Enacting IT Governance in Local Governments

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Agenda

- Research Questions and Methodology
- IT policy at the national level
  - New forms of organisation
- IT governance at the local level
  - Hybrid organisation
  - Distributed leadership

Research Questions

- The digital transformation of the public sector raises the attention to IT governance

- IT governance is under-investigated in the public sector

- How does IT policy at the national level frame IT governance at the local level?

- How does a municipality conduct IT governance within the school sector?

Methodology

Case Study

- Denmark is a front-runner in digital transformation of the public sector
- Roskilde Municipality is a medium-sized municipality not in the front neither lagging behind
- The school sector is a central local task

Empirical Data

- Document analysis and elite interviews
- shadowing the CIO combined with two interviews
- Interviews with the city manager and the deputy city manager
- Interview with the CEO of the school sector
- Interviews with two headmasters of local schools

IT Policy at the National Level

- 1994: The Information Society
  - Ministry of IT and Research
  - Technology optimistic
- 1999: The Digital Denmark
  - Lack of overview
  - Standardisation and IT architecture
- 2001: The Digital Task Force of the public sector
  - Ministry of Finance
  - Better service and efficiency
- 2011: Agency for Digitisation

Public IT strategies

A hierarchy of strategies:

- Joint public IT strategy (2002)
  - New strategies every fourth year
- Joint IT strategy for local governments (2010)
  - The latest for 2016-2020
- IT strategies in almost every local government (2012)
- IT strategy for the local schools in Roskilde municipality (2014)

Overall Development in Danish IT Policy

- A shift from political strategies of the information society to public management strategies

- From the Ministry of IT and Research to the Ministry of Finance

- Digitalisation of the public sector is gradually becoming less of a 'visionary' issue and more a technical/administrative issue

- From technological optimism to a complex issue of public private cooperation with security issues high on the agenda

- From a de-centralised approach to control and centralisation of the digital transformation

Association for Digitalisation: DIGIT

- Focus on the benefits realisation in the strategy for local governments

- Thus the de facto monopoly of KMD must stop

- This raises a lot of problems

- The solution is cooperation among local governments – a new form of organising the digitalisation

- Roskilde and other local governments establish DIGIT
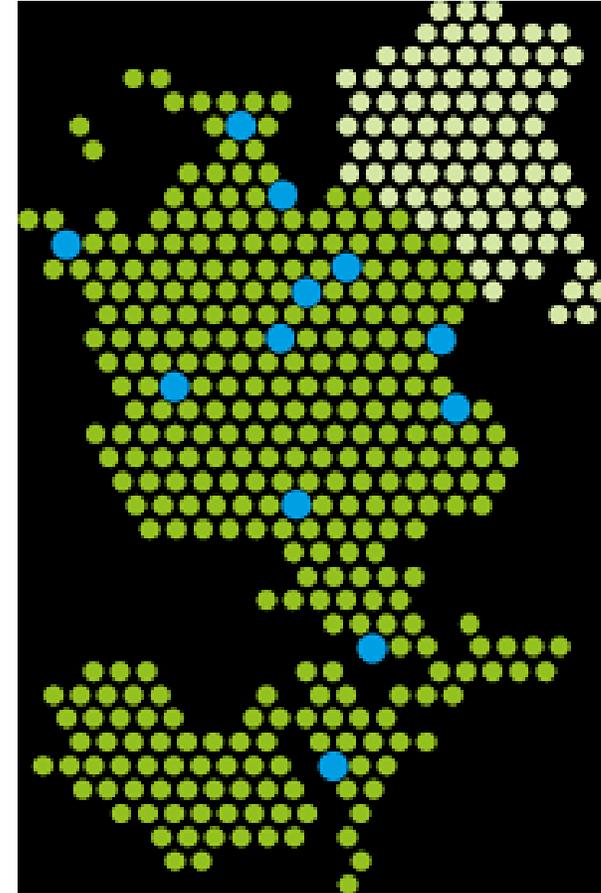
How Does IT Policy at the National Level Frame IT Governance at the Local Level?

- High political consensus about the necessity of a digital transformation
- The hierarchy of strategies works as a negotiated frame for the process of digital transformation of the public sector
- Local governments implement the IT policy and create a digital transformation of the public sector

IT Governance at the Local Level

Definition of IT Governance

"*IT management* focuses on the internal effective operation of IT products and services, as well as the administration of existing IT operations. In contrast, *IT governance* is a higher level activity aimed at ensuring that IT is aligned with the present and future demands and goals of the business and its customers." (Campbell et al., 2009)

Theoretical Framework

A Hybrid Organisation

- A centralised or de-centralised IT department
- A Hybrid approach to the organisation (Heeks, 2006)
- Finding the right hybrid way of organising the IT department (Weill and Ross, 2004)

Distributed Leadership

"A distributed perspective frames leadership practice as a product of the interactions of leaders, followers, and their situation (…). Thus, attention to interactions, rather than fixating on individual actions, is essential." (Diamond and Spillane, 2016)

Findings

The analysis is divided into two sections:

1. IT governance conducted through the organisation of the IT department

2. IT governance conducted through the distribution of leadership

Building a Hybrid Organisation

- A central IT department, and decentralised teachers taking care of IT task, resulted in a fragmented organisation

- The solution was a special IT school team with IT professionals serving local schools

- The former school library was converted into a pedagogical IT support unit

Distributing Leadership

- IT governance is distributed from the top to the bottom of the organisation in *the process of translating the strategies* other levels
- This process is enacted when digital objectives are translated to objectives for the teaching in local schools

"It shouldn't be the tail wagging the dog in excitement over the technological opportunities. In that case, we will lose our purpose. Everything we do, all our interactions, must be grounded in the children's learning and well-being." (CEO of the school sector)

IT Governance

- IT-governance is distributed by *the exchange of digital competence* from IT professional to professionals of the school sector
- This distribution takes place both at the CEO level and at the school level

"In this way, it's actually each CEO's responsibility to make sure that they get the IT solution they need – it's part of their tasks as manager. This is where IT governance comes in. The CEOs also have to reflect on digitalisation within their field. Hence, the idea is that they can use me, and the IT department, as a sparring partner so that we guarantee that the equipment they select is compatible with the IT infrastructure and the other IT systems we have."

How Does a Municipality Conduct IT Governance within the School Sector?

- The local government in this case managed to overcome the fragmentation by establishing a hybrid organisation

- IT governance is distribution from the top to the bottom of the organisation by processes of translating IT strategies

- and from the IT department to the schools by the process of distributing competences

Thank you for your attention!