



## Coordination and complex policy problems - experiences of de-sectorized municipalities in Sweden

Jörgen Johansson

### Abstract

The article highlights the growing contradiction in public policies managing complex policy problems in political systems characterized as sectorized. Utilizing a case study, this article analyzes how Swedish municipalities have attempted to introduce alternative organizational models, replacing a sector-based model to improve coordination values. The local self-government in Sweden has traditionally been organized as a sector-based model, i.e., a political organization that consists of standing committees organized functionally with sector-based responsibilities. In the last two decades, several municipalities have introduced de-sectorized models motivated by arguments concerning coordination and producing seamless municipal services. The article aims to describe and analyze the introduction of de-sectorized models in Swedish municipalities. The most significant results of the analysis show: Firstly, 66 out of a total of 290 municipalities in Sweden have created de-sectorized municipal organizations since the end of the 1990s. Secondly, the de-sectorized organizations introduced imply that the number of elected representatives decreases significantly. The interviewed actors regard this as a negative democratic side-effect. Thirdly, the results of conducted interviews also indicate that the de-sectorized model enhances coordination values at an overall level and has the potential to create cost efficiency in administrative expenses. Finally, more research needs to bring forward analyses on how to introduce alternative political organizing to manage complex policy problems vis-a-vis an institutionalized system of local self-government.

**Keywords:** Coordination, Organizing, Democratic legitimacy, Complexity, De-sectorized political organization, Local Government, Institutional practices



© Author(s). This is an Open Access-article distributed under the terms given in CC-BY 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which allows to copy and redistribute remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially given that proper attribution is made, and indicated if changes were made, and that this licence is specified and linked to.