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# A combined management and strategic spatial planning approach on local sustainable development policy

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## Abstract

It is a main challenge for local authorities to mobilize capacity to meet the expectations on their roles for sustainable development and research can describe an uneven local adoption of visions and policy for sustainable development. Less is known about what causes this uneven local implementation of models and tools for sustainable development. Some explanations relate to the size, in which smaller municipalities are less active. This paper sets out to contribute to this debate about the causes behind uneven local adoption of policies and implementation of sustainable development at the local scale.

Although proliferation of research work on the role of local policy for sustainable development from regional and geographical approaches we want to argue that few studies in this area are detailed accounts on the nature and working of the organization representing a local authority. From this background this article develops an analytical approach combining management theory and strategic spatial planning in the endeavor to open the black box of the processes and structures of local authority. This aims to forward our understanding of the uneven adoption and implementation of sustainable development policy into local initiatives. More specifically, it is hoped that this paper will contribute to the understanding about the role of the organizational logics of local sustainable development initiatives. For this discussion, we are distinguishing between three organizational logics (i) initiatives internal for particular offices of the local municipality, (ii) initiatives that cut across the offices and bodies of the municipal organization, and (iii) initiatives in collaborations and through governance with external partners. The aim of paper is to identify in which ways these different logics are related to incremental, radical or absence of developments and initiatives for sustainable development goals.

The paper presents a deep case study on the local authority of Norrköping, Sweden. This is a second rank city in Sweden with a population of around 150 000. Norrköping is the location for a train stop for a coming national high-speed railway, East Link. This will offer fast train service to Stockholm, which is the capital and main urban region in Sweden. It is predicted that the coming East Link will impact the attractivity and development of Norrköping. The planning for the East Link has involved extraordinary high demands on local policy and planning, including development of new residential and business areas and local infrastructure facilities. Through this paper it is investigated in which ways this situation also offers a window of opportunity to integrate aspects of sustainability. Referring back to the typology of three organizational logics, preliminary results suggest that the implementation of sustainability policy through the first logic is uneven across different

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offices. More radical implementations are organized through projects cutting across offices of the local authority. The third mode of organization through which the local authority is involving external partners for development projects integrating sustainable development goals and which relate to the coming East Link is rather marginal and with little impact.

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