Att lägga politiken tillrätta
Kommunala chefers professionalisering

av

Ann-Sofie Lennqvist Lindén

Akademisk avhandling

Avhandling för filosofie doktorsexamen i statskunskap, som enligt beslut av rektor kommer att försvaras offentligt fredagen den 10 december 2010 kl. 13.00, Hörsal L3, Örebro universitet

Opponent: Docent Håkan Magnusson
Statsvetenskapliga institutionen
Lunds universitet

Örebro universitet
Akademin för humaniora, utbildning och samhällsvetenskap

701 82 ÖREBRO
Abstract


The desire for many people today is to be professional, and many occupations seek professional status. The idea of a profession has a higher status than a mere occupation; professionals have lot of knowledge and power to decide about their own work and they can also voice opinions about other. Occupations are driven towards attaining professional status. This process is not driven by single individuals aiming to exercise power in relation to other individuals. It is a collective, national process by an occupation.

The overall aim of this dissertation is to examine, describe and analyze the process of professionalization of local public managers. There are four research topics: a) What are the characteristics of a professional group, and do these apply to local public managers? b) How is municipal organization portrayed with regard to the roles of politicians and administrators? c) How do politicians, managers, and public servants view themselves and each other in a normative and descriptive way? d) In what ways are managers trying to increase their influence to reach a position from which it is possible to choose to follow, or not follow, a political decision?

The methods used in this research are several; a deep case study in which surveys, observations, document studies and interviews are conducted.

As theoretical framework theories of power, professionalization and discourse are used to analyze the empirical material from the case study.

The results show top managers’ ongoing quest for professional status. They exclude other groups in order to handle their work without interference from others – discretion, the driving force behind professionalization. Usurpation is a strategy to get into the area of the politicians. Politicians are talked of as children in need for raise and a municipality is perceived as a private business enterprise. In this discourse values such as effectiveness, customer satisfaction, competition and value-for-money are important. The municipality is heavily inspired by the ideas of New Public Management. This development is quite problematic with regard to democracy. The democratic values such as public ethics, political democracy and the rule of law – the public ethos - are not spoken of. My hope is that this dissertation can prompt managers to reflect, since I have tried to see their work from a different perspective than what they most probably use.

Keywords: förvaltningschef, kommun, chefskap, professionalisering, tjänstemannaroll, politik, förvaltning, offentligt ethos.