project and/or process management. More specifically, they should develop partnership frameworks that enable and support partnership managers in configuring and adapting PPPs to local interdependencies, stakeholder interactions, and gradual discovery of the proper function of the partnership in the local context (cf. Head & Alford, 2015; Nederhand & Klijn, 2019). The gradual discovery of project goals through stakeholder involvement helps ensure that what is measured is what is important in the local setting and keeps measures relevant and important under changing circumstances. Further research into flexible PPP designs is needed in order to provide proper recommendations for practice in this regard.

Fourth, however, the study also shows that proper partnership governance and design is not enough to ensure efficient and effective management of PPPs addressing wicked problems. There is a need for skilled, competent and resourceful partnership managers who are capable of developing effective strategies for handling cross-pressures, meeting the various partnership needs, and resolving managerial tensions. Doing so is not simply a rational exercise of choosing the most optimal strategy, but a choice conditioned on the specific set of experiences, competencies and resources that a partnership manager possesses. In order to pursue strategies that involve some degree of project management, the partnership manager must possess specific administrative knowledge and knowhow related to designing, planning and executing projects in an efficient manner (Ferlie et al., 1996; Hood, 1991; Osborne & Gaebler, 1992; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011; Bentzen et al., 2020). In order to pursue strategies that (also) entail process management, the manager must know how to identify and connect with relevant stakeholders; possess and invest social capital and reputation in bringing them together; and have the skills and credibility needed to build trust, settle disputes and construct shared meaning (Gray, 1985, pp. 923f; Crosby et al., 2015; Krogh & Torfing, 2015; Krogh, 2022). Some partnership managers

will only have professional experience, competencies and resources compatible with one management style, constraining them to a strategy of opposition; others are managerial ambidextrous and master both forms of management, enabling them to pursue strategies of separation and synthesis (cf. Crosby et al., 2015). Given the co-existence of multiple modes of governance today, partnership managers from the police and local government will increasingly find themselves in situations where they need to perform and reconcile different and sometimes opposing styles of management. Our study has not examined the individual characteristics of the partnership managers and how they influence on the management strategies they pursue. Future studies may further examine how specific personality traits, professional backgrounds and resources of partnership managers condition how public managers handle conflicting demands for process and project management in PPPs.

6. Conclusion

While previous research has examined whether project management or process management is the most effective in producing perceived outcomes in public-private partnerships, little research has been done on managerial strategies for relieving cross-pressures and tensions between the two management styles in PPPs addressing wicked problems. Our study has examined how public managers handle conflicting demands for process and project management in PPPs for preventing negative social control. It has developed an analytical framework for studying the managerial tensions and managerial strategies for handling them and applied it in a comparative case study of partnership management practices in three PPPs for preventing negative social control in immigrant communities in Denmark. The study has shown how cross-pressures from conflicting requirements, demands and expectations emanating from central government, employing organizations and local socio-political environments produce managerial tensions in the PPPs and how partnership managers handle these tensions through paradox management strategies of opposition, separation, and synthesis. It shows a promising path of integrating paradox management theory in public governance hybridity research and suggests the need for

further research into flexible PPP designs and management skills, competencies and resources appropriate for integrating project and process management of PPPs.

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