

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Dimensions of professional knowledge

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Abstract: This study concern how professional knowledge is discussed, understood and employed by integration workers in an integration activity in Sweden called Civic Orientation. The changing and complex nature of integration work implies that integration workers need specialized knowledge to ensure quality of the activity. Defining what is meant by professional knowledge is especially important and to address these issues, this study focuses on what constitutes professional knowledge with respect to the efforts made to support immigrant integration. Our study reveals that professional knowledge in Civic Orientation encompasses the understanding and responding to the heterogeneity of the groups in daily interactions, developing standardized procedures; and knowledge about how to establishing a cumulative approach to knowledge in the organization. We argue that these motives are embedded in different perspectives on culture and knowledge. Furthermore, these different perspectives are expressed as tensions between values of creativity and standardization as well as between equality and heterogeneity.

Keywords: professional knowledge, communication, integration work, standardization

1 Introduction

The focus of this study concerns how professional knowledge in integration work is understood and defined by integration workers and managers in one of the main programs used by Swedish authorities to help immigrants integrate into Swedish society, a program called Civic Orientation (CO).

In recent decades, societal structures, welfare organizations, and work processes have been challenged because of increased immigration and changing immigration policies. In this context, public integration work has been transformed by both public policy mandates as well as general demographic and societal changes.^[1] These transformations involve how activities are organized, what methods are used, and how operating procedures are implemented as well as management and governance. The changes are discursive changes at the social, business, and professional level,^[2] where differences in logic and principles are at play in the determination of what is professional knowledge.

Given the nature of the work involved, integration workers in this field often need to have specialized knowledge and one can ask if the transformations of work practice with immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers is developing into a new field of practice.^[3] However, we argue that it is reasonable to assume that the transformations have generated new demands on professional expertise as well as questions in need of further research.

The issue of professional knowledge suggests a highly relevant question: How is professional knowledge defined and how is it dealt with in a new integration activity such as CO? Understanding the processes of integration work requires understanding how dimensions of knowledge are discussed, understood, and employed, by the integration workers but first we need to define what integration is.

1.1 Integration and integration work

Integration is a concept that has been addressed in many ways, but it often involves both social structure and individual behaviour.^[4,5] The structural component of integration incorporates a dimension where individuals participate in formal organizations and activities such as in politics, education and labour to seek agency. This view of integration also means that participation can vary from low to high and that integration activities in general aim to support both formal and informal relationships. On the individual level, integration can generally be defined as structural or affective interconnectedness with

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others as well as with social institutions, as individuals position themselves and are positioned by others through social interaction and relationships with different kinds of institutions.^[6]

1.2 Civic orientation

In Sweden, CO is a 60-hour integration program directed to some immigrants; those who has a residence permit and join the establishment-program from the Public Employment Service, and those who are a family immigrant. The regulation^[7] states that the purpose of CO is to facilitate the integration of new arrivals into the work and life of the community by providing a basic understanding of Swedish society and by forming a basis for further knowledge acquisition. Therefore the government encourage to participate as early as possible after arrival to the municipality. CO must be conveyed in the form of dialogue and discussion adapted to the immigrant's own conditions and perspectives. The information should therefore be given in the immigrants' mother tongue. The CO should be seen as a common base where the municipalities' efforts are supplemented by the county councils, government agencies and other actors.

CO provides the immigrants with information about the following:

- (1) Human rights and fundamental democratic values
- (2) An individual's rights and obligations in general
- (3) How society is organized
- (4) Practical everyday life

Furthermore, one goal with CO is to ensure a certain national standard in terms of form and content.

The emphasis is on the practical aspect of living in Sweden but the exact content, extent and focus of each thematic area are adapted from the participants specific conditions and the local conditions. The program is given in the immigrants' native language, so the groups are categorized by language. But the immigrants are a heterogeneous group with different experiences and knowledge they are young and old, men and women, skilled and unskilled, from urban and rural areas, and from different countries with various religious backgrounds.

However, a program generally starts when there is a full group (*i.e.*, 15-20 people). If a participant is absent from one occasion (session), it can be made up the next time the program is given since the program is highly structured. However, this strict structure means that deviation from the planned activities or changes in the pace at which the activities are provided is greatly restricted, constraining the immigrants' other priorities such as education and work.

1.3 Professional knowledge

But what is professional knowledge? We often talk about professional knowledge just like Muzio and Kirkpatrick^[8] we see professionals as a collective setting, who develop approaches, values and strategies.^[9] Professional knowledge is often treated as a concept where we assume that we know and almost intuitively recognize it. But the meaning and essence of professional knowledge is not easy to define in words; it is multifaceted, perspective-rich and complex phenomenon and therefore tends to slip between your fingers like sand. However, in this study, professional knowledge is related to the social structure of integration work since that is a key issue in the assignment of CO.

Knowledge can be seen and understood in several ways but in this study we see knowledge as being connected with facts and principles, having familiarity or conversance with subjects, which in this case should be subjects related to integration work. On a general level one can say that professional knowledge is a prerequisite for competent acting that is valued in situations, which also means that knowledge is the ability to participate in an integration activity. From our perspective, knowledge is embedded in activities and just like Thàng,^[10] we argue that knowledge is personal, but also manifested and shared between people in activities.

Since there is no definitive definition of what constitutes professional knowledge in integration work, the aim of this study is to get an understanding of how professional knowledge in integration activities is understood and defined by integration workers and managers in one of the main programs used by Swedish authorities to help immigrants integrate into Swedish society.

1.4 Perspectives of activities

Even though we are now in a situation where integration work is discussed in most Western countries, we still need to know more about how professional knowledge in integration work is understood and in what ways the meanings of professional knowledge enter and transform everyday integration practices. Consequently, we argue that the way professional knowledge is understood has a massive influence on how to organize work, but also on staff members' (integration workers) modes of expression and, more specifically, methods of performing integration work. From this point of view, the theoretical and methodological perspective of this study is that professional knowledge cannot be isolated from the context in which it is put to work.

CO can be understood as an activity system and can be scrutinized at three interrelated levels: activity, actions, and operations.^[11] In this study, our prime focus

is the local organization of the activity in a municipality. The interplay between society, institutions, and individuals becomes relevant for understanding how through different voices various perspectives on professional knowledge arise (*i.e.*, ways of acting, reasoning, and handling the experiences that are made in relation to the task of the activity system) where the activity is directed at newly arrived immigrants. Governmental policy categorizes activity as providing information about Swedish society in a way that helps immigrants integrate into Swedish society.

However, even if the immigrants' integration gives meaning to the activity, individuals have their own goals and engagements. To be able to teach a class on democracy, an integration worker must carry out a series of actions, for example, preparing for the lesson. Such preparations imply that the general objective of the lesson (*e.g.*, lessons on democracy) is accomplished by the integration worker's perceived motive and goals coupled to each action. However, the integration worker's actual performance, the operations, depends on current conditions and tools, *i.e.*, the means or methods by which their actions are carried out. Such aspects of work are embedded in daily routine practice and are not always consciously performed. For example, the integration workers do not have to think about how to keep a session moving; they just do it.

The interdependence between the different levels^[11] implies that CO is shaped and transformed by generating actions and operations. An integration worker, however, might find it difficult to establish a link between the durable object of an activity and the goals of their on-going actions, although these are connected. Such paradoxical relations are characteristic for activity systems and can be thought of as sources of change. The changing dimensions of CO imply that it is not always clear how professional competence is defined. There is an inseparable relationship between the knowledge required to handle situations that challenge routine aspects of work and aspects of quality. In other words, the concept of professional knowledge is an historical accomplishment and is 'recurring patterns of purposeful activity that are distributed over people and technologies in work practice'.^[12]

An integration worker's main concern is to establish links between the immigrants' cultures and Swedish culture, a process that Akkerman and Bakker^[13] call 'boundary crossing'. Boundary crossing involves generating new meaning and new understanding across cultural differences. How the integration workers identify, understand, and frame distinctive perspectives in meaning making processes becomes central to facilitating the

immigrants' understandings of everyday life in Sweden. Sometimes, however, situations that disturb the on-going conversations emerge and challenge the routine aspects of the work. How well integration workers deal with these interruptions is an indication of their professional knowledge.

From a boundary crossing perspective, we consider professional knowledge in relation to how different viewpoints are produced with specific voices and relate to specific positions. This multi-voicedness, for example, illustrates how individuals can take on varying perspectives and move between different positions. Such a view becomes relevant for describing how boundaries are constructed and overcome. In our study, different positions are evident in discourses about professional knowledge, as people both respond to former utterances and anticipate future responses. Hence, processes of positioning are both shaped by context and are context renewing.^[14]

2 Methods

The empirical material in this study comes from integration offices in Sweden. And just like a schoolroom, the physical facilities of the integration offices include tables and chairs, distributed in rows, and a whiteboard located at the front. The activities are scheduled four days a week with each meeting lasting two hours. Professional knowledge and continuity in everyday work, in terms of both content and form, are upheld and accomplished through the schedule and the framing and structuring of activities.

2.1 Data collection

After being provided with the details of the study, all the staff members and management agreed to participate in the study. To embrace the relation between individuals' ways of talking in and about everyday practice and the collective organization of activity, we focused on the entire activity system, which made it possible to analyse individual, collective, artefact-mediated, and professional knowledge with respect to CO.

To grasp the workflow and the ways work was organized, about 115 hours of observations were carried out, divided between both authors. The purpose of those observations was to understand the overall expectations, norms, purposes and procedures already in place that adhered to the organization and coordination of work. The observations were focused on different activities and discussions and can be described as a funnel shaped process where the point of departure was questions starting with 'What is valued?'. Observations also involved talking to different staff members in and about various situations.

Field notes were written in close conjunction with the observations, and time, place, activities, as well as what the immediate interpretation of what the participants addressed as important were all recorded. These notes have been used as complementary data to support and illustrate our interpretations.

Another purpose of the observations was to highlight for closer scrutiny those activities that played a critical role for how professional knowledge is defined in immigrant integration work. The periodic work meetings at the department were distinguished as a sort of crucial activity as they focused on aspects of professional knowledge related to the organization, development, and understanding of their work. These meetings included the manager of operations, administrative staff, and integration workers. Eight meetings were recorded, all between 60 and 90 minutes long. The video recorder was arranged to capture how the integration workers and the managers interacted with each other and what was presented on slides.

Additionally, a total of 18 interviews were conducted and tape-recorded, 16 with integration workers and two with management. Most interviews were done with the integration workers since their work is specifically targeted in the study. The interviews generally lasted about one hour, but varied between 30 and 90 minutes. All interviews were conducted at locations specified by the integration workers. Attention was focused on knowledge and quality in work. The interviews with the management were transcribed verbatim, but the interviews with the integration workers were summarized as an initial step. When transcribed, some of the oral remarks were edited to make them easier to understand.

2.2 Analysis

This study focuses on some aspects of professional knowledge and how integration workers and managers involved in CO conceive of professional knowledge. All data were used as a basis for analysis, and to form a preliminary hypothesis of how professional knowledge was understood and expressed, the field notes were initially used for documenting the workflow as well as guiding the analyses. Thereafter we made a content analysis of the interviews and the video recordings to find recurrent patterns of the way the staff and management understood aspects of professional knowledge. In that process, the interviews and the video recordings were listened to, reviewed and scrutinized several times.

Excerpts of interest for this study were transcribed verbatim. To grasp *what* was valued, *how* and *in relation* to what, the staging of *rules*, *community*, and *division of labour*^[15] guided our analysis as well as the ways in

which different interlocutors positioned themselves and others. Such positioning made visible their formal stance in relation to the activity as well as the ways in which they articulated specific agenda and perspectives on professional knowledge. Additionally, different positioning played out in terms of different responsibilities and people were held accountable for distinct tasks accordingly.

The initial analysis identified two categories that emerged as significant tools (or even strong actors) in maintaining and securing professional knowledge: *culture* and *material and methods* (standardizations). Specifically, culture stood out as a core aspect of professional knowledge in relation to the integration workers' ability to perform their daily tasks, making information intelligible and meaningful to the immigrants. Subsequently, we continued with closer analysis of the interviews and transcribed parts of the video recordings, starting with more detailed analysis of culture by scrutinizing how differences in the groups of immigrants were understood and what values and attributes emerged as aspects of professional knowledge in relation to the integration workers' actions. Specific focus was directed towards narratives about the bridging aspects of the integration workers' tasks.

In relation to learning material and methods at hand for the integration work, a structured order seemed to influence the distribution and processing of information. This finding directed our focus to analyse what rules and attributes emerged as aspects of professional knowledge in relation to the regulations and guidelines that directed the activity. The next step directed our analysis to examine the cumulative approaches to knowledge inherent in the system of activity. We identified professional knowledge aspects in relation to how actions and responsibilities were horizontally and vertically distributed in relation to the community.

3 Results

In the daily work associated with CO, the integration workers and management refer to professional knowledge in different ways and in different contexts: in everyday interactions in the classroom and in relation to resources such as methods and learning material. What becomes professional knowledge is revealed in the enactment of rules, community standards, and division of labour.

3.1 Professional knowledge as culture in action

One central aspect of professional knowledge in daily activities is culture. Culture is integral in the integration workers' daily work in both expected and quite un-

seen ways, and professional knowledge is manifested as the workers invoke culture in classroom interactions with the immigrants. CO is designed to provide information about Swedish society and to make comparisons between different cultures. What is less noticed is that the integration workers' work relies on the ability both to recognize the multiplicity of differences in the groups and to recognize the group members' sense of cultural belonging. This awareness enables the integration workers to bridge cultures. That is, culture functions as the organizing element of an activity, embracing interactive and mutually constitutive relations between cultural contexts and aspects of quality. As an organizing element, culture serves to continuously shape the activity in which the integration workers are operating.

In relation to the central functioning of culture it is interesting to note how institutional expectations on the integration workers were related to their dual cultural competence. As one manager expressed it: 'You will still need a certain amount of time in Sweden to be able to compare the cultural part in any way, and at the same time, it has sometimes been on the contrary; to be a broker, you cannot have been too long in Sweden. Otherwise you do not have the material to compare with.'

This utterance positions the integration workers as brokers between cultures. The interactions across contexts such position enables is an aspect of professional knowledge in the integration workers' work, where culture becomes a core feature. A decisive aspect of the value given to culture is made visible in how the integration workers deal with the heterogeneity in the groups. The integration workers consistently expressed the view that it was their responsibility to recognize the multiple differences in the groups: 'When you're small, you are socialized into norms and values and a culture (...) you have the culture as a starting point. It is easy to bring this up in the classroom too, but when you see that there are also other opinions, then one understands. (...) it's an advantage, it is a resource for me that a person may see different things with different perspectives. That is what I am trying to emphasize in class.'

This utterance stresses that people's positions are relational and linked to cultural and historical experiences. By understanding the immigrants' cultural belonging, the integration workers can understand how their different positions affect the way they perceive the environment and the issues that are dealt with in the sessions. This utterance also indicates an understanding of peoples' need to belong and their ability to move between different positions. Such movement can be considered as sense making processes and therefore part of identity^[16] with a potential of spanning cultural bound-

aries. Even dichotomies between cultures and differences in the group are used by integration workers to go deeper into the subject, which becomes a crucial aspect of professional knowledge in their work. The integration workers express how professional knowledge depends on varying perspectives and that there is a constant negotiation between different positions in the class about various issues. For example, when talking about gender equality, one integration worker says: 'Sometimes the illiterates handle issues of gender equality better than highly educated (...) I give the illiterates the chance to defend their thoughts and ideas.'

Likewise, the integration workers' discourse also revealed how professional knowledge depends on bringing the immigrants into account: 'What is it that Iranians, for example, with that culture and that background are concerned about?'

The integration worker is simultaneously 'othering'^[13] the Iranians and locating culture to them. By distancing oneself from a cultural value system, the integration worker is bringing the immigrants into account by challenging them to participate in the activity. The integration workers' objective positioning of 'themselves' is a prerequisite for directing and jointly scrutinizing cultural boundaries (*i.e.*, how the different cultures relate to one another). The integration workers' understanding of the immigrants' cultural belonging enable the anticipation of relevant issues that most surely will raise questions and lead to the negotiation of different norms and values, which makes new courses of action possible while letting each group member take his or her own stance. Such identification and negotiations of boundaries have the potential to lead to new understandings of everyday life, norms, and values in different cultures. The utterance below refer to user-based aspects of professional knowledge that concern positioning the immigrants as active and responsible, encouraging them to respond to their on-going life projects: 'They (the immigrants') think that we want them to forget their traditions and turn Swedish. We discuss that a lot (...) But our role is to raise questions. Where are you? Who are you, as a human, as a father or mother? It is their (the immigrants') role to become more active in society.'

This understanding of society' through their (the immigrants') thoughts' indicates the integration worker's desire to make connections between the already known and the desired outcome, which is successful integration into Swedish society. Such dimensions of performance become important aspects of professional knowledge, aiming to increase the immigrants' access to active participation in society. Thus, the choices the integration workers make regarding how to carry out a specific

action are partly (re-)enacted from experience, partly improvised, and partly coupled to envisioning the future. In other words, the objective is not to overcome differences, but to establish continuity in action and interaction between different positions and cultures. Such enactment pinpoint process aspects of professional knowledge aiming to satisfy individual needs and interests.

3.2 Professional knowledge in methods and learning material in action

According to the national regulations,^[7] different aspects of standardization and responsibility to secure a uniform delivery of service to all immigrants are interlinked with professional knowledge. Standardization as an aspect of professional knowledge involves an insurance that the same content is delivered in an equal manner to all immigrants. In CO, both the content and the form are stipulated at a national level, implying that the freedom to choose, *e.g.*, the literature to be used, is utterly constrained. Hence, methods and material found in textbooks and presentations are based on eight predefined themes stipulated in the restriction, which are divided into subthemes and provide a set of categories that define the 'problem areas'. Consequently, these constraints significantly influence how integration workers perform their tasks and how professional knowledge is defined.

According to the data, the scheduled processing through the different themes assures that all immigrants receive the same information. By using standardized tools such as PowerPoint presentations, professional knowledge becomes equated with equality. Moreover, according to the interviews, there is also a cumulative professional knowledge as all immigrants move from one scheduled theme to another in the same way, indicating that the tools are seen as providing measurable variables to evaluate the activity. However, as the informants argue, it is reasonable to always critically consider whether these standardized programs do what they claim they do or even provide equal opportunities once an immigrant completes the CO.

It is obvious that when the integration workers are making professional knowledge a question of standardization and equality, it influences how they interact with the immigrants, *i.e.* process aspects of the activity. When the integration workers are conducting a lesson, the standardized material or scripts coordinate their actions and predetermines what is relevant to highlight depending on the immigrants they are interacting with. Simultaneously, as the integration workers describe the content of the lessons as having different significance depending on the groups and their cultural heritage, indicating

that a uniform script cannot effectively deal with the differences between groups, they argue that they must follow the standardized chronological order that is built on an overall logic. The integration workers position themselves as responsible for following the script and overall, see the script as logical:

I think the arrangement that we have today and the order of the headings is rather logical. It starts with 'Coming to Sweden', and it ends with 'Growing old in Sweden'.

The reflective remark made above, on the chronological order of the issues in the script, indicates that the script might be correct and logical from an imagined life course perspective, and this is perceived as professional knowledge. However, this objective 'logic' and the way it corresponds to the heterogeneity of the groups can be called into question as it is designed for institutional use and can make it difficult for integration workers to respond to individual immigrants' issues.^[17] That is indicating the complex and contested character of professional knowledge, which is made evident in a manager's remark: '(standardized scripts) should be a tool to help you to perform, but also a quality assurance that all receive our department's CO'.

This utterance points to a both/and function associated with standardization. This dual functionality indicates a need for boundary crossing for the integration workers, highlighting objective as well as subjective aspects of professional knowledge which exceeds the expectations of various stakeholders. Boundary crossing,^[13] becomes in other words a vital competence in achieving and upholding professional knowledge and distributing and structuring work that everyone needs to relate to. As seen from the data, the standardized material is valued as an important tool in their work. Although, there are times that the integration workers need to let go of the stipulated order to respond to situations at hand. A challenge involved in achieving and upholding quality seems to lie in the way standardized information can be organized to support the integration workers' creative abilities.

3.3 Perspectives on knowledge

Many issues in CO require the integration workers to have specific professional knowledge. One such issue is sexuality, which is a subject that can be challenging for anyone and even more challenging in cultures where it can be taboo to discuss sexuality in mixed-gendered groups. It is reasonable to think that it is easier to talk about the parental insurance system than about sexuality. A reasonable question would be what content and pedagogical knowledge is best for maintaining professional knowledge regarding such issues.

However, according to the data, professional knowledge in CO is also a matter of handling structures that support and develop the work processes. As a manager says, this is done: ‘through internal education, management makes evident their responsibility for securing the integration workers’ knowledge base where we know that it differs very much culturally and about group processes to make them suitable for the mission’.

One manager emphasizes the need to keep the integration workers ‘job-ready’, indicating a boundary between objective knowledge and the integration workers’ subjective knowledge:

We want them trained in some way in order to keep them job-ready.

The managements’ view reveals a vertical distribution of knowledge, implying that objectified knowledge is given precedence over the integration workers’ situated knowledge. The interviews with management also reveal that professional knowledge aspects of the organization of work are related to developing and maintaining structures and processes for continued knowledge development. Such aspects of professional knowledge can be related to parts of the ISO 9000 system that give importance to continuously developing methods and processes within organizations by regular audits.

The integration workers expressed a desire for a common knowledge base (especially pedagogical knowledge) that would help them adapt their activities for the specific needs of the immigrants, which point to the professional knowledge of processes related to what Sahney, Banwet, and Karunes^[18] call the delivery of service and the outputs in terms of supporting the immigrants integration in society. The following utterance highlights a boundary between management and the integration workers and the multiple boundaries between the integration workers’ level of knowledge, indicating an organizational perspective that needs to be considered when assessing professional knowledge. ‘[We] want to have a course in education science. If we want better results, we need to create a common denominator among us. But even among the integration workers, the level of education is very diverse. It can have an effect, more or less. But at least we have had a common denominator the courses that we have had here and the meetings we’ve had here always provide us with some knowledge and it’s open you discuss, you criticize, complain, appreciate, everything.’

In addition, the utterance addresses how the integration workers frame their tasks, an understanding that addresses the ambiguous nature of their activity with respect to assessing its professional knowledge in relation to a larger collective system of activity. By conditioning

the enhancement of work, the boundary between what currently characterizes the activity as a whole and what is yet to be accomplished is emphasized, indicating a possible path of action. The utterance reveals that the integration workers desire more action from management while also acknowledging horizontal aspects of knowledge development. The utterance also indicates a readiness to move from an ‘individual’ view of knowledge and learning to one that considers the perspectives of others. In other words, professional knowledge depends on developing a common denominator in the system of activity, which requires a learning environment that supports boundary-crossing activities as a way of promoting the continuous development of new knowledge.

The approach to the cumulative dimensions of knowledge will have implications for what becomes valued as quality work, and the above utterance addresses how boundary-crossing activities can serve to secure both learning and quality. However, ensuring learning and quality requires recognizing what the integration workers actually do. The results reveal different perspectives on where to locate knowledge, which are relative to and constitutive of one another. Simultaneously, the results indicate the integration workers’ and management’s different relations to professional knowledge, maintained through different positioning, voicing, and interactions within the activity system with different actors, who jointly design and conduct the CO.

4 Discussion

We started by scrutinizing how professional knowledge is understood with respect to an integration activity. Our study revealed that professional knowledge in CO simultaneously encompasses three motives: (1) understanding and responding to the heterogeneity of the groups in daily interactions; (2) developing standardized procedures; and (3) establishing a cumulative approach to knowledge in the organization. We argue that these motives are embedded in different perspectives on culture and knowledge, which become evident in the organizational discourses about professional knowledge. Furthermore, these different perspectives are expressed as tensions between values of creativity and standardization as well as between equality and heterogeneity.

As seen in the result, professional knowledge points to different aspects of integration work that simultaneously both constitute and reveal the dilemmas with professional knowledge on a conceptual level. For example, there is no all-embracing definition for either multiculturalism or integration for the integration workers to relate to. When it comes to integration, the complexities arise as soon as we change perspectives: from personal

to societal, from thematic to practical, or from diversity to coherence. In Swedish society, significant differences exist and many individuals and groups desire to be socially and politically recognized. Such differences manifest themselves in culture, identity, and interests, which together are usually referred to as integration. If we talk about integration, we need to come to an understanding regarding a number of issues to frame and articulate what it means. Once these issues are considered, the degree of inclusivity can be measured, which can be argued as a measure of quality of those activities that supports integration. The actions and activities that the authorities initiate will emanate from the desire to reach this agreed definition of what is desirable with respect to an inclusive society.

Professional knowledge can thereby, on the one hand, be described as to what extent actions and activities reach this definition of integration. On the other hand, this integration is an outcome of what a society sees as qualitatively desirable. Professional knowledge with respect to inclusiveness can then include dress code regulations (or the opposite) in public schools or the workplace, the right (or absence of the right) to education in one's mother tongue, and religious or political freedom (or regulations), but professional knowledge can also include specific integration activities provided for immigrants that support their integration process.

4.1 Interests in conflict

Our results revealed a paradoxical relation in the activity system between, on the one hand, the effort made to achieve a specific 'knowledge domain in relation to the integration workers' dual cultural competence', and on the other hand, the effort made to standardize routines in terms of means and methods to secure quality through detailed ways of accounting for work. While the standardizations served to structure work, aiming to offer a uniform and equal delivery of service, we recognized the immigrants' culture played a significant role for the integration workers' understanding of, framing of, and response to the heterogeneity of the groups. We hold that there is a risk that different motives contradict one another with respect to equality versus heterogeneity. If so, such a conflict of interest might indicate a paradoxical aspect inherent in the activity system, which is consequential for the concept of professional knowledge and essential for the understanding of how to support the integration of immigrants.

Our results also indicate that professional knowledge is characterized by the creative dimension of the integration workers' performance, as they adjusted their actions to the immigrants' needs. We argue that vital as-

pects of professional knowledge emerge in activities and cannot simply be regarded as a given in the sequential pre-structured order. Hence, our findings point to the integration workers' knowledge as being involved in displaying the situated meaning of information, which relies on their understanding of the heterogeneity of culture. The challenge to secure quality can never be addressed without considering the situated knowledge required for imposing standardized procedures onto the processes of meaning making. As Wittgenstein^[19] argues, no rules can sufficiently specify a pattern of behaviour because the interpretation of a rule requires more rules. Similarly, Kim and Kim^[11] argue that 'the rules for deliberation are to be produced only through deliberation', implying that such rules and skills are produced by people interacting with one another. The significance of the integration workers' rules became apparent in their creative performance as they responded to and made use of the differences in the groups.

4.2 Cultural brokers

The integration workers mean they take many perspectives into account and that an important aspect of professional knowledge in CO is that they themselves function as cultural brokers, who create links in a chain of democratic governance. Accordingly, they have a specific understanding of the learning context and what Veillard^[20] calls a horizontal expertise that allows crossing boundaries between cultures and different positions. Such boundary-crossing skills involve supporting the immigrants' access to society by enhancing the opportunities for knowledgeable actions in a new cultural context.^[21] These skills comprise the integration workers' ability to take many perspectives into consideration.^[22]

The integration workers see themselves as positioned between two cultures, which enable them to simultaneously face the ambiguity of boundaries where they can address and articulate 'meanings and perspectives of various intersecting worlds'.^[13] At the same time, the workers' in-between position also enables them to move beyond boundaries by negotiating the meaning of various subjects in the groups, which entails more complex judgements than just transferring information about Swedish culture.

However, from a qualitative-perspective the integration workers are responsible not only for supporting the immigrants' trajectories, but also for making sure that they get the information they have a legal right to. We argue that the standardized material stabilizes work in terms of content and procedure and the integration workers mean they must provide supplemental information for the immigrants to make sense of different subjects.

Thereby one can say that aspects of professional knowledge are incorporated in both organizational structure and the work processes. However, what is at stake here is the way information is organized in terms of sequential order and content. That is, the order and content should support the integration workers' activities,^[17] and the policy discourse should be reflected in the textual material. As seen in the result, these concerns are not always satisfied and transparent. Even if the integration workers use the material to structure their activities, the fundamental structural conditions for their work are never actually questioned. If the underlying cultural models of standardizations remain implicit, the potential of standardized tools to fill a bridging function will presumably go unrecognized.^[13]

4.3 Institutional implications

The complexity of professional knowledge resides in the fact that the way in which work is constituted must also be understood in relation to the organizational context. Policy makers and others have argued for the need for national standards to ensure quality and equal service to all immigrants, where equality is similar to professional knowledge. However, if professional knowledge and quality in CO is equated with standardization and equality/uniformity, it is likely that the principles of a democratic conversation about the organization of everyday life will suffer. If this is the case, it is likely that the integration workers' knowledge in situ will be ignored and their cultural knowledge becomes invisible. The struggle for standardization, as a central aspect for ensuring quality, might collide with the heterogeneous character of the participants' needs and their ability to adapt information. If the multiplicity of different identities within the groups is neglected, equality might result in homogenization.

From what is seen in the result, we argue that professional knowledge of CO practices depends on the capacity of organizations to develop cumulative structures that support the integration workers' navigating and bridging between the different boundaries they encounter in their work. One aspect of such an organization would involve spending time on making explicit the integration workers' in situ rules.

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