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Abstract:

This article presents a study of Danish primary education policy with the purpose of exploring what is put at stake when contemporary management discourses describe the object of management as fluid and emergent processes rather than as entities, persons and things. The article examines how such a process view of organisation allows policy makers to imagine innovative change, but also how a process view interacts in particular ways with financial pressures and become entangled to increased performance measurements. We conclude that in this particular case, a conception of the object of management as processes is utilized to stabilize a belief that undoing organisational structures and categories offer an almost limitless resource for a simultaneous improvement of performance and reduction of expenses.

Biographical notes:

Justine Grønbæk Pors is an assistant professor at the Department of Management, Politics and Philosophy at Copenhagen Business School. Her research focuses on the history of the public sector and how current attempts to renew public service challenges professional work and subjectivity. She is particularly interested in paradoxes, affect, ghosts and noise.

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1 Introduction

The public school needs to be liberated. The organisation of work in the public school looks like that of the industrial society. ... Can the expenses of schools be scaled down and schools simultaneously be arranged for and aimed at a modern knowledge society? It can indeed if we abolish the tyranny of the number 1: 1 teacher = 1 class = 1 classroom, etc. is an outdated and expensive organisation of teaching.

Local Government Denmark (2002a, p. 1)[1]

If we follow the logic of this alternative metaphysics of change to its logical conclusion, it would imply ... the relaxing of the artificially-imposed structures of relations; the loosening up of organisation. Such a relaxing strategy will allow the intrinsic change forces, always kept in check by the restrictive bonds of organisation to express themselves naturally and creatively.

Robert Chia (1999, p. 211)

This article presents an empirical study of Danish education policy in order to explore how management discourses begin to describe the object of organisation and management as emergent, fluid and unpredictable processes, rather than as specific entities, persons or core tasks. Our aim is to identify what is put at stake when contemporary organisations develop and make use of processual descriptions of the object of management.

While a rich literature has depicted the many strategic advantages of conceiving of organization and organizational change as processes (e.g. MacKay and Chia, 2013; Hjorth et al., 2015; Tsoukas and Chia, 2002; Statler and Roos, 2006), some scholars have also warned that a process view leads management theories to become less interested in basic phenomena such as 'core task,' 'goal' or 'purpose' and thus loose possibilities of specifying the contents and goals of organizing and of organizational change (du Gay and Vikkelsø, 2012; Vikkelsø, 2014). Some organizational scholars have argued that process philosophy offers a fertile way to study various aspects of management because it is apt to capture the fluid, emergent and ever-changing reality of organizing and of organizational phenomena (Hernes, 2014; Helin et al., 2014; Bakken and Hernes, 2006; Styhre, 2003; Van de Ven and Poole, 2005). However, other scholars have linked a process view to a current fascination with change in organization theory and practice (Andersen and Pors, 2016) and argued against a "pronounced tendency within contemporary organizational analysis to treat 'change' as an existential absolute, a generalized epochal condition, and concomitantly in a highly abstract manner." (Du Gay and Vikkelsø 2012, p.140) The crux of the debate seems to revolve around the notion of abstraction and an opposition between concrete and abstract. Process theorists argue that a process view offers a concrete and situated understanding of the fluid nature of change and that things, entities and people as change agents or change-owners are mere abstractions (MacKay and Chia, 2013; Chia, 1999). And, critics of this view propose that such accounts operate with an abstract and universal concept of change, which fails to grasp the concrete objects of organizing such as purpose, goals and core tasks and thus loose crucial and necessary possibilities of specifying the content and task-at-hand disappear (Vikkelsø, 2014).

This paper engages in this debate. However, we will not begin in what at this point seems a rather futile question of which account is more abstract or more concrete. Instead, we are interested in what happens when something similar to a process view emerges and is put to use in empirical organisations and management discourses. The paper is sparked by the observation of a set of commonalities between process philosophical management theories and Danish public policy as indicated by the introductory quotations. By now there is little doubt that process philosophical concepts offer a rich alternative to more mainstream and reifying understandings of organisation and have contributed to management theory with a rich vocabulary and sociological imagination. Yet, academia is not the only place in which a process view gains importance. At various sites in public and private sectors, ideas similar to those from organisational process theory are evoked (see e.g. Garud et al., 2011). This raises important questions of how the very idea of organisation as process is imagined as an object of management. In this paper, we will explore how Danish education policy documents begin to conceive of the object of management as fluid and emergent processes. From the outset, it is important to stress that this study is *not* about tracing the specific links and paths between published research

about process theory and Danish education policy. It is not a study of how process philosophical ideas travel from academic to practical realms. Our aim is a much more limited exploration of how a process view emerges in one particular empirical setting and with what consequences. We ask the following questions: How do policy documents articulate the object of management as emergent processes rather than as goals, results, tasks and organisation? How are processes imagined as a resource for management? How does a processual view of organisation become intertwined with other governance agendas and what are the implications of this?

The paper proceeds as follows. First, we briefly outline the process view(s) in organization and management studies. Second, we present the methodology and empirical material employed for this study and depict how we engage theoretically with the policy documents and which status they hold as 'circulators' of a process view. Here, we draw on both discourse analysis and actor-network theory. Then, we analyse contemporary policy documents and their articulations of process thinking. We show that while process thinking offers a rich understanding of the learning processes of children, it is also utilized to stabilize a belief that undoing organisational structures and categories offer an almost limitless resource for a simultaneous improvement of performance and reduction of expenses. Finally, we discuss commonalities between the empirical case and process philosophical ideas in management theory and suggest a set of research questions to be pursued in the future.

1.2   *A process view in organisation theory*

A process view offers a critique of mainstream management theory for conceiving of organisations as entities and for having overlooked *organising* as non-linear developments, dynamic fluctuation and fluid streams of processes (MacKay and Chia, 2013; Hernes, 2014; Bakken and Hernes, 2006). Rather than thinking in terms of taxonomies, hierarchies, systems and structures, process scholars argue that there is a need to engage more closely with the fluid, dynamic, and complex nature of change (Hernes et al., 2015, p.118). Tsoukas and Chia (2002, p.570) famously state: 'Change is ontologically prior to organisation – it is the condition of possibility for organisation.' With a critique of 'entitative approaches' (Chia, 1999) process scholars have argued that abstractions such as names, labels and nouns are only a false (and often harmful) façade beneath which fluid and dynamic processes flourish (Hernes, 2008, p.19, 58; Bakken and Hernes, 2006, p.1601). Tsoukas and Chia (2002, p.570) state: 'The trouble with concepts ... is that they are discontinuous and fixed and as such unable to capture the continuously mutating character of life.' Hernes et al., (2015, p.118) write that change should be perceived as 'ongoing, and [as] something, which cannot readily be divided into separate and distinct periods of activity.'

A process view points to the potential residing in inherent forces of organisational change processes (MacKay and Chia, 2013). Hernes et al., (2015, p. 118) argue that rather than assuming change to be something that should be planned or controlled organisations should 'work with the forces already at play and by which they interact to sustain an evolving focus for the change process.' This includes an acknowledgement of the 'contingency of change', that is, a sensitivity to the events or experiences, even if they seem mundane or even irrelevant, may turn out to be influential on the course of change (Hernes et al., 2015, 120-121). Hernes et al., (2015, 122) also highlight the power of heterogeneity of factors arguing that this necessitates change agents with 'a readiness to search for factors of explanation other than those that are purely organisational.' Relatedly, scholars call for

an awareness of *potentiality,* meaning the existence of factors that are not explicitly actualized *per se*, but which enter change processes as possibilities (Helin et al., 2014). Thus, change agents should be sensitive to how an array of heterogeneous and potential factors, sometimes in unpredictable ways, may enter and influence change processes.

In accordance with this, some advocates of a process perspective suggest that a reduction or relaxing of control may set change forces free to evolve and flourish. Chia explains how a 'management of change' involves a '*relaxing* of the artificially-imposed structures of relations; the *loosening up* of organisation. Such a relaxing strategy will allow the intrinsic change forces, always kept in check by the restrictive bonds of organisation to express themselves naturally and creatively' (Chia, 1999, p. 211; see also Tsoukas and Chia 2002, p. 579).

With this article, we do not challenge the fact that a process view is a fertile point of departure for understanding and studying phenomena of organizing. What we do like to suggest, though, is that a set of assumptions and arguments has emerged in the presented empirical case, which resemble the reasoning in process philosophical management theory and that it is important to draw attention to the diverse implications resulting from this.

2.   Background of the study

The specific objective of this study is to explore how, in the case of Danish education, policy documents articulate the object of management as processes rather than people, goals, results, tasks and organization and to examine how such a process view interact with other political agendas such as retrenchments and optimization of resources.

The study is a single-case design in order to allow for an in-depth, nuanced understanding of the complex, diverse dynamics and effects of the shift towards a process view (Yukl, 1989; Yin, 2008). We do not suggest that the case of Danish education is representative for a general development in public policy. Rather, the value of this particular study is its detailed account of how a description of organization as processes is articulated in policy documents and with what consequences. The study can be labeled as an inductive and explorative case study (Bassey, 1999; Yin 1994, p. 41; Just et al., 2013) in the sense of an analytical openness towards the curious and unexpected entanglements between notions of process and efforts to organize more efficiently in contemporary Danish primary education. However, our analysis is persistently guided by the process philosophical literature. Thus, the study was conducted with a dynamic relationship between theoretical sources and empirical material. The initial finding of a process view in education policy sat new theoretical interests on the move, which then again allowed us to return to the data with new resources for trying to understand what was going on (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000, p. 252).

To systematically examine how a process view is articulated in Danish public policy, we built an archive of mainly, but not exclusively, policy documents. As the national Ministry of Education and local municipalities share the government of schools, we collected policy documents from the ministry as well as the Danish association of local governments (LGDK) over the last 20 years. The archive consists of national legislation, reports, discussion papers, special initiatives, recommendations and best practice examples, communication of new knowledge and pedagogical tools and articles from the weekly journalistic magazine published by LGDK. An overview of the archive is given in figure 1.

2.1 *Policy documents as material-semiotic actors*

As our main data source is documents, it is necessary to describe how we conceptualise documents as part and parcel of organizational practice. In the following, we will describe how, drawing on the work of Bruno Latour, we conceive of documents as material-semiotic actors. We argue that documents are not disconnected from organizational practices, but actively contribute to the work of connecting and enrolling schools in new visions of what the good primary school looks like.

While policy documents arguably cannot determine particular management practices, it is commonplace for scholars to view policy documents as an 'authoritative allocation of values' (Kogan, 1975, p.55) that 'project images of an ideal society' (Ball 1990, p.3) or as 'hegemonic discourse formations' that are both 'legitimate' and 'common sense' (Motion and Leitch, 2009, p.1047). Scholars inspired by Michel Foucault have further argued that policy documents do more than just that: their 'constitutive effects' include the production of new management subjects and objects and provide a new language for imagining organisation (Foucault, 2000). Motion and Leitch (2009), for example, theorize policy as 'normalizing regimes that regulate identity, and the intersection of power/knowledge and truth relations within such processes' (p.1046). As our interest regards the intricacies of how political and managerial discourses imagine organisation as process, policy documents are an apposite venue for exploring this, given their central role in formulating and circulating new visions about what it means to manage an organisation such as the Danish primary school.

Having policy documents as an empirical object may invite dichotomies between 'policy' and 'practice' in which policy is imagined as a national or generalized foundation from which local and particular practices may be influenced or differ. We will suggest that such 'great divides' presupposing the 'micro' versus 'macro' or the 'local' versus 'general' are not that helpful to understanding the work of policy documents. Instead of placing policy documents in such *a-priori* hierarchy of size or relevance, we suggest, with inspiration from actor-network theory, to see policy documents as material-semiotic actors (Jensen and Lauritsen, 2005; Taalas and Hirsjärvi, 2013). As material-semiotic actors, we attend both to the particular materiality of policy documents and to their semiotic meanings. To start with the former, documents are not simply 'meaning' or 'intentions' to be extracted by the analyst. As Latour has famously stated, documents are endowed with particular *properties* that shape their agency in particular ways: They are '*mobile* but also *immutable*, *presentable*, *readable* and c*ombinable* with one another!' (Latour, 1990, p.6, emphasis in original; see also Sage et al., 2011). In our case, policy is formatted as both paper and digital and the two versions circulate certain 'authorizing accounts' (Smith, 1978) of what it means to manage a school. As such, they actively contribute to the work of connecting and enrolling schools in new visions of what the good primary school looks like. Indeed, organisation scholars have illustrated the textual agency of documents in how they actively contribute to organisational processes through their performance of certain ideas (Cooren, 2004, p.374). They do more than simply 'represent' or 'perform' these ideas; they also 'delegate' the work of realizing and translating its visions in new ways (Jensen and Winthereik, 2002).

Understanding policy documents as material-semiotic actors helps us emphasize that they have agency beyond those intended by their authors. The effects of policy documents may 'exceed or bypass discussions of content and intentionality' (Jensen and Lauritsen, 2005, p.353). Namely, the property of being *combinable* suggests that elements may be taken out, amplified and used for other ends or priorities than those originally

intended. Latour (1999) refers to this as a 'slight surprise of action': when something moves, a translation and displacement takes place. Ideas and articulations travels from document to document and as a result may change in surprising manners. This insight also has an obvious consequence for our reading of the documents. While we identify ideas of process in the documents, we cannot say much about how local governments or schools translate, ignore or use these ideas. However, given the prevalence of process ideas in our archive of educational policy documents, it seems fair to assume that these ideas in some form or other do connect to different practices, fuelling managerial imaginations about how to organise a primary school.

3.   Learning processes as the dominant imperative in Danish education policy
In this section we will present the trajectories through which Danish education policy has adapted a process view. We present findings that suggest that through a conceptual shift from teaching to learning the object of management becomes fluid and unpredictable processes rather than predefined and organisationally contained activities. Moreover, we will show how the conception of the object of management as processes becomes entangled to financial concerns and as a consequence is utilized to stabilize a belief that undoing organisational structures and categories offer an almost limitless resource for a simultaneous improvement of performance and reduction of expenses.

After a decade characterized by a policy focus on results, assessment and organisational accountability (Pors, 2011; Krejsler and Kryger, 2013), in the late 2000s a new focus on learning processes emerged in Danish education policy. Several policy events contributed this change: In 2010, the association of local Governments launched a large new policy initiative entitled *New vision for the public school,* which was framed as a fundamental change of schooling from a focus on teaching to a focus on the individual learning processes of unique children (LGDK, 2010). In 2012, the former minister of Education invited schools to sign up for the project of *New Nordic Schooling,* the manifest and related dogmas of which calls upon schools to be open to change, curious, innovative and risk-taking in order to of realize the potential of each individual child (Ministry of Education, 2014a). In 2014, a new national primary school reform was implemented. One of the main tenets of the reform is a focus on how to insist on and work with the unique potential of each individual child (Ministry of Education 2012, 2013). Moreover, under headlines such as "the open school", the reform intends learning processes to thrive across categories such as teaching and play, learning and break, and school and non-school settings.

The conceptual shift from 'teaching' to 'learning' entails a description of learning as processes that may emerge at any time and in any social setting (LGDK et al. 2009, p. 80). Children learn in all social contexts, 24 hours a day, 7 days of the week, it is argued (LGDK 2010, p. 9). Thus, learning is seen as fluid processes that cannot be contained by a lesson or a school day – instead teachers are encouraged to facilitate learning transgressing such 'artificial' boundaries. Moreover, learning processes are seen as unique. Schools are encouraged to understand each child as having an individual combination of preferred ways to concentrate, process and absorb and new subject material (LGDK 2010, p.24).

While teaching is criticized for its presumed 'one size fits all' view, positing learning in this way encourages teachers to break down the categories and boundaries that otherwise organize the school. Teaching should not address all children in a class homogeneously, but differentiate so that the specific learning style and motivational pattern of each child are

accommodated. LGDK (2004, p. 4) argues that schools should 'say goodbye to levelling and standards and hello to seeing the individual child as part of the community and to making a difference'.

With this focus on learning, recent Danish policy depicts the reality of the organisation as streams of processes rather than organisational structures and categories. Schools are expected to develop ways of relating to children that acknowledge the fluid and heterogeneous nature of learning processes.

3.1 *The problem with structure*

The shift from a school that focuses on teaching to a school that focuses on learning includes a critique of many of the structures and categories previously utilized in the organisation of a school day. LGDK writes:

> The public school needs to be liberated. The organisation of work in the public school looks like that of the industrial society. But we are living in a knowledge society with entirely different conditions. Can the expenses of schools be scaled down and schools simultaneously be arranged for and aimed at a modern knowledge society? It can indeed if we abolish the tyranny of the number 1: 1 teacher = 1 class = 1 classroom, etc. is an outdated and expensive organisation of teaching. (LGDK 2002a, p.2)

Categories such as class or classroom teaching are seen to limit the natural flux of learning processes by forcing rigid divisions upon them. LGDK argues:

> Our holding on to the class as the predominant form of organizing of teaching reduces children's possibilities for benefitting. Put differently: the school is too one-sided in its form of teaching. Children are different and have different ways of learning. Classroom teaching cannot to a sufficient degree take that into account. (LGDK, 2002b, p.7)

The concepts of classroom teaching and class are criticized for lacking capacity to capture the heterogeneity of learning processes. A school day organized through defined durations of lessons and breaks are criticized for not taking into account the ephemeral, fluid and emerging nature of learning processes:

> Learning cannot be designed or planned. This view on learning is a great challenge for the deliberate strategies and for instance the evaluation of goal achievement that is only interested in how the exogenous goals are doing without concern for the learning process. (Thomsen and Krøll-Schwartz, 2009, p.118)

What is called for is flexible organizing i.e. flexible formation of learning communities and flexible allocation of staff (LGDK, 2010; Balle, 2013). Instead of forcing learning processes into rigid categories and time durations decided on beforehand, organising should flexibly be adjusted to learning processes. Just to give one example of how this thinking is translated into organizational and pedagogical self-descriptions at the level of individual schools, we provide the following quotation from the value statement of a school:

> The school considers itself an amoeba, which in flexible and self-reflective manners meets the challenges that emerge within and beyond the school milieu. Therefore it will be very difficult on propose concrete suggestions for the weekly timetable. Neither is it possible to determine a structure on beforehand. (HC Andersen skolen, 2014)

Thus, educational policies depict categories and structures as unfit to capture the fluid and ever-changing reality of processes. Learning is described as heterogeneous forces that cannot and should not be divided into separate and distinct periods of activity. School actors are encouraged to perceive learning and knowledge as coherent and fluid processes and should not be artificially cleaved, captured and divided by categories and organisational structures.

3.2   *Releasing potentiality*

In the recent reform of the public school, the idea of 'the open school' holds a prominent position (the Ministry of Education, 2013, 2012). Instead of fixed institutional boundaries with separate activities, the concept of an open school seeks to realize the ubiquitous concept of learning by organizing learning processes across institutional boundaries such as school/day care or sports club and conceptual boundaries such as school/local community. The underlining idea is that new possibilities of learning can emerge if strict boundaries between teaching and play are dissolved. In a joint publication, LGDK, the ministry of the interior and social policy, the ministry of education, the ministry of economy and business, and the ministry of finance argue that what is needed is:

> … a natural entwinement of activities of teaching and leisure time. It is exactly in the interplay between play and learning that new opportunities emerge for developing spaces of learning and development in both leisure time and in teaching. (LGDK et al., 2009, p.80)

The reform requests schools to identify new possibilities of learning in spaces in between teaching, play and leisure time. The reform material provides lively examples of the possibilities of learning that may emerge if teachers think of learning as fluid and ongoing processes which flow across artificial distinctions: Breaks may be an opportunity to enhance the readiness to learn if games are arranged that involve physical exercise. Or teachers may use the lunch break to inspire curiosity and desire to learn about food products in a more informal manner, asking the children where they think the cheese in the lunch packets may come from etc. (Ministry of Education, 2012, p.12).

The reform requires schools to form partnerships with institutions such as after school care, libraries, museums, local business, sports clubs etc. The aim is to release learning from inhibiting organisational boundaries and generate coherent learning landscapes through productive interstitial spaces (Bjerg and Staunæs, 2014). These spaces are described as particularly potent for learning because they are 'authentic' and escape the categories and goal-rationality of the school. The Ministry (2014b, p.3) explains through an example:

> Besides the teacher, three adults are present: the farmer, the chef and a nature consultant. They offer the children different, authentic experiences. The farmer helps the children in the garden, while the nature consultant shares his knowledge in such a manner that they do not even experience it as teaching.

Thus, education policies expect schools to develop openness towards the unpredictable flow of learning and learn to utilize it. Teachers are called upon to work with the forces already in play e.g. by harvesting authentic moments in which a child or a group of children show motivation or readiness to learn (i.e. breaks or visits to a farm). Observing the object of management as emergent processes paves the way for a transgression of a zero-sum understanding of the relationship between input and output. The policy documents suggest

that potential possibilities can be actualized if schools dismantle artificial boundaries and structures. An imaginary is produced in which almost indefinite opportunities of learning await beyond the confines of customary organizational structures.

3.3   *Entanglements*

The focus on learning and the attempts to dissolve customary boundaries between teaching and non-teaching is seen as a solution to the problem of lacking performance of one of the most expensive school systems of the world. LGDK argues:

> Denmark has one of the most expensive public schools in the world, but this fact is not mirrored in its performance. The Danish economy is under pressure and our welfare society faces great challenges that call for reforms and change. That goes for the public school as well. It is crucial that we focus on innovation, research and rethinking when we create the public school of the future. (LGDK, 2010, p.2)

Focusing on learning processes, LGDK (2010, p.5) argues, is a means to 'reach the ambitious goals for the public school without raising the spending per pupil.' 'Children need to learn more for the same amount of money', LGDK states (2010, p.5) and later:

> [We need to] (...) make more efficient and think in new solutions about how the allocated *resources to the school area can be spent better* (...) there is also a need for a break with customary perceptions and actions. The children's learning must be the dominating incentive in the school. Therefore, we need new perspectives. (Local Government Denmark 2010, p.5, emphasis added)

The deconstruction of categories and boundaries becomes attached to other, economic, matters of concern. In this particular case, a process view seems to also fuel and enable a hope that schools can organize more cost-efficient if they prioritize processes over structures. Schools are expected to improve performance by conceiving of their organisation as processes rather than structures, and harvest learning beyond the organisational or physical limits of the school. This also means that physical and financial limits to performance may be derecognised, and flexibility and the dissolution of fixed categories portrayed as an almost limitless resource for improving public schooling.

This new fiscal focus has not only changed the rhetoric, but has also heralded legislative changes. Concurrent with the before-mentioned primary school reform of 2014, a new and controversial working hour agreement was negotiated. A central tenet was a redistribution of the balance between teachers' preparation and teaching time towards the latter. The implications are that teachers have more lessons to teach with less time to prepare. Similarly, if we look towards the related policy agenda of including pupils with special needs, this idea was put forward with process ideas of doing away with categories of the 'special' and 'normal' pupil and instead consider all pupils as unique learners (see Alenkær, 2009, p.20). With such critiques, the means offered to achieve an inclusive school are directed at new pedagogical ideas of how the teachers can work with their own expectations and how they can reorganize their teaching flexibly so the formerly 'different' student no longer appears to be 'different'. It is about abandoning categorizations and the limits they pose on an inclusive and process view of learning. Concurrent with these new articulations, special needs education is increasingly articulated as a heavy drain on municipal budgets (Danish Ministry of Finance, 2010; Houlberg, 2010). In times of welfare budget cuts, facing unintended, expensive policy consequences of the special-

common division, inclusion has become attached to the agenda of public sector savings. The expenses have garnered the attention not only of LGDK, who for some time has discussed different models for generating greater economic incitement for inclusion at the level of individual schools (LGDK, 2005), but also of the Ministry of Finance (2010).

The economic questioning of respectively teachers' preparation time and special needs education co-exist and is entangled to the process view in a way so that the relationship between pedagogy and economy to change from a zero-sum game to a plus-sum game. Because there is not a one-to-one relationship between the time allocated to teaching preparation and the quality of teaching, the former can be questioned and made an object of retrenchments. Likewise, because inclusion is not about allocating money to special needs education, but about dismantling rigid categories, expenditures can be questioned. With a process view, there seems to be an imagination of doing more with less through 'new perspectives', a liberation of learning, and more diverse and flexible forms of organizing. This approach considers the resources to already exist within the school and the teachers *as a potential*, if only rigid categories, boundaries and mind-sets are changed. The argument is that potential resources can emerge and be utilized if existing restrictions of their natural flux are removed. As long as accomplishing better learning is understood as a matter of substituting a organizational structures or 'fixed mind-set' with an open and processual outlook, improving learning does not necessarily include increased expenses.

4.   Resonance across a process philosophical management theory and Danish education policy

In this section, we proceed with a discussion of resemblance to the studied policy documents.

With its focus on learning, recent Danish policy depicts the reality of the organisation as streams of processes rather than organisational structures and categories. The understanding of learning as heterogeneous, fluid and boundary transgressing processes seems to resemble a view on the object of management. Relatedly, and somewhat similarly to the critique of 'entitative approaches' uttered e.g. by Chia (1999), or Tsoukas and Chia (2002, p.570), Danish education policies depict categories and structures as unfit to capture the fluid and ever-changing reality of processes. Learning is described as heterogeneous forces that cannot and should not be divided into separate and distinct periods of activity.

Moreover, somewhat similar to the idea of the contingency of change (Hernes et al., 2015, p.120-121), the studied policies call for teachers to work with the forces already in play i.e. by harvesting the potentiality that might emerge unexpectedly in breaks or leisure time activities.

Finally, the studied policies build on the assumption that if structures and rigid categories are withdrawn or dissolved new opportunities will emerge. As shown, this makes possible a transgression of a zero-sum relation between resources and quality.

Obviously, there are also important ways in which Danish education policy differs from process philosophical management theory. One example is the lack of consistency in policy, where on the one hand the object of management is argued to be fluid processes, but on the other hand, a focus on the individual as change agent is maintained. This is in opposition to what Tsoukas and Chia (2002, p.569) argue, namely to 'stop giving ontological priority to organisation' the argument is that what is to be avoided is that change is made 'an exceptional effect, produced only under specific circumstances by certain people (change agents).' In the empirical case, the belief that the dissolution of

artificial structures will let processes unfold naturally and creatively, is specifically utilized to create a situation where performance is made contingent on the willingness of individuals' (teachers') willingness to change and promote change.

Here, one could observe the problem as a lack of consistency in the use of a process view in Danish education policy, since old assumptions of the individual as a change agent still survive. More precisely, though, our findings point to the insight that in policy, a process view will often coexist and interact with a number of other concerns. In this case, it means that a process view not only lead to a loosening of organisation, but is also utilized to justify cost reductions and intensified pressure on professionals. A process view carries an assumption that organisations can benefit from releasing practices from rigid boundaries, categorizations and entity-thinking and that abandoning structure and static thinking can give rise to 'authentic' change from within (Chia 1999, p.211). Yet, in the case of educational policy, this idea displaces the burden of realizing the assumed potential to professionals who need to figure out how to do more with less (Andersen and Pors, 2016). Numerous reports of increased sickness absence and stress among teachers and pedagogues following the new preparation norms witness that this is no trivial affair (e.g. Winther, 2015).

We do not mean to argue that these findings discredit the merits of process philosophical management theory. That ideas from process philosophy are taken up in heterogeneous, 'non-academic' practices is neither surprising nor scandalous particularly when observed from a process perspective. A main tenet of process philosophy is that theory is not a detached representation of the world but itself an outcome of various, heterogeneous processes of construction and fixation occurring across traditional distinctions e.g. between the academy and the public sector (see Nayak, 2008). What we would like to argue is that more research is needed to examine the curious implications arising from the emergence of process views in different empirical settings and that process philosophical management theory may benefit from taking such studies into account.

5.   Conclusion

In this paper, we have shown how Danish education policy utilizes reasoning and argumentation similar to that of process philosophical thinking, particularly that the core object of management should be conceived of as fluid and inherently ungovernable processes. There is undoubtedly an argument to be made that in Danish primary education, a process view constitutes a fruitful point of departure for thinking about how children learn and how learning processes unfold across institutional boundaries and different social settings. However, as we have shown, in this particular case, a process view co-exists with and become entangled to fiscal concerns and a strong policy desire to produce more learning with fewer resources. A plea to stop giving priority to organisation over change processes is here also utilized to support a belief that if only schools dismantle organisational structures and develop flexible forms of organizing, then financial conditions are less important. One implication is that process ideas allow the relationship between pedagogy and economy to change from a zero-sum game to a plus-sum game. By demolishing a one-to-one relationship between the time allocated to teaching preparation and the quality of teaching, more and better learning can be believed to emerge from flexibility and dismantling of former artificial boundaries.

The contribution of this article is to study empirically the curious implications of turns to a process view in contemporary organization. Whereas previous empirical studies

have focused on demonstrating the strategic advantages of a process view (e.g. Hernes et al., 2015), our aim was to pursue what happens when a process view become entangled to other kinds of purposes, concerns and rationalities. Simply put, our main contribution is to show how a process view risks lending itself to a managerial imagination of 'more-for-less'.

For managers in education the emergence of a process view in policy means that a challenge arises of how to support teachers in handling the increased pressures put upon them. When education policy adapts to a process view, teachers are expected to be open to the unpredictable flux of learning processes, while simultaneously ensuring more learning with fewer resources. The challenge of actually translating different sorts of dissolutions of structure into more and better learning processes seems to be pushed out to individual teachers, who are simultaneously deprived of the possibility to argue that better teaching requires better conditions of preparation.

As this study has been limited to the particular and perhaps peripheral case of Danish public education, more research is needed to explore the curious extra-effects that the turns to process philosophy of contemporary organizations may have in different organizational settings. Of particular importance here is perhaps public sector organizations with their many competing logics of public purpose, welfare, efficiency, citizen rights and political and administrative accountability. In this study, we have focused on entanglements between a process view and an economic rationality of 'more-for-less', however, more knowledge is needed to illuminate how a process view may collide or interact with such logics some of which inevitably relies on predictability and formal organizational structures.

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Figure 1. Overview of the archive

	Number of documents	Character
Danish ministry of education	69	Legislation, reforms, declarations, dissemination of new knowledge and best practice
Local Government Denmark	42	Official statements, discussion papers, dissemination of new knowledge and best practice
Articles from the weekly magazine Danish Municipalities	57	Feature articles, news articles, and reports from events and initiatives in local schools
Other policy actors	18	Declarations from other Danish ministries, investigative reports and analyses from national centers, offices etc., and reports and analyses from OECD and EU
Professional unions and associations	12	Formal statements, discussion papers and news articles in journals published by professional unions
Pedagogical and school management literature	82	Handbooks, journal articles, reports, dissemination of knowledge and best practice

Note

[1] This quotation, as with all other quotations from Danish publications in the thesis, has been translated to English by the authors.