MAKING SENSE OF LEADERSHIP IN GREENLANDIC ORGANIZATIONS

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MAKING SENSE OF LEADERSHIP IN GREENLANDIC ORGANIZATIONS

• Contributions
• Why study leadership in Greenland?
• What do we know from the pilot study?
  • Previous analysis of leadership in Greenland 1985-2010
  • Preliminary empirical findings from
• What is missing?
• Stepping stones for future research
• Bibliography
CONTRIBUTIONS

Research question:

How do participants in Greenlandic organizations practice leadership & management?

Better knowledge of how leadership is practiced in Greenland

Formulate theoretical understandings of leadership in the Greenland

Developing educations fulfilling the need for particular leadership in Greenland
How is leadership practices affected by smallness?

“The Arctic region is increasingly attracting economic and political interest. New business opportunities are on the rise and Arctic stakeholders are playing a key role in facilitating and creating favourable conditions for boosting Arctic economic activity.”

“Business development in the Nordic Arctic must be rooted in its people(s) and have a drive to create innovative development, in which the Arctic’s unique resources and human capital become competitive on a global scale.”

(Arctic Business Analysis, Nordic Council of Ministers, 2018)
WHY STUDY LEADERSHIP IN GREENLAND?

The lacking focus on leadership in The Arctic is a challenge facing the development of local organizations

"There is a great acknowledgement of the need for developing leadership skills in order to focus on continued growth and development”

(Kompetence, kapacitet og ledelse. Centrale problemstillinger, 2017, p. 23)
THE PILOT STUDY

Research question:

*How do participants in Greenlandic organizations practice leadership & management?*

Research approach:

- Search for relevant (theoretical) literature and analysis of leadership in Greenland
- Interview with chairman of several Greenlandic organizations
- Interviews and conversations with 10 top-level leaders in Nuuk
- Participant observation of network meeting of women leaders in Nuuk
Previous analysis of leadership in Greenland 1985-2010:

Top-level leaders are thought of as being motivated by individual economic gains.

Cultural dimensions in most research:
- The importance of the colonial past
- Cooperation lost in translation
- Greenlandic vs Danish leaders and their position in organizations
- Interaction with nature

Closeness:
- Interdependency is an ever present condition

Structural dimension:
- The availability of leadership competence and local supply of education
- Accounting & commercial law has significant presence in educations

Primary research approach:
- Leadership as a system

PRELIMINARY EMPIRICAL FINDINGS FROM THE PILOT STUDY

Closeness
- The close-knit community affects the understanding of individual and collective identity

Network
- Network-relations enable and restrict actions

Professional bias / blindness
- Establish conflicts and restrict the possibility for cooperation at leadership level

A need for leaders to be more than figureheads
- Focus toward what needs to be done
- Know what is going on locally
- The patriarchal understanding of the leader is (very) present among employees

Defining and dealing with problems
- Leadership as a complex and reflexive practice

Need for braveness and curiosity
- Visions and decisions enabling future actions
- Challenge what we have done previously
WHAT IS MISSING?

Thorough empirical investigations of how leadership unfolds in everyday activities

Theoretical frameworks and research approaches focusing toward the dynamic interactions and change of meaning
## WHAT IS MISSING?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional perspective</th>
<th>Reflexive perspective</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leaders exert control through formalization and plans</td>
<td>Leaders can address and influence the local interactions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leaders have to look at the system objectively from the outside and design and implement strategies that ensures the desired outcome</td>
<td>Leaders are participants in the ongoing process of local interactions. Conversational themes regarding strategic planning emerge in this process — signals intention</td>
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STEPPINGSTONES AND CUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- Writing up the literature review
- Continue developing a theoretical and analytical framework suited for analysis of leadership in Greenland
- Dialogues and workshops with leaders in Greenland
- Empirical research concerned with taking contextual experience of participation seriously
- Interviewing / observing mid-level leaders activities


Balslev, L. (2017). Actors and practices. AN INSTITUTIONAL STUDY ON MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTING CHANGE IN AIR GREENLAND.


