

NAVIGATING THE LOGICS OF CHANGING PUBLIC FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

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Growing cities, new governmental sustainability directives, and a large building stock in need of acute measures put pressure on public facilities management organizations to transform their operations. However, the complex organizational context encompasses multiple, sometimes competing, institutional logics where long-term demands on sustainability often are at odds with short-term financial goals and politics. The aim of this paper is to increase the understanding of how actors navigate within such complexity in order to translate governmental energy efficiency directives into local practices. Data was collected through an ongoing case study of a facility management organization in Sweden. Focus is on a single institutional actor, a project manager and his (institutional) work of creating and implementing new energy directives. Findings show that translating energy-efficiency directives into practice is not a straight forward process and, together with other issues, requires considerations of the interplay between different logics. In order to manage this, the project manager was switching between strategies of 'zooming in' and 'zooming out' i.e. either focusing on single and narrow logics or integrating them at different stages of the process. By elucidating the more practice-based simplifications that also is adopted by the project manager, we instil the need for more nuanced conceptualizations of complex institutional landscapes, being a central concern for researchers and practitioners engaged in the sustainability challenge in the built environment sector.

Keywords: institutional logics, public facilities management, work practices

INTRODUCTION

In Sweden, a particularly large number of public buildings were built during the period 1965 to 1974 as part of a political vision. These buildings, including both public housing and public premises, now need to be renovated or even replaced as they face several problems including meeting today's energy efficiency demands, and other goals related to sustainability. Responsible for these buildings, and important players for the development of sustainable facilities management (FM), are public facilities management organizations (PFMOs). The inherent organizational complexity and the multifaceted decision-making structure place high demands on PFMOs (Hopland 2016) as they are confronted with requirements that represent targets and ambitions of political bodies (Hartmann *et al.*, 2008), as well as the juridical context of legislation, rules and bureaucracy (Kuipers *et al.*, 2014). Adding to the complexity; the practices and ethics of public FM cannot be viewed in isolation from the development of a business ditto (Galamba and Nielsen 2016). For instance;

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renovation decisions are exposed to long-term demands on energy efficiency, governmental and corporate sustainability directives, while being governed by short-term financial goals and politics at the same time (Higham *et al.*, 2015). These two overarching perspectives call for different responses in practice (Rey and Higgins 2009). Specifically, (public) building renovation takes place in a context of multiple, and sometimes competing (institutional) logics, such as economics, project practice, energy efficiency, and sustainability (Hill *et al.*, 2013; Gluch *et al.*, 2018). The current body of literature on public and sustainable FM mostly encompass issues such as; best practice, decision support tools, financial savings, technical engineering, health and safety issues, together with research on barriers/hinders for sustainable facilities management (Nielsen 2016; Campbell 2017). However, the above-mentioned conditions imply that change in work practices is both needed and happening at different levels of the organizational nexus of public FM (Gluch and Svensson 2018), and that theories and research methods subsequently need to be geared towards both the level of practice as well as the wider (institutional) context, in order to capture the essence of the transformations that PFMOs currently are subjected to (Galamba and Nielsen 2016). Research on sustainable FM could and should encompass both technical issues as well as social ones (Bröchner *et al.*, 2019) and researchers are suggested to view and understand (new) practices within the context of their use (Hill *et al.*, 2013). According to Bröchner *et al.*, (2019), environmental, social and economic sustainability will be the basis for joint solutions for tomorrow's sustainable FM. This implies that the actors need to find ways that enable collaboration and integration of the multitude of logics prevalent in PFMO's, rather than ending up with some logics overrunning others (Thoresson 2015). Drawing on a practice-based institutionalism we explore the actions and strategies (i.e. institutional work (IW)) of a project manager working for a PFMO in Sweden with the ongoing implementation of governmental energy directives, while simultaneously managing a large building stock in need of renovation. The paper aims to increase the understanding of how actors (can) navigate within (such) complex institutional landscapes, in order to translate governmental energy efficiency directives into local practices.

Theories of IW (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006) and institutional logics (IL) (Friedland and Alford 1991) are suitable when trying to understand how local practices are linked to a wider institutional context, such as the organizational field of PFMOs. Traditionally, institutional theory has foregrounded “embeddedness” over “situatedness” (Smets *et al.*, 2017); in fact, contemporary practice perspectives are in part a counter-point to previous institutionalist positions that held the notion that the social world is external to actors. However, with an interest in IW and ILs, a shift can be seen within institutional theory in which practices has become a focal point of interest. Our focus on a practice perspective highlights how one institutional worker creates new practices in an institutional context characterized by multiple embedded logics, both pre-existing and new ones.

In any given field, there are so called ILs, or sets of “material practices and symbolic constructions” (Friedland and Alford 1991) that shape meanings, give legitimacy, determine issues, problems and solutions, and have an impact on change (Thornton 2002). ILs shape and create the “rules of the game”, they represent sets of expectations regarding social relations and behaviour (Goodrick and Reay 2011). As social actors rely on their understandings of a certain logic, so does their understanding of what behaviours or what materials that bring status and power in an

organization which is organized under that logic (Thornton and Ocasio 2013). The change in work practices that are needed in PFMOs can be seen as a change in what governs public FM; and consequently, a change in the logics underpinning PFMOs. When investigating (changing) ILs, researchers have been encouraged to adopt a practice-based perspective and to study the connection between logics and organizational practices (Smets *et al.*, 2017).

The importance of studying how multiple logics play out and are acted upon and continuously re-constructed in practice has been stressed; there has been a stream of work showing that many fields are guided by multiple logics over time (e.g. Lindberg, 2014; Dunn and Jones, 2010). Multiple logics can both compete and cooperate (facilitate one another) in practice (Goodrick and Reay 2011) and sometimes logics can be “used” strategically, and not necessarily enacted in some pure and distilled form (Venkataraman *et al.*, 2016). In this context, Ludvig *et al.*, (2013) have shown the importance of possessing communicative skills and discursive competencies when implementing energy efficiency directives (and introducing new logics) in public construction organizations. They highlight the need for change agents to frame and anchor politically directives in local practice in order for them to be executed.

This paper draws on data collected in a case study at the facility management office (FMO) in the city of Gothenburg (Sweden), between the beginning of 2016 and the end of 2017. The FMO build and manage various municipal premises, including, schools, preschools, housing for elderly and housing for people with special needs. For this paper, we have focused on how the FMO works with "hard" facilities management issues, such as; maintenance, renovation and reparations etc. The FMO is providing premises for public administration in 10 different City Areas (CA), each area operating according to a separate budget. The Facilities Secretariat (FS), with 7 officials, is responsible for the strategic planning of municipal premises for the CAs and coordinates the need for, and use of, premises in the city. Another influential body operating within the realms of the FMO and the FS is the Municipal Facilities Board (MFB). The MFB consists of laymen politicians, mandated to decide on the focus, goals, policies and directions that governs both PS and FMO's operations. Specifically, we seek to understand how the FMO worked, in practice, with a transformation towards a more strategic management of their portfolio of premises. They developed and tested this practice in a pilot-project (hereafter referred to as the 'strategy project') between March 2016 - September 2016. The pilot project team consisted of one project manager, (coordinator and from FMO, FM by training), one representative from FMO (a FM), one representative from PS (planning manager), one consultant and one representative from the City Area where the pilot should take place (architect). The project manager was also responsible for moving the pilot project from its test-area to the whole city and organization. In the early stages a sustainability manager was also part of the team. Later on, a financial manager became part of the pilot project team. The strategy project was initially only directed towards energy efficient renovation of pre-schools but emerged to entail all sorts of public premises throughout the city and a multitude of measures. Little by little the project transformed from its pilot version to become an organizational practice, referred to as “strategic facilities planning”.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The data collection spans a period of 1,5 years, divided in two main phases conducted by the first author of this paper. In the first phase, the unfolding of the strategy project

was closely studied, from the initial idea phase, and throughout its prolonged development and implementation. The data consists of 15 in-depth semi-structured one hour- interviews with 12 different persons, field observations of meetings and presentations, and analysis of documents and PowerPoint presentations concerning the strategy project, those used both externally (mainly to political laymen) and internally, within the FMO. A year after the pilot project officially was completed (and the new more strategic facility planning practices allegedly were in place) the FMO was revisited for a second phase of data collection. All interviewees from the first phase were inquired again to participate in follow-up interviews. Eight out of the original twelve agreed, while four were unable (rather than unwilling) due to several reasons, such as, sick leave, changes of workplaces etc. Two additional employees at the FMO were interviewed instead. In addition; seven interviews with the strategy project manager were conducted from February 2016 to October 2017. A short questionnaire was e-mailed to all the Facility Managers (FMs) at the FMO. We were interested to see how "strategic facilities planning" was perceived and understood amongst the FMs, since their work practices were going to be directly affected by this new way of working, and they would be involved in the implementation. 8 out of 13 responded.

Our data analysis was aimed at exploring the perspective of one particular institutional worker. More specifically, we focus down at the project manager's perspective, as he was progressing the strategy project by means of navigating multiple logics in a complex institutional milieu (Smets *et al.*, 2017). Through the analysis we followed Reay and Jones (2016) and considered 'logic' to be the pattern and interplay among symbols, beliefs, norms, and practices that guide people in an institutional setting, thus; socially constructed values and beliefs that guide behaviours. Such logic can be revealed by language, practices, and manifested in symbols and materials (*ibid*). Drawing on multiple methods our case study offered fruitful grounds to understand, challenge, nuance, and contextualize the storylines of the project manager by combining scrutiny of language (interviews), practices (observations), and symbols and materials (written documentation). It is of importance to note here that there exist no "ILs" in the world per se, it is rather a conceptualization that is deployed to instil some order in the world of organizations and their environments (Zilber 2013). The findings section is therefore to be understood as our own conceptualization of the project manager's work to translate energy efficiency targets into organizational practices; by means of successfully navigating through the multitude of different logics that constitute the institutional landscapes of FMOs.

FINDINGS

We identified two general themes of strategies for institutional work that were used by the project manager in developing and implementing the strategy project in the PFMO; 'zooming in' and 'zooming out'. These themes refer to the two general approaches of, on the one hand set aside organizational complexities and zoom in on specific logics, levels, or tasks at certain points in time, and on the other hand, to be able to zoom out; looking at the "nexus" from a far and integrating multiple logics. In reality, these strategies overlapped at times, but we believe that the two simplified themes indeed reveal something central about being a manager in the context of PFMOs. The findings are not presented as a linear process, but rather as snapshots of the actual process.

Zooming in

Keeping cool (and carry on): This category refers to the ability of the project manager to focus only on what was right in front of him and his team on the project agenda, thus carrying on as planned and temporally disregarding the tensions deriving from the project's broader organizational and institutional surroundings. For instance: the political logic unfolding in parallel with the project. The political laymen and politicians who carried the decision mandate for some mandatory demands imposed on the PFMO studied, indeed took their time making decisions. This was in part for administrative reasons and also because their decisions, in turn, was 'sequenced' together with broader decision-making concerning the re-organization of the whole city administration. The uncertainty related to this could indeed have instilled a lot of ambiguity for committing to progress in the strategy project. However, the project manager did not wait for this group to make decisions, but kept his own project running even though the politicians had not yet approved of the ideas. The project manager reflects on this in the following way: "If this new way of working is to be implemented formally and all the way, in the entire city, with all kinds of premises, the politicians need to agree upon the ideas. However, in the current stage, we just continue working as we do. Even if the politicians have not said yes yet...we just continue." When asked by a facility manager if it is really any use to start working according to the new way, while all these other discussions concerning the comprehensive re-organization are going on, another project member echoes the view of the project manager: "We keep on doing our thing". "You just hold on as much as you can". Thus, outwards, at project meetings and presentations, the rhetoric of the project manager (and the project team) was that the project was already rolling (although formally things were not set).

Personify: This category refers to zooming in all the way down to the individual level, where it foremost was the interactions with individual persons that regulated the day-to-day decision-making and practices. Various kinds of ILs were thus internalized in certain persons. The responsiveness to individual and personal encounters seemed particularly important in the early phases of the project. Setting up the project entailed forming a group of people from different organizations, carrying with them different logics, perspectives, and stakes into the project team. To "personify" thus refers to the observation that these people seemed to translate the understanding of complex ILs to more intuitive and emotional associations linked to the specific person that represented it. One example of this was how important it was to choose the "right" person to represent the FMs. The city area chosen as the pilot area was chosen because the particular manager responsible there was deemed "a little bit better" than the rest and would also be willing to easily accept and develop the new ideas. He was seen as competent and someone people from different organizations unanimously would accept to work with. Previous experiences from the FMO and the PS had shown the importance of developing personal relationships, so that people have confidence in each other and not discard ideas based on organizational belonging. This was acknowledged by the project manager who put together a team of people that he thought could work together, despite previous quarrels between certain organizations. The representative from the PS started his first meeting with the pilot project group by saying: "Well, you all know me, I am from (name of his organization). Am I famous...or in-famous...heh heh...I do not say anything more? (He here referred back to some previous cooperation problems between the organizations.) This statement was followed by laughter from all participants. The

small talks following the laughter testified that the group unanimously respected and accepted that particular person himself, so that any grudges against the organization he represented could now be put aside. To personify refers to how individual interaction directly regulate outcomes and directions for the navigation of the complex institutional context, where any overriding logic temporality is internalized in various persons.

Acknowledging the importance of professional's logics: Although being a project open for interpretation and possible to identify with for a majority of people within the organizational nexus (See zooming in: integrating logics), the project manager needed to make some decisions regarding who to please the most, especially in the development phase of the project, i.e. whose professional logic(s) to relate to among the workers who would execute the new ideas in practice. In the organization, there had been both former real estate agents working as FMs alongside more technical oriented FMs. For the former real estate agents, their work had mostly focused on the client relationships rather than the facilities in themselves. With strategic facilities planning, more technical demands were put on the FMs, thus the new ideas were more suitable for FMs with an educational background other than real estate together with the engineers working as project managers for renovation projects. In order to pursue his means, the project manager was able to identify with the (technical) FMs and project managers and navigate forward by focusing specifically on the needs (zooming in) of these specific professional groups. The existing logic, both within the FMO and PFMOs in Sweden in general, that the engineers and FMs had been "forced" to relate to, was a project practice / "patch and mend" logic. Measures had been conducted ad-hoc; "we could only "put out fires" and handle the most acute things", says one FM. "There was no long-term planning at all" adds the project manager. This meant that FMs and engineers had not been able to do their job according to their professional training, which according to them involved long-term thinking and proper planning. When presenting the new ideas connected to the strategy project, the project manager emphasized the long-termless of the project, its strategies and by that, although not explicitly, telling the technical FMs and engineers that they would now be able to work according to their professional training and hence their professional logics. By acknowledging a specific type of logic that can be said to have been "in-active" in practice (i.e. the professional logic of the technical facilities managers and engineers) together with being zoomed in and attentive to the "frustration" that these people felt, the project manager managed to get a crucial set of people to agree on the ideas and the way forward. The (technical) FMs and engineers expressed that it would be "a relief" to work according to strategic facilities planning; this new way was really "the obvious and natural" way to perform as a FM / engineer and was in contrast to the "ad-hocness" of the way things had been done before. They were all very enthusiastic about the new way of working and thus important players to have "onboard".

Zooming out

Emphasizing collectivity: Once the members of the pilot project team had established an initial consensus and comfort based on personal relationship, they seemed gradually to consider instead the collective and aggregated efforts. Thus, while 'personify' is about letting immediate behaviour and decision-making be guided by encounters with individual persons, 'emphasizing collectivity' refers instead to the modus of being guided by the collective. During the meetings at the later stages of the project instead of focusing on organizational issues that might prevent the group from

working together, emphasis was put on their mutual core values. Issues on how to share important information, that was not possible today, was solved by referring to a joint future wanted IT-system - a system that they hoped would be invented in the future. They removed the obstacles for the moment and were able to work together as a unified group that were to come up against their common counterpart: the politicians. Not as individuals nor representatives from different organizations but as a unified group with a shared vision. Being a unified group was also emphasized when the strategy project was presented for employees at the CAs and FMs at the FMO and the project manager talked in terms of “we” together have made this or that within the project, not mentioning who “we” are. Thus, instead of dwelling on their differences he de-personalized and unified the group, focusing on their common visions and ideas, thus was able to zoom out.

Integrating logics: Being able to zoom out, the project manager (together with colleagues) rather quickly realized that energy efficiency measures alone would not be enough to gain legitimacy for the strategy project. The project manager articulated that the politicians that gave the directives would not accept a proposal that only accounted for energy efficiency measures, since for the politician's financial means were important i.e. a financial logic was governing their actions. What was more; the strategy project still needed to comply with the energy efficiency means of the organization as well as adhere to the professional logics of the FMs and engineers at the operational level as discussed above. Thus, with the strategy project, the project manager needed to be able to synthesis and integrate different logics and perspectives.

The concrete practice of planning for evacuation into existing buildings, a result of the strategy project, can be seen as a product of negotiations around the tensions posed by the overlay of multiple logics in the FMO and the ability of the project manager to integrate these. A necessary condition in order to be able to evacuate into existing buildings was to find the empty spaces, enabled by what most FMs stated as the purpose with “strategic facilities planning”: “The FMO now has a more holistic “picture” regarding their building stock”. By evacuating into existing buildings FMO did not need to rent as many energy consuming pavilions and by that “pleasing” the ones who favoured the energy aspect of the project: such as the director of the FMO. For him the strategy project was mainly linked to a general “environmentally friendly” agenda and he says: “the proposed evacuation will demand for less usage of temporary buildings (pavilions), which are extremely bad for the environment.” Notably, for the project manager himself, who was working closely with the people on the project/ operational level: “the strategy project ... is not so much related to these environmental goals and to those things.” This could be seen as a contradiction since we above stated that he made the project open to fit different means. However, the strategy refers to the ability to be able to zoom out from individual needs and create something that many could adapt to. This does not necessarily mean that the project manager himself was equally committed to all aspects. Not renting pavilions also meant saving money and for the project manager, this aspect was of most importance; he says that “working with strategic facilities planning has been great since it enabled me with the possibility of helping the city save money”. The financial aspects were also endorsed by one of the development managers that worked for all FMO: “The economical sustainability is absolutely the overall aim of the work with strategic FM”, and for the politicians as mentioned above. Thus, “Strategic facilities planning” was open enough to fit the needs and likings of different people throughout the organizational nexus.

Knowing the nexus - “where” are the different logics to be found? The project manager could see that at different levels of the organizational nexus of the FMO, people were guided by different logics, and hence needed different arguments and arrangements in order to “buy” into the ideas and practices that came along with “strategic facilities planning”. To show how this was done in practice we have two examples of groups that needed to be convinced: the politicians and political laymen (i.e. located at the field level) and the professionals at the operational/project level, and a brief summary of how they were argued to. The first time 'strategic facilities planning' was presented to public officers (financial director of the city) the financial director of FMO was in charge of the presentation and the project manager had a background role. The financial dimensions of the strategy project were further endorsed by this opening line from the financial director: “In the end, it’s all pennies and dimes, that is not actually what we should be talking about, or working with, but that is how it goes.” Thus, in meetings with the politicians. i.e. close to / at the field level, the financial aspects of the strategy project were endorsed. However, in order to promote 'strategic facilities planning' at the operational level, the project manager did the presentations and the strategic dimensions were endorsed to a larger extent. These examples show that the project manager had "sense" of the nexus and the logics' placements within it, although he did not talk in such terms.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

We have investigated how one actor navigate within the complex institutional setting of a Swedish PFMO, in order to translate governmental energy targets into (new) local practices. Our findings indeed elucidate the multiple ILs at play in the transformation towards more sustainable FM (Dunn and Jones 2010; Hill *et al.*, 2013) a transformation that we labelled an 'institutional change'. If adopting the common conceptualization of change and ILs, in which institutional change often is portrayed as a replacement of one dominant (institutional) logic for another (Thornton and Ocasio, 2013), several aspects of the process studied would probably either have been missed or misunderstood. In particular, the different strategies needed by the project manager, at different parts of the organizational nexus (Gluch and Svensson 2018) and in different times of the process, would risk lacking much central nuance, if it wasn't for the first-person view adopted in this paper. We found that several logics were at play in the organization, and that at times the project manager notified and made use of a multitude of these strategically (Venkataraman *et al.*, 2016). However, at other times his gaze was focused merely on pragmatic versions of single logics, one at a time, in order to accompany day-to-day expedient actions. We also propose that the project manager "activated" a logic that had been "in-activated" within the organization: the professional logics of the technical FMs and engineers. For future research, this raises the question of what constitutes as an active or in-active logic and how do they impact organizational processes? (What) is there a difference in impact of inactive vs active logics on organizational processes?

Whereas researchers nowadays often conceptualize institutional landscapes as being “complex” and consistent of “a multitude of logics” (e.g. Zilber 2013), the project manager himself did not talk about his day-to-day context in terms of neither "logics", nor was he overwhelmed by their "multitude" or "complexity". As our findings elicit, rather than seeing the multiple logics milieu as a problem, the project manager in our study seemed to acknowledge his scene, accept it and actively navigating it with curiosity. Our findings lend weight to the fact that successful practitioners need to both be aware of their institutional context but also refrain from getting paralyzed by

the vast institutional complexity in their daily work. While this dynamic approach served the manager from FMO well, we found it interesting to note that he himself did not seem to explicitly reflect upon these types of strategies. He was purposively creating new practices, maintaining and destroying others, but seemed less reflective in terms of the way his actions were adjusted to reach his purpose (i.e. his strategy). This would be interesting to elaborate on further, in future research. The questions could be something in line with: How much, or, what part of, the managers practices (IW) are explicit and how much /what is implicit?

We have conceptualized the project manager's ongoing IW as two thematic strategies of zooming in and zooming out respectively. It seemed as if the strategies sorted under the 'zooming in' category were used more in early phases of the project, whereas 'zooming out' were used to a larger extent in the later stages, as the project slowly but steadily became more embedded in its institutional surroundings. By focusing on these two strategies for IW, this paper offers a more nuanced understanding of the seemingly growing complexity of the institutional landscapes underlying sustainable public FM. In practice, single actors do not need to, and cannot, take into account all this complexity at once, but is handling the day-to-day work partly by effectively ignoring and/or prioritizing. These skills are needed, as future (sustainable) FM needs to find ways to integrate both environmental, social and economic sustainability (Bröchner 2019). We propose that the way we have conceptualized PFMOs; as a field characterized by multiple types of actors and stakeholders with multiple logics of varying strengths, depending on the location within the organizational nexus, could possibly be generalized across the construction sector; future studies could look into how a variety of measures are implemented and translated into practice.

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