

Fusjoner og pandemier: Noe vi kan lære oss fra HiØ og Viken?

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Går det å reflektere over oss
selve? Ja, det gjør det...

- Spoiler alert: Hva kan vi lære oss? Jo, blant annet at det skjer veldig mye i løpet av prosesser som avgjør resultatene...
- Tre prosesser
 - En planlagt fusjon
 - En allerede eksisterende fusjon
 - En prosess som rammes av ytre sjokk

Studie	Studieobjekt	Metode	Fokus
1	«USN»	Intervjustudie	«Mislykket» fusjonsprosess
2	Viken fylkeskommune	Intervjustudie	«Mislykket» fusjonsprosess/prosjekter som endringsverktøy
3	HiØ - Masterutdanning	Selvrefleksjon	«Fremgangrik» endringsprosess under pandemien

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Proessen som skulle sørge for at høyskolene i Buskerud, Vestfold og Østfold blir avsluttet.

Tertiary Education and Management (2021) 27:59–72
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11233-021-09065-5>

ORIGINAL PAPER



Support and opposition in an attempted higher education merger

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Received: 23 August 2020 / Accepted: 8 February 2021 / Published online: 5 March 2021
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Abstract

The study explores an ultimately unsuccessful merger of three Norwegian public university colleges. It shows how social practices of support for and opposition to the merger were the effects of the intersection(s) between *why* the merger was necessary and *how* the proposed merger process was enacted. Support and opposition may change during the merger process, since participants move in and out of positions given how the process unfolds. We relate support and opposition to identity. A merger supports attractive identities if it is consonant with overarching normative ideals of higher education and experienced fairness during the merger process. The findings have implications for how we can better understand and explain why some merger initiatives lead to termination instead of a merger.

Keywords Merger · Support · Opposition · Social practice · Higher education · Norway

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	Ideen (hvorfor bli universitet)	Proessen (hva foregår)
Støtter	Konkurransen, universitetsstatus, nødvendighet	Investeringer (i f.eks. PhD program), kvalitet, eksisterende strukturer til fordel for alle
Motvirker	Motstand mot markedet, høyskolenes spesielle oppgaver	Ressurser, identitet, maktspørsmål, lokasjon

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Table 2 Explanations for opposition

	General opposition	Merger process opposition
Explanation for opposition	Identity – ‘who should we be in relation to the idea of a higher education market and of university status?’	Identity – ‘what kind of partner do we become in the merger?’ (merger of equals or acquisition)
Underlying factors	Normative ideals of university (college) mission and function	Understanding of fairness in relation to the use of power and resources
‘Location’ of opposition	University Colleges A, B, and C	University College C (at some point also University College A)

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Hva med Viken?

- Et annet perspektiv på prosesser, i prosjektet DiVi (Skinnarland, Persson, Frostenson)

ool of Business
the 26th Biennial NFF Conferer



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Utfordringer (blant annet...)

- Where should people work? What about physical places of work? Where to situate them? How to deal with geographical distance?
- Part of a solution: An overarching project 'New forms of work in Viken' was established.
 - A workplace concept, involving flexible work opportunities for employees on various locations and in different forms.

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Hva i all verden gjør man når man fusjonerer Buskerud, Akershus og Østfold? Vi hadde digitalisering som utgangspunkt...men fant et pilotprosjekt

- Pilot project objectives
 - Identify best practice collaborative working methods and use of distributed management
 - Decentralized work and distributed management
- A central idea was digitalization – to enable work in a more convenient and efficient way.
 - Interaction platform
 - Flexible workplaces
 - Staff portal
 - New quality assurance system

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Vi oppdaget at
mye var relatert
til lokalisering og
fysiske løsninger

Pilot project	Theme	Original geographic focus	Locations targeted during the projects
I	Activity-based workplaces and a co-creation centre	Sarpsborg (City Hall)	Same
II	Work forms and management in open office solutions over geographical distance; mobility and geographical distance	Oslo (Gallery S12)	Same
III	Premises as tools for integration – new forms of work, co-creation, county identity building	Drammen. New facilities for the department for infrastructure (most employees from The Norwegian Public Roads Administration)	Drammen, Pir 7
IV	Open office solutions, nodes, for flexible forms of work and closeness to where employees live and local citizens	Honefoss	Several places in Viken.

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Hva gikk å undersøke?

- *The purpose of this article is to explain organizational change by means of parallel project establishment and management.*



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Funn

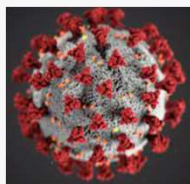
- The general idea behind 'New forms of work in Viken':
 - to achieve flexible work opportunities for employees in the newly merged and geographically dispersed county.
- We see an *ambiguity* of organizational change
 - Change as both episodic and continuous, initiated both centrally and locally
- Occurrences translated into new forms of sensemaking
 - New rationalities infused
 - Rationalities co-developed over time
- Projects – *from being instruments for change, to being results of change*

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Nye prioriteringer, ny meningskaping, i løpet av prosjektene

- Such priorities – that involved new sensemaking –include a *concrete need for workplaces, a need to build culture and identity, digitalization ambitions, geographical solutions, politics of decentralization, economic rationalization, environmental concerns and, of course, the Corona pandemic.*
- One of many examples: Project IV: "Working in nodes" became "Decentralized workplaces"
- Several processes going on at different levels
 - Changed priorities at higher levels change lower-level processes and project character
 - But also... Lower-level processes have their own priorities and change because of 'local' factors and priorities
 - Projects as *'meta-structural phenomena'*

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And now onto something completely different... (?)

- Frostenson, M., Persson, M, & Skinnarland, S. (2024, forthcoming). From distance to distance: On how a master's programme in organization and leadership went through pandemic change. In S. Puiu & S. Idowu (eds.), *Online Education during COVID-19 and Beyond: Opportunities, Challenges and Its Future*. Springer, Cham.

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Hva med oss som studieobjekt?

- The purpose of the chapter is to **describe and analyse the changes of a master's programme in organization and leadership in a Norwegian university college before, during and after the pandemic.** /.../ The process is described as a **change process** which led to permanent new opportunities from a pedagogical and academic perspective. /.../ for example opening up for permanent pedagogical solutions such as increased student responsibility for interaction.
- The frame: **Organizational change as 'emergent'**

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Forskningsspørsmål

Which challenges did the pandemic imply?

How were they dealt with?

And what were the reasons for the fact that the programme developed positively under and through the pandemic?

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Vi gjør det kjapt...

- Challenges...
 - These were mainly related to communication and pedagogy, and how to teach when students were no longer on-site.
- Dealing with them...
 - The challenges, however, were dealt with through the development of pedagogy and activities to accommodate for both physical and distance teaching. Improved technological tools, the faculty's readiness for change and the structural readiness of the programme were highly beneficial when it came to handling the crisis and development of the programme.

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Bra å vite...

- Hvorfor gikk det (relativt) bra?
 - **Readiness for change**
 - faculty members that were relatively flexible when it came to adapting
 - **Decentralization of decision-making**
 - Beslutningene ble tatt av de fagansatte
 - **Structural capabilities and prerequisites**
 - a stable but still malleable structure of the programme,
 - distance-oriented with monthly in-callings.
 - provision of digital tools and resources by the central administration of the university college.
 - **Hva med 'emergent organizational change'?**
 - reactions were not about a 'quick fix' to remedy a problem. Rather, it was an ongoing situation that the faculty and the university college had to adapt to for an unforeseeable period of time. Solutions, for that reason, were developed to function well in an uncertain future.

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Hvor befinner vi oss (i prosessene)?

Studie	Prosesskarakter	Nivå	Type endring	Aspekt	Hva risikerer vi?
1	We're not really into it, but can opt out if we don't like it	Strategisk	Potensiell (forhandling)	Gjennomføring av noe som vi kanskje skal gjøre	Fremtiden
2	We're into it and must make the best of it, whatever that may be	Operativ	Ambiguøs (nedenfra/ovenfra)	Gjennomføring av noe som er blitt besluttet men som påvirkes av både lokale/sentrale aspekter	Fremtiden
3	We're into it and must save and protect what we have	Operativ	«Emergent» (desentralisert)	Gjennomføring av noe som allerede har en etablert struktur – som blir utfordret	Det vi har nå

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Tre studier, noen fellestrekk?

- Selv om prosessbetingelsene er ulike ser vi at prosessene utvikler seg over tid
- Prosessene...
 - Er i stadig utvikling
 - Har ikke et tydelig slutt punkt eller resultat (i alle fall er det ikke noe som er kjent)
 - Får et resultat som vi bare kan bedømme og evaluere i etterkant
 - Kan være 'meta-strukturelle' eller ikke
 - Kan ha forutsetninger (i organisasjonen) som avgjør resultatet
- Hvis vi vil bli konsulenter innenfor området og gi råd om hvordan man lykkes med fusjoner og organisasjonsendringer, hvorfor ikke bli prosesskonsulent? Det er jo håndteringen av prosessen og de betingelser som er grunnleggende som avgjør det meste.