From Customer Satisfaction to Citizen Interaction

A cooperation model for community development based on Total Quality Management

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“New opinions are always suspected, and usually opposed, without any other reason but because they are not already common”

John Locke 1632-1704  
(An Essay concerning Human Understanding, 1690)

“No man is an island, entire of itself, every man is a piece of the continent...”

John Donne 1573-1631  
(Devotions upon Emergent Occasions, No. 17, 1624)
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Maria Fredriksson
Luleå, August 2004
Abstract

Current problems with unemployment and the consequences of cut-down in the public sector need appropriate solutions, where private citizens perhaps take on more active roles than today, individually or in groups. The aim with this doctoral thesis is to contribute to one such solution, which is a cooperation model for societal development in local communities, based on Total Quality Management (TQM) and on the participation of many residents. The model is gradually developed with the help of collected experiences and opinions from three stakeholder groups in two different Swedish communities, as well as from general theories and literature. These groups are the quality-project initiators, the community residents and the local politicians. The disposition of the thesis is accordingly.

The thesis contains two case studies. The first one concerns the use of TQM as a support of societal development in a local community. The improvement work is conducted within a non-profit organisation built on voluntary engagement. These experiences have then been compared, in the second case study, to the ones in another community where TQM is not used, but where the ambitions are the same. Here the framework for the improvement work is both a non-profit organisation and a for-profit one.

The analyses indicate that TQM can be used with success within societal development, even if some of its tools or methodologies are interpreted in new ways, or not used at all. As TQM should be applied with regard to the type of organisation and its purpose, a certain flexibility is both expected and helpful. As far as management is concerned, the leadership needs to be “softer” and more diplomatic when managing unpaid volunteers, as compared to the situation in a commercial enterprise. Another observation is that the societal work is best conducted within groups, defined by situations or activities in life or in the society. An active resident can join a group according to interest. This is a modified version of the “quality circles” inherent to TQM. In a separate, and more theoretical study, the issue of adopting TQM to new sectors in society is discussed.

In both the studied societies, there are difficulties to get residents involved or active, which puts into question the mandate with a large community project that aims at improving the quality of life for all
residents. There are also difficulties with finding and renewing the leadership, and with communication with, above all, local politicians. Nevertheless, these politicians are in general positive to private initiatives like the ones in the two communities, and consider such projects very important for the future development of rural areas. They think that the experienced weaknesses can be reduced if the improvement work is distinctly defined and organised, if information and communication improve, and if the active residents become more educated about the procedures and limitations of the political governing of the communities.

These and other observations of the two communities lead to a model where a cooperation between societal stakeholders develop in three phases; the start-up, the establishment and the continuation of the work. Each phase is discussed separately, and advice is given how to avoid, or meet, various problems that are likely to appear along the way.
Sammanfattning

Dagens problem med arbetslöshet och neddragningar i den offentliga sektorn kräver nya lösningar, där vanliga medborgare kan få mer aktiva roller än idag, som individer eller i grupp. Syftet med denna avhandling är att bidra med en sådan lösning, i form av en samverkansmodell för utveckling av lokala samhällen, baserad på offensiv kvalitetsutveckling och på medverkan av många invånare. Modellen utvecklas stegvis med hjälp av observerade erfarenheter och uppfattningar hos tre olika intressentgrupper i två svenska samhällen. Forskningen bygger också på litteraturstudier och befintliga teorier. De tre grupperna är de pionjärer som startat utvecklingsprojektet, de vanliga invånarna och de lokala kommunpolitikerna. Avhandlingens disposition följer denna uppdelning.


Analyserna visar att offensiv kvalitetsutveckling kan användas framgångsrikt inom samhällsutvecklingen, även om några av dess verktyg och metoder tolkas på nya sätt, eller inte används alls. Eftersom offensiv kvalitetsutveckling bör användas med hänsyn till en organisations mål, så är en viss flexibilitet både väntad och önskvärd. När det gäller managementfrågor, så bör ledarskapet vara både ”mjukare” och mer diplomatiskt när det gäller obetalta och frivilligt arbete, i jämförelse med situationen i ett kommersiellt företag. En annan observation är att detta arbete med samhällsutveckling bedrivs bäst inom grupper som definieras av situationer och aktiviteter som är typiska för livet eller för samhället. En aktiv invånare kan gå med i en viss grupp efter intresse. Detta är en modifierad version av ”kvalitetscirklar” enligt recept från offensiv kvalitetsutveckling. I en oberoende, mer teoretisk studie i denna avhandling, diskuteras användningen av offensiv kvalitetsutveckling inom nya samhällssektorer.
I både de studerade lokala samhällena finns svårigheter att engagera och aktivera fler invånare, vilket innebär att mandatet kan ifrågasättas för stora projekt som strävar efter att förbättra livskvaliteten för alla invånare. Det är också problem med att rekrytera och förnya ledarskapet, och med att kommunicera med, framförallt, de lokala politiker. Trots detta så är dessa politiker i allmänhet positiva till privata initiativ som i de två samhällena, och tycker att liknande projekt kan bli mycket viktiga för den framtida utvecklingen av små samhällen på landsbygden. De tycker också att de upplevda svagheterna kan åtgärdas om utvecklingsarbetet definieras och organiseras tydligt, om information och kommunikation förbättras, och om de aktiva invånarna skaffar sig bättre kunskaper om procedurer och begränsningar inom den politiska styrningen av samhällena.

Dessa och andra observationer av de två samhällena leder till en modell där samarbetet mellan olika intressegrupper utvecklas i tre faser; starten, etableringen och fortsättningen av arbetet. Varje fas diskuteras separat, och olika råd ges för hur problemen som förväntas uppstå kan antingen undvikas eller åtgärdas.
List of Appended Papers

This thesis is an introduction to, and an extended summary of, the following five papers, appended in full.

Paper I

An earlier version of this paper was also presented at the Seventh World Congress for Total Quality Management: Business Excellence. Make it Happen, Verona, Italy, 25-27 June 2002. The paper was published in the conference proceedings, Vol. 1, pp. 243-251.

Paper II

Paper III

Paper IV

Paper V
Table of Definitions

In this thesis, concepts from Total Quality Management, Social Economy and Political Science are used, and in order to facilitate the reading some definitions are presented in Table i.

**Table i.** In the table some definitions relevant for this thesis are presented to guide the reader.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic discipline</td>
<td>an area of knowledge; a subject that is studied or taught, especially at a university</td>
<td>Hornby (2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association</td>
<td>is used here in the sense of an official group of people who have joined for a particular purpose. In this thesis it refers to a non-profit organization</td>
<td>Hornby (2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>is used in the sense of a densely populated area, including its residents, which is part of a municipality</td>
<td>Hornby (2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community issues</td>
<td>is used here for issues that are relevant for residents in a community, and that are normally managed by an organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>the act of people working together to create or produce something</td>
<td>Hornby (2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation model</td>
<td>refers here to a collection of recommended strategies, activities and methodologies for working together to create societal changes</td>
<td>Hornby (2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council</td>
<td>is a group of people chosen to give advice, make rules etc</td>
<td>Hornby (2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>is the highest local administrative unit of Sweden, where there are totally 24 counties</td>
<td>Hornby (2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County administrative board</td>
<td>is the highest level for county administration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer</td>
<td>an individual or organization for whom someone wants to create value</td>
<td>Bergman &amp; Klefsjö (2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement</td>
<td>the act of making something better, or the process of something becoming better</td>
<td>Hornby (2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement teams or groups</td>
<td>groups of individuals who discuss problems and suggest improvements.</td>
<td>Bergman &amp; Klefsjö (1994)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Jante’</td>
<td>the ‘Jante Law’ was formulated in 1933 by the Danish-Norwegian author Sandemose, in the form of 10 satirical “commandments” about envy and provincialism, on the them “don’t think that you are better than us”.</td>
<td>Sandemose (1933)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandate</td>
<td>the authority to do something</td>
<td>Hornby (2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>Reference</td>
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<td>-----------------------------</td>
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<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>a set of methods and principles for a particular activity. Here it is used for describing research strategy, approach and methods. The word is, however, used differently in the theories of Total Quality Management (TQM), where it means “ways of working” within a number of separate activities, for instance, solving a problem.</td>
<td>Hornby (2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
<td>means example to copy</td>
<td>Hornby (2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality</td>
<td>town, city or district with its own local government, being a part of a country</td>
<td>Hornby (2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>group of people forming a business, club etc, with a particular aim</td>
<td>Hornby (2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Societal development</td>
<td>new event or stage that is likely to affect what happens in a continuing situation in society</td>
<td>Hornby (2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society</td>
<td>people in general who share the same customs, laws etc, and live together in communities</td>
<td>Hornby (2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder</td>
<td>an individual or group of individuals with a common interest in the performance of the supplier organization and the environment in which it operates the concept of ‘stakeholder' is used here in the sense of a person or organization involved in a particular system (community), and depending on its development</td>
<td>SIS (1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System</td>
<td>is described by several researchers as a whole, with interdependent elements or components affecting each other over time, and working towards a common aim. Examples of systems are political entities, communities, teams and organizations.</td>
<td>Deming (1994), Senge et al. (1994) and Kehoe (1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System approach</td>
<td>a way of doing or thinking about something, such as a problem or a task, from the point of view that it is an interdependent component of something larger</td>
<td>Hornby (2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Sector</td>
<td>used here in the sense of a non-profit organization within Social Economy</td>
<td>Isaksson (1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Quality Management (TQM)</td>
<td>is in this paper considered to be a management system consisting of core values, methodologies and tools with the aim of increasing external and internal customer satisfaction with reduced resources</td>
<td>Hellsten &amp; Klefsjö (2000)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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1 Introduction

Chapter one contains an extended background, problem discussion, aim of the research, research questions, and the demarcations made in the thesis. The logical structure of the thesis is illustrated by a figure.

1.1 Background

Why do local communities in the European Union (EU) and the USA stimulate improvement work, sometimes with national, or even international, funding? The main reason is that there are many problems in small societies, which are often related to national or international phenomena. The problems can vary from time to time, and from country to country, but are largely similar. They concern the residents living in a community, which embodies, for instance, the economy and job opportunities, health care, child care, education, and public service. In a period of economic and social changes with, for instance, cut downs in the welfare state, influencing also the social climate, new ways of thinking and working seem necessary (Isaksson, 1997; and the Ministry of Trade & Industry, 1998). According to Sätre Åhlander (2001), interest has increased in recent years in the EU in finding new strategies based on local initiatives in order to solve problems with, for instance, unemployment. This tendency seems to exist in all European countries.

Söderström et al. (1999), note that the conditions for the economy in the EU countries are partly set by the ongoing integration of the international economy. Demographical alterations sometimes create problems, such as decreased fiscal incomes and an ageing population. This can also affect democracy. Ashley (1985) states that democracy cannot be realized without many residents being committed to common work, anchored in their immediate environment. Consequently, politicians seem to make an effort to include this into their visions and ambitions for the future development of society.

According to the Swedish Ministry of Trade & Industry (1998), there is an increasing interest in Sweden and the rest of the EU in solutions within the social economy. One such solution is to support non-profit
Chapter 1 Introduction

organizations within the social economy. A Swedish national committee for social economy was established in 1999. Its purpose is to emphasize the social economy as an important political area (Berge, 1999). Social economy is, according to this committee, organized activities with societal goals, built upon democratic values, and separate from the public economy. Activities in the social economy are focused on the commonweal and utility, such as organized activities in non-profit organizations (the Ministry of Trade & Industry, 1998). Social economy will be further described in Chapter 2.

According to Danielson (2001), the social economy, including the third sector, with non-profit organizations, has a strong growth, with a long tradition in Europe. The concept of social economy, which became an official term in the EU in 1989, was first established in France, in order to distinguish those economic activities that are managed democratically, with the commonweal as their purpose. In Sweden, the term has in recent years been used in the contexts of regional policy and employment policy. The EU has established the demarcation CMAF, which stands for Cooperatives, Mutuals, Associations and Foundations. CMAF is to a great extent synonymous with the concept of social economy. Lundstedt et al. (1999)

The Swedish Minister of Infrastructure, Ulrica Messing, states that the importance of using local and regional conditions and resources has increased. Social economy can play an important role in mobilising engagement and local competence and hence in vitalizing democracy and giving people opportunities and power to influence their situation. Different activities and job opportunities can evolve from local needs and resources when residents of local societies become committed to their own future. Small communities in rural areas can be vitalized and various services can survive. The social capital is of vital importance for industrial life, politics and the public sector (Messing, 2001a).

How then, can residents in local communities work with improvements? There is a wealth of examples of what residents can do, such as starting enterprises in cooperation with each other and the authorities. There are many successful examples in Sweden from the area of social economy, motivated by the commonweal. One is the company Salubrin/Druvan Ltd and its charitable foundation, created
about a century ago by the chemist Mr. Håkansson, mainly in order to support medical research with the profit of the mother company. Another initiative from about the same time is Protite Ltd, which was created by the employees of the bankrupted South Swedish Leather & Belt Ltd in order to save the company, the jobs and the local community. Protite Ltd is still owned by the employees. Several similar examples are discussed in Lundstedt et al. (1999).

There are also examples of how residents can work with improvements. One way is through successful cooperation over organizational boundaries, with projects in, among others, the U.S., the U.K. and Sweden. An important approach is the community health improvement model created jointly by the American Society for Quality (ASQ) and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI). The so-called ASQ/IHI model provides a methodology and new approach to addressing important community issues; see Kinney (1998). It will be further described in Section 2.5.2.

Another example is provided by the community of Tacoma in Washington State, where the residents have worked with concepts from Total Quality Management (TQM) and studied how compatible “The citizen-as-customer model” is to community-wide improvement work. The project started as a research programme, initiated by the American Society for Quality (ASQ). Jacques (1999); see also Section 2.5.3, for further elaboration on the Tacoma example.

Toqua village in the state of New York is another major example from the U.S. The name Toqua refers to Total Quality Management, i.e., the programme for changes used in the project. The programme, for a “total municipality of quality”, started in 1991 when a new mayor was elected. He became a central person in the daily management of the municipality. This programme had, besides a quality and customer focus, also strong efficiency in focus. The municipality established a Village Quality Council (VQC), with the mayor, the municipal department managers and two quality consultants. The Toqua village statement and quality policy were established and gradually accepted by the municipal executive board. Hagedorn-Rasmussen (2002)

One example from the U.K. is the “Best Value Programme”, with the residents in focus. It is a governmental initiative in which the users of
public services are invited to affect the shaping and the quality of the services. For further information, see www.audit-commission.gov.uk.

There are also examples in Sweden where municipalities work with quality in focus, after initiatives on either national or local levels. The Swedish communities of Gothenburg and Stockholm are two such examples where concepts from TQM have been transferred to community issues. Gothenburg has a long tradition in trade and industry. Since 1999 it administrates an annual quality award, which is related to the Swedish Quality Award (SQA). The purpose is to inspire and stimulate quality development with the residents’ best in focus. Gothenburg also works with quality measurements in order to develop its activities. See http://www.goteborg.se for more information.

The community of Stockholm works in a similar way. Since 1999 the city has had an annual award in order to spread good examples of quality development and stimulate attention and discussion about all activities financed by the city. The goal is to satisfy users and to stimulate continuous development and improvement of municipal activities. Stockholm has quality guaranties with a correction system. The purpose of the quality guaranties is to make clear to the users what they can expect in service and care from the municipal units. There is a system for opinions and complaints from which improvements evolve. See http://www.stockholm.se for more information.

The Swedish Institute for Quality (SIQ), with headquarter in Gothenburg, supports quality work in Sweden. The mission of SIQ is to:

“... stimulate and contribute to positive development in all aspects of Swedish society. We shall do this by generating, collecting and disseminating current knowledge about TQM, as well as methods for practical application. We shall also give new impulses through international collaboration.”\(^1\)

One SIQ project is about innovation systems, with the purpose of stimulating and supporting cooperation between organizations in the

\(^1\) The text was collected from SIQ, Michael Westher, 2004-08-09
political and educational sectors and private enterprises. SIQ has
developed a model for approaching the problems. Named “A process
and model for development of innovation systems” it contains
mapping, description, evaluation and continuous improvement. For
further information, see http://www.siq.se.

The community of Åseda in southern Sweden provides another
example of a local societal improvement project. It started in 1994 and
is carried out with a system approach, with the aim of breaking a
negative economic and demographic trend. The work ranges from
improving the local environment to getting a national upper secondary
school placed in Åseda. The latter project generates qualified
personnel for companies in the area; see Helling et al., (1998). Åseda
is an example of a local community with growing interdependence
between organizations in the social, public, commercial and non-
formal economies; see Section 2.3 for descriptions of the different
economies.

All problems that can occur in society may be scientifically viewed
from different perspectives, for instance, those of economics, political
science or social science. In each one of these there are several
different theories and approaches. This thesis has a management
approach, i.e., it deals with planning, organizing, leading and
controlling third-sector projects about societal development.

1.2 Problem Discussion

The Swedish Minister of Infrastructure, Ulrica Messing, states that
cooperation between different societal sectors is essential. The present
development enhances the demands on politicians and public officers
and employees, and on the established organizational activities in rural
areas. It is necessary to think and work in new ways in order to
stimulate and utilize individual engagement. Traditional and well-tried
politics is not always the solution to current problems (Messing,
2001a, 2001b). However, such new thinking may not be easy to
implement. According to, Busch Zetterberg (1996), Sweden has had a
strong focus on state-run welfare, and the role of the civil society has
long been ignored in public and political discourse. Problems certainly
emerge when actors from different societal sectors and economies try
to cooperate, since they often have different purposes and traditions. A community is a complex social system, and another aspect to take into consideration is the political one. The overarching political ideology in most European, North American and Oceanian countries is liberal democracy.

1.3 Purpose of the Thesis

The background and problem discussion generates the purpose of this thesis, which is to explore and describe how residents in local communities can work with improvements across organizational boundaries, and also transform the experiences into a cooperation model for community development. In the model suggestions are made for stimulating and utilizing the residents’ engagement and work in their local societies. The essence is a proposition for how to work with community issues.

1.4 Research Questions and Demarcations

Research questions

The purpose of the thesis is divided into the following research questions:

1. What experiences can be found when residents in local communities work with improvements?
2. What are the opinions and experiences of “third person” residents about the improvement work?
3. What are the opinions and experiences of local politicians about the improvement work?
4. How can these experiences be transformed into a cooperation model for community development?

Demarcations

The first and major demarcation made in this thesis is the focus on studying concepts from Total Quality Management (TQM) entering
social economy and the third sector. TQM is described in some detail in Chapter 2. The next demarcation of the research is the interpretation of local communities, here meaning villages in rural areas, and not cities or part of cities.

Another demarcation is that the investigated experiences focus on opinions about and experiences of improvement work. Due to the complexity of a community and its parts, the research questions are divided into three different major aspects of stakeholders in community.

The first aspect takes into account the experiences and opinions of “professionals” in local improvement work, which means representatives of local business life, as well as of the initiators, the committed and the active participants in societal development projects. The second aspect includes the knowledge, experiences and opinions of residents in general in the communities where the projects take place. The third aspect is to map and analyse the corresponding attitudes of local politicians or policy-makers in the regions and municipalities where the projects take place.

1.5 The Structure of the Thesis

The thesis consists of three parts. The introductory first part contains Chapters 1-3, where the background, theoretical frame of reference, methodology and data collecting methods are presented and discussed. Here, the working process is also outlined. Some examples are also given of societal improvement work, in order to illustrate the width of the research area. Part two represents the empirical side of the research and contains Chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4 contains case descriptions, while Chapter 5 is a summary of the appended papers. The third and conclusive part, Chapter 6, contains discussions, conclusions and suggestions for further research.

The structure of the thesis, as well as the relations between the research questions and the appended papers, are visualised by Figure 1.1.
The Introductory Part
Chapter 1: Introduction
Chapter 2: Theoretical Frame
Chapter 3: Methodology

The Empirical Part
Chapter 4: Case Descriptions
Chapter 5: Summary of Papers

The Conclusive Part
Chapter 6: Discussion, Conclusions and Further Research

**Research Question 1**
What experiences can be found when residents in local communities work with improvements?

**Research Question 2**
What are the opinions and experiences of “third person” residents about the improvement work?

**Research Question 3**
What are the opinions and experiences of local politicians about the improvement work?

**Research Question 4**
How can these experiences be transformed into a cooperation model for community development?

**Paper I**
*TQM as a Support for Societal Development – Experiences from a Swedish Community*

**Paper II**
*Experienced Effects of Applying TQM in Societal Improvement Work in a Swedish Community*

**Paper III**
*A Cooperation Model for the Third Sector Based on Total Quality Management*

**Paper IV**
*Opinions of Local Politicians on Community Development Projects – two Swedish Studies*

**Paper V**
*TQM – Terrific Quality Marvel or Tragic Quality Malpractice*

**Figure 1.1.** The figure illustrates the structure of the thesis with its three parts. The upper, bold arrow illustrates that the empirical part runs through all five appended papers. The other arrows show the connection between the research questions and the appended papers. A dotted arrow symbolizes a somewhat weaker connection.
Chapter 2 Theoretical Frame of Reference

In this chapter the theoretical concepts and theories relevant to the thesis will be presented. They are presented in order to form a filter through which the empirical results will be analysed. Some of the concepts are also described more thoroughly in this chapter, since they will be used in Chapter 6. A short history of the area of Management is presented, since the emphasis of this thesis is on Total Quality Management.

2.1 Management

Most individuals are, in one way or the other, and from time to time, members of organizations. Examples of such organizations are sport teams, theatre groups, business enterprises, trade unions or civic organizations. Some of these are formally structured, while some are temporary or casual. All are nevertheless created and kept together by people who see benefits in working together towards a common goal. The goal gives the organization a reason to exist. Management is the process of planning, organizing, leading and controlling the resources and the work of the members of the organization in order to reach the common goal. Stoner et al. (1995)

2.1.1 The evolution of management

Long before the term “management” came into use, the early thinking and thoughts about management were founded by the Greek, Roman and Chinese armies. Stoner et al. (1995) quote the pioneering works by Sun Tzu (‘The art of war’ from more than 2000 years ago), and by Macchiavelli (‘Discourses’ from 1531).

Stoner et al. (1995) also give an overview of historically important key management theories. Examples are the Scientific Management School (1890-), the Classical Organizational Theory School (-1940), the Behavioural School (during World War I), Management Science (1940), the System Approach (1950), the Contingency Approach (1970), and the Dynamic Engagement Approach (1950). Henri Fayol
(1841-1925) is, according to Stoner et al. (1995) and James (1996), the founder of the key management theory, because he was the first to systemize the knowledge. See also James (1996) for discussions of key management theories.

Other authors, for instance, Huczynski (1995), call the different examples of key management theories an “idea family”. The ideas Huczynski discusses are Bureaucracy, Scientific Management, Administrative Management, Human Relations, Neo-Human Relations, and Guru Theory.

Huczynski (1995) also states that the central assertion in the idea family is that “the only object of business is to compete with others for the favours of the customer as King”. Total Quality Management evolves from the “Guru Theory”, which helps managers to build business systems, in order to successfully compete in their chosen market segment. The expression comprises a muddle of prescriptions, which include the importance of innovation, more teamwork, more empowerment of the individual, more employee participation, fewer levels of hierarchy, and less bureaucracy. Huczynski (1995)

According to Beckford (2002), the mainstream management thinking is still dominated by Taylor’s (1911) “Scientific Management”, Fayol’s (1916) “Classical Theory” and Weber’s (1924) “Bureaucracy Theory”, although there are lots of other theorists and theories in the management discipline. Some theories are briefly described in this thesis. However, those mentioned have the notion of management in common, i.e., that it includes planning, organizing, leading and controlling an organization in order to reach its goal. See also Dalrymple (2000)

### 2.2 Total Quality Management

There is no general agreement on where and when TQM was first used. In their criticism of the development of TQM, Leonard & McAdam (2002) refer to Boaden (1997) when claiming that TQM was not developed by one person. Rather, they argue that quality efforts have always existed, in one form or another. They quote Moreno-Luzon & Peris (1998) when discussing this issue:
"We must also attribute this to the eclectic nature of the discipline, which combines contributions from diverse technical, humanistic and social disciplines." Moreno-Luzon & Peris (1998, p. 11)

It might even be possible to trace quality efforts to Babylonian times, several hundred years B.C., when it was important to have exact measurements and product liability for building pyramids and other monuments; see, for instance, Bergman & Klefsjö (2003). However, it seems more appropriate for this thesis to focus on the development that started during the last century.

2.2.1 The evolution of total quality management

There are several ways of describing the evolution of TQM. The two ways of Dale (1999) and Kroslid (1999) are shortly described here.

Dale’s four-level model

One can identify four levels in the evolution of TQM, according to Dale’s model (1999), illustrated by Figure 2.1. Dale calls them Inspection (I), Quality Control (QC), Quality Assurance (QA) and Total Quality Management (TQM). Garvin (1988) and Kanji & Asher (1993) also describe the evolution of TQM in a similar way.

![Figure 2.1. The four evolution levels of the TQM discipline, starting with Inspection (I), followed by Quality Control (QC), Quality Assurance (QA) and Total Quality Management (TQM). From Dale (1999).](image)

Dale (1999) uses British and international standards, for instance, ISO 8402, when explaining what these four levels are. At the first two levels the activities are measuring, examining and testing
characteristics of an entity and comparing with specific requirements. Operational techniques and activities are used to fulfil the requirements. The third level, called Quality Assurance, provides confidence that an entity will fulfil the quality requirements. Here quality systems according to, for instance, the international system of standards, ISO 9000, are an important ingredient. TQM is the fourth level. It involves the application of quality management principles to all aspects of the organization, including customers and suppliers, and their integration into the business processes. It is a company-wide approach to quality, with a focus on continuous improvements and a commitment by everyone in the organization. The first three levels of Inspection, Quality Control and Quality Assurance are inspection-orientated and preventive, while the fourth level is more progressive and essential for strategic success. See also Garvin (1988), Kanji & Asher (1993), Dale (1999), Zairi (2002) and Bergman & Klefsjö (2003) about the evolution of TQM.

TQM is a concept that has traditionally been connected with business life, commercial and industrial organizations for manufacturing and production. The focus has been on, for example, more effective processes, lower costs and satisfied customers, see, for instance, Dale (1999) and Hellsten & Klefsjö (2000). However, the domain of TQM is changing. The concepts of ‘quality’ and ‘customer’ have been extended, and quality has remained a dominant theme in management thinking since the 1940s (Beckford, 2002).

Originating from production quality and the quality of a process as parts of other disciplines, TQM has become a discipline of its own, now including also such concepts as quality of life (Dale et al., 2001). According to Dale (1999), TQM is both a philosophy and a set of guiding principles for managing an organization. These principles and the ways of working with improvements are not limited to work places, but can also be used for improving life in local societies by the residents themselves through collaboration (Brown et al., 1994; and Stratton, 1997).

Kroslid’s two schools of evolution

The evolution of TQM can also be considered from another perspective. Kroslid (1999) studies the historical development of ideas in TQM and states that the development of the field has two distinct
lines, the Deterministic School of Thought and the Continuous Improvement School of Thought. According to Kroslid (1999) “the Deterministic School of Thought is specified as evolving ... around a deterministic view of reality with a belief in the existence of one best way.” This means that conformance by standards is the best way to meet customers’ requirements. On the other hand, “The Continuous Improvement School of Thought is specified as being ... founded on a reality full of variation, with an awareness of improvement potential in every aspect of work.” Continuous improvement is used to reduce the impact of environmental changes and other variations, in order to satisfy customers and other stakeholders. See, for instance, Zairi (2002) for a discussion of new paradigms about TQM and sustainability.

It is not only the evolution of TQM that is the subject of different opinions. In international research there are several different descriptions of the concept of TQM, i.e., interpretations of what TQM really “means”.

### 2.2.2 Interpretations of TQM

Oakland (1989) compares the opinions of what he calls the most notable American quality gurus. He discusses their definitions of quality in connection to the notion of Total Quality Management. As examples, Crosby defines quality as “conformance to requirements”, while Juran’s definition is “fitness for use” and Deming’s is “a predictable degree of uniformity and dependability at low cost and suited to the market”. All these gurus have different programmes for how to structure work and to achieve quality. Examples of these programmes are Crosby’s 14 steps to quality improvement, Conway’s six tools for quality improvement, Deming’s 14 points for management and Juran’s ten steps to quality improvement. However, Oakland (1989) points out that many views are shared, such as that there are no short-cuts to quality, that improvement work requires full commitment and support from the top, and that training and participation of all employees are needed. It is noteworthy that none of these gurus has explicitly used the label TQM for their philosophies.

There are many different definitions of TQM. Oakland (1989, p. 14) calls TQM “an approach to improving the effectiveness and flexibility
of business as a whole”. Further, TQM has been described as a set of improvement tools useful in an organization; see Olsson & Bokor (1995), and as a management philosophy; see Hackman & Wageman (1995). TQM has also been described as a programme for changes based upon organization culture; see, for instance, Witcher (1995) and James (1996), and as a management system; see Shiba et al. (1993), Boaden (1997), Dale (1999) and Hellsten & Klefsjö (2000).

The confusing definitions reflect the discipline’s evolution, in pace with the development that more and more scholars have become interested in the discipline. In this thesis, the definition by Hellsten & Klefsjö (2000) is used because of its pedagogical and structured description. According to them, TQM is a management system for continuous improvements. It contains core values, methodologies and tools.

Figure 2.2. The role of core values, methodologies and tools in TQM. From Hellsten & Klefsjö (2000).

Figure 2.2 illustrates that the aim of TQM, according to Hellsten & Klefsjö (2000), is to increase external and internal customer satisfaction with reduced resources. Hellsten & Klefsjö (2000) emphasize that TQM is a management system, used in the sense defined by Deming (1994), i.e., “a network of interdependent components that work together to try to accomplish the aim of the system”. For a discussion of System Thinking, see Section 2.2.4.

According to Hellsten & Klefsjö (2000), one of the components of TQM is the core values. These are the basis for the culture of the organization. Core values are, for example, continuous improvements and a focus on processes; see Figure 2.3. Another component is methodologies, i.e., ways to work within the organization to establish
the culture and reach the goals set by the organization. A methodology consists of a number of activities performed in a certain order. The methodologies can be process management, quality circles and benchmarking. The third component is the tools, i.e., concrete and well-defined tools for numerical or verbal data, to support decision-making or facilitate the analysis of data. The tools that can be used are, among others, Ishikawa diagrams and affinity diagrams, which help with structuring and analysing verbal data in order to solve problems. These three components are interdependent and mutually supportive; see Figure 2.3. Hellsten & Klefsjö (2000)

The TQM systematics evolves continuously. Over time, some core values might change, and, in particular, the interpretation of some of them might be developed. As an example, the interpretation of the concept of ‘customer’ has changed from the simple ‘buyer’ to a rich

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2 In this thesis the word “methodologies” is used instead of the word “techniques” used in Hellsten & Klefsjö (2000).
Chapter 2 Theoretical Frame of Reference

spectrum of external and internal customers. Hellsten & Klefsjö (2000)

Foster & Jonker (2003) go even further, and discuss ‘customer’ within a “third generation” of Quality Management. There the ‘customer’ concept is extended to the concept of ‘stakeholder’, with the purpose of stressing how business is integrated into society.

It is important to note that TQM should be looked upon as a system. The values are supported by methodologies and tools to form a whole. For example, the core value “Let everyone be committed” cannot be implemented without suitable methodologies. Some of these might be “Improvements groups” or “Quality circles”. However, these methodologies will not work efficiently without the use of specific and suitable tools. Examples of such tools for numerical data might be “Pareto Charts” and “Histograms”; see Brassard & Ritter (1994) and Hellsten & Klefsjö (2000). Examples of tools for verbal information might be “Affinity diagrams” and “Tree diagrams”; see Brassard & Ritter (1994).

Bergman & Klefsjö (2003) suggest core values that are important elements in a successful quality strategy, see Figure 2.4 and Section 2.2.5.

Ishikawa (1985) stresses that a deep personal commitment is essential for quality development, not the least from those who try to get others committed. Individual development and education are therefore necessary. The use of quality circles can be considered a methodology, supporting people to meet and to identify problems or possibilities for improvements. It was originally a way to spread knowledge and to provide education.
If a problem is identified and intended to be solved, it is important that
the problem or the possibility of improvement is dealt with
systematically and thoroughly. One example of a methodology for
solving problems in the continuous improvement work is the Deming
cycle, or PDSA cycle, see Figure 2.5 in Section 2.2.5. It was originally
called the Shewhart-cycle by Deming, after Walter A. Shewhart.
Deming (1994)

**2.2.3 Demarcations of TQM in this thesis**

Since the academic discipline of TQM contains several theories and
definitions, some necessary demarcations are made in this thesis.
Values will be shortly discussed, but not elaborated in depth, and
some of the methodologies and tools relevant to this thesis will be
described. The particular choices are related to the methodologies and
tools used in the empirical part of the thesis. One important ingredient
in TQM is the system thinking, which will be emphasized during the
work.
2.2.4 System thinking

Many theorists and researchers describe a system as a whole, with interdependent elements or components affecting each other over time, and with a common aim, see, for instance, Deming (1994), Senge et al. (1994), Kehoe (1996) and Bergman & Klefsjö (2003). Deming (1994), notes that a system must have a clear aim, including plans for the future, and be based on values. A system needs to be managed. Examples of systems are political entities, communities and organizations.

The systemic structure is the pattern of interrelationships among key components of the system. It may include hierarchy, process flows, attitudes and perceptions, the quality of a product and the ways in which decisions are made. Structures in systems are built by the choices people make, consciously or subconsciously; see Senge et al. (1994).

System thinking and the ability to see the whole, as well as how different parts affect each other, are essential in TQM, and can generate a win-win situation; see Bergman & Klefsjö (2003). According to Imai (1997), and his view of system thinking, TQM has been developed as a strategy to aid management in becoming more competitive and profitable by helping it to improve in all aspects of business.

Oakland (1989) thinks that the management must have knowledge of the system, of its boundaries, and of the interaction between the components and the individuals in the system. It is the management’s responsibility to create the aim for the system and to get the components to collaborate towards that aim.

Kantor & Heaton-Lonstein (1994) and Senge et al. (1994) discuss three different paradigms of the system and note that the type of paradigm refers to the overriding set of assumptions embedded in the organization’s values about authority and boundaries. For instance, a closed system emphasizes stability, group loyalty, security, clear boundaries and tight controls. An open system focuses on flexibility, collaboration, consensus and reliable communication. TQM is considered an open system in this thesis, with the use of the described interpretation of TQM as a system. A random system accentuates
variety, individuality, high achievement, excitement, unpredictability and fun.

2.2.5 Values, methodologies and tools

Values

One of the components of TQM is the values. The values of an organization should be clearly stated and express the principles upon which the mission will be achieved. According to Hellsten (1997), they are indeed the foundation of TQM. Hellsten & Klefsjö (2000), define them as the basis for the culture of an organization, and name them “core values”, while Senge et al. (1994) call them “agreed-upon values”, and Kanji & Asher (1996) “core concepts for improvement”. See also Boaden (1997) and Sila & Ebrahimpour (2002) for other discussions of the values of TQM.

Schein (1995) divides “values” into three levels of culture in an organization. The first level is called artefacts. On this level, the most visible and audible behaviour patterns of the culture in an organization can be found, and they guide the behaviour of the members in that organization. The second level is called values. All cultural learning reflects some original values and their definition of what ought to be, as distinct from what is. A value may be questioned and debated. If a solution works and a group has a shared opinion of its success, then the value will gradually transform into a belief and, finally, an assumption. Hence, when values are taken for granted, they gradually become beliefs and assumptions. Consequently, Schein (1995) calls the final, third level basic underlying assumptions. When a solution to a problem works repeatedly, it is taken for granted and the third level is reached.

The concept of value is complicated (Schein, 1995). In this thesis the definition from Hellsten & Klefsjö (2000) is used. The values are the ones that an organization decides upon. Values are best expressed in terms of behaviour, i.e., how people in an organization act professionally internally and externally. Values are guiding symbols that will help the participants to work toward the organization’s vision, picturing the desirable future (Deming, 1994; Senge et al., 1994; Kehoe, 1996; and Hellsten & Klefsjö, 2000).
Chapter 2 Theoretical Frame of Reference

Hellsten (1997) reviews the literature on values in TQM and refers to Tenner & DeToro (1992), Oakland (1993), Shiba et al. (1993), Dahlgaard et al. (1994) and Bergman & Klefsjö (1994). The result is a list of common core values, which well agree with the result from a comprehensive article review presented by Sila & Ebrahimpour (2002). The list can be summarized as:

- **Focus on the customers**
  According to Bergman & Klefsjö (2003), quality has to be valued by the customers, and the quality has to be put in relation to the customer’s needs and expectations. The authors state that there are both external and internal customers. The external customers are those who buy, use or in any way are affected by the produced goods or services. The internal customers are the employees. Every employee has internal customers within the company, and their needs have to be satisfied too, in order for them to perform well.

- **Management commitment**
  Quality improvements demand a total commitment by the management. Hellsten (1997), among many others, states that the management must be committed from the start, with initiating planning and participation in the work, including evaluation of both processes and results.

- **Everyone’s participation**
  All employees at all levels should be involved in the improvement work, which should be practised everywhere in the organization; see Dahlgaard et al. (1994) and Shiba et al. (1993).

- **Focus on processes**
  According to Tenner & DeToro (1992), Oakland (1993), Shiba et al. (1993), Dahlgaard et al. (1994) and Egnell (1999), almost all organized activities may be seen as processes. The aim of a process is to deliver products or services that satisfy customers. It is stressed that the focus is not on the results, because these are dependent variables.

- **Continuous improvement**
  Dahlgaard et al. (1994) suggest that continuous improvement of processes is necessary to increase customer satisfaction. One model for process analysis and improvement is the Deming cycle, or PDSA cycle. See also Deming (1994).
• **Fact-based decisions**

It is important to make decisions based on well-founded facts; see Tenner & DeToro (1992) and Bergman & Klefsjö (2003). There are available tools for creating, structuring and analysing numerical information and verbal information in order to support fact-based decisions.

Note that not all theorists and authors emphasize exactly the same values, or define them with the same wording. This thesis will not go deeper into such subtleties.

**Methodologies**

Hellsten & Klefsjö (2000), among others, stress that TQM should be looked upon as a system. In order to form a whole, methodologies and tools should be used to support the chosen values. Some of these methodologies are listed and briefly described below because they are then used in the theoretical analysis in Chapter 6.

• **“Kaizen”**

The word “kaizen” is Japanese and means roughly ‘change for the better’. It is used in many different contexts. Politicians, for instance, speak of “kaizen” for trade balance, for diplomatic relations and for social welfare. In the business world the “kaizen” concept has been deeply rooted for a long time. The meaning of “kaizen” is that everyone involved contributes continuously to the improvement of the different processes in the organization. “Kaizen” is a conscious systematic work towards improvements, with a focus on small steps at a time. Continuous improvement can, however, be extended to include large improvements as well; see also Juran (1995), Kanji & Asher (1996) and Imai (1997).

The “kaizen” philosophy is customer and process orientated. In the philosophy about “kaizen” there is an awareness of the necessity of satisfying the customers in order to keep the business alive and to be profitable. “Kaizen” is based on people’s commitment and participation through the use of the knowledge and experience of employees. This can be done, for instance, via quality circles. “Kaizen” may be regarded a continuous journey around the PDSA cycle: Plan – Do – Study – Act. Kanji & Asher (1996), Imai (1997) and Bergman & Klefsjö (2003)
• **Benchmarking**

Benchmarking is a methodology that includes thorough studies of processes similar or identical to the one of interest. It is useful for quality improvement, above all for finding opportunities for process improvements. It requires self-assessment and the ability to translate practices from other contexts into working processes in the current organization; see, for instance, Munro-Faure & Munro-Faure (1992), Camp (1995) and Kanji & Asher (1996). A process in this thesis means a series of activities repeated over time, with the purpose of creating a value for a customer. See, Egnell (1999) for further elaboration of the definition of processes.

• **The PDSA cycle**

The PDSA cycle, illustrated by Figure 2.5, is a form of flow diagram for learning and for improvement of a product or a process that describes a methodology for structuring improvement work. The first step is “Plan”, when someone has an idea or suggestion for a change, i.e., for improving a product or a process. Deming (1994)

At the planning stage, different management tools can be used, such as affinity diagrams, tree diagrams and matrix diagrams (to be discussed later). By working with these tools, participants in, for instance, quality circles can analyse what needs to be done and how it should be done.

![Figure 2.5](image-url)  
*Figure 2.5. The PDSA cycle is a flow diagram for learning and for improvement of a product or a process. From Deming (1994).*
The next step is “Do”. At this stage a person or group should be chosen, with the responsibility for the plans to be followed. The third step, “Study”, is implemented when the time is ripe to study and analyse the results. Here it is important to study both improvements and failures, and to document what went well and to establish a new, improved procedure for the process. The last step in the cycle is “Act”. At this stage one adopts, or adjusts to, the change, or abandons it. Sometimes it is necessary to go through the cycle again. Deming (1994)

- **Quality control circles**

Forming Quality Control Circles (QC-circles) is one way to create groups of people committed to the improvement work and to working together. Ishikawa developed this idea in Japan in the 1960s. Bergman & Klefsjö (2003)

Ishikawa (1985) created QC-circles for educational purposes, where individuals came together and stimulated each other to read and study quality methods in journals and books. Such circles can also try to solve problems that the groups identify, or to work out different possibilities for improvements; see also Kanji & Asher (1996).

The educational element in QC-Circles is the most important one in many Japanese companies, and there has been a rapid development of QC-circles. A typical QC-circle in Japan has 6 - 10 members. The use of QC-circles is not limited only to the manufacturing industry. There are, for instance, QC-circles in sales organizations, department stores, hotels, banks and restaurants. Using simple statistical tools, such as the seven QC-tools, people work in groups, discussing, analysing and solving different problems. There are also different ways of encouraging circle members, for instance by awards or by publishing their results on notice boards. Ishikawa (1985) and Kanji & Asher (1996)

Taking part in the circles is voluntary, and the circles are free to choose their own topics. Even if certain meetings take place during working hours, many are still held outside the working day, where they are freer to choose their topics. Bergman & Klefsjö (2003)

According to Bergman & Klefsjö (2003), QC-circles can be a useful methodology for teaching and encouraging the staff in their own
interest, in matters concerning quality improvements. It is essential for QC-circles, however, to have the management’s support, and that the management takes an interest in the activity and in the achieved results; see also Kanji & Asher (1996).

Quality Control Circles have many names. Kanji & Asher (1996) call them Quality Circles, and another name is “improvement teams”. However, the latter might differ from Ishikawa’s QC-circles in the sense that they are often also empowered to implement what they recommend. They can be given resources, such as people, machines and financing, in order to ensure that their ideas will be successfully realized. Bergman & Klefsjö (2003)

- **Brainstorming**

Brainstorming can be an effective methodology for a team to generate ideas creatively on any topic, through a process that is free from criticism and judgement. Brainstorming encourages open thinking and involves all team members. It allows them to build on each other’s creativity, while staying focused on their joint mission.

The two major ways of brainstorming are “structured” or “unstructured”. Both can be used silently or aloud. The structured brainstorming includes that each member of a team gives ideas in turn. In an unstructured brainstorming team members give ideas only as they come to mind. It is noteworthy that brainstorming generates just a set of new ideas, and not necessarily final solutions. Brassard & Ritter (1994) and Klefsjö et al. (1999)

**Tools**

The methodologies presented above will not work efficiently without the use of specific and suitably chosen tools. Examples of such tools are “affinity diagrams”, “tree diagrams” and the booklet with the criteria of the Swedish Quality Award (SQA). There are tools for structuring and analysing both verbal information and numerical data. Klefsjö et al. (1999)

- **Affinity diagrams**

These can be used for gathering and grouping ideas brought up, for instance, during brainstorming. A team can generate a number of ideas, which the team members then organize and summarize in
groupings, in order to understand the essence of a problem, see Figure 2.6. Working with this tool encourages creativity in the team and breaks down communication barriers. The affinity diagram illustrates mental associations rather than logical connections in the verbal data. Kanji & Asher (1996) and Brassard & Ritter (1999)

Figure 2.6. The general layout of an affinity diagram which can be used for gathering and grouping verbal data, such as ideas, in order to understand the essence of a problem. Inspired by Foster (2001) and Bergman & Klefsjö (2003).

- **Tree diagrams**
Tree diagrams are also used for verbal data, but should be applied mainly when it is necessary to map the tasks for implementation, i.e., to “break down” a goal into levels, with sub-goals for detailed actions that can be performed stepwise towards the main goal. Kanji & Asher (1996) and Brassard & Ritter (1999)
Tree diagram encourages thinking when solutions are to be found, and moves the planning stage to execution. Tree diagrams, see Figure 2.7, also reveal the real level of complexity, or uncover unknown complexity. Kanji & Asher (1996) and Brassard & Ritter (1999)

- **Criteria of the Swedish Quality Award (SQA)**

  During the last few decades, criteria for national quality awards in various countries have been used by many different organizations in their work with quality. Some examples are the criteria for the Deming Prize, the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, the British Quality Award Scheme and the Prix Qualité France. In Scandinavia there are examples from the Danish Quality Award, the Norwegian Quality Award, the Swedish Quality Award and the Finnish Quality Award; see, for instance, Jönson & Aune (1995).

  The Swedish Quality Award, SQA, has its background in a national effort for increased quality consciousness. It was created in 1992 by the Swedish Institute for Quality (SIQ). It is originally based on the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, with adaptations to Swedish conditions, traditions and ambitions.

  The SIQ Model for Performance Excellence (2002), which is the basis for the SQA, is based on the following 13 core values:

  1. Customer orientation  
  2. Leadership  
  3. Participation by everyone  
  4. Competence development  
  5. Long-range perspective  
  6. Public responsibility  
  7. Process orientation  
  8. Prevention  
  9. Continuous improvement  
  10. Learning from others  
  11. Faster response  
  12. Management by facts  
  13. Interaction
2.3 Social Economy and the Third Sector

Social economy is a manifold concept. Westlund (2003) notes that it has different names, such as, the third sector, the non-profit sector, and the third system, in different national and cultural contexts; see also Gidron et al. (1992). There is a wealth of literature about the third sector and its management; see, for instance, Nutt & Backoff (1992); including attempts to define what the third sector is; see, Mertens (1999) and Westlund (2003). For a discussion of sociological and political science approaches to the third sector, see also Anheier & Seibel (1990).

The concept ‘Social economy’, first established in France, is now an official term in the EU. In Sweden it is used mainly when discussing regional or employment policy. EU has defined the concept ‘Cooperatives, Mutuals, Associations and Foundations’ (CMAF), which is largely synonymous with social economy; see Lundstedt et al. (1999). Social economy encompasses organized activities with societal goals, built upon democratic values, and is separate from the public sector. Activities in the social economy are for the public good and for public utility, such as, for instance, in non-profit organizations (the Ministry of Trade & Industry, 1998).

Isaksson (1997) divides the economy in society into three sectors. The first sector, the public one, includes local, regional and national governments. The second sector is the commercial one with profit-motivated organizations. The third sector, sometimes called the civil society, contains non-profit organizations, for instance associations, families and individuals, see Figure 2.8. There is no internal hierarchical order, or specific meaning, of the numbering of these sectors. The boarders between them are not exactly defined, which means that, for instance, municipal profit organizations belong to the grey box overlapping the public and the commercial sectors; see also Westlund (2003) for a similar grouping. Isaksson’s (1997) division into sectors is made from criteria relevant in different contexts, for instance legislation, liability to pay tax and social structure. According to him, one starting point is the aim, i.e., whether the organization’s goal is commercial or for the public good. Another starting point is the juridical situation, i.e., if the organization is public or non-public.
Figure 2.8. The three sectors of society, with no hierarchical order. The first sector, the public one, is the local, regional and national governments. The second sector is the commercial one with profit-motivated organizations. The third sector, sometimes called the civil society, contains non-profit organizations, for instance, associations, families and individuals. Municipal profitable organizations belong to both, with the grey marking, i.e., overlapping the public and commercial sectors. From Isaksson (1997).

The Swedish Ministry of Trade & Industry (1998) uses another type of illustration of the relationships between the different economies in society, see Figure 2.9.

Figure 2.9. An alternative illustration of the relationships between the different economies in society. From the Swedish Ministry of Trade & Industry (1998).
Examples of organizations in area A in Figure 2.9 are a cooperative day nursery run by the parents, a drug-abuse help-centre run by an association, or similar help activities with public financing. Within area B there are organizations such as non-profit-making associations that have business activities, for example, a producer’s cooperation. In area C traditional associations can be found, such as free churches, sport clubs and youth clubs. In area D village communities can be found, as well as concerned-citizen committees. Ministry of Trade & Industry (1998)

There is a wealth of research and literature on the third sector and its management. However, these deal mostly with management in times of change, i.e., the change from an industrial society with its organizations, to a knowledge society; see, for instance, Drucker (1989). Much has been written about the third sector in, for example, Australia, the U.K. and the U.S.; see Lyons (2001), Hudson (1995) and Nutt & Backoff (1992). There are several attempts at explaining what the third sector is; see, for instance, Isaksson (1997) and Mertens (1999). There is also research on the third sector with sociological and political science approaches; see, for example, Anheier & Seibel (1990). In this thesis most of the literature that is dealt with is about what the third sector is, because one of the definition is used.

2.3.1 Third-sector characteristics

The third sector has variety, complexity and dynamics, and there are different models for governance and decision-making in third-sector organizations (Lyons, 2001). It is common in different countries that the third sector consists of organizations whose primary objectives are social rather than economic. They can vary from religious organizations to trade unions and community organizations. The common aspect is that they are all value-led, and established and managed by people who believe that changes are needed, and that they must engage themselves. The third sector combines entrepreneurship with a social conscience. Hudson (1995)

According to Hudson (1995), the third sector has a strong influence in the U.S., and many social changes have evolved from third-sector organizations, for instance, social welfare services. This sector, with its non-profit organizations, exists in almost all parts of the world,
such as in industrialised economies, developing economies, and in both free and less democratic societies. Non-profit organizations exist everywhere because of the human characteristics that bring people together to provide, or prevent, something.

According to Isaksson (1997), the characteristics of the third-sector activities are:

- they do not distribute profits to individuals or groups,
- they do not have economic profit as purpose,
- they aim at the common good,
- they engage citizens for common goals, and
- citizens can participate and have influence.

An attribute of the third sector in Finland and Sweden is that its organizations and associations do not conduct business for profit.

Hudson (1995) identifies the characteristics of core organizations in the third sector in Australia, by the fact that they

- are value-led,
- do not distribute profits to their owners, and
- are not subject to direct political control.

Hudson (1995) has a model similar to Isaksson's (1997) for the boundaries between the third, public and private sectors. However, it is slightly different from Isaksson’s model in the sense that a certain type of organization may belong to different sectors in the two models. One example is schools and educational organizations. In Hudson’s model they belong more to the third sector than to the public one. This difference is due to cultural differences between countries, Australia and Sweden in this case.

Lyons (2001) discusses the third sector in Australia and has identified similar characteristics. His distinctive characteristics of third-sector organizations include several “negative” criteria:

- centrality of values,
- difficulty to generate income,
- reliance on volunteers,
Chapter 2 Theoretical Frame of Reference

- difficulty in judging performance,
- accountability, and
- board and staff conflict.

Lyons (2001) also claims that values play a central role. Third-sector organizations are, in general, started by people who share certain values. These values are the features that attract new members and often hold the organization together. One consequence of this centrality of values can be instability and a tendency towards division of people, “we” the members and “them” outside the organization.

One clear difference between organizations in the third sector and those in the other two sectors is the generation of income. Most third-sector organizations rely on entirely voluntary efforts, which is an important difference from business and government organizations.

Boards and managers of third-sector organizations have difficulties in judging an organization’s performance, such as childcare and health education services. One of the major challenges for third-sector organizations concerns accountability. Governmental organizations are accountable to the electorate, and profit organizations are accountable to customers and the owners. In the third sector the accountability depends not only on the type of organization, but also on how many members an organization has, and how the members look upon their membership. It can make a great difference if, for instance, the members see themselves as consumers rather than contributors within the organization. Another challenge for organizations in the third sector can be tensions between staff and the board, due to a lack of clarity about the role of boards, or a lack of clear performance measures. Lyons (2001)

As a summary, the characteristics of non-profit organizations differ among countries, depending on, for example, political culture and social economy, even in those countries with liberal democracy as the overarching political ideology, see also Section 2.4, where the concept of democracy will be shortly described. In this thesis Isaksson’s (1997) definition of both the third sector and of non-profit organizations can be used, see Figure 2.8. However, the definition made by the Swedish Ministry of Trade & Industry is used in this thesis, see Figure 2.9. It shows the reader somewhat more clearly that the boundaries between the different economies and their
organizations are diffuse. One of the most general features of a non-profit organization, apart from its non-profit characteristic, seems to be that it is value-led. Values are also one of the important components of TQM, as discussed in Section 2.2.5. When discussing social economy one cannot disregard the political climate.

2.4 The Concept of Liberal Democracy

When asking questions like “Should people be more equal?”, “Is the state more important than the individual?” or “Can the majority dictate to the minority?” one is dwelling upon fundamental issues, and the answers depend on the respondent’s ideological position. Ideological positions exist at different levels, from the one of a person to the one of a country. The latter can also be called the overarching ideology. Overarching means here that the values and thinking of the specific ideology permeate all thinking and doing in a country. Most people are influenced by political ideology, either knowingly subscribe to it, or unconsciously absorb it as part of an opinion. An ideology can also be called a political theory, which means political values and ideals, and mostly express opinions about what ought to be. Political theory may be defined as a discipline that aims to explain and criticize the disposition or distribution of power in a community. Distribution of power means here, for instance, who has the legislative, the judging and the executive powers. Goodwin (1992)

Since the fall of communism, at the end of the 1980s, most countries in Europe, North America and Oceania have either adopted, or are trying to adopt, democracy and liberal economy.

2.4.1 Democracy

Democracy is an old concept, originating the ancient Greeks, which roughly means ‘power to the people’. However, in those days the “people” were free Greek men, i.e., slaves, women and foreigners had no opportunities to participate in elections, or be elected. The present interpretation of democracy means, however, that it is a theory or a system of government in which residents, men and women, can participate in free elections. Lübeke (1988) and Collins (1988)
There are direct or indirect elections (representative) of the governing bodies. Direct democracy means that all citizens participate in decision-making and accept a majority verdict. One example of direct democracy in Sweden is to use a referendum, such as for instance, when the question was raised whether Sweden should be a member of the EU or not. Otherwise there is representative democracy in Sweden, which means that the citizens or residents vote for persons that will represent their views in the national, regional or local parliaments. The referenda in Sweden are just advisory. Scruton (1996)

2.4.2 Liberalism

Liberalism is a political ideology. However, in some countries the development of liberal thought began several hundreds of years ago, for instance, in England. Liberalism hence appears to be a truth and a basis of reality, rather than a political ideology among many. This may be compared to the description of values in Section 2.2.5. Some of the ideas behind the main elements of liberalism will be shortly described here, because the concepts of democracy and liberalism will be used in Chapter 6.

The characteristics of liberalism concern the limits of authority, and opposition to state interference with individual activities. This emphasizes the importance of the individual and the promotion of human rights and liberties, which serve to delimit the area in which the state is justified to act. Hobbes (1664), among other advocates of liberalism, takes the individual as the basic unit of society. Goodwin (1992)

- The individual
The preservation of the individual and the attainment of individual happiness are the main goals of a liberal political system, in theory. The individual person, and all human life, is to be regarded as sacrosanct, and violence is prohibited except for preserving the liberal society itself. The individualism is based on equal respect for all persons as moral beings. Liberalism assumes the individual to be rational. This assumption also decides the form of political organization, which justifies participatory, rather than authoritarian, government. Furthermore, the individual has knowledge of his own
best interests and the ability to pursue them rationally. Since a person is a free human being, who knows her or his own interests, authoritarian or paternalistic government is against human nature. Also, the performance of self-interest may lead to cooperation or competition. Goodwin (1992)

- **Contract and consent**
  Deriving from the idealization of individual freedom and rationality, a central political axiom, according to Goodwin (1992), is that government should be based on the agreement of the people, which also legitimizes it. The individuals give up their natural rights of self-protection and the right to punish, and the government takes on the duty to protect its subjects. Goodwin (1992) also notes that this forms the basis of the relation between liberalism and democracy, even if they are incompatible in some respects.

- **Constitutionalism and the law**
  Some form of constitution that limits the power of government is essential to liberalism. John Locke contributed to the liberal theory of government with the theory of separation of powers, i.e., distribution of powers, which had the aim of guarding the individual’s rights from the trespass of a tyrant. The constitution and the law have parallel roles in liberalism. The constitution is a form of higher law, which prevents the government from transgressing against its subjects. The law prevents the individuals from violating each other. Goodwin (1992)

- **Freedom as choice**
  Freedom is the primary value in liberalism, which means that the rational individual pursues his own interests. Realization of freedom requires that the citizens should be able to choose. A pluralist democracy is the liberal idea of freedom. Goodwin (1992)

- **Private and public life**
  As a result of liberal ideas the value and importance of private life, both economic and social, is enhanced at the expense of public or political life. Liberalism does not entail democracy but democracy is probably the best guarantee for liberalism. Goodwin (1992)

The idea of liberal democracy is a dimension that should be kept in mind when discussing how residents themselves can work with
improvement in order to affect their own lives. One way of doing it is to use TQM, which has also entered the social economy.

2.5 TQM Enters the Social Economy

There are many discussions in the literature about management and the use and implementation of TQM in producing organizations, for instance, if the use of TQM generates profitability to an organization. There are also debates about development of methodologies, such as benchmarking or quality circles. However, there are few discussions about society and its residents, seen as a system, and the use of TQM for societal improvements. Organizations within the social economy, which need to be managed too, are one part of this societal system; see, for instance, Dalrymple & Drew (2000).

Discussions and research about managing organizations in the social economy may be found in, for instance, Hudson (1995), Lyons (2001), Nutt & Backoff (1992), Isaksson (1997) and Mertens (1999). Reavill (1999) discusses the current status and possible future of TQM as a major management concept. He finds that the social economy could benefit from adopting TQM concepts, since its organizations are generally not-profit making, which means that the need for efficiency can be even higher when the “driver” of profit is missing.

2.5.1 TQM applied to community issues


In the U.S. there are several examples of organizations that have successfully applied concepts from TQM to other segments of society than just the commercial and public ones. The community of Pensacola in Florida has brought together people from different sectors to create a “Quality Community”. The state of Oregon is striving to create a high-performance society through benchmarking and human investments strategies. Communities in California, Wisconsin and Arizona are establishing mutually profitable partnerships among
schools, city government and private business; see Osborne & Gaebler (1992) and Brown et al. (1994). These are examples of TQM-based collaborations over sector boundaries, where the community is seen as a system; see also Knapp (1998) and Scholtes (1997).

The systematic approach, the system view and the preventive thinking in TQM can be used also for societal projects with a more limited scope. Examples are: to prevent negative economic and demographic trends; see Helling et al., (1998); to prevent domestic violence; see Corpuz & O'Hanlon (1999); and to reduce traffic injuries; see Knapp (1998).

2.5.2 The ASQ/IHI model

The American Society for Quality (ASQ) and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) have collaborated in a project where a community health improvement model has been created as an approach to working with community issues; see Figure 2.10. Kinney (1998) and Knapp (1998)

![Figure 2.10. The ASQ/IHI model for teams in community systems. Kinney (1998) gives some guidance on how to structure, and work in teams, as well as about their possible connections within larger community contexts. From Kinney (1998)](image)

Traditions have been strong and persistent concerning government agency actions, social services involvement and civic engagement about urgent community needs, at the national, regional and local levels. However, these traditional approaches have limitations in
Chapter 2 Theoretical Frame of Reference

resolving serious community needs. The community health improvement model, here called the ASQ/IHI Model, provides a new way of working with important community issues, such as reducing traffic injuries. Kinney (1998) and Knapp (1998)

Kinney (1998) suggests that the ASQ/IHI model can be used after establishing community-based quality measures, and after a review of measures and priority areas initiated by the community leadership.

Community contexts differ from organizational ones, and therefore Kinney (1998) suggests that community teams must first adopt structures and processes in order to work effectively. Her suggestions apply to core teams, as well as to extended teams and team connections in larger community issues, see Figure 2.10.

This ASQ/IHI model is similar to other improvement practices, for instance, reliance on cooperation in teams and attention to human and organizational dynamics. According to Kinney (1998), the most important experiences from applying improvement methodologies on community issues are:

- The system boundaries and roles are unclear.
- Cause-and-effect relationships are complex.
- Ownership of the community improvement aim is not always clear and is difficult to maintain.
- Customer connections are diffuse.
- Teams vary substantially in culture, professions, power, skills, and usually have limited team experiences.
- The ASQ/IHI model served as the primary method in these teams.
- The availability of useful timely data in a community setting is a serious challenge.

Kinney (1998) discusses teams and gives suggestions and some guidance. A brief summary of Kinney’s ideas is given below.

**Core team**

According to Kinney (1998), community health improvement work benefits when a small group of key actors is established as a core team, then focuses on a specific aim, and acts to implement changes. This flexibility is crucial for success in implementing small cycles of
change. The core team must achieve knowledge of customers, either through members or by other means. She also suggests that the membership in the core team should be updated regularly to maintain coherence between activities and membership.

The processes of the core team are very important for success. Collaborative leadership and participation are the foundation of the processes. Team members need to identify and use the diversity among organizations, professions, persons and cultures in the work. Many basic quality improvement tools contribute considerably to creating predictable and stable team processes in community teams.

This core team should thoughtfully identify members to create an extended team and actively manage the connections with them. In this model the extended team should include the host organizations for team members, for instance, a public health department if the improvement work is a health issue. Kinney (1998) also suggests that the media and politicians be members of an extended team. The extended team can provide a foundation for sustaining the improvements achieved by the core team.

**Extended teams**

The extended team, see Figure 2.10, was a valuable resource for the community health improvement project discussed by Kinney (1998). The suggestions for such an extended team are:

- The core team should create and support connections with the extended team before they actually need support.
- Core team members should then use their personal connections.
- Core team members should act within their own organizations in order to link the community teamwork to relevant organizations.
- The core team should collaborate with other relevant community groups, in order to link areas of shared interest.

According to Knapp (1998), the ASQ/IHI model has been applied to other projects as well. One example is an injury prevention project in ten communities in the U.S., for instance, in Dallas (Texas), Denver (Colorado) and Waltham (Massachusetts). Knapp (1998) also notes that the ASQ/IHI collaborative model requires a clear aim, a committed leadership, an excellent teamwork, expertise and the use of
PDSA cycles. Improvement teams should not start with too severe problems, nor spend too much time on data collection. The size of a team should be between four and eleven members. Knapp (1998)

**Other teams within the community context**

In this particular example of cooperation between the American Society for Quality (ASQ) and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI), the project has several ways of connecting with related community initiatives. For instance, for ASQ members a connection with the local Community Quality Council, CQC seems to be natural. Many members of the Community Quality Council have roots in the American Society for Quality. Both Kinney (1998) and Knapp (1998) conclude that this model and work process are applicable to other community projects.

2.5.3 The citizen-as-customer model in Tacoma

Residents of the community of Tacoma in Washington State have worked with concepts from TQM in a project where they studied how compatible “the citizen-as-customer model” has been with community-wide improvement work Jacques (1999).

In Tacoma most residents had little faith in institutions and elected officials. One aim of the project was therefore to rebuild public trust in the community as a viable unit for social and civic interaction. Another is to help the residents to find trust in their own capacities, as individuals, to make a difference. The improvement work started as a research programme, initiated by the American Society for Quality, ASQ (Jacques, 1999).

Independently, a group from the W. Edwards Deming Institute got an idea in 1994 to form a partnership with a community in order to study the applicability of Deming’s theories to community issues. The group saw a community partnership as a way for active interaction between theory and application, for instance, by using the PDSA cycle in communities.

When the collaboration started between Tacoma and the Deming Institute in 1996, the Tacoma quality initiative had proceeded for three years, so the residents were already familiar with quality concepts.
Existing community infrastructure and leadership network, like in Tacoma, are important for the success of improvement work, and can, for instance, speed up the use of the PDSA cycle. A major problem for the community was the limited funds available. Nevertheless, the team leaders hoped that they would be able to identify and improve at least one community issue that most residents had resigned about. In 1997 a team started the process of selecting an issue to be in focus of the improvement work. According to Jacques (1999), a community improvement project should be:

- relevant to the residents,
- beneficial and interesting to the residents in all aspects of life,
- preventive or proactive,
- feasible.

The improvement work should also:

- offer both short-term and long-term benefits,
- give measurable results, and
- offer opportunities for the residents to be involved.

In Tacoma, these criteria resulted in a choice of family violence as such a central issue for improvement work.

Jacques (1999) cites Putnam (1995) when concluding that factors such as community wealth, educational levels, and political parties might explain why some community projects are successful, while others are not. However, the crucial factors in Tacoma turned out instead to be the skills of the community groups that brought people together for face-to-face conversations about local issues. Events and activities for training and awareness were important means of engaging the residents.

According to Jacques (1999), communication and work in processes are keys to overcoming political barriers in community improvement efforts. Quality professionals involved in community work can contribute with their knowledge of improvement methodologies and system-approach thinking. Jacques refers to Scholtes (1997) when stating that poverty levels, unemployment rates and fiscal deficit are relevant measures for the outcome of the work. All this implies that
new ways of thinking are needed to secure a successful outcome of community improvement projects.

### 2.6 Criticism of TQM

Critical voiced have also been raised against using methodologies from TQM in the commercial and public sectors. A few examples are given in this section with the purpose of showing that the criticism may be wide and varying. For instance, Bejerot & Hasselbladh (2002) question if it is legitimate to put the customer in focus in publicly financed organizations. They are of the opinion that quality control is a way of executing power, and therefore question its use in the public sector. Another critic is Erlingsdóttir (1999), who discusses and criticises quality assurance in health-care projects.

It should be noted, however, that many critical authors, including the two examples above, discuss just some parts of TQM, and from the point of view of the deterministic TQM school. See Section 2.2.1, as well as Kroslid (1999), for the definition and development of the two TQM schools. Figure 2.1 in Section 2.2.1 illustrates how Quality Control and Quality Assurance are related to TQM.

Another criticism against the use of TQM, based on experiences from the commercial sector, is raised by Lau & Anderson (1998). They note that TQM often fails when implementation begins. However, they claim that this is due to the fact that all the dimensions of the TQM concept are not adequately addressed. According to Brown et al. (1994), TQM efforts sometimes fail in the start-up phase because of lack of management commitment, poor timing, wasted education and a lack of short-term, bottom-line results.

Some TQM methodologies and tools are criticised also by Beckford (1998). He describes in detail what he calls “the Quality Gurus”, and their definitions of quality, key beliefs and principal methodologies. His main conclusion is that the importance of a socio-cultural context is missing in the different quality approaches. Management commitment is a most critical issue when pursuing quality. Beckford (1998) finds that all Quality Gurus agree on this, but that they are not
very specific about how such a crucial commitment can be obtained once it is missing.
In summary, there is a lot of criticism against concepts from TQM, just a fractional part mentioned here, and the criticism varies from the very concept to the application of it. It should be noted that many critical authors discuss the concepts with one label but with several definitions, which affects the theoretical discussions and practical applications; see appended Paper V.
3 \textbf{The Methodological Framework}

This chapter describes research approaches, methods for data collection and analyses in general, as well as the ones used in this thesis. There is also a work process description.

3.1 \textbf{Research Purposes}

According to Yin (1994), among others, the research approach should be decided according to the type of problem and the purpose of the research. There are three major purposes of research according to Marshall & Rossman (1999); description, explanation and exploration. Yin (1994) also notes that these can complement each other.

Description might be the main purpose when investigating a new interesting phenomenon, i.e., mainly documenting it. When the purpose is explanatory, it seeks to explain the pattern related to the phenomenon and to identify likely relationships with other phenomena. A study with an exploratory purpose is intended to investigate a phenomenon that is little understood, to identify categories of explanations, and to generate hypotheses and research questions for further research. See also Yin (1994), for examples of descriptive, explanatory and exploratory studies. Yin (1994) and Marshall & Rossman (1999)

In this thesis the author’s pre-understanding directed the choice of sample, i.e., the author’s education and interest in social science as well as in quality technology and management. My curiosity was aroused about how to combine these two disciplines.

The research purpose of this thesis is to explore and describe how residents in local communities can work with improvements using concepts from TQM, and to transform the experiences into a cooperation model for community development.
3.2 Research Traditions in General

Research may be defined as seeking answers and solving problems in order to expand knowledge. These processes should be systematically conducted. Bell (1999), among others, notes that a researcher needs methodologies, i.e., methods to approach the subject, in order to explain the research results scientifically. The chosen approach in this thesis is influenced by the researcher's ontological, epistemological and methodological premises, see Figure 3.3 in Section 3.6.2. These are all formed by principles and beliefs about what a human being is, the nature of reality, and how knowledge is gained. These form, according to Denzin & Lincoln (2000) and Lindén et al. (1999), the filter through which the research results are interpreted. This can be visualised as in Figure 3.1.

![Figure 3.1](image)

*Figure 3.1.* The figure illustrates how the researcher has a pre-understanding, and faces several choices in the scientific work. All this affects the results. Popper (1972) discusses objectivism in research in his book “Objective Knowledge”.

According to Denzin & Lincoln (2000) and Hartman (2001), there are differences between the two different epistemological traditions, i.e., two paradigms in the theory of science and research; positivism and hermeneutics, and their different traditions, the quantitative and the qualitative ones. However, most of the differences depend on the politics of research, and on the paradigms having different objects for research. Andersson (1979) takes a step further, and states that the difference between the positivistic and the hermeneutic paradigms is more than two different technical or methodological approaches. They
are two completely different views of life, as the overview in the next section shows.

### 3.3 Positivistic versus Hermeneutic Paradigms

#### 3.3.1 The positivistic paradigm

Scientific knowledge should be expressed in linguistic sentences corresponding to reality. This opinion generated demands and design of measurements and experiments to test knowledge. Positivism originates from “philosophy positive”, i.e., about what is real and true. These demands gave rise to a narrow delimitation of science, as described by, for instance, Andersson (1979), Thurén (1991) and Wallén (1996).

The main characteristics of contemporary positivism are the belief in scientific rationality, which means that knowledge should be empirically well founded and tested, and judgements should be replaced by measurements and data collection. The scientific methods should generate reliable and valid knowledge. Other main characteristics of contemporary positivism are that explanations should be expressed in terms of cause and effect and in conformity to law. Reductionism and the objectivity of the researcher are other typical ingredients. Andersson (1979), Thurén (1991) and Wallén (1996)

#### 3.3.2 The hermeneutic paradigm

_Hermeneutics_ can be broadly translated as ‘interpretation’ and originates from the interpretations of the Bible and other sources. Interpretation can vary, from “reading” a traffic sign to a deep understanding of a human being and her or his situation in life. Hermeneutics can also be seen as a general doctrine about communication and understanding. Andersson (1979), Thurén (1991) and Wallén (1996)
One main characteristic of contemporary hermeneutics is that interpretations are about significance or meanings, often linked to the researcher’s pre-understanding, which s/he might even be unaware of. In an interpretation the researcher might adopt a partial or holistic perspective, or alternate between the two. It is important that the interpretations in hermeneutic research are related to a context. Andersson (1979), Thurén (1991) and Wallén (1996)

In a theoretical sense this thesis work has hermeneutic elements because of certain interpretations of actions and experiences. Hermeneutics is, according to Wallén (1996), about interpretation of actions and experiences, and according to Hartman (2001), with a human conception about “reality”. In this thesis interpretations and analyses are made of how residents in two Swedish communities work with improvements, and how they experience strengths and difficulties. Such studies will necessarily have strong hermeneutic elements. They are also conducted more from a holistic than from an analytic perspective.

### 3.4 Quantitative versus Qualitative Traditions

The design of a study begins with the selection of a topic and a paradigm. Paradigms in social sciences help to understand phenomena, since they comprise theories and methods. Two paradigms, or approaches, discussed widely in the literature are the qualitative and the quantitative ones. Creswell (1994)

#### 3.4.1 The quantitative tradition

Within the positivistic tradition connections between measurable phenomena can be investigated. Quantitative research is intended mostly to test existing theories by the logic-deductive model. But much of this research stresses controlling variables rather than testing a theory. Advocates of quantitative studies claim that their work is conducted within a value-free framework. Denzin & Lincoln (2000)
The quantitative research approach will not be further discussed in this thesis. However, some quantitative data collecting methods will be described in Section 3.7.4.

### 3.4.2 The qualitative tradition

According to Denzin & Lincoln (2000), the word *qualitative*, such as in “qualitative studies”, implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not necessarily experimentally examined or measured in terms of quality, amount, intensity or frequency. Sometimes they are not measured at all. Qualitative researchers emphasize the socially constructed nature of reality, as based in hermeneutics, as well as the value-laden nature of inquiry. They look for answers to questions that stress *how* social experience is created and given meaning. Denzin & Lincoln (2000)

Qualitative research has a long history in academic disciplines, such as anthropology and sociology, and other fields where human behaviour is of interest. Qualitative research may be seen as a set of interpretative activities and puts no single methodological practice before another. It is difficult to define clearly, and it has no theory, paradigm or distinct set of methods or practices of its very own. Researchers use, for instance, content, discourse, archival records, statistics, tables and graphs for analysis. They also use the approaches, methods and techniques of ethno-methodology, phenomenology, hermeneutics, feminism, interviews, cultural studies, survey research and observations. All of these approaches, methods and techniques “can provide important insights and knowledge”, as formulated by, for instance, Denzin & Lincoln (2000) and Mason (1996). According to Holme & Solvang (1991) and Yin (1994), the notion of a qualitative research strategy should be used in human and social sciences, where there is a need for nearness to the studied subject. It can be used for individuals, groups of individuals or organizations.

Social research can take many forms and can be carried out under varying conditions, and there is a diversity of methods and differing views about goals. Each strategy has advantages and disadvantages, and the research approach should be decided according to the type of problem. See, for instance, Hammersley (1993), Denzin & Lincoln (1994), Yin (1994) and Bjereld *et al.* (1999).
Denzin & Lincoln (1994) discriminate between five phases of the research process:

- the researcher as a multicultural subject,
- theoretical paradigms, for example, positivism,
- the research approach, for example, case studies,
- the methods of collection and analysis, for example, interviews and observations, and
- the art of interpretation and presentation, for example, policy analysis or criteria for judging adequacy.

In order to generate scientific knowledge it is necessary to use scientific methodology. The two traditional ones, such as induction and deduction, will be described shortly in Section 3.4.3, together with another example of scientific methodology, abduction.

According to Creswell (1994), the epistemological assumption in the qualitative paradigm is that the researcher interacts with whatever is being studied, unlike in the quantitative paradigm. The language of research, the rhetorical assumption, is informal in the qualitative paradigm, while it is formal in the quantitative one.

In this thesis a qualitative study is designed to correspond with the qualitative paradigm assumptions, because the research questions and the studied object are in the domain of social phenomena. In addition a case-study strategy is chosen, because, according to Yin (1994) and Hörte (1996), case studies can be used in order to describe, explore, and explain a phenomenon.

The methodological assumption in the qualitative paradigm is that an inductive process should be used in a study, in contrast to the quantitative paradigm, where deduction is used. Creswell (1994)

3.4.3 Induction, deduction and abduction

There are several different ways of approaching a phenomenon, but also for a researcher to draw conclusions, understand and explain. These are influenced by, among other things, the choice of paradigm, for instance, positivism, and the methodological assumption, i.e., the
view of what the research process is. Thurén (1991) and Creswell (1994)

**Induction and deduction**

In modern philosophy the most common explanation models are induction and deduction. Induction means generalization from conclusions derived from a specific case. A weakness is that the model distils a general rule from limited observations. When using deduction, on the other hand, the researcher starts from a general rule and explains a specific case. A weakness here is that such a model does not explain, or expand knowledge, but rather establishes a rule. For further discussion of induction and deduction, see Föllesdal *et al.* (1993), Thurén (1991), Alvesson & Sköldberg (1994) and Molander (1998).

**Abduction**

According to Alvesson & Sköldberg (1994), abduction is probably the most common methodology for case studies. Here a single case is interpreted with a kind of overarching hypothetical pattern. The interpretation is corroborated with new observations. In this way abduction is a combination of induction and deduction. During the process the empirical application is developed, and the theory is adjusted. A difference from induction and deduction is that abduction contains the factor of understanding. Abduction departs from empirical facts, just like induction, but does not dismiss a conceptual framework and is closer to deduction. The analysis of the empirical work can very well be combined with literature studies of earlier theories in order to achieve a deeper understanding. It should also be mentioned that there is no clear connection between hermeneutics and abduction. Abduction may be illustrated as in Table 3.1.

Abduction is used in this thesis, and motivated by the importance of understanding the studied objects, for the purpose of building a model based on experiences and earlier theories.
Table 3.1. The figure visualises the difference between deduction, induction and abduction. Modified after Alvesson & Sköldberg (1994).

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<th>Deduction</th>
<th>Induction</th>
<th>Abduction</th>
<th>The chosen methodology in this thesis</th>
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<td>Empiricism</td>
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The process of gathering data, analysing it and drawing conclusions in this thesis, may also be interpreted as in Figure 3.2, from Rudestam & Newton (2001), illustrating a research process.

### 3.5 Approaches in the Quantitative and Qualitative Traditions

A research purpose and a chosen paradigm must be complemented with methods for data collection and analysis. According to Creswell (1994), quantitative methods are of two types. The first one is experiment, which includes true experiment with assignments of subjects and treatment conditions. The second one is surveys, including cross-sectional and longitudinal studies with the help of questionnaires for data collection. The purpose of the latter is to generalize from a sample to a population. Creswell (1994)

Human and social sciences have various traditions with qualitative approaches, covering all phases of a research process. Examples are methods for data collection, for analysis and for reporting, sometimes with their own names, such as, “ethnographies”, “grounded theory”, “soft systems methodology”, “phenomenological studies” and “case studies”. Creswell (1994)
The particular concepts of “grounded theory,” “soft systems methodology” and “case studies” will be described below, in order to clarify the methodologies used, or not used, in this thesis work.

3.5.1 Grounded theory

Grounded theory differs from other research approaches, according to Hartman (2001). At the initial stage the researcher is less bound by rules, and the investigation is gradually designed in accordance with the collected and analysed data. Hartman (2001) has reviewed the extensive work done by the advocates of grounded theory, Strauss and Glaser, and refers to them when discussing the approach. The differences between these different advocates will not be discussed here.

An essential issue in grounded theory is how the entities for comparison are chosen, i.e., how the decision is made about what information should be collected, and from whom. These choices can be made, or the samples taken, repeatedly during the investigation, in accordance with the theoretical ideas generated during the process.

The knowledge generation in grounded theory may perhaps be visualised as in Figure 3.2, from Rudestam & Newton (2001), which illustrates the research wheel. The connection to grounded theory is made by the author of this thesis.

According to Hartman (2001), grounded theory is a suitable methodology for generating new theories, but not for testing theories, or for investigating new areas within the framework of existing theories.

Since the purpose of this thesis is to explore and describe how residents in local communities can work with improvements using, or not using, concepts from TQM, grounded theory has not been used.
3.5.2 Soft systems methodology

There are several systems methodologies, and an extensive literature about research methodologies and approaches. Only one of them will be described here, namely “soft systems methodology” (SSM), developed by Checkland in 1981. SSM is based on soft system thinking, and is meant to be used in situations where there is little or no clarity in the definition of a problem and no clear action for solving it. Beckford (2002)

System thinking is an attempt to avoid the reductionism of natural science. In SSM a variety of opinions are elaborated and evaluated by a group of problem solvers. By explaining and evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the opinions, an approach can be generated. Checkland (1999) suggests a process of inquiry with the following seven stages:

1. Finding out
2. Rich picture
3. Root definitions
4. Redesign
5. Real-world comparison
6. Debate and decision
7. Taking action
Using these seven stages SSM can lead to changes in attitudes, structure and procedures. Checkland & Holwell (1998), Checkland (1999) and Beckford (2002)

Stages 1 & 2 are based on the experience and knowledge of the participants. In the first stage the members explore the problem situation and gather information about it. In stage 2 the problem is expressed as the participants experience it. Checkland (1999) and Beckford (2002) In stage 3 concise statements about the system’s aim are developed and called root definitions. These present what ought to be, i.e., an ideal view. In stage 4 the root definitions are used, and conceptual models are developed, which all identify the necessary activities. In stage 5 a comparison is made between the constructed models and how the participants understand the “real world”. In stage 6 there are debates and decisions on possible changes in the situation. In the last stage 7 the suggested changes are implemented in the “real world”. Checkland (1999) and Beckford (2002)

SSM is not used in this thesis. The case studies would have been different and, most likely, the results too, if SSM had been used. One reason for not using SSM here is that the author does not want to get involved too much in the studied entities. SSM is used mostly in action research, where it is desirable that the researcher should get involved and influence the studied objects. Another reason for not using SSM here is that the research problem was clearly identified already from start.

3.5.3 Case studies

Case study is an approach associated with the qualitative tradition. Here the researcher explores a single “phenomenon”, the case bounded by time and activity. The latter may be a programme, event, social group or process. In addition, the researcher collects detailed information by using different data collection procedures for a period of time. Creswell (1994) Merriam (1988) and Yin (1994)

Because of the purpose of the thesis work, case studies are chosen as an approach in this thesis. The concept will be described in more detail below.
3.6 Research Design in this Thesis

According to Hartman (2001), it is essential to know the purpose of a scientific investigation before starting the research. Otherwise it is not possible to choose proper methodologies and approaches. Therefore the case selection will be briefly presented here, before the description of the chosen research approach in the thesis.

3.6.1 Case selection

According to Creswell (1994), the aim of a study can emerge from literature reviews, suggested by colleagues or advisors, or be developed through practical experiences.

The research purpose here is to explore and describe how residents in local communities can work with improvements, with a focus on using concepts from TQM, and transform the experiences into a cooperation model for community development. The ideas that led to the selected cases emerged from literature reviews, as well as from other researchers and persons with practical experiences of societal improvement work and the use of TQM.

The two cases under study are the improvement work done by groups of residents in the communities of Åseda in the municipality of Uppvidinge and of Seskarö in the municipality of Haparanda. The interest in those communities emerged through extensive literature study, after which it was obvious that they represent two different ways in which residents work with societal changes. After complementary observations of the two communities, different operational research questions could be formulated. The research was designed in the form of two case studies, supplemented with comparisons between the two. It should be stressed that the study does not include “official” improvement work as steered by the local municipal administration.

The major difference between the two cases, which was one of the main motivations for the study, is that the Åseda improvement work is partly based on values, methodologies or tools from TQM, while the Seskarö work is not. The two cases are therefore studied by methods
that are as similar as possible, and with a focus on the role of TQM in Åseda and alternative work processes in Seskarö.

3.6.2 Case-study design

Yin (1994) notes that case studies are used to a large extent in social science research. They are preferred when questions like “how” or “why” are posed, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon in some real-life context.

According to Miles & Huberman (1994), a key feature of qualitative sampling is that qualitative researchers usually work with small samples of people in their context. These samples are then studied in depth. They also note that qualitative samples tend to be resolute, rather than random, and they state that qualitative researchers often deal with the questions of “what my case is” and “where my case leaves off”. They define a case as a “phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context”. The case is the unit of analysis. Boundaries can be, for instance, settings, concepts and sampling. Miles & Hubermann (1994)

Yin (1994) has a slightly different view of what the unit of analysis might be, and defines four major types of case-study designs, see Table 3.2. There may be one or more units of analysis, in combination with single- or multiple-case designs. The single-case study is appropriate to use when, for instance, the case can be analogous to a single experiment, or when the case is unique. The unusual or unique case is likely to involve only a single case by definition. The second choice is between a single-unit and a multiple-unit analysis. The latter is feasible when attention is given to subunits. In an organizational study, the embedded subunits might be processes, such as meetings, roles and locations. Yin (1994)
Table 3.2. There are four major types of design for case studies. Each one of the basic single-case and multiple-case designs can have one or more units of analysis. The single-case design might be appropriate when a case is unique in some sense. A case study can involve more than one unit of analysis when attention is given to subunits, for instance, meetings, roles or locations. From Yin (1994, p. 39)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Single-case design</th>
<th>Multiple-case design</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holistic (single unit of analysis)</td>
<td>TYPE 1</td>
<td>TYPE 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embedded (multiple units of analysis)</td>
<td>TYPE 2</td>
<td>TYPE 4</td>
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In this thesis there are two single-case studies. The one about Åseda involves one unit of analysis, i.e., the process of improvement work. It has a single-case design because the work, and in particular its organization, is unique in Sweden. The one about Seskarö has the same unit of analysis, and was chosen as a comparison to Åseda, due to the different organizations and work processes in the two communities. Seskarö was therefore chosen as a single-case study for another reason than Åseda, i.e., not for its possible uniqueness. For a more detailed description of the two cases, see Chapter 4.

In these two single-case studies, attention will be given to several subunits in order to increase knowledge. These are the initiators, the leadership and representatives of local business life. There are also other sources of information and data, such as a randomly chosen group of “normal” residents and a politically representative choice of local municipal politicians. These subunits were investigated with different strategies for data collection, such as interviews and observations. However, other data collection methods have also been used and will be further outlined in Section 3.7.

The methodological framework of the thesis research may hence be summarized as in Figure 3.3.
3.7 Data Collecting Methods in General

A qualitative case study differs from a quantitative one. It can include individuals, roles, groups and organizations. Even when a case study is an individual, the qualitative researcher has many within-case sampling decisions to make, such as which activities, events or locations to select. Miles & Huberman (1994)

Decisions also have to be made about what kind of information is needed to enlighten the problem, and how to get the information and data. There are two types of data. Primary data is gathered by the researcher herself/himself, while so-called secondary data already exists. It is common to start by studying data that already exists, such as literature studies. For data collecting methods, see, for example, Merriam (1988), Wiedersheim-Paul & Eriksson (1991), Creswell (1994), Yin (1994) and Lofland & Lofland (1995).

There are different ways of collecting data. Yin (1994) calls them “sources of evidence” and Creswell (1994) names them “data collection types”. A few examples are presented below.
3.7.1 Interviews

Yin (1994), notes that interviews are one of the most important sources of information in a case study. The interviews can be planned and performed in several forms. According to Fontana & Frey (1994), they can be semi-structured or unstructured. The most common in case studies is an “open-ended” interview, which means that key persons can be asked both about facts and about their opinions in one and the same interview.

One type of interview is “face-to-face”, which means that the interviewer talks to a respondent in person, in contrast to, for instance a telephone interview. A group interview is when the researcher interviews one group of respondents at a time. Creswell (1994)

According to Creswell (1994) and Yin (1994), there are advantages and limitations of the different types of interviews, when used for collecting data.

Advantages
According to Creswell (1994), interviews are useful above all when the respondents cannot be directly observed by the researcher. They are also of value for obtaining historical information from the informants. Another advantage is that the researcher has more control over the questioning, since the interviews can focus directly on the case-study topic, and also provide perceived causal inferences (Yin, 1994).

Limitations
Interviews also have their limitations. According to Creswell (1994), an interview provides information filtered through the eyes and memory of the respondent, maybe also affected by the presence of the researcher. Interviews may also be biased if they take place in a designated place and not in the natural field setting. In addition, they can suffer from poorly constructed questions, which can confuse the respondent, see Yin (1994).
3.7.2 Observations

Observations are based on visits to the “field” of the case study. Yin (1994), notes that there are two types of observations; “direct” and “participant” ones. The difference between the two is that in a participant observation, the researcher is not only a passive observer.

Creswell (1994) distinguishes between four different “participant” observations. A “complete participant” is a participating researcher, who completely conceals her/his role as an observer, while with an “observer as participant” the observing role of the researcher is known to those observed. When the researcher is a “participant as observer” the participation is primary while observation is secondary. Finally, a “complete observer” means that the researcher observes openly, but without participating.

Advantages
Observations cover events and their context in real time, and the researcher gets first-hand experience of the studied entity. The researcher can record information as it occurs, and notice unusual aspects. Observations can also give an insight into the behaviour and motives of individuals and their relations, which might be uncomfortable to discuss in interviews. Creswell (1994) and Yin (1994)

Limitations
Observations are time and cost consuming. The researcher might introduce some selectivity when observing, and the events might proceed differently because they are observed. There is hence a risk of manipulation of the events by the researcher. Yin (1994)

Creswell (1994) also states that the researcher might limit the observations, if being seen as intrusive, or if lacking necessary skills as an observer. There might also be situations where sensitive information, for instance private, is not suitable for being reported.

3.7.3 Literature study

Literature studies may include several categories of “literature”, for instance, “documentations”, “archival records”, “audiovisual material” and “books”. According to Creswell (1994) and Yin (1994),
“documents” can be minutes of meetings and agendas, newspapers, journals, diaries, other written reports and letters.

**Advantages**
The advantages of using documents as sources of information are, according to Yin (1994) that these are stable and can be reviewed repeatedly. They are not created as a result of the case study and normally not by the researcher. Documents can be exact and contain exact names, references and details of an event, as well as having a long span of time, many events and many contexts. Creswell (1994) notes also that documents enable the researcher to obtain the language and words used by the informants, and to study the documents in due time.

**Limitations**
Documents might be incomplete, for instance if the information is biased by the author. They might also contain protected information, for instance of a private or military nature, and therefore be of restricted access. Documents of value for new research findings might be hard to find, or to transcribe, copy or scan. The information in complicated or old documents might be difficult to interpret. Yin (1994) and Creswell (1994)

### 3.7.4 Questionnaires

According to Creswell (1994), surveys are one of the two types of quantitative method for data collection, see Section 3.5. A survey can be based on questionnaires. Dahmström (2000) distinguishes between questionnaires sent by normal mail and those sent by e-mail. In this thesis, only the traditional questionnaires sent by ordinary mail will be described, because the two kinds of questionnaire are similar and the one sent by ordinary mail is used in the thesis.

**Advantages**
The advantages of mail questionnaires are that they are an inexpensive data collection method, and that it is possible to send them to many respondents at the same time. Many different questions can be posed and the respondents can answer them when appropriate and during as much time as it takes. While answering a questionnaire it is also possible for the respondent to check documents or notes. Another
advantage is that the interviewer does not directly affect the respondent. Dahmström (2000)

Limitations
There is a risk of a serious loss of responses, which may influence the reliability of the study, and raises questions about why so many did not answer. The questionnaire cannot be too extensive or complicated, especially as the respondent has no one to ask if a question is difficult to understand. There is also some uncertainty for the researcher about who really answered the questionnaire, the intended respondent, or someone else. It is also difficult to get answers to open questions, in contrast to those where the respondent is asked to cross some alternative, or grade some statement. Dahmström (2000)

3.7.5 Data collection methods in the thesis

The four overarching research questions in this thesis are approached from the perspectives of three main groups of stakeholders. The first one contains the initiators, committed persons and representatives of local business life, involved in the improvement work in the two communities. The second group contains the “average” residents, and the third one the local municipal politicians. The chosen data collection methods are taken mainly from the qualitative tradition, but a “quantitative” questionnaire has also been used.

Data collecting methods for research questions 1 & 4

Research question 1 is: What experiences can be found when residents in local communities work with improvements? Here the methods illustrated by Figure 3.4 were used, and the results helped to develop a tentative cooperation model for local communities, which answers research question number 4: How can the experiences be transformed into a cooperation model for community development?

The data collecting methods were chosen because there is a societal phenomenon to be studied, where closeness and in-depth studies are necessary. One disadvantage of the chosen method may be limited reliability, for instance in that another researcher might get different answers to the same questions. However, as the questions are mostly
about the respondents’ opinions and experiences, another method
would not have been suitable.

The primary data was collected through semi-structured telephone
interviews, personal visits, observations and a questionnaire. The
secondary data was collected from documents, articles and the
scientific literature.

**Data collecting method for research question 2**

The work with the results of the data collection for research questions
1 and 4 generated a model, but also further inquisitiveness, and the
second research question was formulated as: *What are the opinions
and experiences of “third person” residents of residents’ work with
improvement?*
Here a questionnaire, sent to residents in Åseda and Seskarö, was used to collect the data. Its relation to the full investigation is illustrated by Figure 3.5.

**Data collecting method for research question 3**

The results of the questionnaire mentioned above generated further curiosity, above all about the role of local politicians, and hence the third research question emerged: *What are the opinions and experiences of local politicians of residents’ work with improvement?*

Here telephone interviews were conducted with politicians from the municipalities to which Åseda and Seskarö belong. The results were used in order to modify the tentative cooperation model.

An interview protocol with questions was constructed, which means that the clustering was prepared before the interviews. The answers were then reduced and categorized, and grouped according to the experienced strengths and weaknesses. In Appendices X and XI, the preparatory letter for the interview and the interview protocol may be found. Figure 3.5 illustrates the full data collecting process.
**Figure 3.5.** The full data collecting process during the thesis work, as related to the research questions and the derived cooperation model.
3.8 Strategies for Analysis

There are several different methods for analysing data in quantitative and qualitative studies. According to Miles & Huberman (1994), the coding of data in a qualitative study, i.e., data reduction, leads to ideas on what should go into a matrix, i.e., data display. As the matrix fills up, preliminary conclusions are drawn. In a quantitative study the data reduction may be, for instance, computing means, standard deviation and indexes. The data display may be correlation tables and regression printouts, and conclusions may be based on significance levels and experimental differences.

According to Creswell (1994) and Lofland & Lofland (1995), analysis is an eclectic process, i.e., there is no “right way”. Lofland & Lofland (1995) discuss instructions for performing case studies. The authors group the instructions into “gathering data”, “focusing”, and “analysing”, and state that data gathering must start before focusing and analysing, but also that all three parts thereafter can go on in parallel. Fontana & Frey (2000) discuss several methods for collecting and analysing empirical data, depending on the research strategy. For instance, if “grounded theory” is used, the analysis of empirical data should be conducted in a certain way.

In this thesis a qualitative research strategy, abduction and case studies are chosen, and the empirical material consists mainly of pieces of texts from literature studies, interviews and questionnaires. The general analytic approach was decided before data collection, but the analysis was also prefigured during and after the data collection.

Yin (1994) mentions two general strategies for analyses, namely relying on theoretical assumptions and developing a case description. The former means following the theoretical propositions that led to the case study, and that probably generated the design of the research. The latter means developing a descriptive framework for organizing the research. This general analytic strategy is less preferable, but can be used when theoretical propositions are lacking. Yin (1994)

In this thesis the theoretical proposition generated the design of the research, i.e., the study of quality improvement work in local communities.
According to Yin (1994), there are then four major techniques for analyses: Pattern-matching, explanation building, time-series analysis and programme-logic models.

**Pattern-matching**
According to Yin (1994), this is the most desirable strategy for analyses in a case-study approach. Pattern matching means comparing an empirically based pattern with one or several predicted ones. If the patterns agree the results can help to increase the internal validity in a case study, see Section 3.9.

**Explanation-building**
This is a special sort of Pattern-matching, which is relevant to explanatory case studies. The purpose is to analyse the case by finding an explanation of the studied objects or phenomena. Yin (1994)

**Time-series analysis**
This is a strategy that is useful when one wants to identify important events or activities occurring on different occasions. Yin (1994)

**Programme-logic models**
This is a combination of pattern-matching and time-series analysis. The pattern to be matched is the one of key causes-and-effects between independent and dependent variables. The analysis stipulates a chain of events over time, including these independent and dependent variables. The strategy can be useful for explanatory and exploratory studies. Yin (1994)

Since pattern matching is the most desirable strategy for analyses, it is used in this thesis. The empirically based pattern of how the residents work with improvement in Åseda and Seskarö is compared to the theoretical pattern of work in TQM, with the use of its values, methodologies and tools.

Creswell (1994) notes that the use of surveys is one of the two types of quantitative data collection methods used, and that they can be conducted with the help of questionnaires. Dahmström (2000) finds both advantages and limitations with this method, as discussed in Section 3.7.4. The most important limitation is probably the risk of a severe loss of responses.
The loss of respondents in a questionnaire

Dahmström (2000) calls the loss of responses a partial loss, or loss of variables, which means that one or several of the questions are not answered. If a questionnaire is not answered at all, it is called a loss of individual or of object. A respondent can avoid a question due to forgetfulness, ignorance, refusal, technical problems or, because the interviewer did not ask the question explicitly. Dahmström (2000) classifies these reasons in the following way:

- The respondent has moved and is not available.
- The respondent refuses to answer or to participate.
- The respondent has difficulties in speaking and understanding the used language.
- The respondent is too old or sick.
- There have been technical mistakes in the process.

In this thesis the loss of respondents is briefly discussed. However, the strategy for analysing the data is pattern-matching and not in any way statistical. The answers are grouped and categorized and, when triangulation is made, compared to the other answers.

3.8.1 Chosen strategies of analysis in the thesis

The material in this thesis has been analysed through theories, methodologies and tools from the discipline of Total Quality Management, but also with the help of notions from the third sector.

Analysis of material for answering research questions 1 and 4

Visits to Åsedä in April 2000, June 2001 and October 2001

The first two visits were inductive, i.e., a few unstructured questions were asked and the respondents were invited more to narrate than to answer questions. The answers were categorized, grouped and then clustered in order to be compared with concepts from TQM and the third sector. The purpose was to map those Åseda residents that work with improvements and quality developments. The categorizing, grouping and clustering of verbal information continued during all three visits.
During the visit in October 2001 prepared observations were also made, which means that the clustering followed Merriam (1994). The specific items, or cluster, that the attention focused on were:

- The environment,
- the participants,
- activities and interaction, and
- frequency and duration.

Notes and impressions from the observations on the spot were structured accordingly.

Telephone interviews in September 2001 with Åseda residents
The next phase was semi-structured telephone interviews with open answers. In September 2001 the telephone interviews were conducted in order to gain knowledge about how people in Åseda work with improvements. The interviews were inspired by the PDSA cycle. The questions were divided into plan, do, study, and act, in order to get a picture of how the residents started an improvement project, how they conducted it, how they evaluated the results, and lastly, how they learned from their experiences. This means that the clustering was prepared before the interviews. The answers in the questionnaires and interviews were then reduced, categorized, and divided according to the PDSA cycle, and grouped according to the experienced strengths and weaknesses. The grouped answers have been displayed in tables, and conclusions have been drawn.

Questionnaire in June-August 2002 in Åseda
The purpose of this questionnaire was to describe what effects the participants have experienced from the association’s improvement work.

The analysis and interpretation of the sampled data are made from a theoretical perspective, and no statistical generalizations are made. Here too, the analysing method for pieces of text was used. The clustering was made already in the questionnaire, and the answers were coded. This means that some judgments about the meaning of the blocks of text were made from the start.
Visits to Seskarö August 2003 with interviews and questionnaire
The purpose of the visits, interviews and questionnaire was to obtain approximately the same information from Seskarö that had been collected from Åseda. The results were used to answer the same questions about what experiences can be found when residents in local communities work with improvements, and how the experiences can be turned into a model of application. The analyses were conducted in the same way as for Åseda.

Analysis of material for answering research question 2

Earlier results of conducted investigations were used as a basis for a new questionnaire, this time sent to the residents of both Åseda and Seskarö. The procedure was similar to the earlier ones. After the questionnaires were answered by the respondents and returned, the answers were systemized after each question and then analysed through pattern matching.

Analysis of material for answering research question 3

The earlier studies had generated the interest in research question 3, and my curiosity was aroused about what opinions and experiences the local politicians have of major community improvement projects outside their normal political agenda. The procedure was similar to the one used when analysing research question 2. After the questionnaires were answered by the respondents and returned, the answers were systemized after each question and then analysed through pattern matching.

3.9 Validity, Reliability and Generalization

Validity, reliability and generalization are different measures of the quality, strictness and potential of the research, conducted with certain methods and disciplinary principles (Mason, 1996). There are different views on the matter, and in this section only the traditional ones are presented. Due to the connection of disciplinary principles these measures are also presented as applicable to qualitative research.
According to Wiedersheim-Paul & Eriksson (1991) and Mason (1996), validity means an instrument’s ability to measure what is meant to be measured. Internal validity concerns the accordance between a model’s concepts and the operational definitions of them. If the research is valid, the researcher has done what s/he says s/he would do. In qualitative case studies it is more helpful to use the views that may emerge from descriptive and interpretative studies.

To increase the internal validity, the researcher can, for instance, triangulate methods and data, and check that the presented data are well linked to the emerging theory. For more detailed discussions, see, for instance, Wiedersheim-Paul & Eriksson (1991), Hammersley (1993) and Mason (1996).

Wiedersheim-Paul & Eriksson (1991) define external validity as the accordance in the measured results that the researcher gets when using an operational definition. Miles & Hubermann (1994) point out that questions about external validity have to do with generalization, i.e., if the conclusion of a study is transferable to other contexts. This can be difficult to obtain in qualitative research. Miles & Huberman (1994) present three levels of generalization: from sample to population, analytic theory-connected, and case-to-case transfer. To increase the external validity, a researcher should make sure that the characteristics of the original sample are fully described, and that the findings are connected to, or confirm, a theory.

Reliability involves the accuracy of the chosen research methods and techniques, i.e., how reliable and accurate the produced data are. A measurement tool should, for instance, give reliable and stable results; see Wiedersheim-Paul & Eriksson (1991), Miles & Hubermann (1994) and Mason (1996). Miles & Huberman (1994) discuss quality control under the assumption that the studied process is consistent and stable over time, and does not depend on researchers and methods. Miles & Hubermann (1994) prescribe actions that a researcher can take to increase the reliability. In a qualitative case study, efforts should be made to clarify the research questions, and to design the study in congruence with them. One can also use several data sources and see if the findings are similar, although this can be difficult to realize in qualitative research.
Chapter 3 Methodology

Generalization means the extent to which the researcher can make a wider claim on the basis of the research and analysis, rather than stating that the analysis concerns a particular population; see Mason (1996). For a discussion of generalization in qualitative research, see also Hammersley (1993).

There are difficulties in using the “traditional” measures of validity and reliability in qualitative research, which Janesick (2000) discusses. To identify how qualitative researchers perform their studies, Janesick (2000) has offered alternative ways of thinking about descriptive validity and the unique qualities of case studies. Descriptions of persons, places, and events have been the cornerstones of qualitative research. Validity in qualitative research concerns description and explanation, and whether the explanations fit the description. Qualitative researchers do not rely on one single way of interpreting an event, and one way might not be more justified than the other (Janesick, 2000).

Creswell (1994) refers to Firestone (1987), Guba & Lincoln (1988) and McCracken (1988) when claiming that the methodological assumption in quantitative research is not only that of a deductive process. It includes also such notions as cause and effect, context-free results, generalizations leading to prediction, explanation and understanding, and that the process is accurate and reliable. In contrast, the research process in the qualitative paradigm is not only inductive, but also includes a simultaneous shaping of factors. In addition, emerging design categories are identified during a qualitative research process, which is context-bound. Patterns and theories are gradually developed for the understanding and become accurate and reliable through verification.

3.9.1 Validity, reliability and generalization in the thesis

Efforts have been made to increase the validity and reliability of the results in the thesis. It is, however, inappropriate to make statistical generalizations, since it is important to understand, gain knowledge and interpret the opinions and experiences of a limited number of persons.
Validity and reliability of the answers to research questions 1 & 4

Visits to Åseda in April 2000, June 2001 and October 2001
These visits were paid in order to get an understanding of, and nearness to, the studied object, so that proper questions could be asked in the future interviews.

During the visit in October 2001 prepared observations were made, and the results are used as a complement to the interviews, in order to triangulate. What was observed was how the members worked in their improvement groups. Notes and impressions of the observations on the spot are structured according to Merriam’s (1994) recommendations.

Telephone interviews in September 2001 with Åseda residents
The next phase was semi-structured telephone interviews with open answers. The interview key was formulated and adjusted during a period of time. The questions were then discussed with colleagues, and a test interview was conducted. After some adjustments the “real” interviews were made, with the questions divided into “plan”, “do”, “study”, and “act”, to get a picture of how the residents started an improvement project, how they conducted it, how they evaluated the results, and lastly, how they learned from their experiences. All respondents agreed to have the interviews recorded.

Some triangulation was made here as well, in order to increase the validity. Several sources of information were used to answer some of the questions in the study, such as interviews, literature studies, observations and a questionnaire. In addition, participator control was used. The respondents received their answers in writing after the interviews and could give opinions, adjust or add, if something had been misinterpreted, or if they had changed their minds.

Questionnaire June-August 2002 in Åseda
A questionnaire can raise the inner validity, i.e., help the researcher to gain background knowledge and an understanding. It contains structured questions, which makes a comparison less difficult, and re-analysis is possible. Totally 40 questionnaires were sent out, and 24 answers were received. The reasons that 16 residents did not answer could be, for instance, a negative attitude to the association’s work, or
to questionnaires in general, and this one in particular, or lack of time or interest. However, those that responded answered all the questions.

*Visit to Seskarö August 2003 with interviews and questionnaire*

The purpose of this investigation was to obtain approximately the same information from Seskarö as had been collected from Åseda. The measures for increasing both validity and reliability were the same as in the Åseda study.

*Literature study*

During the work with the two case studies, my curiosity grew about the more general use of concepts from TQM in various contexts, and about the debate on this issue in the scientific literature. The authors of the appended Paper V, with experiences from such contexts, discussed the matter and decided to analyse the situation. They used “brainstorming” to generate key words like Total Quality Management, TQM criticism, TQM fad and TQM problems, which were then searched for in different databases, such as all those in Ebsco Host. See also Fredriksson (2001a, 2001b, 2002) for more information.

**Validity and reliability of the answers to research question 2**

Earlier results of conducted investigations were used as a basis for a new questionnaire, this time sent to the residents in both Åseda and Seskarö societies. The questionnaire was constructed, discussed with colleagues, adjusted and finally sent to the residents together with an explaining and instructing letter. See also Fredriksson (2003b).

**Validity and reliability of the answers to research question 3**

The earlier studies had generated curiosity about what opinions and experiences the local politicians have concerning major community improvement projects.

The politicians were selected from political parties in rough accordance with the political balance in the two municipality councils, and with equally many women as men, since there is an approximate gender balance in those councils.
An interview protocol with questions was constructed and discussed with colleagues before the telephone interviews began. These interviews were also recorded, and the answers were written down and sent to all respondents, so that they could adjust the answers if necessary. Appendices X and XI contain the preparatory letter sent to the politicians before the interview, as well as the interview protocol.

3.10 Work Processes

The data collections in the two case studies were conducted during different phases. Literature and document studies were conducted throughout the working processes in both case studies.

3.10.1 Work process to answer research questions 1 & 4

Visits to Åseda in April 2000 and June 2001
The first two visits to Åseda were inductive, i.e., a few unstructured questions were asked to “leading” persons, such as leaders of the domain groups, municipal politicians and representatives of the county administrative board. The purpose was to map who in Åseda works with quality improvements. The leader of the improvement project was asked questions repeatedly during the visits, in order to get an understanding of and nearness to the studied object, so that proper questions could be asked in the future semi-structured interviews.

Telephone interviews in September 2001 with Åseda residents
The structure of the telephone calls, a preparatory letter for the interviews and the questions may be found in Appendices I-III.

The respondents were chosen because they were found during the visits to Åseda to be representatives of the improvement project. They were first contacted by mail in order to find out if they wanted to take part in the interviews; see Appendix I. After that a letter was sent by Telefax to the respondents with more information about the project; see Appendix II, as well as with the list of questions and a confirmation of the interview date. This was done in order to give the respondents time for preparations; see Appendix III.
All respondents agreed to have the interviews recorded, although none of them wished to be mentioned later by name or company. The interviews were written down with a code notation, after which the written answers were sent back to the respondents for possible adjustments.

**Visit to Åseda in October 2001**

Here prepared observations were made, and the results were used as a complement to the interviews, in order to triangulate. Contact was taken with the project leader, and with his help some arrangements were made with a few improvement groups. The observations were prepared to some extent. They focused, for instance, on the specific items recommended by Merriam (1994), namely the environment, the participants, activities and interaction, as well as frequency and duration. Notes and impressions of the observations were structured accordingly.

During all three personal visits Åseda documents were studied together with the scientific literature about theories relevant for this study.

**Questionnaire in June-August 2002 in Åseda**

The purpose of this questionnaire was to describe what effects the participants have experienced from the association’s improvement work.

Three different improvement groups, all representing the local economic life, were approached. The leader of the project “Progressive Åseda” delivered the names and addresses. In June 2002 40 questionnaires were sent out together with a letter, see Appendices IV and V. A reminder was sent in July. Totally 24 answers were received.

The interpretation and analysis of the sampled data were made from a theoretical perspective, and not a statistical one.

**Visits to Seskarö August 2003 with interviews and questionnaire**

The purpose of this investigation was to obtain approximately the same information from Seskarö as had been collected from Åseda. The work process therefore followed as closely as possible the one concerning Åseda. However, the data collection here could be conducted during a
shorter time period, mainly thanks to the earlier experiences from the Åseda case study.

A few differences from the work process in Åseda are noteworthy. The questions in the interviews and the questionnaire could be structured directly, in accordance with the knowledge gained in Åseda. However, notions from TQM were not used, since the Seskarö project does not refer to this concept. During a period of three days, interested Seskarö residents could come to the local folk museum in order to answer the questionnaire, as reproduced in Appendix VI. It was complemented with personal conversations between the interviewer and the respondents. Information about the event and the questionnaire was spread informally on the island with the help of residents active in the project. These data collecting methods were chosen because of the short period of time and the difficulties in getting in touch with people and getting hold of documents. Documents such as minutes of board meetings were collected from various local places and with the help of project leaders.

3.10.2 Work process to answer research question 2

Earlier results of the investigations were used as a basis for a new questionnaire, this time sent to the “average” residents of both Åseda and Seskarö. The procedure was similar to the earlier ones. The questionnaire was sketched and then discussed with colleagues, adjusted and sent to residents together with a letter of explanation; see Appendices VII and VIII.

Before submitting the questionnaire, official permission was applied for and granted to collect and use addresses of private residents. Since the number of inhabitants of Seskarö is approximately 500, all names and addresses of residents over 18 years of age were asked for. In order to make the investigation in Åseda as similar as possible, names and addresses of 500 adult residents of Åseda were asked for. These Åseda names and addresses were randomly chosen and provided by Statistics Sweden (Statistiska Centralbyrån), which is a central government authority for official statistics. As a result, 500 questionnaires were sent to Åseda and 432 to Seskarö.
Chapter 3 Methodology

The returned answers were systematized after each question and then analysed through pattern matching.

3.10.3 Work process to answer research question 3

The earlier studies had generated results about experienced strengths, weaknesses and problems. One of these problems, mentioned by the initiators and committed persons in both the Åsedan and Seskarö projects, was difficulties in communicating with local politicians. This motivated a separate study of the opinions and experiences of local politicians concerning major community improvement projects of the type in Åsedan and Seskarö.

As a start addresses and telephone numbers to local politicians in the Uppvidinge and Haparanda municipalities were searched for on the Internet. A letter was then sent to them by mail and e-mail; see Appendix X. An interview protocol with questions was constructed and discussed with colleagues before the telephone interviews began; see Appendix XI. Ten local politicians from each municipality were chosen from political parties in approximate proportion to the distribution of mandates in the municipal councils. Then the chosen politicians were notified about the telephone interview by ordinary letter or e-mail. Thereafter, times for the interviews were booked by phone.

The telephone interviews were recorded and the answers were written down and sent to all respondents for possible adjustments.
4 Case Descriptions

This chapter describes the two studied communities and the municipalities to which they belong. There is also some information provided about the two communities’ improvement work.

This thesis is based on two single-case studies, namely of the two somewhat different processes of improvement work in the communities of Åseda in the municipality of Uppvidinge and Seskarö in the municipality of Haparanda.

The Åseda case study was chosen because it is considered unique in Sweden, mostly due to how the improvement work is organized, but also because of its connection to notions of quality management. The Seskarö case-study was chosen because its residents work with improvements for reasons similar to those in Åseda, but they have not explicitly used values, methodologies or tools from TQM, or other management and quality strategies.

The two cases are described in Sections 4.1 & 4.2. The overview is divided into descriptions of the settings and the backgrounds to the improvement projects, how the improvement work is organized, and what has been achieved.

4.1 Swedish Municipalities in General

Every fourth year there is a general election to municipal councils in Sweden. These are the only local political institutions directly elected by the residents, and have the supreme right of municipal decisions. The municipal council decides about budgets, municipal taxes, rates and local school issues, such as for instance day care. The limits of municipal activities are decided by the Swedish Parliament, and a trend seems to be that responsibilities are gradually being transferred from the national to the local level. There are also rules for subsidies to municipalities from the national budget, and they tend to change regularly, which often stirs up debate in municipalities that consider themselves unfairly treated.
Meetings of the municipal council are public, which means that any resident can come and listen. There are laws and work plans that regulate the work of the council. The municipal council appoints the municipal executive board, which suggests, prepares and implements decisions made by the council. It also governs, manages and controls the municipal activities.

### 4.2 Uppvidinge Municipality

The municipality of Uppvidinge is a part of the County of Kronoberg in Southern Sweden. The nearest city and airport is Växjö, 50 km to the west. Uppvidinge has approximately 10,000 inhabitants, living in nine communities, Åseda, Lenhovda, Norrhult/Klavreström, Älghult, Fröseke, Alstermo, Marhult, Sävsjöström and Lindshammar, as well as in the countryside, see Figures 4.1 and 4.2. Åseda is the largest community, with some 2,600 inhabitants, followed by Lenhovda and Norrhult/Klavreström with around 1,800 and 1,300 inhabitants respectively. The smallest community is Lindshammar, with some 60 inhabitants. Around 2,300 of Uppvidinge's residents live in the countryside.³

Uppvidinge is an industrial municipality, dominated by manufacturing industries, the public sector and private service enterprises. Around 45 per cent of those employed work in industry, and 35 per cent in the public sector.⁴ The industry in Uppvidinge represents eleven different branches. Here manufacturing, medicare and social care, and trade and transport are the three largest ones, as counted by the number of employees. The three main employers are the municipality itself (around 800 employees), followed by ProfilGruppen AB in Åseda (around 360) and Elitfönster AB in Lenhovda (around 330).⁵

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³ [http://www.uppvidinge.se/omkommunen/omk_befolk.htm](http://www.uppvidinge.se/omkommunen/omk_befolk.htm) (18 November 1999); the data there is from 31 December 1998.

⁴ [http://www.uppvidinge.se/naringsliv/naringsliv1.htm](http://www.uppvidinge.se/naringsliv/naringsliv1.htm) (from 8 August 2001)

⁵ [http://www.uppvidinge.se/naringsliv/syssel.htm](http://www.uppvidinge.se/naringsliv/syssel.htm) (from 19 November 1999)
Figure 4.1. The maps show where in Sweden the County of Kronoberg is located and how it is subdivided into municipalities. The maps are taken from http://www.ltkronoberg.se/clv/personal/at/hem/kronoberg.htm and http://www.kronoberg.se.

The Uppvidinge municipal council and executive boards are located to Åseda, which is therefore regarded as the municipal centre. In the latest municipal council election in 2002, the Social Democrats and the Centre Party (‘Centerpartiet’) gained a political majority in the municipal council and govern Uppvidinge together. It is noteworthy that such a political coalition does not exist in the Swedish Parliament. For more information and “political” facts about Uppvidinge, see http://www.uppvidinge.se.

The main goal of the municipality of Uppvidinge is to maintain a high level of employment, as well as its present number of residents. In addition, the municipality wants to encourage the young residents and to give them more opportunities to engage themselves in the work to reach these goals. Other goals are to raise the quality of life and of living and to strengthen the cultural identity of the region. The municipality wants to accomplish this through a strengthened cooperation between itself and the commercial sector of the municipality, and to extend the possibilities for the residents and
organizations to influence the development through participation and commitments. http://www.uppvidinge.se

4.2.1 Background to the improvement work in Åseda

Åseda is situated in the northern part of Uppvidinge, and has public communications to the cities of Växjö, Vetlanda, Nässjö, Västervik, Oskarshamn and the island of Öland, see Figure 4.2. Åseda’s largest company is ProfilGruppen AB with approximately 360 employees. Other major Åseda companies are Samhall GEVE, Bonnier Presenta AB, Spaljisten and Allt i Plåt. There are also many small enterprises.6

Åseda's residents live in family houses and apartments, and the ownership varies, from private to municipal. There is public child welfare, and Åseda also has comprehensive and upper secondary schools. Due to the geography, some children have to use daily public transportation to school.

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Åseda offers its residents a rich spectrum of leisure activities. There are buildings for indoor sports, a riding ground, a cinema, an amusement park and a public library. The services also include a pharmacy, a (state-owned) liquor shop, banks, restaurants and other special shops.\(^7\)

Both Uppvidinge and the community of Åseda suffered from a decrease in population from around 1994 and on. The main reason was that residents started to move out of the municipality at an increasing rate. This negative trend has, among other things, affected the services in the community.

In order to improve the situation some residents from the local trade and industry sector initiated an improvement project in 1996. They were all experienced in working with quality issues in general, and TQM in particular, in their organizations and wanted to use TQM concepts to develop Åseda and its possibilities. Fredriksson (2004a)

### 4.2.2 What is “Progressive Åseda”?\(^7\)

The improvement work is organized through a non-profit organization, see Figure 4.3, called “Progressive Åseda” (Offensiva Åseda), which was established in 1996 for that purpose. It soon became the hub for all “non-political” improvement work in Åseda.

\(^7\) [http://www.uppvidinge.se/omkommunen/omk.aseda.htm](http://www.uppvidinge.se/omkommunen/omk.aseda.htm) (from 18 November 1999).
The organization’s main council consists of a chairman, a project leader and two representatives of each domain group. Its quality council has representatives of the sponsors, for instance, the Swedish Institute of Quality (SIQ) and the Kaizen Institute. Other economic sponsors are the municipality of Uppvidinge, the Council of the County of Kronoberg (‘Länsstyrelsen’), NUTEK (‘the Swedish Business Development Agency’) and the European Union. The involvement of the EU shows that the Åseda project is considered interesting for communities with similar problems in other countries.8

“Progressive Åseda” has a system view with a progressive approach, which means that the project work is built upon trust, cooperation and the wish to satisfy all residents. It is also based on the conviction that there are always opportunities for improvement and that a progressive

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8 Underlying material for the application of funding for “Offensiv samhällsutveckling i Åseda”, p. 2.
The system view for progressive community development in Åseda

The purpose of “Progressive Åseda” is to engage the residents in continuous improvement work in order to support and stimulate the societal development and to attain an improved life quality for everyone in the community. The organization’s culture is built upon shared values that originate from the Swedish Quality Award (SQA), with its customer-focused agenda based on 13 core values. “Progressive Åseda” has therefore developed 13 similar values, suited for work within local communities. Helling et al. (1998)

These 13 values, below, are printed on a card in pocket format and distributed to all organizations and households in Åseda.

1. Citizen orientation
2. Engaged leadership
3. Participation by everyone
4. Competence development
5. Long-range perspective
6. Public responsibility
7. Process orientation
8. Prevention
9. Continuous improvement
10. Learning from others
11. Faster response
12. Management by facts
13. Interaction

Figure 4.4. The figure illustrates the system view for progressive community development in Åseda. Inspired by Helling et al. (1998, p. 53).
In “Progressive Åseda” the residents active in the project belong to domain groups; see Figure 4.3. A “domain” is defined as a part of societal life, and the twelve existing domain groups are intended to represent the major societal activities in a small community. Any resident can contribute to the project within one or more groups, depending on interest. Nevertheless, all groups work with the shared goal of improving the whole community, implicitly or explicitly, and collaboration between the groups is common. Examples of domain groups are those of parents with young children (“Parents”) and of residents over 60 years of age (“60+”).

Each domain group consists of a number of people working with improvements in their own domain. Networks have been established between Åseda, the county council, private residents, upper secondary schools, and public authorities. For more information, see http://www.offensiva-aseda.com/.

![Figure 4.5](https://www.offensiva-aseda.com/htm/mote.htm)

**Figure 4.5.** This photo from the annual “Åseda Day” is meant to illustrate that meeting places are important for the development of Åseda, and other small communities, and for the residents’ commitment and well-being. From http://www.offensiva-aseda.com/htm/mote.htm.

A wide range of results has been reached by the domain groups. One example is that the “Parents” group has improved the environment for children, with, for instance, traffic speed limits near schools, and by providing educational material for the local day care centres. Another example is the work of the group “Industry”, leading to the
establishment of a new curriculum with national recruitment to the local upper secondary school. The idea originated from the largest Åseda company, ProfilGruppen AB, which was established in the early 1980s. The company identified a clear need for educated and competent new collaborators within its speciality, aluminium-profile manufacturing. A complete upper secondary school curriculum was developed by the domain group “Industry”, in collaboration with, above all, Profil-Gruppen AB, the Uppvidinge municipality and TeknikCentrum AB in Växjö. It was approved by the national school authorities in 1997, and benefited from a relatively fast implementation and national marketing. Helling et al. (1998)

Figure 4.6. The photo is from the annual Åseda “Children’s Day”, which is arranged by the domain group “Parents”. From http://www.offensiva-aseda.com.

The domain groups ”Industry”, Service”, “Business”, “School”, “Youth” and the municipality of Uppvidinge arrange an annual event called “The Youth Day”. The purpose is to show young residents the opportunities for future employment in the region, see Figure 4.7. 
“Progressive Åseda” uses different ways of encouraging improvement group members, for instance, by awards or publishing their results on notice boards.

The domain group ”Associations” coordinates the activities of existing private associations and clubs, and supports, in particular, the smaller ones. This domain group also arranges exhibitions where associations can demonstrate their activities. A ”Flower of the Month” has been introduced as an award to a person engaged in these associations.

“Progressive Åseda” works with evaluation in a systematic way. There is for instance a model from which the domain groups are marked. This is very secret until the result is presented as “The Best Improvement Group of the Year”. The judges are a “troika” of the Executive Committee, the project leader and the “Last Year’s Winner” of the award.

“Progressive Åseda” communicates through different channels. Some examples are that the organization has a newspaper of its own, which is distributed to all households in Åseda. There is a homepage on the Internet (http://offensiva-aseda.com/). The active persons have conversations, as well as informal and public meetings. Local politicians are invited to the monthly meetings of the “Progressive Åseda” council.
4.3 The Municipality of Haparanda

Seskarö is different from Åseda, not least due to the very different geographical settings, as illustrated by Figure 4.8.

**Figure 4.8.** The locations of Åseda and Seskarö are marked on a map of Sweden. The basic map is taken from http://www.ltkronoberg.se/clv/personal/at/bem/kronoberg.htm.

The island of Seskarö in the Haparanda archipelago is a part of the municipality of Haparanda, which, in turn, is a part of the County of North Bothnia in northern Sweden; see Figure 4.9. The municipality has more than 10,000 inhabitants, living in communities, as well as in the countryside. Haparanda is an industrial and commercial municipality on the boarder to Finland, dominated by the public sector and private service enterprises.
Figure 4.9. The map shows the municipality of Haparanda with the island of Seskarö to the south. The blue area is the northernmost part of the Gulf of Bothnia, which is a shallow and brackish bay of the Baltic Sea, surrounded by the Swedish and Finnish mainlands. From http://user.tninet.se/~hyv401p/haparanda_karta.htm.

Seskarö has a history from the mid-16th century, when geographically and linguistically it belonged to Finland, which was then, however, a part of Sweden. The population, of mostly fishermen, hunters and peasants, grew, and at the end of the 19th century the first sawmill was built. A hundred years ago the population was approximately 3,000 persons, of whom some 700 worked at the sawmills. Seskarö was then the major community in the Haparanda municipality, until the community of Haparanda, 20 km away, grew into a city. In 1917 some residents tried to create, by force, a “Republic of Seskarö” but were disarmed by a Swedish army unit. This was one of many such incidents along the Finnish border a century ago, between residents and Swedish authorities; see Figure 4.10. The population regarded itself to a large extent as “Finnish” in those days. The Finnish
language, culture and traditions still play important roles in the region along the border.

Figure 4.10. The photo shows distribution of soup, which was a relief action after the incident in 1917, when some residents tried to create, by force, a “Republic of Seskarö”, but were disarmed by a Swedish army unit. This is one of a collection of historical photos at http://www.seskaro-hembygd.se/start/bildarkiv/historiska.htm.

In 1928 the Seskarö sawmills were closed down, the public service deteriorated and many younger residents had to move. In the 1930s a government decision led to the start-up of a new sawmill, run by a state-owned company. It still exists, and has through the years been the most important employer in Seskarö.

4.3.1 Background to the improvement work in Seskarö

Seskarö has had a long negative demographic trend and a decreased public service. In 1997 approximately 60 persons were employed at the sawmill and there were approximately 550 inhabitants, to be compared with the numbers 300 and 3,000 a century ago. The primary school still exists, although a shutdown has been discussed. The library has been closed, and the organizational activities are limited,
and directed towards adults. In the light of this, a societal development project started in 1997 with the ambition to break the negative trend and exploit existing opportunities. Already in 1978 the bridge to the mainland, shown in Figure 4.11, had made it easier for Seskarö residents to commute to the mainland, as an alternative to leaving the island for good. It is also easier than before for tourists to visit the island, which has a reputation of being the “most beautiful island of the Baltic Sea”. Before the bridge, the only everyday connection to the mainland was by boat/ferry, or on the ice. Seskarö could be isolated from the mainland during periods of unfavourable weather or temperatures.

Figure 4.11. The photo shows the bridge from 1978, connecting the island of Seskarö to the Swedish mainland. From [http://www.seskaro-hembygd.se/start/bildarkiv/forbindelser.htm](http://www.seskaro-hembygd.se/start/bildarkiv/forbindelser.htm), which also has photos with boats and ferries in use before the bridge.

### 4.3.2 What is “The Future of Seskarö”? 

The community development project that started in 1997 was called “The Future of Seskarö” (‘Seskarös framtid’). The aim is that Seskarö should develop into a community with a force of its own for future development. Economic support has been granted from the municipality of Haparanda, the North Bothnia county administrative board and the European Union.
A plan for coherent improvement activities was created by a development group of Seskarö residents. It had representatives from the four major non-profit organizations on the island. The plan was distributed to other organizations, as well as to the municipal council, various private enterprises and Seskarö residents.

The overarching goal of the project was that within a 10-year period Seskarö should reach a critical mass concerning population and local employment, so that the negative trend on the island is stopped and turned in a positive direction.

Already in 1996 a non-profit home-district organization had been established as well as a forum for the Future of Seskarö. This non-profit organization became the hub of the project “The Future of Seskarö”. The organization has a meeting place, (headquarters) called Fridhem (‘Home of peace’); see Figure 4.12. The project was then subdivided into two phases. The first one, between 1998 and 2000, was the establishment of the project. The second one, between 2001 and 2003, is called the phase of growth. During the latter phase the major responsibility for improvement work related to growth and job opportunities was transferred from the non-profit organization to a for-profit organization. The for-profit organization was created in 2001 as a joint-stock company, in which all the residents on Seskarö could buy shares. The board of directors contains representatives from three different groups in Seskarö, private persons, associations and companies, which also are the three owner-groups in the company.

The major activities of the company “Seskarö Future Ltd” (‘Seskarö Framtid AB’) are to administrate industrial premises and tourist establishments, and also support the development of the local business life. The income is generated, among other things, from the administration of industrial premises and tourist establishments.
Figure 4.12. The photo shows the old Fridhem, which was built as a manor house. The headquarter of “The Future of Seskarö” is in a newer house with the same name and location. From http://www.seskaro-hembygd.se/start/bildarkiv/historiska.htm.

Examples of results accomplished by the work in the improvement project are new work opportunities, two new companies and an increased faith in the future among many residents. For a more detailed case description, see Fredriksson (2004b).
5 Summary of Papers

In this chapter the appended papers are summarized. To give a short presentation of each paper, the background, purpose, method, main results and main conclusions are described. A more extended discussion with conclusions can be found in Chapter 6.

5.1 Summary of Paper 1


5.1.1 Background

TQM is a management philosophy traditionally connected with business and industry. Today’s society is complex, with a strong connection between the business, public and private spheres, and there are examples of communities that have transferred parts of TQM into community issues in order to reach a specific goal or solve some problem. One outstanding example in Sweden is the community of Åseada. However, using business concepts in other parts in society is not without problems.

5.1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to map and describe how a local community in Sweden, Åseada, uses concepts from TQM when working with societal development.

5.1.3 Method

Since the work in Åseada is considered unique with its systematic approach towards community development, a qualitative research strategy is used. With a single-case study like the one of Åseada, a
complex social phenomenon can be understood (Yin, 1994), such as an organization’s work with improvements. The analysis is based on literature and document studies, interviews and observations, with the focus on a few topics, which are inductively studied; see Merriam (1994). These are the local environment, the participants themselves and their activities.

5.1.4 Main results

For a period of time Åseda had a negative economic and demographic development, affecting local services and business. This motivated some residents from the local trade and industry, experienced in the professional use of TQM, to start a project to develop Åseda and its possibilities. A non-profit organization was established in 1996. Its purpose was to engage the residents in continuous improvement work to support and stimulate the societal development in order to improve the life quality of everyone in Åseda.

The work is built around a non-profit organization, which comprises twelve domain groups. The non-profit organization “Progressive Åseda” (‘Offensiva Åseda’) is organized as shown in Figure 4.3 in Chapter 4. The association has a council, a separate quality council, a sponsor group and domain groups. The main Council has a chair, a project leader and two representatives of each domain group.

![Diagram](image-url)

**Figure 5.1.** The association tries to cover all situations that may meet a resident in a community, with the help of twelve so-called domain groups. It is in these groups that the work with improvement takes place.
Chapter 5 Summary of Papers

The association tries to cover all situations that may meet a resident in a community, with the help of so-called domain groups: Parents, The School, Culture, Business, The Church, Service, Associations, Caring, Industry, Youth, 60+, and Countryside; see Figure 5.1. It is here that new ideas are presented and the real work with improvement takes place.

Meetings within the association, as well as with the public sector and with all interested Åseda residents take place regularly. Each domain group meets every month, at least once, and sets its own sub-goals for the internal work. Only projects where a consensus is reached will be implemented. All domain groups work with double leaderships. This is preferable when the leaders have different leadership philosophies and competence. The domain groups have 2-20 members. Networks have been established between Åseda, the County Council, private residents, upper secondary schools, and public authorities.

Some of the groups use their own version of the PDSA cycle as support for routines and systematics in the improvement work. They identify improvement potentials, work with methodical problem solution and evaluate the actions taken. Networks are formed between the groups, whenever they have overlapping interests. However, each group must realize its own ideas, and find the proper financial support.

“Progressive Åseda” has its own journal, distributed six times per year to around 2,000 households and other groups, and many other means of information are used, for instance, the Internet (www.offensiva-aseda.com).

The experienced difficulties have been to engage residents in the improvement work, and to gain an understanding and a ‘mandate’ for the actions taken. Communication with the residents and local politicians has also been experienced as difficult. Additionally, it has been troublesome to find new, committed and active residents when the pioneers have left the leading roles.

5.1.5 Main conclusions

Most of the written information collected in April 2000 gave the impression that all domain groups worked with the PDSA cycle in a
systematic way. However, the answers to the written questionnaire and interviews conducted in October 2001 show that just a few groups work in a systematic way, and just a few of them use the PDSA cycle, and even then not exactly in accordance with what is normally meant by QC-circles or Improvement circles.

It is essential that QC-circles, and their results, have support from the management; Bergman & Klefsjö (1994), so the Åseda association’s council and the project leader play an important role. The empirical work shows that the interviewed representatives of the groups have experienced a strong support from both the council and the project leaders.

All in all, a conclusion drawn from the empirical as well as the documented material is that the work in the association “Progressive Åseda” has reached several positive results during the period of 1994-2000. This seems to be a consequence of the clear and firm organization, visions, mission, leadership and activity plan of the association.

There is, however, room for further improvement of the systematics and organization, above all in terms of a better TQM education of involved residents and a more systematic approach to the work in the domain groups.

Simultaneously, one should try to maintain the positive effects of the informal networks and contacts in the present organization. However, the way in which the residents in Åseda have worked, with shared core values and improvement work, with everyone’s involvement to create a positive local and regional societal development is important to pay attention to, to document and to pass on to other communities.

### 5.2 Summary of Paper 2

Chapter 5 Summary of Papers

5.2.1 Background

There are several international examples of organizations that have implemented TQM concepts in different segments of society. A Swedish example is the community of Åseda in southern Sweden, as described briefly in Chapter 5.1. When analysing such an extensive quality improvement project, it is essential to study not only the work processes, but also how the active residents experience the effects of their work.

5.2.2 Purpose

The aim of the study was to increase knowledge about what effects are experienced when residents themselves work in their local community. The research questions are studied from three stakeholders’ perspectives and this paper focuses on the perspective of representatives of the local business life, who belong to the group of initiators and to those committed to community improvement projects.

5.2.3 Method

The data collection method for this study was a questionnaire. It was sent in June 2000 to three domain groups in “Progressive Åseda”, called Industry, Business and Services. The project leader of “Progressive Åseda” provided the names and addresses. The questionnaire was sent to totally 40 persons, of whom 24 responded.

5.2.4 Main results

The three improvement groups were all asked to grade their opinions about effects of the work with improvement. Out of the 24 respondents 21 thought that the association’s work had “positive” or “very positive” effects, while the remaining three thought that the effects were “neither positive, nor negative”. No one experienced “negative” effects. One more specific opinion was that “Progressive Åseda” has changed attitudes and behaviour for the better in the community, although it was also noted that the effects have been positive for parts of the community, and negative for others.
A summary of some specific experienced effects is given in Table 5.1.

Most of the respondents did not believe that the number of Åseda residents had increased. However, more than 70 per cent of the respondents felt that the ease and well-being of the citizens in Åseda had improved, that the common activities had expanded and that collaborations between companies, organizations, private persons and politicians had increased. Around half of the respondents had experienced neither any change in public services, nor any change in the collaboration with other communities in the municipality. Several other positive effects were mentioned by individual respondents, such as that the project has “put Åseda on the map”.

**Table 5.1.** The table shows a summary of experienced effects among the improvement groups representing the local business life. The effects have been translated into operational terms built upon “Progressive Åseda’s” goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Has/have increased</th>
<th>Is/are unchanged</th>
<th>Has/have decreased</th>
<th>Do not know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The number of work opportunities in Åseda community</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of persons moving to Åseda community</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of commuters to Åseda</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-being and ease among Åseda’s residents</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The common activities for Åseda’s residents</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of young people (&gt;16 years) moving from Åseda</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of families with children (&lt;16 years) in Åseda</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public service</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration in Åseda society between companies, organizations, private persons and politicians</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public transportation to and from Åseda community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact and collaboration between Åseda community and other communities in the same municipality</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Difficulties were also experienced, for instance, that the boundaries against the administrative and political side of the municipality were disturbing during the improvement work. Another negative comment was that the initial work was too difficult, and only addressed to the leaders of society, i.e., to industry and the municipality.

5.2.5 Main conclusions

“traditional”
Some clear and relevant trends can be seen. Above all, a majority of the respondents think that the general effects are positive or very positive. When going into details, like in Table 5.1, it is clear that the same trend is visible in all issues that have to do with the “well-being and ease” of the current residents, as well as their “common activities” and “collaboration”. Here a great majority have experienced improvements thanks to “Progressive Åseda”.

When it comes to experiences that would in practice be measurable, the picture changes. Then the answers vary between an improved situation, an unchanged one and, in some cases even a worsened one. A rather clear majority can be found under “unchanged”. Examples are the number of people moving in or out of Åseda, the number of commuters and the amount of public service. It must be kept in mind that the goals of “Progressive Åseda” are to improve the situation in all these issues, so that “unchanged” cannot be regarded as a satisfactory result.

Unfortunately, these measurable quantities cannot easily be controlled, because all Swedish official statistics tend to be presented for whole municipalities, so that the numbers for the community of Åseda cannot be disentangled. It is not clear whether the respondents based their experiences in these cases on informal or unofficial information, on rumour, or just on “feelings”.

There is one exception from this difference between the two types of experiences, namely the one about “work opportunities”. Equally many respondents have experienced an increase as those who have not. This might be due to the choice of respondents from local business life, as the respondents simply have an expert insight into this sector of the Åseda community. It seems quite clear from the material
that at least these residents are highly motivated, which explains their generally very positive experiences of the effects, although they seem rather realistic about the more quantitative effects reached so far.

5.3 Summary of Paper 3

Fredriksson, M. (2004). ‘A Cooperation Model for the Third Sector Based on Total Quality Management’. This paper has been submitted for publication.

5.3.1 Background

Many societal changes are apparently due to economic cut-downs. There are problems with unemployment, and in rural areas also difficulties in maintaining public services and stimulating residents to stay. The problems are common to many countries in the European Union, and policy-makers are looking for different solutions. One may be to use values, methodologies and tools from Total Quality Management (TQM) for societal improvement work. It is therefore of interest to compare societal projects where TQM has been used with those where it has not. The Åseda and Seskarö projects are two Swedish examples of the two different approaches, and both were motivated by the same type of negative trends in economy and demography. There was not enough public service and it was difficult for the local industry to get competent personnel. In Seskarö it was important to develop the local industry and create employment.

5.3.2 Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to develop and present a cooperation model for societal development, based on experiences from two Swedish societies, Åseda and Seskarö, and their use of, respectively, TQM and other methods.
5.3.3 Method

In this qualitative study a case study strategy was used, and data was collected through interviews, observations, questionnaires and literature study. The improvement work is studied from two perspectives: that of the initiators, dedicated residents and local business representatives, and that of “all” local residents. The method of analysis is “pattern matching” and comparison, since Åseda explicitly uses methodologies from TQM and Seskarö does not.

5.3.4 Main results

The improvement work in Åseda has been organized through a non-profit organization, including so-called improvement groups that represent possible situations in life. This organization, “Progressive Åseda”, has to a certain extent used values, methodologies and tools from TQM, with a system perspective.

In Seskarö the improvement work also started in a non-profit organization, the Local Folklore Association (‘Hembygdsföreningen’), but most of it was later transferred to a company called “Seskarö Future Ltd” (‘Seskarö Framtid AB’), where all residents could buy shares, and some 185 did. This umbrella organization took the work from the third sector into the commercial one, but still with the perspective of the whole community. The profits are to be reinvested in Seskarö enterprises. The participants have not explicitly used values, methodologies or tools from TQM. The Local Folklore Association continues its work by, for instance, arranging study circles and art exhibitions.

There are strengths and weaknesses as experienced by the active participants, and many of them are similar in the two communities. A particular strength in Åseda is the use of domain groups, which can be interpreted into TQM methodologies such as improvement groups. Åseda also used the methodology of the PDSA cycle. The weaknesses in both communities are difficulties in making residents involved or active, or even getting them to accept this kind of project, find and transfer leadership, and maintain communication with local politicians.
In the U.S. as well there are several examples of organizations that have successfully applied concepts from TQM to other segments of society than just the commercial ones; see Osborne & Gaebler (1992) and Brown et al. (1994). All these experiences, foreign and Swedish, give clues to a cooperation model based on TQM for a non-profit organization in the third sector. The model is illustrated in Figure 5.2.

The study from the perspective of local residents in Åseda shows that most of them know about the project “Progressive Åseda”, although a great majority of the respondents to a questionnaire do not take any part in the improvement work. The knowledge has been gained either through written or oral information or through participation in public meetings or improvement groups.

Other opinions expressed by Åseda residents in general may be divided into “for” or “against” the project in both communities. The negative answers may be categorised as criticism of management, organizing of improvement work, information and communication, and the lack of anchoring the project among residents, i.e., a lack of mandate for this kind of project.

The Seskarö case study shows that the general residents gained knowledge about the project in the same way as in Åseda. Here too a great majority of the respondents to the questionnaire do not participate in the improvement work.

In addition, the criticism expressed in the Seskarö questionnaire may be categorised exactly as in the Åseda case, namely as a criticism of management, organizing of improvement work, information and communication, and the mandate for this kind of project.

5.3.5 Main conclusions

The TQM-based cooperation model suggested in this paper is a proposal for organizing improvement work for societal development. In the start-up phase 1, the main issues are the leadership, the communication, the organization of the work, the education, the relations to others and the involvement. In this phase a core group is created, which could be, for instance, a non-profit organization, like in Åseda and Seskarö. However, it is preferable to have persons with
experiences of work with TQM, because a systematic approach to improvement work is useful. In phase 1 there is also another difference between Åseda and Seskarö, namely the importance of local business. In Åseda the local business that worked pro-actively was already established. In Seskarö the creation of local business was an important ingredient in phase 1. It is essential that an inner core group is created in phase 1, consisting of leaders and an association council.

**Figure 5.2.** The model illustrates how the improvement work in a local association such as “Progressive Åseda” and “The Future of Seskarö” can be conducted in three phases. The model is partly inspired by a model described in Kinney (1998) and discussed in Section 2.5.2.

In phase 2 (“establish”) the important factors of distinction, praise and awards are added. Some of these existed in Åseda, but not in Seskarö, maybe because Seskarö did not use concepts from TQM. In phase 3, where the continuous work is established, there might be a change of leaders, and the issue of a “public” mandate should be addressed. Two important factors permeate all three phases: leadership and communication. In phase 2 the core group is extended with improvement groups and other advisory groups. In Seskarö the “Seskarö Future Ltd” could be one of these partners, rather than the whole organization. In the final phase 3 another enlargement is made in order to include other stakeholders in the community. Included here are the personal and professional networks of the core group and of the improvement groups, including the political sector. In each phase
methodologies and tools from TQM can be used to systematize and structure the improvement work.

Most residents of Åseda and Seskarö seem to know about the improvement work although not many of them participate actively. It is even difficult for this kind of community project to gain acceptance by residents. However, the model should be efficient at least for cooperation between local organizations across boundaries, while the public mandate might be discussed during phase 3.

5.4 Summary of Paper 4


5.4.1 Background

According to Kinney (1998), there are several important differences in applying improvement methods in community settings compared to commercial ones. These differences are the same in Swedish communities, for instance, that the system boundaries and roles are unclear, ownership of the community improvement aim is not always clear and difficult to maintain, and customer connections are much more diffuse. Some of these may create problems when transferring business concepts, such as TQM, into other contexts. One difficulty may be to overcome political barriers in community improvement efforts. This has been experienced in the two Swedish communities that have been studied. Several respondents to questionnaires in both Åseda and Seskarö expressed difficulties with communication and cooperation with politicians; see appended Paper IV and Fredriksson (2003, 2004).

5.4.2 Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to map and analyse the local politicians’ opinions about, and experiences of, the two societal development
Chapter 5 Summary of Papers

projects in Åseda and Seskarö, and to suggest means for improved cooperation between politicians and active residents.

5.4.3 Method

The data collecting methods were literature studies and telephone interviews with 20 politicians. The target of analysis is improvement work from the perspectives of politicians. The method of analysis was “pattern matching”.

5.4.4 Main results

Opinions of politicians in the municipality of Uppvidinge
All ten respondents are familiar with “Progressive Åseda”, although only two of them have participated actively in the improvement work, and another two to some extent.

All ten respondents find it positive that residents take initiatives and work for their own future and community and appreciate that the engagement in society increases also among those residents that are not politically active. It is hence seen as very positive that the project can serve as a complement to the normal municipal work, especially in areas where the municipality lacks financial resources. Some respondents remarked that this might even become the main form of societal development work in the future. The ways of information, communication and dialog, not necessarily through formal channels, were also considered important for the community.

However, a few respondents also think that this kind of community development work can be negative, for instance, by increasing the injustices between the different communities in the municipality. Another aspect concerns the municipal responsibility, which includes core activities. Problems can occur when the private initiatives are not related to the municipal responsibility, so that the municipality cannot help. Some respondents were also concerned about the crop of rumours around the project and about not everyone feeling involved, so that there is a risk of creating an audience and spectators. It was therefore stressed that responsible residents should be engaged from the start and that the visions and goals must not be too high and
difficult. It was also considered important to contact the municipality and other authorities in the very beginning of a project or activity, not least since there are rules, laws and decision-making processes to take into consideration. An additional comment was that this kind of participation and voluntary work could lower the interest in political commitment, which might jeopardise local democracy.

**Opinions of politicians in the municipality of Haparanda**

All ten respondents are familiar with “The Future of Seskarö”, even if some of them claim to know just a little. None of them has participated in the improvement work. However, almost everyone has followed the progress of the improvement work in the media, through the municipal decision processes, and through visits to the Seskarö village, where they have talked to residents active in the project.

Here too all respondents are positive to this kind of project, and appreciate when residents in a village take initiatives and work with their own future, and their enterprises. This is considered necessary when national policies are so diffuse and municipal and national efforts do not last. However, concerns were expressed that the right residents must run and organize the work. It was also considered positive that the municipality has transferred the responsibility for industrial premises to the residents on Seskarö in the umbrella company “The Seskarö Future Ltd” that all residents can buy shares, and that new jobs and enterprises have been established.

All respondents also see problems with this kind of community improvement work. Some mentioned problems with the economy, for instance, that it was uncertain in the beginning how to finance the project, and that this kind of project is normally possible only with economic support from the municipality or the EU. Another problem is that there are always ‘pros’ and ‘cons’ with new things in a small community, which, in turn, is connected to the importance of information and communication. As in Åseda, the respondents worry about the negative crop of rumours. In addition, they can see that the engagement is ‘cooling down’, and that not all the projects started are being carried out.

Almost all respondents expressed needs and expectations connected to this kind of project. One is that the scorn for politicians has to be eliminated, through, for instance, mutual information, communication
and personal visits. Another concern is that municipal laws and rules must be followed, while at the same time bureaucracy should be minimized.

5.4.5 Main conclusions

In the paper two kinds of organizations in the social economy were presented. The important differences in applying improvement methods in communities that Kinney (1998) discusses may be applied to communities in Sweden as well. The difficulties that this generates can be reduced if the improvement work is clearly defined and organized. A particular strength in Åseda is the use of TQM methodologies, which has made the structure of the work more transparent than in Seskarö. This might explain why the effects experienced by local politicians are more positive in some ways, and more negative in others, in Åseda than in Seskarö.

Jacques (1999) states that communication and processes are keys to overcoming political barriers in community improvement work, which is supported by the investigation in this paper. The difficulties in communicating with local politicians were experienced in both Uppvidinge and Haparanda. The Åseda project shows that quality professionals involved in community work can contribute with their knowledge of improvement methodologies and system-approach thinking.

The overall experiences and opinions in Uppvidinge and Haparanda were that this kind of improvement work is positive. However, the apprehensions that the politicians had can be dealt with if the improvement work is organized in processes and that information and communication improve. There are several ways to communicate with stakeholders, such as through informal channels, personal visits, written information in newspapers, visits to the municipal council meetings, and dialogues with the municipal executive board. Politicians can be invited to the community, including meetings in the community improvement work.

The ways in which the residents have worked in Åseda facilitate the information and communication with politicians and other stakeholders. In Seskarö the transfer of improvement work from a
non-profit organization to an incorporated company has excluded many residents. This exclusion can be dealt with if the company is looked upon as a part of the local business life and as just a complement to the societal project. The main improvement work should not be organized in a company that exclude residents, and has as one purpose to protect the shareholders’ interests.

The experiences and opinions of the politicians in the municipalities of Uppvidinge and Haparanda show that this kind of societal improvement work is not only possible, but can also be made fruitful and even become the main form of developing rural areas.

5.5 Summary of Paper 5


5.5.1 Background

Total Quality Management, TQM has gone from buzzword to fad in many peoples’ opinion. The TQM movement has often responded to criticism or to failure by picking winning strategies, adding ideas or tools into the TQM definition. Confusion and diverging opinions are partly due to the TQM evolution, which can be described in several ways. The different views of the evolution and definitions of TQM generate problems both for practitioners who apply TQM, and for theorists who study it. There are consequences when discussing the effectiveness, use and utility of TQM. The development of TQM implies new definitions, or modifications of existing definitions. Advocates and opponents of TQM often use the same word in discussions about TQM and quality, but define them in different ways.
5.5.2 Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to emphasize the problems related to the lack of common interpretations when discussing the use and utility of TQM.

5.5.3 Method

In this paper the data-collecting method is literature study. The intention is to give some representative examples from different types of organizations within society, and these choices depend on the authors’ different research areas within the discipline. A society as a whole might be described as consisting of two main parts, namely households and organizations. The organizational part can be divided into the three different sectors, ‘the commercial one’, ‘the public one’, and ‘others’ (Johansson, 2004). The public sector can, according to Tarschys (1978), be defined as the parts of the society that are commonly called governmental or municipal. The organizations exemplified in this paper are shown in Table 5.2. The discussion in the paper is structured by use of these three different organizational sectors, and the headings follow that structure.

Table 5.2. In the table, the ovals illustrate issues discussed in the paper. In the examples of commercial organizations the output in the sense of profit is discussed. The example in educational organizations concerns the interpretation and the use of TQM. Lastly, the examples from other organizations concern the use of TQM.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input</th>
<th>Total Quality Management</th>
<th>Output</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Earlier environment, culture and values</td>
<td>Interpretation of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial sector, here in the sense of enterprises</td>
<td>Use of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public sector, here in the sense of educational organizations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other organizations, here in the sense of non-profit organizations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>temporary organizations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.5.4 Main results

TQM and results as profit in commercial organizations
One of the main goals of a business is to stay in business and to be profitable to its owners. Other goals may be that the work environment should be good, that customers are satisfied, and that the company has a good reputation and provides jobs. If the business is a loss, the other goals are of little value, as the business will go bankrupt.

Quality authorities, such as Deming (1986, p. 2), think that if the organization redirect efforts to improve quality, costs would decrease, productivity would improve, the competitive position would improve, jobs would be provided and people would be happier. Deming did not present empirical results in support of this, but relied on logical reasoning. Another model of thought is that high quality satisfies customers. Satisfied customers are loyal customers and loyal customers are profitable customers and profitable customers make lucrative businesses and happy owners and co-workers. A similar line of thought is proposed by Bergman & Klefsjö (2003, p. 332). According to Reichheld & Sasser Jr. (2003), there is a link between customer loyalty and customer profitability.

On the other hand, Reinartz & Kumar (2002) have questioned the strong relationship between loyalty and profitability and claim that this link is weak and sensitive to the market type. Loyal customers are more demanding and often more costly to serve, and loyal customers also expect to get pay-cuts or other bonuses for being loyal, which reduces the profit margins of these customers.

In Hendricks & Singal (1999), the authors have used companies that have received a quality award as a token of these companies having successfully implemented TQM. The quality award could be a national or regional award, as well as an award given by customers to their suppliers. The authors have studied some financial performance measures of these firms and compared them with a group of similar “average companies”. Their conclusion is that during the implementation phase of TQM (defined as six years before, until one year before receiving the award), there is no significant difference between the group of forthcoming winners and a group of control companies. In the time span including the year of the award, until four
years after reception, the award winners outperform the control companies (Hendricks & Singal, 1999). Hansson & Eriksson (2002) show similar results as Hendricks & Singal (1989) in an investigation based in Sweden. The Swedish study compared financial performance of Swedish quality award (SQA) recipients, both regional and national and a control group of companies selected from similar branches.

These attempts to correlate profitability to TQM implementation also have drawbacks, such as the difficulty in isolating which part of the profitability came from the implementation and which might have been a spin-off from receiving the award. Still, a conclusion that can be drawn is that top quality implementation of TQM appears to be a profitable proposition.

**TQM reaches the public sector**

From a situation where TQM was used only in goods-producing companies, TQM has also been used in the public sector. The interest in working with quality in this sector has grown during the last decade (Lagrosen, 1997). This growth can also be illustrated by the establishment of regional, national and international quality awards in many countries; see, e.g., Eriksson (2002) and Chuan & Soon (2000). Examples of awards are the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (NIST, 2003) in the USA and the European Quality Award (EFQM, 2003) and the Swedish Quality Award (SIQ, 2002).

One explanation of the increased interest in quality management for the public sector in Sweden might be the escalating requirements made by different authorities. Since 1987, a new administrative law is in force in the Swedish public sector, which calls for counteracting of inconveniences and improving accessibility among authorities. A part of the public sector consists of schools and universities, especially in Sweden, where most of the educational sector is owned by the government or local authorities. This is a strong motive for a study of TQM usage in the public sector.

**TQM in the educational sector**

When studying the criticism against the use of TQM in the education sector, it seems that it can be divided into at least two different forms and that the criticism emanates from different perspectives. One of these forms is the criticism of the transfer of concepts from one con-
text to another. One example is the introduction of methods and adaptation to ways of thinking and values that were developed in goods producing companies. Another form of criticism is also connected to the transfer of TQM to a new area, but also based upon an ideological view. In this paper the use of TQM in educational organizations is seen as a part of an economization within education.

Kohn (1993) discusses the use of TQM in schools, and questions the use of TQM in the classrooms. He describes this as educators trying to transplant a model, with its methods and metaphors, stemming from the business world, into classrooms. And classrooms are not comparable to companies. Another example of a similar criticism is due to Scherp (2004), who claims that TQM originates from Japanese efficiency actions and that the use of TQM implies that quality is defined by the customers. According to Scherp (2002), learning within the TQM-field is emphasized by learning about ‘doing’ and best ‘practice’. In his discussion he also says that students are customers and quality improvements might be carried through by influence of the customer’s expectations. Consequently, quality will be a matter of marketing and having a good reputation, which is not necessarily connected to the performance of teaching.

However, one criticism against quality work in schools emanates from the point of view that introducing TQM in the educational sector implies an economization of that sector and at the same time an introduction of a new set of values that challenge the traditional educational ones; see Kenway (1994) and Kenway et al. (1995). Changes in educational organizations involving the use of approaches that incorporate managerial and market driven responses are also discussed by Mcinerney (2003). According to this discussion the use of the customer perspective might be seen as means to increase the number of private schools. On the other hand, it could be asked whether use of TQM in schools in the public sector might strengthen the ability of public educational organizations to compete instead of being a threat.

Another aspect of the use of a customer perspective is that it might imply a shift of power to some extent. This is because it reduces the possibility for some sort of ‘experts’ to make decisions founded just upon their own views and agendas.
Aspects of use of TQM in other organizations than public and commercial ones
Reavill (1999) discusses the status and possible future of TQM as a major management concept and suggests that non-profit organizations could benefit from adopting TQM concepts. The systematic approach, the system view and the preventive thinking in TQM can be used not only in manufacturing and service-producing organizations, but also as a way of cooperating in societies.

The literature on organizations other than public or commercial ones includes experiences of using TQM concepts in cooperation between organizations to achieve improvements; see, for instance, Fredriksson (2003, 2004). The experiences of such applications are both positive and negative. However, there is not much criticism of using concepts from TQM in temporary organizations or in non-profit organizations. The new area of TQM application can be related to the more general criticism of TQM. Should TQM be applied to other contexts than in manufacturing and production? Another criticism relevant here is the lack of one sustainable definition of TQM and empirical support in academic contexts.

5.5.5 Main conclusions

In the long term, the openness to various types of criticism will hamper quality management, since the definitions are vague. It is not only the development of TQM that is the subject of different opinions. In international research there are several different descriptions of the concept of TQM, often lacking clear definitions. It is difficult to answer the question whether TQM is Terrific Quality Marvel or Tragic Quality Malpractice. The answer depends on several factors, for instance, to what type of organization the TQM concepts are applied and what definition of TQM is used. The definitions used by theorists and the studied practitioners must also be synchronized. Advocates and opponents often use the same word but mean different things. Although there are obvious problems with the concept, our findings have, however, led us to the conclusion that TQM still generates benefits if used properly. Since TQM is a concept that is hard to grasp, and since it is difficult to implement, another conclusion in this paper is that semantics is important.
6 Discussion and Conclusions

In this chapter the empirical findings and conclusions concerning the four research questions are presented. Lastly, conclusions from the whole thesis are drawn, and suggestions are given for further research.

6.1 Research Question 1

The first research question is “What experiences can be found when residents in local communities work with improvements?”

6.1.1 Findings concerning research question 1

The two case studies, of the Åseda and Seskarö improvement projects, and the examples in the literature study, show that there is more than one way for dedicated residents to take initiatives and cooperate in order to solve societal problems or take care of opportunities. This also includes management and organization. Nevertheless, the two investigated projects have very similar goals, which concern the well-being of the residents in the two communities.

In both Åseda and Seskarö it was representatives of the local business life that took the initiatives, planned, organized and started the improvement work. The reasons were similar in both communities, i.e., a negative economic and demographic trend.

In Åseda there were some common factors among the residents that initiated the project, namely solid education and experiences in systematic improvement work, combined with enthusiasm for the work. In Seskarö the most distinct common factor was rather care for the community and the project.

In Åseda the improvement work is organized through a non-profit organization called “Progressive Åseda”; see Figure 4.3. Chapter 4 describes how residents active in “Progressive Åseda” belong to domain groups, connected to the “domains” in societal life, where the
members are active. All groups share a common goal of societal improvement with the main association, and often collaborate with each other in practical matters. The author’s perception of how the domain groups are related to the council and the project leader is illustrated in Chapter 5, in Figure 5.1.

Each domain group works mainly with improvements in its own domain, but collaborates when there are overlapping interests. The groups “Industry” and “Business” are most active in mutual collaboration, and also try to stimulate cooperation with other sectors of the community. The cooperation is interpreted and illustrated by the author in Figure 6.1.

![Image of Figure 6.1](image)

**Figure 6.1.** The figure illustrates that there is cooperation between organizations in the local industry, business, service and authorities in the community. The arrows symbolize the cooperation between improvement groups and societal sectors.

The definition of a “system approach” applies well to “Progressive Äsedä”. The work is organized in a unique way, with a core group consisting of the project leader, the association chairman, the council and external advisors, and with the domain groups that represent all major aspects of the community. All groups are interrelated and parts of a larger system. The boundaries between the groups are handled through collaboration and empowerment. Each group has two leaders,
and both participate in the council of the whole association. These leaders are invited to, and sometimes also participate actively in, domain groups other than their own. The fact that the groups have two leaders participating in the council of the whole association, and sometimes in other domain groups, helps to give continuity to the improvement work. Representatives of the municipality and the county are invited to the “Progressive Åseda” council meetings. These efforts are an attempt to overcome boundaries and keep continuity in the work.

Structure of the improvement work is a key word in Åseda. The association defined core values and then chose methodologies appropriate to support the core values and the goals. The existence of domain groups is one very important, positive experience of this case study. “Progressive Åseda” consists more or less of its domain groups, since it is in their settings that new ideas are presented and the work with improvements and changes takes place. The process of generating new ideas with the help of domain groups is interpreted by the author in Figure 6.2.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 6.2.** The figure shows how the idea-generating process in the domain groups in “Progressive Åseda” can be mapped.
Chapter 6 Discussion and Conclusions

The Åseda case study supports the conclusion that the leadership of a non-profit project of this type should be firm, but still very diplomatic; see appended Paper I. If it is too academic, systematic, methodological or “difficult”, it can discourage residents from contributing to the work. Hence, one cannot use difficult instructions that are too detailed. The leaders must be enthusiastic and gain respect. There is an obvious need for the association’s improvement work and for its leaders to be accepted among community residents that do not take active part in the project. The reason is that “Progressive Åseda” aims at stimulating the whole community, and not only the active members.

Another conclusion is that the flow of information within “Progressive Åseda” is balanced and sufficient. The communication is both formal and informal, and often goes through personal connections, typical of a small community. Most of the work is documented in several ways. This seems, however, not to be systematically or regularly done, nor is the information about the work collected in one single, physical place, such as a computer record. This is clearly an area for improvement; see appended Paper IV.

It has been a difficult challenge to keep up the interest, engagement and commitment among the residents. Committed residents get tired, and it is difficult to broaden the commitment to a majority of the residents. Another experience, expressed by some of the active persons, is a difficulty to communicate and cooperate with the political side of the municipality, and to anchor the work, the ideas and the organization in the municipal executive board. There is a feeling among the initiators that politicians, and maybe also other residents, are suspicious about the project.

The interviews conducted in Åseda hinted that the reason for these problems could be that many residents, and maybe also politicians, are afraid of changes, perhaps connected to communicative difficulties. One of the leaders expressed that if the association is seen as just a new “authority”, it is not easy to reach out. Among the committed members economy and time can sometimes be burdensome. This type of major improvement work costs time and money for small companies. The solution to some of these problems may be to improve the education, training and information related to the project.
Another reason for some of the experienced weaknesses may be the use of small but continuous improvements in the project. Strangely enough, the interviews showed that some sceptical residents would prefer fast and extensive results.

In Seskarö the organization of the improvement work is different. The initiators started a non-profit organization as in Åseda, but not with domain groups. Then the group of initiators created a joint-stock company with representatives of some groups on the island, with the purpose of reaching the original goals. A conclusion is that it is not appropriate to let such a “closed” organization become more than a complement to a non-profit organization. The exclusion of residents and the complicated economic discussions tend to destroy the trust and belief in improvement work. This stimulation of “earning money” might be positive, but cannot substitute for the voluntary, non-profit work in, for instance, domain groups of the Åseda type.

When comparing the experiences of the initiators, committed and active persons in the two projects, it is obvious that these particular residents are less satisfied in Seskarö than in Åseda. This can be referred to the leadership, structure and organization of the improvement work, which in turn are important key words in TQM. One thing that Åseda and Seskarö have in common is that it has been hard to keep up the interest and commitment in the projects.

One similarity between the examples discussed in the literature, such as Tacoma and Toqua village, and the two cases from Åseda and Seskarö, is that the active persons established a goal and worked systematically towards that goal, in cooperation across organizational boundaries. They worked with a quality dimension in society.

The differences between these examples are clear, for instance, concerning their goals. In Åseda and Seskarö the primary goal is to increase the well being of the residents and the community commonweal. In Toqua village the improvement work was performed on the community level, i.e., politically decided and with the mayor as manager. In Tacoma and other communities, authorities and/or research organizations cooperated in order to reach a specific goal, for instance, to reduce traffic injuries. The organization of the improvement work also differs between the studied examples, and so do the categories of active persons. The Åseda and Seskarö projects
were started mainly by representatives of the local business life, and only later involved “ordinary” residents, but hardly any organizations at all. In the other two examples the projects were, on the contrary, initiated by authorities or research organizations, which have also been the most active members of the project.

6.1.2 The findings in relation to theoretical concepts

Social economy
Both “Progressive Åseda” and “The Future of Seskarö” are examples of the many variations in social economy, as overviewed in Chapters 1 & 2. One conclusion is that the aim and the structure of the Seskarö project are not much different from, for instance, those of the company Salubrin/Druvan Ltd. The motivation is the commonweal, and the activities are to a high extent charitable; see Section 1.1. It is important to observe and spread such examples of social economy, which is pointed out nowadays by, for instance, the Swedish Government and the EU.

Total quality management
The focus in this thesis is, however, on issues concerning the management of organizations and work in the third sector, rather than on their national or international values. One assumption here is that different “idea families” or management theories develop over time, with TQM as good example; see, for instance, Dalrymple & Drew (2000). However, there is no unequivocal definition of the concept, which creates problems both for practitioners, when using it, and for academics, when analysing it. A conclusion drawn here from the appended Paper V is that it is important not to reject TQM as a whole, if one, or even several, applications fail. TQM should be applied with considerable thought on the specifics of the target organization, and its purpose, as well as on the purpose of applying TQM.

A particular difficulty is to study how efficient and effective TQM is for the management of different types of organizations, for instance, when transferred from the traditional use in commercial organizations in manufacturing and production to public and non-profit organizations. One finding is that there is a bewildering array of definitions of what TQM really is, in both practice and theory. For the sake of clearness, the main thesis work is therefore based on a specific
interpretation of TQM, as described in Chapter 2. The issue of confusing TQM definitions is analysed separately in the appended Paper V.

The Seskarö project does not explicitly make use of values, methodologies or tools from TQM. In particular, the main planning is done by the management of the joint-stock company, and there is no array of “domain groups” like in the Åseda project. When analysing the latter from a TQM perspective one finds that the non-profit organization “Progressive Åseda” actually uses TQM values and methodologies and has a system approach to its work, even if this is not always expressed as a purpose.

Figure 6.3 illustrates how “Progressive Åseda” fits into the scheme of the mutually supportive TQM components values, methodologies and tools. The layout is taken from Hellsten & Klefsjö (2000), as described in Chapter 2. The domain groups in “Progressive Åseda” are here interpreted as the improvement groups (“circles”) of TQM. Hellsten & Klefsjö (2000) consider the creation and use of improvement groups a methodology in TQM, a way of structuring work. The improvement work in Åseda was structured accordingly in improvement groups. The use of the PDSA cycle is also a methodology in TQM for systematic improvements. It is used in “Progressive Åseda”, but only by some of the groups, and then as a structure for ideas. Brainstorming is another methodology in TQM. Some of the Åseda activities can be interpreted as brainstorming, but there has been no explicit or systematic use of this methodology.

Core values are the basis for the culture of an organization, as discussed in Section 2.2.5. “Progressive Åseda” has developed 13 such core values, as listed in Section 4.2.2. They are based on the values in the SIQ Model for Performance Excellence, and have, except for smaller changes in formulation, been the basis for the criteria of the SQA since 1992.
Figure 6.3. The figure shows the role of core values, methodologies and tools in “Progressive Åseda”. The association uses the TQM philosophy with continuous improvement work. Core values have been developed, and some methodologies have been applied in the work towards proud and committed residents. The layout is inspired by Hellsten & Klefsjö (2000).

Methodologies are the ways to work within the organization in order to reach the goals. A methodology consists of a number of activities performed in a certain order. “Progressive Åseda” has used at least three methodologies.

The third TQM component is the tools, i.e., rather concrete and well-defined tools for numerical or verbal data, intended to support decision-making or facilitate the analysis of data. The Åseda case study shows that “Progressive Åseda” has not used any particular TQM tool in that sense.

Another conclusion is that the TQM concept of ‘customer’ has been extended to “residents” or “stakeholders” in both the Åseda and the Seskarö projects, even if the customer concept is not used at all in Seskarö. The definition of “customers” can be interpreted as in Bergman & Klefsjö (2001), “those we want to create value to”.

The Åseda improvement groups have not been used for educational purposes, i.e., the members have not studied quality methodologies as a group activity, which, according to Ishikawa (1985), originally was one of the purposes of improvement groups. Rather, the groups have been used to identify and solve problems, as well as to identify possibilities for improvement work in Åseda. One conclusion is that it is very important to educate the project leaders, as well as the other members of the improvement groups, so that they know how to use, and benefit from, TQM methodologies and tools; see appended Paper.
I. If only a few persons have this knowledge, there is a risk that others see the rules and methodologies as forced upon them, as well as too abstract and complicated. Another risk is that supportive work methodologies and tools might be overlooked, and that too much time will therefore be spent on “inventing” methodologies that already exist in TQM.

The interviews and observations show that “Progressive Åseda” uses the PDSA cycle. The Plan phase is often used by the domain groups when planning new events, not just for improving existing processes. This focus on new events, rather than on processes can, on the other hand, explain the experienced positive effects of well-being and ease among the residents active in the project. A typical example is the Åseda Day, which is carried out (Do) as one event. The result is analysed and discussed (Study), and changes are adopted (Act) in time for the planning (Plan) of a new event, i.e., the next Åseda Day.

At the planning stage (Plan) of “Progressive Åseda” no management tools were used, contrary to recommendations in TQM. At the “Do” stage persons or groups were chosen, and given the responsibility for realizing the plans. At the “Study” stage there was some documentation, but there are margins for improvements here, as confirmed by the interviews in Åseda. The association has several channels for feedback, such as the executive committee, the council, the improvement groups and enquiries to Åseda residents. Improvements can be made in the procedure for taking care of this feedback, including a more systematic documentation, which would provide better support to the next phase (Act). The feedback seems to function best for major arrangements.

According to the interviews and observations in Åseda, the TQM methodology of brainstorming has been used during some domain group meetings, but in an unstructured way. No particular tools have been used to structure, or to document systematically, the ideas that were presented. This means that there is a risk of “double-work” and inefficiency in the use of brainstorming, for instance, when good ideas in one group are not communicated to other groups.

The empirical study of the Åseda project, and the comparison with the Seskarö project, show that methodologies and tools from TQM can be beneficial for a non-profit organization. TQM can also support
networks or temporary organizations for societal development, in the way “Progressive Åseda” has used the chosen TQM methodologies to achieve a system approach and collaboration across organizational boundaries.

Summarizing the strengths of the Åseda projects in TQM terms, it is obvious that the quality-educated active persons, who had knowledge about and quite consciously used the system approach, the organizational structure, the focus on processes, and the top-management commitment have been of great help. The strengths of the Seskarö project are rather the attempt to adopt a system approach and parts of the organization, such as the original non-profit one. Creating a joint-stock company has been a strength when starting new enterprises, but not obviously as the main hub for the full project.

Summarizing the weaknesses of both projects, even the most enthusiastic project leaders have had difficulties in reaching the intended “customers” of the improvement work, i.e., the third-person residents. Nor has the collaboration with the political sector been satisfactory for the project management. A certain lack of documentation of processes, ideas and decisions has made it somewhat difficult to inform about the actions, and to make sure that all decisions are based on facts. Almost all weaknesses therefore touch upon central issues in TQM, such as a clear view of who the customers are, and satisfactory communication with them, as well as a careful documentation of all initiatives.

A conclusion from these strengths and weaknesses is that the Åseda project has reached further than the Seskarö one mainly because of its use of TQM. However, the Åseda project has used just a selection of TQM concepts, which are sometimes used in unconventional TQM ways, and the distinctions are not always clear to the external observer, or to those active in the project. There has been no obvious intention to “deviate” from TQM. Rather, some differences from TQM can be blamed on a lack of knowledge about its methodologies among members of the domain groups. One might therefore ask if the Åseda project would have been helped by an even stricter use of TQM. As argued above, a few problems can be solved, if this knowledge is enhanced, as an integrated part of the project. However, other unorthodox “TQM” actions in “Progressive Åseda” can be considered interesting initiatives in the process of applying TQM to a
new sector of society. Development projects of the Åseda and Seskarö types will therefore continue to be of a high interest also for the theoretical and practical development of TQM and its methodologies and tools.

These conclusions relate to the appended Paper V, which discusses the transfer of TQM to other sectors in society than the traditional commercial one. The main conclusion that can be drawn, considering also Åseda and Seskarö, is that concepts from TQM can be successfully used but need to be modified and perhaps even simplified. In this process the labels on various concepts are of minor importance. However, the fundamentals of TQM, such as core values, methodologies and tools are important and cannot be left out.

**Liberal democracy**

The work in Åseda and Seskarö may also be seen from another perspective. The improvement work, the organization and structure touch upon the ideas of liberal democracy. This is not very surprising because the communities described exist in a general society where liberal democracy is an overarching ideology, with main ingredients based on the individual and the concept of freedom.

The examples given by the two case studies, as well as those described in the literature are also examples of how liberal ideas can be applied to practical life. The liberal individualism is based on equal respect for all persons as moral beings, and it assumes the individual to be rational, which, in turn, leads to a participatory political organization. The individual has knowledge of her/his own best interests and the ability to pursue them rationally. The performance of self-interest can lead to cooperation or competition. The Åseda and Seskarö projects are examples of how individuals practise those ideas. A difficulty in both cases is that the improvement work is seen as a competition by some residents. In addition, it has been difficult to define the boundaries between private, public and political life within the projects.
6.2 Research Question 2

The second research question is “What are the opinions and experiences of “third person” residents about the improvement work?”

In Åseda a questionnaire was sent to 500 randomly chosen residents over 18 years of age. Among the 255 respondents, 187 said that they were not actively involved in the improvement work. The active ones took part in several ways, from participating on the board of the association, to attending meetings, donating money and assisting in different activities, for example, voluntary work. Some were leaders of domain groups. It is noteworthy that almost half of the respondents were aware of results reached by the societal development projects run by “Progressive Åseda”.

In Seskarö a questionnaire was sent to all the 445 residents over 18 years of age. Among the 230 respondents, 185 said that they were not actively involved in the project. The active ones were members of the board of “Seskarö Future Ltd”, or worked in the original “home” of the project, i.e., the Local Folklore Association. Most respondents know about the project through information channels similar to those in Åseda.

A notable difference from Åseda is that only 75 out of 230 respondents were aware of any results of the work conducted in the societal development project. An explanation may be a lack of communication between the active and other residents. Only about 15 percent of the respondents thought that the methodologies used in the project were particularly good. An explanation of this low number can be that only residents active in the project answered that question, while the others were not aware of the used methodologies. (In Åseda this question was posed only in interviews with residents active in the project.)

In both Åseda and Seskarö the opinions of the respondents may be reduced, and divided into “for” or “against” the projects. The answers, and in particular those “against”, may also be categorised as opinions about the management, the organization of the improvement work, the information and communication about the activities, and the
importance of anchoring this kind of societal development project among the residents. The latter issue can also be expressed as the local mandate for this kind of project.

In both communities there is severe criticism of the projects raised by many respondents, the most serious criticism being the one of an experienced “top-down” management. This supports the conclusions from earlier interviews and questionnaires, where the residents that are active and committed within the projects claimed to experience these attitudes and opinions among many other residents.

A conclusion here is therefore that projects of this kind, i.e., for societal improvements, must consider, from the start, whether a general mandate from most residents is “necessary” in order to reach the goals. An alternative would be to limit the work to networks and cooperation among individuals and organizations that are truly committed to the work. If the first alternative is possible to reach, it may be interesting to discuss the concept of ‘direct democracy’, which might be a new area for practical use of TQM and its various concepts.

6.2.1 The findings in relation to theoretical concepts

Liberal democracy
From the point of view of liberal democracy, the improvement work in Åseda and Seskarö are examples of the primary value in liberalism, i.e., freedom, which means that the rational individual pursues her/his own interests to a certain degree. In practical life freedom means that the citizens should be able to choose, which the residents in both Åseda and Seskarö have done. A few chose to start an improvement project, whereupon many residents chose to join, while a majority preferred not to join.

The risk of strong individualism in liberal democracy may in the Åseda case be seen as a win-win situation, which means that committed individuals pursue their own interests through the domain groups but the goals for the groups are the commonweal for Åseda, which includes the whole community.
6.3 Research Question 3

The third research question is “What are the opinions and experiences of local politicians about the improvement work?”

Totally 20 politicians were interviewed, and consideration was taken to the distribution of the mandates over political parties in the two municipal councils.

The dominating experience and opinion among Uppvidinge and Haparanda politicians are that this kind of improvement work is positive for the region. The respondents were familiar with, respectively, “Progressive Åseda” and “The Future of Seskarō”, although in different ways. None of the respondents was active in the projects. Most politicians, in both Uppvidinge and Haparanda, appreciate that residents take various initiatives to improve the communities and the lives of themselves and others. Not all politicians agreed though, which generates the conclusion that this kind of improvement work is not obviously positive to all, at least not experienced as positive.

The difficulties in communicating with local politicians were experienced in both Uppvidinge and Haparanda, and by both “sides”, i.e., those active in the projects and the politicians. According to the politicians, this can be dealt with if the improvement work is organized in processes and if information and communication from and within the projects improve. Here the residents have several means, for instance, communication with stakeholders by informal channels, personal visits to politicians, articles in local newspapers, visits to the municipal council meetings, and lobbying to get important issues on the agenda of the municipal executive board. Also, politicians can be invited to personal visits to the local communities and to meetings within the improvement projects. The latter requires that the improvement work be strictly organized with regular meetings, since politicians are often pressed for time. The two investigated cases of Åseda and Seskarō have shown the importance of legitimacy.

A general opinion of the politicians in Uppvidinge and Haparanda is that societal improvement work in social economy, as a complement to, for instance, political or commercial work of a similar nature, is
not only possible, but also fruitful and perhaps even a necessity for the future, and especially in rural areas. One reason for this is that the public economic resources for improvement work tend to decrease, when more and more funds must be allocated to other measures, such as medicare, pensions and actions against unemployment. Perhaps, the organizations in the social economy can be better utilized as the forums for democracy that they actually are. However, some politicians were worried that participation in this kind of projects might lead the residents’ interest away from political issues, while others had the opposite view, i.e., that an interest in the local community will “automatically” stimulate an interest in politics as well.

6.3.1 The findings in relation to theoretical concepts

Social economy
Both Åseda and Seskarö are examples, although different, of organizations in social economy. Politicians in Uppvidinge and Haparanda said explicitly that it would be necessary for the future for local communities and the residents to take initiatives and work on their own future as a complement to the public economy.

There is a “geographical” difference between the politicians in Uppvidinge and Haparanda. The politicians in Uppvidinge work at the municipal council, which is located in Åseda. This fact may have influenced the opinions of the politicians. They see and hear daily what “Progressive Åseda” has achieved, what it aims at and what the active residents are not satisfied with in the community. In the Haparanda municipality, the corresponding political work is located in the city of Haparanda, 20 kilometres away from Seskarö, which gives fewer “confrontations” with the project.

Total quality management
In Åseda and in Seskarö the active residents have expressed some difficulty in communicating with the politicians. The politicians, however, have not experienced this difficulty in the same way, since they do not “need” such contacts. What the difficulty or differences are due to is not easy to say. The rules and management traditions in the established political system can perhaps be experienced as inertia in the system. What is important, however, is to involve the politicians
early in improvement projects, so that they take responsibility for the top management commitment. In the appended Paper V there is a discussion of some of the criticism raised against the use of TQM in “new” sectors in society, and of how its concepts may be modified in order to avoid these difficulties. Referring to the problems in Åseda and Seskarö to reach out to the political sector, TQM might have to be modified as a management system in order also to include major cooperation for a whole community; see Figures 6.6 and 6.7, and the guidelines for phase 1 in Section 6.5.

Liberal democracy
When using the perspective of liberal democracy, one conclusion is that the politicians are a part of the representative democracy, while the way in which the residents have worked in the two case studies, in Åseda in particular, is an example of direct democracy. In direct democracy it is most often the voices of the interested and active persons that are heard. This fact was described as an injustice by some politicians, especially in Uppvidinge. According to the author, the work in Åseda and Seskarö is, however, a clear expression of liberal democracy in pluralistic communities.

6.4 Research Question 4

The fourth and last research question is “How can these experiences be transformed into a cooperation model for community development?”

6.4.1 Findings concerning research question 4

The two case studies have shown that both “Progressive Åseda” and “The Future of Seskarö” have been conducted in phases. Phase 1 is the start-up of the project, phase 2 is the establishing stage, and phase 3 is where the continuing improvement work functions as intended. Two important factors permeate all three phases, and those are leadership and communication, as illustrated by Figure 6.4.

In the start-up phase 1, the leadership, the communication, the organization of the work, the education, the relations to others and the
commitment are the main issues. In phase 2 the important factors of distinction, praise and award are added. In phase 3, where the continuing work is supposed to function, one issue is the change of leaders from the pioneers to new ones, and another is the question of a more general mandate.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 6.4.** The figure illustrates how the author interprets the work with improvements in a local community like “Progressive Åseda” and “The Future of Seskarö”. The work is carried through three phases, and the two important factors, leadership and communication, permeate all three phases.

### 6.4.2 The findings in relation to theoretical concepts

The empirical studies show that methodologies and tools from TQM can be used as a foundation for community development, with practical measures according to how “Progressive Åseda” has used the chosen methodologies, with system approach and collaboration over organizational boundaries. Such a system also seems for planning, organizing, performing and evaluating community improvement projects.

One opinion in this thesis is, however, that TQM should be looked upon as a philosophy for management with the fundamental parts of core values, methodologies and tools, and that this philosophy is useful for different systems, e.g., for-profit organizations, non-profit organizations, and temporary organizations, such as networks.

As an important comparison, Seskarö started approximately at the same time with its improvement work, but has not managed to anchor the work or involve residents in the same successful way as in Åseda,
which may partly be due to a lack of many of the practical measures inspired by TQM and applied in Åseda.

There are several very good efforts made by “Progressive Åseda” that are well worth noting and spreading. Examples are the association’s way of managing and organizing its work, the strengths identified in the study, and also efforts that have not been expressed firmly but have been identified during this study. The latter is mainly that the improvement work has been conducted in phases, as in Figure 6.4, and that the domain groups are similar to the improvement groups, or circles, of Ishikawa (1985).

Connecting to the discussion earlier in this chapter and to the ASQ/IHI model, reviewed in Chapter 2, one can define an inner core group, which is created in phase 1. It consists of the project leaders and the association council. At this stage a group of politicians should be invited and communicated with. In phase 2 the core group is extended with, in this case, improvement groups and the other advisory groups, such as the Åseda Quality Council. In the final phase another enlargement is made, in order to include other stakeholders in the community. Included here are mainly the personal and professional networks of the core group and of the improvement groups, including interested politicians. In each phase methodologies and tools from TQM can be used. The full tentative model is illustrated by Figure 6.5.

In line with the studies and results presented in this thesis, it may be concluded that “Progressive Åseda” has now entered phase 3, and that “The Future of Seskarö” is somewhere in between phase 1 and 2, i.e., establishing the local business life, which is meant to be the organization for the improvement work.
Figure 6.5. This figure is connected to the ASQ/IHI model (Kinney, 1998), and modified to illustrate how the improvement work in a local society such as within “Progressive Åseda” can be conducted in the three phases of Figure 6.4. An inner core group is created in phase 1 and extended with improvement groups in phase 2. In the last phase 3 another enlargement is made in order to include other stakeholders in the community.

The crucial step in this model is the passage from phase 2 to phase 3. When a project enters into a more or less stationary phase, the pioneering entrepreneurs tend to lose enthusiasm, and new leaders must take over. The project also risks becoming dominated by administration of those activities that have survived and become successful. Hence, it might be necessary to change the style of leadership, from the one needed for starting new activities, to one of “administrators”. There is also an enhanced risk that the project will be regarded as yet another societal authority. This view is already expressed in both Åseda and Seskarö. Before phase 3, it is also necessary to set a level of ambition concerning which new stakeholders to approach when enlarging the active circle. It is a matter of philosophy and ambition whether to try to engage all residents among the stakeholders in phase 3. The experiences from Åseda and Seskarö are that this will not be possible. The new
stakeholders should be limited to organizations and groups, while “average” residents should instead be stimulated to join existing improvement groups, or maybe to create new ones, or to replace someone who does not have the opportunity to participate any longer, for instance, a family member. It is impossible to engage all residents. However, the author thinks it is necessary that there is a critical mass. The answer to how big the critical mass needs to be is not investigated in this thesis.

6.5 Conclusions of the Thesis

The research purpose in this thesis is to explore and describe how residents in local communities can work with improvements, with a focus on using concepts from TQM, and to transform the experiences into a cooperation model for community development. The experiences and opinions of residents of various categories in Åseda and Seskarö, as well as of regional politicians, can be structured around issues in TQM, and turned into the basis for such a cooperation model. It is intended to point to a structural way for working with societal improvements, with involvement not only of a core of pioneers and a circle of interested residents, but also of a wider network provided by the active residents. Just like in the Åseda example, such work might lead to new interpretations of some traditional TQM concepts, which is to be expected when an established theory is applied to a new domain. Examples of such concepts are some core values and methodologies, such as “the customer in focus”, “focus on processes”, “a committed leadership”, “a system view”, and “quality circles” (“improvement groups”). The case studies have shown that some modifications are possible and feasible, although TQM tools have not been tested in the investigated cases. Those for collecting and analysing, for instance, verbal data, could possibly be used without modifications.

To summarize the thesis, a cooperation model, modified from the one in Figure 6.5 in Section 6.4.2, is suggested here. The cooperation model is based on the experiences found in the literature and on the practical experiences from Åseda and Seskarö. One conclusion is that the model may be applicable to temporary organizations, such as networks, and to non-profit organizations. The model can be used
from the municipal perspective, if politicians would like to take initiatives for improvements, or from the perspective of residents, if a “private” resident wants to do the same. A recommendation in the latter case is that the resident anchors the ideas in some organization, either a “private”, non-profit, one, or in “business”, such as a company. One conclusion from the case studies is that it might be difficult for a “private” person to get response for such ideas in a local community, if the ideas are not first anchored in smaller circles.

Even negative factors, i.e., negative local experiences, are worth noting from the two case studies. The most apparent ones can be categorized as:

- Top-down management
- Unrealistic goals
- Undemocratic
- Difficulties in anchoring the work in new circles, for instance, among politicians and “average” residents
- Problems when commercializing the project

Some of these problems, for instance, top-down management, unrealistic goals and undemocratic methods can probably be “easily” solved with the help of improved communication, both internally and externally.

There are also positive experienced factors, mostly related to experienced concrete results:

- Job opportunities
- Well-being among residents
- Faith in the future
- Attention from other communities
- Commitment
- Environmental improvements

All in all, one may conclude that the positive results overshadow the problems, and that this type of improvement work conducted in the social economy is valuable and a complement to the commercial and public economy.
The empirical and theoretical parts of this thesis help to build a more detailed cooperation model, as compared to the one presented in the appended Paper III, and overviewed in Figure 6.5. The experiences in Åseda and Seskarö from the different stakeholders’ perspective, described in Paper I, II, III and IV, as well as the conclusions from Paper V should be added to the model, in order to stress that it is important to use clear concepts from TQM and have clear goals. The recommended way of doing this is to see TQM as a management system, or as the author of this thesis sees it, as a philosophy for managing systems. However, the important parts are the system view, the core values, the methodologies appropriate to support the values and culture and the use of tools. The modified cooperation model for community improvement is illustrated by Figure 6.6.

Guidelines for phase 1

It is important that improvement teams adopt structures and organize the work in processes in order to be efficient, especially as the system boundaries and roles are unclear from the start in this type of project. It is important to create the vision and goals as soon as possible in the first phase. Without the vision it is almost impossible to structure the work. The goals, however, can vary in the different phases and groups.

A core group should be established with a small group of key actors, for instance a council and a group of quality experts (“quality council”). It is important to involve at least a few local politicians at this first phase. The membership in the core team should be updated in such a way that there is coherence between the activities and the membership. The processes of the core group are very important for success. One process should be to consider boundaries and roles already during phase 1. Collaborative leadership that is transparent, diplomatic and participative is recommended.

In phase 1 there are appropriate methodologies from TQM that can be used, such as the PDSA cycle combined with affinity and tree diagrams. These are especially useful when identifying issues to be improved or problems to be solved. It is advisable at, or even before, this stage to establish community-based quality measures, which will help the management to choose among possible improvement areas.
Phase 1 requires systematic communication, documentation and information. Information and communication can be both formal and informal. It is also important that the core group members make use of their personal and professional networks. The parts in this communication can be a group consisting of, for instance, the core-group members and representatives of the surrounding community, in what Ishikawa (1985) saw as open group communication.

Figure 6.6. This figure illustrates the same cooperation model as in Figure 6.5, complemented with recommendations for the processes of leadership and communication, which permeate all three phases of a societal development project.
Guidelines for phase 2
The leadership and communication are important here, too. They permeate all the phases in improvement work.

The core group should identify members of an extended team and manage the connections with them. A possible way of doing this is to extend the team and create improvement groups. The improvement groups can be similar to those in Åseda, which are connected to the main situations in a local community. These groups can be created according to the purpose of the improvement work. It is important to invite local politicians to participate actively at a very early stage, in order to stimulate contacts and mutual understanding between the third-sector and political sides of the community. Such invitations can start with a few individual politicians inside the personal networks of core group members, or with those that show an interest already during the start-up in phase 1. But one should also take care to reach out at once to all local politicians, by the communication methods listed earlier, as well as in Paper IV.

Phase 2 is also suitable for introducing appreciation and notification, in particular for the new members of the extended group. One way is to use awards, such as those in Åseda. Improvement group members are encouraged there through, for instance, positive results being published on notice boards and in the project news journal, through awarding a “Flower of the Month” and through appointing “The Best Improvement Group of the Year”.

Guidelines for phase 3
The third phase, also called “Continue”, means establishing the fundamental work with, for instance, identifying processes and structures and organizing the project. It then passes into a phase in which the active persons are more familiar with the way of work and the organization. It can also be interpreted as the “Act” phase in the PDSA-cycle, which means stopping and reflecting upon the work done and the results achieved and establishing new and better ways of working.

In phase 3 the core group and improvement groups can be extended with other stakeholders in the community. In this phase personal and professional networks are also important. The core team and improvement group members should act within their professional
organizations in order to link the improvement work to other suitable bodies.

Figure 6.7. This figure illustrates how the improvement work in a local community can be conducted according to the PDSA cycle. Affinity diagrams are suggested as a methodology in the planning stage. Inspired from Deming (1994) and Jonson (2004).

The three phases can also be interpreted in the PDSA-cycle. Phase 1 with its core group, see Figure 6.6, is very much the planning stage in the cycle. Phase 2 can roughly be interpreted as the doing stage, where the core group together with improvement groups work together. The third phase may be interpreted as the study and acting stages in the
cycle, where the core group and the improvement groups study the results, perhaps together with other stakeholders in the community, which might provide valuable feedback. The PDSA-cycle is also here a practicable methodology.

The type of project that “The Future of Seskarö” and “Progressive Åseda” have realized in their communities in order to affect the local situation is both workable and necessary, especially in situations where the residents are affected by negative regional trends. Sweden is a democracy and a learning society, which requires active individuals. In pace with the increased average competence and knowledge in society, individuals become more aware of their own best interests, and of how to pursue them rationally. Such ambitions and initiatives cannot easily be absorbed by the traditional political organizations and processes. The best solution seems to be to stimulate interested and dedicated residents to take initiatives for societal improvements, and then to turn the most ambitious ones into cooperation between relevant local groups, organizations and political bodies. The experiences from Åseda and Seskarö, as well as the concepts from Total Quality Management can be most helpful in such processes.

6.6 Suggestions for Further Research

In the light of the model suggested in Figure 6.6, a future research project could be to test it in communities similar to Åseda. Then it might be possible to refine its ingredients further, or to adjust the whole model. This can be conducted with, for example, action research, where a researcher works actively in place with the application of the model, perhaps within the qualitative tradition and with soft system methodology as a research approach; see Section 3.5.2.

Since the studied phenomena in Åseda and Seskarö are complex, further research can be conducted from several aspects. The conclusion that “Progressive Åseda” is in phase 3, while having problems with the change of leaders to new ones, raises the question about how new leaders can become committed. Research can
therefore be conducted about management and leadership in non-profit organizations that work for community development.

A more theoretical research can concern, for instance, how methodologies and tools from TQM can be adjusted to community projects in general, and to improvement groups in particular, all based on experiences from the two case studies.

Another suggestion for further research is to create a model for assessment connected to awards like, for instance, the Swedish Quality Award. However, this future model should be adjusted to small communities. Perhaps a national award can pay attention to this kind of improvement work, conducted in local communities by the residents themselves. In this study, one observation is that attention and acknowledgement are very important issues for the residents committed to the improvement work. Here inspiration can maybe be obtained by the current role by SIQ related to assessment models for Innovation systems (Chocron & Nilsson, 2003).

Finally, it would be interesting to study and develop quality measures for this type of project, with Åsedå as a case study. Such measures might help to better describe and record the results and effects, and therefore also simplify the communication with residents in general and with politicians.
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Paper I

TQM as a Support for Societal Development – Experiences from a Swedish Community


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TQM as a support for societal development—
experiences from a Swedish community

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ABSTRACT  Total quality management (TQM) is a management philosophy traditionally connected with business, and industry. Today’s society is complex but with a strong connection between business, public and private spheres. One example is the impact that negative economic and demographic trends have on communities. Implementing improvements can also be a way of improving life in a local community by its residents. There are communities that have transferred parts of the TQM philosophy to community issues. The outstanding example in Sweden is the community of Åseda. Here, non-profit organizations, companies and the public sector have collaborated. They have established common core values, worked with quality methodologies, and achieved positive results during the last few years. The residents are organized in a form of improvement groups, working according to the PDSA cycle, and covering all situations a resident might be confronted with in a community. In this paper, results from a study of the experiences from Åseda are presented. The author discusses how the work is organized and how residents in the community work with improvements, and also illustrates the experienced benefits and difficulties. Some indicators for successfully implementing TQM on community issues have been observed and are presented, such as the roles of leadership and of the improvement groups.

Introduction

Today’s society should, more than ever, be interpreted as a complex system, with growing interdependence between business life and the public and private spheres. Total quality management (TQM) is a concept that traditionally has been connected with business life, in commercial and industrial organizations. For example, the focus has been on more effective processes, lower costs and more satisfied customers. In addition, the interest in TQM has increased in recent years in different kinds of organizations.

In the US, there are several examples of organizations that are succeeding with the concept of total quality and are implementing their knowledge into other segments of society. Pensacola in Florida has brought together people from many sectors to create a ‘Quality Community’. The state of Oregon is striving to create a high-performance society through benchmarking and human investment strategies. Communities in California, Wisconsin and Arizona are establishing mutually profitable partnerships among schools, city governments and private businesses. Even if the work is voluntary, and the community involvement is

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through public relations and charity, it is strategically important with this kind of engagement. (Osborne & Gaebl, 1992; Brown et al., 1994)

These examples are communities where people work with total quality management, and where the community is seen as a system; see Scholtes (1997). The TQM philosophy has been transferred to community issues and developed into models for collaboration; see Kinney (1998); Corpuz & O’Hanlon (1999); Jacques (1999); Reavill (1999); Roberts (1994). TQM also has a future in charitable non-profit organizations, which is an important sector of the US economy. Many processes within these organizations are characterized by waste, rework and unnecessary complexity (see Sinha, 1997).

There are also examples of communities in Sweden working with TQM; the most outstanding being the community of Åsed. Here, the improvement work is carried out with a systematic approach, with the aim of breaking a negative economic and demographic trend. The work ranges from improving the local environment to getting a national high-school education placed in Åsed. The latter project generates qualified personnel for companies in the area (Helling et al., 1998). Åsed is an example of a local society with growing interdependence between business life, public and private spheres.

Traditional TQM models and strategies for implementation are designed to fit organizations and their activities in a workplace. TQM as a major management concept has become well established, and helpful to organizational objectives in areas such as industrial and product-orientated commercial businesses, see Reavill (1999). The implementation, however, of TQM as a support for societal development from a system approach is a relatively new topic, as is scientific studies of the subject. Therefore, it is interesting to map how TQM is used when applied to community matters, including the difficulties experienced and strengths.

In this paper, experiences from the TQM role in Åsed are described; for example, how the work is organized, who are involved and how these persons look upon the work and its results. The study is limited to the non-profit association, called ‘Offensiva Åsed’, which is the organizational framework for societal improvements that follow the TQM agenda. The word ‘Offensiv’ in the name ‘Offensiva Åsed’ is here equivalent to the word progressive, and refers to ‘prevention’. The association tries to prevent a negative development, and to identify and take care of opportunities, building on experiences and traditions. The association in this paper is called ‘Progressive Åsed’.

Definitions of used concepts

In international research there are several different descriptions of the concept of TQM, often lacking clear definitions. TQM has been described as a set of improvement tools useful in an organization; see Olsson & Bokor (1995); and as a management philosophy; see Hackman & Wageman (1995). TQM has also been described as a programme for changes based upon organization culture; see for instance Witcher (1995); James (1996); and as a management system; see Boaden (1997); Dale (1999); Hellsten & Klefsjö (2000). In this paper, the latter definition, by Hellsten and Klefsjö (2000), is used, i.e. a management system consisting of core values, techniques and tools with the aim of increasing external and internal customers’ satisfaction with reduced resources. The aim is to establish a culture based on core values, and choose techniques, which support the values and tools suitable for the chosen techniques.

Some other definitions, relevant in this paper, are society, community, municipality, association, and groups-domain. Society here means people in general, who share the same customs, laws etc, living together in communities. The concept of community is used in the sense of a densely populated area, i.e. all the people who live in a particular area, which is
part of a municipality. *Municipality* is a town, city or district with its own local government. The concept of *association* is used in the sense of an official group of people who have joined for a particular purpose.

Within the Åseda association, the participants form groups connected to domains depending on where in societal life they are most active. All of them work together for societal improvements and with a common goal in the interest of the whole society, implicitly or explicitly.

**Methodology**

The aim of the study was to increase knowledge about how a society can work with improvements using concepts from TQM. It was therefore important to map how the work is organized, as well as the residents’ experiences of benefits and difficulties. Since the work in ‘Progressive Åseda’ is considered unique, a qualitative research strategy is used. With a single-case study like this, a complex social phenomenon can be understood (Yin, 1994), such as an organization’s work with improvements.

Three different data sampling methods have been used; literature and document studies, interviews and observations, with a focus on a few topics which are studied inductively; see Merriam (1994). These are the local environment, the participants themselves, their activities, and the frequency and duration of their meetings. The observations were used as a supplement to the semi-structured interviews.

The study was conducted in different phases. First, literature and document studies, supplemented with personal visits, were conducted. During such visits, different people were interviewed, for example, leaders of the domain groups, municipal politicians, and representatives from the county administrative board. During these visits, eight unstructured personal interviews were conducted. The questions focused on how the respondents work with improvements within their organizations and in the society. The questions were open, and the answers were interpreted immediately. Moreover, the project leader was asked questions repeatedly during the full visit. This was done in order to get an understanding for, and a nearness to, the studied object, so that proper questions could be asked in future semi-structured interviews. The second phase was semi-structured telephone interviews with open answers. The answers have been analysed by the author—for details see Fredriksson (2001). The interviews were inspired by Deming’s improvement cycle, also called the PDSA cycle; see also Deming (1994). The questions were divided into plan, do, study and act, to get a picture of how the residents started an improvement project, how they conducted it, how they evaluated the results, and finally, how they learned from their experiences; see Fig. 1.

A disadvantage with the chosen sampling method can, for instance, be a lack of reliability. To avoid this, the respondents got back their answers in print, and could give comments. The last phase was the interpretation and analysis of the sampled data. It is made from a theoretical perspective and with definitions common in total quality management.

**Empirical findings**

*The community of Åseda and the background of the improvement work*

Uppvidinge is an industrial municipality, dominated by manufacturing industries, the public sector and private service enterprises, and Åseda is its largest community, with around 2500 residents. During a particular period Åseda had a negative population development, which affected the local services and business. In order to break this negative trend some residents
from the local trade and industry started a project. They were all experienced in working with TQM within their organizations and wanted to use this concept to develop Åseda and its possibilities. A non-profit organization was established in 1996, and its aim was founded in the quality work in, above all, the manufacturing industry. It is important to note that the work was formally initiated by these individuals, and not by their companies.

The purpose of the non-profit organization is to engage the residents in a continuous improvement work to support and stimulate the societal development in order to reach an improved quality of life for everyone in the community. TQM was considered suitable for this work because it is built upon a common culture, and a common commitment in the work to reach the common goal. A strategic plan was established, as well as a plan for activities. Funds were applied for and granted. The quality work is based on the standards of the Swedish Quality Award (SQA), with its customer-focused agenda based on 13 core values. Consequently, ‘Progressive Åseda’ has developed 13 similar core values for successful local communities. (Helling et al., 1998)

How the improvement work is organized

The non-profit association ‘Progressive Åseda’ (‘Offensiva Åseda’ in Swedish) is organized as shown in Fig. 2.

The association has a council, a separate quality council, sponsors and domain groups. The Quality Council has representatives from the economic sponsors, the Swedish Institute for Quality (SIQ), the Kaizen Institute and a writer. The sponsors are the municipality of Uppvidinge, the Council of the Kronoberg county, NUTEK (the Swedish Business Development Agency) and the European Union. The main Council has a chair, a project leader and two representatives from each domain group. The association tries to cover all situations that may be met by a resident within a community, with the help of 12 so-called domain groups; Parents, The School, Culture, Business, The Church, Service, Associations, Caring, Industry, Youth, 60+, and Countryside (see Fig. 3). It is here that new ideas are presented and the real work with improvement takes place. This model has a grass-root perspective, as in popular movements of the past. However, the groups are not always trained for this kind of systematic work, which can sometimes slow down the process.

The Quality Council meets twice a year and the association’s council meets once a
Figure 2. The figure illustrates the organization of the non-profit association ‘Progressive Åseda’, and is inspired by Helling et al. (1998).

Figure 3. The figure illustrates that the association ‘Progressive Åseda’ has 12 domain groups that aim at covering all situations a resident might be confronted with in a community. There is no internal hierarchical order. There is also collaboration between the different groups.

...
have overlapping interests. However, each group must realize its own ideas, and find the proper financial support.

The association has major meetings four times per year, when all residents in Åseda are invited for discussions and information. It has its own journal, distributed six times per year to around 2000 households and other groups. Information boards are placed along major roads in the area. There is a home page on the Internet, and a board with current information at the local railway station. There is also a catalogue with information about companies and authorities in Åseda, and another one with all private associations and clubs. There have been many articles about the association and its work in local and national newspapers and other media and in quality journals. The project has been presented at several national quality conferences and meetings.

The organization and the TQM work differ in several ways from those in private enterprises. First of all, the leadership of voluntary work is different, and ‘diplomacy’ is an important factor. In addition, societies are complex, and private and public organizations and authorities need to collaborate. Some Åseda leaders expressed the opinion that the residents cannot wait for a political leader to solve their problems. They need to work for solutions themselves. However, it is important that politicians are also involved, as they are part of society.

From the Åseda example, one cannot tell if there is a common factor among residents who take an initiative like this, except that they are all well educated and have experience with systematic improvement work. They also share the enthusiasm for the project. Another experience is that the leadership must not be too academic, systematic, methodological and ‘difficult’. Hence, one cannot use difficult and too detailed TQM methodologies and tools.

Examples of improvement work

The Åseda primary school is a so-called ‘Koolat Kid’, referring to practical work with quality and with certain tools. Koolat Kid is a movement that started in the US in the late 1970s. Its aim is to teach pupils how to work systematically to improve their own school and its activities. The Swedish Institute for Quality (SIQ) started a pilot project built on the Koolat Kid idea, and now seven Swedish schools are engaged in this, including the one in Åseda, (The Swedish Association of Local Authorities, 1998)

The domain group ‘Youth’ works with well-being and activities for young people, when outside school. Examples are arrangements of music events, pub evenings, folklore festivals and art exhibitions. The domain group ‘Culture’ arranges festivals and other cultural events. The group ‘Caring’ has worked with improvements of bicycle, walking and hiking routes, and with a public tourist map of Åseda. The domain group called ‘60+’ has mainly elderly members. It helps with many practical things such as cleaning in public places, renovation, and maintenance. The domain group ‘Business’ stimulates unity and collaboration between local business enterprises, while ‘Industry’ arranges competence development courses. It is established among local companies that an applicant for an employment in an Åseda company gets priority if he/she actually takes up residence in the society (and does not shuttle from a nearby city).

The largest company in Åseda, ProfilGruppen AB, is active in the ‘Industry’ group. Profilgruppen was established in 1981 and manufactures aluminium profiles. It works systematically with quality management and has been certified according to ISO 9002 and 14001. Leading persons in the company are actively engaged in the societal work, and in leading roles. According to the company, such an engagement is essential for recruiting competent personnel, since quality of life and local services are important factors in attracting new
employees to industry. In the mid-1980s the company identified a need for educated and competent new collaborators. A new ‘aluminium’ curriculum was suggested for the local high school, but without practical results. Leaders of the company revived the idea in 1996. The domain groups, as well as local school authorities and politicians, were engaged. Specific plans were presented for a ‘normal’ municipal high school, but built on the same idea as many private high schools. The collaboration resulted in a complete high-school curriculum, approved by central school authorities in 1997. The industrial aluminium network has helped with the relatively fast realization and marketing of the programme. (Helling et al., 1998)

A special service group of more than 50 companies in, mainly, the construction and transport sectors, meets monthly. One goal is to make the industrial area in Åseda attractive and to simplify, for customers, locating the companies. Check-lists are used, and the quality system Reko, which is similar to ISO 9000, is implemented.

Conclusions

Only the domain groups and leaders of ‘Progressive Åseda’ have been interviewed in this background study. In addition, not every member or participant in the domain groups, nor every domain group, have been investigated. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized.

Most of the information collected during April 2000 gave the impression that all domain groups worked with the PDSA cycle in a systematic way. The answers, however, collected in October 2001 show a difference. Just a few groups work in a systematic way, and just a few of them use the PDSA cycle, and even then not exactly in accordance with what is normally meant by QC-circles or Improvement circles; see also Bergman & Klefsjö (1994). The QC-circles have been, and can be used, for educational purposes, where individuals come together and stimulate each other to read and study quality methods in journals and books. These circles can also try to solve problems that the group identifies, or work out different possibilities for improvements. The circles have worked in a similar way but have not used any particular QC-tool or have not emphasized the study of quality methods. It would be interesting to see if the circles in Åseda could evolve more towards Ishikawa’s QC-circles; see also Ishikawa (1985).

It is essential that QC-circles, and their results, have support and interest from the management (Bergman & Klefsjö, 1994). Here, the association’s council and the project leader play an important role. The empirical work shows that the interviewed representatives of the groups have experienced strong support from both the council and the project leaders, not the least because these pioneers can contribute with their personal and professional networks.

In summary, a conclusion drawn from the empirical as well as the documented material is that the work in the association ‘Progressive Åseda’ has achieved several positive results during the last six years. This seems to be a consequence of the clear and firm organization, visions, mission, leadership and activity plan of the association. Perhaps this is a necessity when working with TQM application in a society?

There is, however, room for further improvement of the systematics and organization of the Åseda project, above all in terms of a better TQM education of involved residents and a more systematic approach to the work in the domain groups. It is, for instance, not easy to obtain a clear and short answer about the meaning of central concepts (such as ‘improvements’, ‘quality’ and ‘development’). The opinions, however, seem to agree to a high extent concerning concepts such as ‘shared core values’, ‘caring’, ‘striving for a common goal’, ‘residential needs’ and ‘collaboration’.

Simultaneously, one should try to maintain the positive effects of the informal networks
and contacts in the present organization. However, it is important to pay attention to the way the residents in Åseda have worked, with shared core values and improvement work with everyone’s involvement, in order to create a positive local and regional societal development, and to document and to pass this information on to other communities. The experiences can, with certainty, be a model for other communities.

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Paper II

Experienced Effects from Applying TQM in Societal Improvement Work in a Swedish Community


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Experienced effects from applying TQM in societal improvement work in a Swedish community

Maria Fredriksson

Introduction

Today’s society can be interpreted as a complex system, with growing interdependence between the different sectors of society, such as the commercial, public and non-profit sectors (third sector). Total quality management (TQM) is a concept that traditionally has been connected with business life, in commercial and industrial organisations. The focus has been on more effective processes, lower costs and more satisfied customers (Bergman and Klefsjö, 1994).

In the USA there are examples of organisations that have implemented concepts of TQM to other segments of society. Pensacola in Florida has brought together people from many sectors to create a “quality community”. The state of Oregon tries to create a high-performance society through benchmarking and human investment strategies. Communities in California, Wisconsin and Arizona are establishing partnerships among schools, city governments and private business (see Osborne and Gaebler, 1992; Brown et al., 1994). In parallel, the TQM philosophy has been developed into models for such collaboration (see Kinney, 1998; Corpuz and O’Hanlon, 1999; Jacques, 1999; Reavill, 1999; Roberts, 1994).

An outstanding Swedish example of such TQM work is the community of Åseda in southern Sweden. Here the improvement work is carried out with a systematic approach, with the aim of breaking a negative economic and demographic trend. Åseda has a growing interdependence between business life, public and private spheres, which can be divided into sectors. According to Isaksson (1997), the first sector is the commercial one, the second is the public, and the third sector is where the non-profit organisations can be found. These sectors are interrelated, and their structures vary from country to country depending on, e.g. culture, and socio-economics. According to Sinha (1997), TQM has a future also in third-sector non-profit organisations, since many processes are here characterised by waste, rework and unnecessary complexity.

The implementation of TQM in the third sector as a support for societal development from a system approach is a relatively new
topic, including scientific studies of the subject. The current development is motivated by a belief that third-sector organisations could benefit by adopting TQM concepts, although its implementation will not be without problems (see for example Reavill, 1999). Therefore, it is important to map current efforts to apply TQM to community matters. In this paper the experienced effects from Åseda are described, starting with a background about how the work is organised, who are involved and what strengths and difficulties these people have experienced.

Definitions and delimitations

In international research there are several different descriptions of the concept of TQM (see for example Olsson and Bokor, 1995; Hackman and Wageman, 1995; Boaden, 1997; Dale, 1999; Hellsten and Klefsjö, 2000). In this paper, the definition by Hellsten and Klefsjö (2000) is used, i.e. TQM is seen as a management system consisting of core values, methodologies and tools with the aim to increase external and internal customers' satisfaction with reduced resources.

Several researchers describe a system as a whole, with interdependent elements or components affecting each other over time, and working toward a common aim (see for example Deming, 1994; Senge et al., 1994; Kehoe, 1996; Bergman and Klefsjö, 1994). Examples of systems are political entities, communities, teams and organisations.

Some other definitions, relevant in this paper are society, community, municipality, association, and improvement groups. Here society means residents in general, who share the same customs, laws etc., living together in communities. The concept of community is used for all residents living in a particular, densely populated area, which is part of a municipality. Municipality is a town, city or district with its own local government. The concept of association is used in the sense of an official group of people who have joined for a particular purpose. In this case it is a non-profit organisation. Within the Åseda association the participants form groups connected to domains depending on where in societal life they are most active. All of the groups work together for societal improvements and with a common goal in the interest of the whole society, implicitly or explicitly. In this paper the groups are called improvement groups.

The study is limited to its non-profit association in the third sector, for short called “Progressive Åseda”, which is the organisational framework for societal improvements following the TQM agenda. Another limitation is that the study contains the three improvement groups representing the local business life. Further on, no comparisons have been made with other communities. Therefore, it is possible that Åseda is not unique in its vulnerability to losing jobs, residents and public services, or its “need” of TQM-related activities.

Methodology

The aim of the study was to increase knowledge about what effects are experienced when residents themselves work, in their local community, with TQM methodologies and tools, in order to break a negative economic and demographic trend.

The data collection method for this particular study, about experienced effects among the local business life, was a questionnaire. It was sent to three improvement groups within “Progressive Åseda”, called “industry”, “business” and “services”. The project leader of “Progressive Åseda” provided the names and addresses.

In June 2002 the questionnaire was sent out, and in August one reminder was sent. The questionnaire was sent to 40 persons in total and 24 responded, 16 in the first place and eight after the reminder. Background data about the Åseda project had been collected and analysed before this study was conducted. For details, see Fredriksson (2001). This study can, by itself, raise the inner validity, i.e. help the researcher to gain background knowledge and an understanding for the next investigation within the full Åseda case study. It would be impossible and inappropriate to make statistical generalisations in this background investigation, since it is important to understand, gain knowledge and
interpret the opinions and experiences of just a few persons. The purpose was to get a picture of the respondents’ opinions about the effects that they had experienced. The questionnaire contains structured questions, which makes a comparison less difficult, and re-analysis is possible.

One can only speculate why just 24 of the 40 addressed members of improvement groups answered the questionnaire. The reason can be, for instance, negative attitudes against the association’s work, or against questionnaires, the lack of time or interest, a difficult and long questionnaire, or that it was sent to wrong addresses or names. There is no relevant difference between the answers collected in July from those collected later in August.

**Background**

The background of this study is essential for the understanding and can be read in detail in Fredriksson (2001). Uppvidinge is an industrial municipality, dominated by manufacturing industries, the public sector and private service enterprises and Åseda is its largest community, with around 2,500 residents. During a period of time Åseda had a negative population development, which affected the local services and businesses. In order to break this negative trend some residents from the local trade and industry started a project. They were all experienced with working with TQM within their organisations and wanted to use this concept to develop Åseda and its possibilities. A non-profit organisation was established in 1996. Its purpose was to engage the residents in a continuous improvement work to support and stimulate the societal development in order to reach an improved quality of life for everyone in the community. TQM was considered suitable for this work, because it is built upon a common culture and a common commitment in the work to reach the common goal. A strategic plan was established, as well as an activity plan. Funds were applied for and granted (Helling et al., 1998). The quality work, is based on the standards of the Swedish Quality Award, with its customer-focused agenda based on 13 core values (see SIQ, 2002). Consequently, “Progressive Åseda” has developed 13 similar core values for successful local communities (Helling et al., 1998).

The non-profit association “Progressive Åseda” is organised as in Figure 1.

The association has a council, a separate quality council, sponsors and domain groups. The quality council has representatives from the economic sponsors. The main council has a chair, a project leader and two representatives from each domain group. The association tries to cover all situations that may meet a resident within a community, with the help of 12 so-called improvement groups: parents, school, culture, business, church, service, associations, caring, industry, youth, 60 + and countryside (see Figure 2). In this paper they are called improvement groups. It is here that new ideas are presented and the real work with improvement takes place. However, the groups are not always trained for this kind of systematic work, which sometimes can slow down the process.

Both the quality council and the association’s council have regular meetings. Meetings with the public sector take place repeatedly. The domain groups meet once or twice a month. Each domain group sets its own sub-goals for the internal work. Only projects where a consensus is reached will be realised. All domain groups work with double leaderships. This is preferable when the leaders have different philosophies and competence. The improvement groups have between two and 20 members (see Helling et al., 1998).

**Figure 1** The organisation of the non-profit association “Progressive Åseda”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Council</th>
<th>Sponsors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Association’s Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain Groups</td>
<td>Project Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>Projects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Helling et al. (1998)
Networks have been established between Åseda, the county council, private residents, upper secondary schools, and public authorities. In 1998 some 300 persons were active in the association, and around 1,100 were members.

Some of the improvement groups use the PDSA cycle as support for routines and systematics in the work. They identify improvement potentials, work with methodical problem solution and evaluate the actions taken. Networks are formed between the groups whenever they have overlapping interests. However, each group must realise its own ideas, and find the proper financial support (Fredriksson, 2001).

The association has major meetings four times per year, when all residents in Åseda are invited to discussions and information. It has its own journal, distributed six times per year to around 2,000 households and other groups. Information boards are placed along major roads in the area. There is a home page on the Internet, and a board with current information at the local railway station. There are catalogues with information about companies, authorities, all private associations, and clubs in Åseda. The association’s work has been noticed and written about in articles in newspapers, other media, and in quality journals.

The project has been presented at several national quality conferences and meetings (Fredriksson, 2001).

**Activities and improvements**

One example of improvement work is that the Åseda primary school is a so-called “Koalaty Kid”, referring to a practical work with quality with certain tools. Koalaty Kid is a movement that started in the USA in the late 1970s. Its aim is to teach pupils how to work systematically on improving their own school and its activities. The Swedish Institute for Quality (SIQ) has started a pilot project built on the Koalaty Kid idea (The Swedish Association of Local Authorities, 1998). Other examples are that the domain group “youth” works with wellbeing and activities for young people when outside school. Examples are arrangements of music events, folklore festivals and art exhibitions. The domain group “business” stimulates unity and collaboration between local business enterprises. It is established among local companies that an applicant for an employment in an Åseda company gets priority if he/she actually takes up residence in the society (Fredriksson, 2001).

The largest company in Åseda, ProfilGruppen AB, is active in the “industry” group. ProfilGruppen was established in 1981 and manufactures aluminium profiles. It works systematically with quality management and has been certified according to ISO 9002 and ISO 14001. Leading persons in the company are actively engaged in the societal work. The industrial aluminium network has helped with the relatively fast realisation and marketing of a
unique upper secondary school curriculum. A special service group of more than 50 companies in, above all, the construction and transport sectors meet monthly. One goal is to make the industrial area in Åseda attractive and easy for customers to find their way to the companies. Checklists are used, and the quality system Reko, which is similar to ISO 9000, is implemented (Helling et al., 1998).

It is essential that improvement groups, and their results, have support and interest from the management (see Bergman and Klefsjö, 1994). Here the association’s council and the project leader play an important role. In Åseda the representatives of the groups have experienced strong support from both the council and the project leaders, not least because these pioneers can contribute with their personal and professional networks. The organisation and the TQM work differ in several ways from those in private enterprises. First of all, the leadership of voluntary work is different, and “diplomacy” is an important factor. Also, societies are complex, and private and public organisations and authorities need to collaborate. It is important that politicians are also involved. The collaboration and network are part of the systemic view from which “Progressive Åseda” works (Fredriksson, 2001).

From the Åseda example one can identify a common factor among residents who take an initiative like this, namely that they are all well educated and experienced with systematic improvement work. They also share the enthusiasm for the work. Another experience is that the leadership must not be too academic, systematic, methodological or “difficult”. Hence, one cannot use difficult and too-detailed TQM methodologies and tools (Fredriksson, 2001).

The idea and form of activity for the non-profit association “Progressive Åseda” is unique. The work is founded in the quality work in, above all, the manufacturing industry. It uses TQM philosophy with continuous improvement work. Some methodologies and tools are applied and core values have been developed. However, it is considered rather difficult, by the participants, to implement the TQM way of working in daily life. TQM methodologies and tools cannot be fully applied if the users are not trained. There are needs for education and training in the groups, and also of the new leaders of the association (Fredriksson, 2001).

The background study shows that the work in the association “Progressive Åseda” has produced several positive results during the last six years. This seems to be a consequence of the clear and firm organisation, visions, mission, leadership and activity plan of the association. There is, however, room for further improvement of the systematics and organisation of the Åseda project, above all in terms of a better TQM education of involved residents and a more systematic approach to the work in the domain groups (Fredriksson, 2001).

Simultaneously, one should try to maintain the positive effects of the informal networks and contacts in the present organisation (Fredriksson, 2001).

Experienced effects among local business life

Since Åseda started the improvement work with the purpose of breaking the negative trend, it is interesting to investigate what kind of effects they have experienced, if any. Here the effects (presented in Table I), have been translated into operational terms built on “Progressive Åseda’s” goals.

The three improvement groups were all asked to grade their opinions about effects of the work with improvement. A total of six persons (of 24) thought that the association’s work had “very positive” effects, while 15 respondents have experienced “positive” effects; three persons thought that the effects were “neither positive nor negative”. No one expressed “negative” or “very negative” effects. However, one of the respondents thought that there have been effects that were positive for some part of the society and negative for another. Another opinion was that “Progressive Åseda” has changed attitudes and behaviour in the society. The residents and local business life were more aware and concerned about values in the local society and the need for loyalty.
Table I Summary of experienced effects among the improvement groups representing the local business life. The effects have been translated into operational terms built on “Progressive Åseda’s” goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Has/have increased</th>
<th>Is/are unchanged</th>
<th>Has/have decreased</th>
<th>Do not know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The number of work opportunities in Åseda society</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of persons moving to Åseda society</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of commuters to Åseda</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellbeing and ease among Åseda’s residents</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The common activities for Åseda’s residents</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of young people (&gt; 16 years) moving from Åseda</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of families with children (&lt; 16 years) in Åseda</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public service</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration in Åseda society between companies, organisations, private persons and politicians</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public transportation to and from Åseda society</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact and collaboration between Åseda society and other societies within the same municipality</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Then the respondents were asked about their experiences of certain specific effects. A summary of the experienced effects is given in Table I. A total of nine of the respondents thought that work opportunities had increased. Another nine thought that the number of work opportunities was unchanged; one thought it had decreased, and five answered that they did not know.

Most of the respondents did not believe that the number of people moving to Åseda had increased. However, more than 70 per cent (17 of 24) of the respondents felt that the ease and wellbeing among citizens in Åseda had increased. The common activities had increased according to 20 respondents. The collaboration between companies, organisations, private persons and politicians had increased, according to 20 respondents, while 13 had not experienced any change in public service.

Other comments were given, like:
- “the moving out from Åseda has stopped”;  
- “adornment and decoration of the society have increased”;  
- “Åseda society is now familiar to other societies”; and  
- “the awareness of and engagements in social conditions and public interest have increased”.

Another effect mentioned was that “envy exists among residents in other parts of the municipality”. Difficulties were also mentioned, for instance, the boundaries against the administrative/political side of the municipality was experienced as a difficulty regarding the improvement.

One opinion mentioned was that when the improvement work started it was too difficult and it addressed the leaders of society, i.e. industry and municipality. A respondent said:

Ordinary people do not want to work with too difficult tools or methodologies.

A total of ten respondents felt that the public transportation has not changed, while 11 felt it had decreased. Collaboration between Åseda society and other societies in the municipality has not changed, according to ten persons.

One of the respondents said:

There have been visible effects but they were small in relation to used resources. These kinds of projects probably stop other development and ideas. In addition, the improvement ideas mainly come from top-level residents.

However, some respondents thought that a certain optimism and belief in Åseda had been developed.

The collaboration between tradesmen and industrialists had increased. Another opinion was that:

The improvement groups get several things done, things that probably had not been done otherwise.

Some opinions were that the improvement work had started positive thinking and quality thinking, “Åseda society is put on the map”. There were also comments that there had been no effects for the respondent personally. For further details, see Fredriksson (2002).
Conclusions

It is difficult to draw firm and detailed conclusions about the experienced effects, due to their subjective nature, and the scarcity of the material. However, some clear and probably relevant trends can be seen. Above all, a majority of the respondents think that the general effects are positive or very positive.

When going into detail, as shown in Table I, it is clear that the same trend is visible in all issues that have to do with “wellbeing and ease” of the current residents, as well as their “common activities” and “collaboration”. Here a great majority have experienced improvements due to “Progressive Åseda”. These improvements are probably “felt” by, or communicated to, the residents, or experienced through personal participation in the activities.

When it comes to experiences that would, in practice, be measurable, the picture changes. Then the answers vary between an improved situation, an unchanged one and, in some cases even a worsened one. A rather clear majority can be found under “unchanged”. Examples are the number of people moving in or out of Åseda, the number of commuters and the number of public services. It must be kept in mind that the goals of “Progressive Åseda” are to improve the situation in all these issues, so that “unchanged” cannot be regarded as a satisfactory result.

Unfortunately, these measurable quantities cannot easily be controlled, because all Swedish official statistics tend to be presented for full municipalities, so that the numbers for the community of Åseda cannot be disentangled. It is not clear whether the respondents built their experiences in these cases on informal or unofficial information or rumour, or just “feelings”.

There is one exception from this difference between the two types of experiences, namely the one about “work opportunities”. There, equally many respondents have experienced an increased number as those finding it unchanged. This might be due to the choice of respondents from local business life - the respondents simply have an expert insight into this sector of the Åseda society.

In spite of these conclusions, it is a very important ingredient of TQM to find ways to motivate those engaged in the practical work, and to map this motivation along the way. It seems quite clear from the material that at least these residents are highly motivated, which explains their, generally, very positive experiences of the effects, although they seem rather realistic about the more quantitative effects reached so far.

A general conclusion is, therefore, that the way the residents in Åseda have worked, with shared core values and methodologies from TQM, with the ambition to break a negative trend into a positive societal development, is important to document and to pass on to other communities. All this, with certainty, can be a model for other communities, preferably in combination with scientific studies.

References


Experienced effects from applying TQM in societal improvement work

Maria Fredriksson

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Further reading

Paper III

A Cooperation Model for the Third Sector Based on Total Quality Management


Submitted for publication
A Cooperation Model for the Third Sector
Based on Total Quality Management

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**Key Words:** Total Quality Management, Social Economy, Third Sector, Cooperation Model

**Abstract**
Societal and economic changes generate problems with unemployment and decreased public services in particular in rural areas. Therefore, different solutions to the problems are of interest to policy-makers. In this qualitative study, with data sampling methods chiefly in the form of interviews and questionnaires, the results show that values, methodologies and tools from Total Quality Management (TQM) are applicable to community issues, especially when establishing cooperation between residents, authorities, business, and other organisations. Based on these results, a cooperation model for the third sector based on Total Quality Management is presented. The model consists of a proposal for organising improvement work seen from two so-called dimensions.
Introduction
Today, many societal changes are obviously due to economic cutbacks. There are problems with unemployment, the public sector has been cut back, and in rural areas there are difficulties in maintaining the public services and stimulating people to stay. The problems are common to many countries in the European Union, and policy-makers are looking for various different solutions. A change of the role of the social economy in modern societies may be observed in the orientation of public policy relative to the social economy; for example, cooperatives cooperate with the public sector in order to save or create jobs. (Sätre Åhlander, 2001)

Social economy is a manifold concept. Westlund (2003) notes that it has different names, such as, the third sector, the non-profit sector, and the third system, in different national and cultural contexts (see also Gidron et al., 1992). In this paper the name “third sector” is used in the sense of non-profit organisations. There is a wealth of literature about the third sector and its management; see, for instance Nutt & Backoff (1992); and attempts to define what the third sector is; see, Mertens (1999); and Westlund (2003); and also the third sector with sociological and political science approaches; Anheier & Seibel (1990).

Literature about management may also be found in the area of Total Quality Management (TQM). TQM is a concept that has traditionally been connected with business, commercial and industrial organisations for manufacturing and production. Reavill (1999) discusses the current status and possible future of Total Quality Management as a major management concept. He suggests that the third sector organisations could benefit from adopting Total Quality Management concepts.

A great deal has also been written about communities’ work with improvements and the use of concepts from Total Quality Management; see, Kinney (1998), Reavill (1999) and Corpuz & O'Hanlon (1999). In the U.S. there are examples of successful applications of Total Quality Management to other segments of society than just the commercial or public sector. For example, Communities in California, Wisconsin and Arizona are establishing mutually profitable partnerships among schools, city government and
private business; see Osborne & Gaebler (1992) and Brown et al. (1994).

However, the application of concepts from business to other sectors is not without problems, and there are also critical voices against Total Quality Management application in commercial and public sectors; see, Brown et al. (1994); and Beckford (1998). However, not many experiences have been recorded concerning the use of Total Quality Management in non-profit organisations. Therefore, there is a need for expanding the knowledge of this topic. Moreover, using Total Quality Management in non-profit organisations can play an important part in societal development. In this paper a model for societal development is discussed, based on experiences from two Swedish societies, Åseda and Seskarö.

Purpose
The purpose of this paper is to present a cooperation model for the third sector based on Total Quality Management. The model consists of a proposal for organising improvement work seen from two major aspects that are called dimensions in the paper.

The first major aspect or dimension
The first dimension is to present how local societies work with improvements. The unit of analysis is the improvement work process from the perspectives of the initiators, dedicated residents, and local business representatives. The overarching research question here is: *How can a TQM-based model for the third sector be formulated?* To be able to answer, this question is further divided into:

*How do the residents work with improvements?; How is the improvement work organised?; What strengths and weaknesses have been experienced?; What results and effects have been experienced?*

The second dimension
is to present this improvement work from the local residents’ perspective. The overarching research question here is: *Does this kind of extensive societal improvement project have the residents’ mandate?* To be able to answer that the following questions are also asked:
Do the residents know about the improvement work?; Do they participate?; How do they participate?; What results and effects have been experienced among the residents?

In this paper concepts from Social Economy and Total Quality Management are used, and in order to facilitate the reading some definitions are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** The table contains explanation of some concepts used in this paper, which might facilitate the reading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>a densely populated area, i.e., all the people who live in a particular area, which is part of a municipality.</td>
<td>Hornby, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation model</td>
<td>refers in this paper to a collection, from different perspectives, of recommended strategies, activities and methodologies for working together to create societal changes.</td>
<td>Hornby, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>a part of, in this case Sweden, with its own regional government.</td>
<td>Hornby, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County administrative board</td>
<td>the highest administrative level for county administration.</td>
<td>Hornby, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer</td>
<td>those people or organisations for whom we want to create value.</td>
<td>Bergman &amp; Klefsjö, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement teams or improvement groups</td>
<td>one way to get persons actively involved in improvement work, through small groups that discuss problems and suggest improvements.</td>
<td>Bergman &amp; Klefsjö, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandate</td>
<td>The authority to do something</td>
<td>Hornby, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>a set of methods and principles used to perform a particular activity. This definition is used here when describing research strategy, approach and methods. In the part about TQM it is, however, used in the sense of “ways of working” with, for instance, solving a problem.</td>
<td>Hornby, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality</td>
<td>a town, city or district with its own local government.</td>
<td>Hornby, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Societal development</td>
<td>a new event or stage, likely to affect what happens in a society.</td>
<td>Hornby, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System</td>
<td>a whole, with interdependent elements or components affecting each other over time, and working toward a common aim.</td>
<td>Deming, 1994; and Kehoe, 1996</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Theory**

Total Quality Management, from now on referred as TQM, is a concept that has traditionally been connected with business, e.g., commercial and industrial organisations for manufacturing and production. It has now evolved into being applied to community issues as well; see, for example, Brown et al. (1994), and Stratton (1997). There are several discussions about the definitions and evolvement of TQM; see, for instance, Brown et al. (1994), Kehoe (1996), Beckford (1998) and Hellsten & Klefsjö (2000). The latter definition is used in this paper. TQM is, according to Hellsten & Klefsjö (2000), a system for continuous improvements. It consists of three interdependent and mutually supportive components, which are core values, methodologies and tools and the aim of the system is to increase external and internal customer satisfaction, with reduced resources.
TQM is based upon a common organisational culture, and a commitment to reach the common goal. The core values are the foundation of TQM, and they are the basis for the culture of an organisation. The values of an organisation should be clearly stated and express the principles upon which the mission will be achieved. The concept of value is complicated. In this paper it means that values are agreed upon. Values are best expressed in terms of behaviour, i.e., how an organisation wants to behave internally and externally. Values are guiding symbols that will help the participants to work toward the organisation’s vision, picturing the desirable future; see for instance Deming (1994), Senge et al. (1994), Kehoe (1996) and Hellsten & Klefsjö (2000). System thinking is an important aspect of TQM. Many theorists describe a system as a whole, with interdependent elements or components affecting each other over time, and working toward a common aim; see, Deming (1994) and Kehoe (1996).

Core values, methodologies and tools in an organisation may vary over time. Methodologies are the ways to work within the organisation in order to reach the goals set by the organisation, which, in turn, are based on the core values. A methodology consists of a number of activities performed in a certain order. One example of a methodology for solving problems in the continuous improvement work is the PDSA-cycle; see Deming (1994).

The third TQM component is the tools, i.e., rather concrete and well-defined tools for numerical or verbal data, used to support decision-making or facilitate the analysis of data. Examples of tools are different kinds of diagrams.

**Methodology**
In this qualitative study a case study strategy was used, and the data collecting methods used were in the first dimensions interviews, observations, questionnaires and literature study. To answer the questions in the second dimension a quantitative data collecting method was used, and a questionnaire was sent to residents in the two investigated communities. The method of analysis was “pattern matching”. To increase the validity and reliability of the work, the methods, tools and questions were discussed with colleagues and the answers were in most cases sent back to the respondents for complementary additions.
The case studies were made in two Swedish communities. The community of Åseda in the municipality of Uppvidinge was chosen for case study because of the residents’ explicit use of Total Quality Management when working with societal development. The community of Seskarö in the municipality of Haparanda was, on the contrary, chosen for case study because of the residents’ explicitly working with societal development, but not using concepts from Total Quality Management.

The Åseda case study

Background to the Åseda case study

Åseda with its 2600 inhabitants is the major community of the municipality of Uppvidinge, in the Kronoberg County in southern Sweden. Uppvidinge has just below 10,000 inhabitants and is an industrial municipality, dominated by manufacturing industries, the public sector and private service enterprises.

After a period of negative economic and demographic trends in Åseda, a societal development project started. There was not enough public service; it was difficult to stimulate people to move to Åseda, and for the local industry to get competent personnel. Representatives of local business who used to work with continuous improvements discussed TQM in companies and how to transfer this experience to the whole community. They created a non-profit organisation and developed its vision and mission. The quality work is based on values, methodologies and tools from TQM; see Fredriksson (2002, 2004).

Results of the first dimension in Åseda

The non-profit association is called “Progressive community development in Åseda”. Its purpose is to engage the residents in continuous improvement work to support and stimulate the societal development in order to attain a better quality of life for everyone in the community. The idea and form of activity for the non-profit association is founded on the quality work. The association is referred to from now on as “Progressive Åseda”.

The “Progressive Åseda” improvement work is organised in a unique way, with its core group consisting of the project leader, the association chairperson, the council and external advisors, and with 12 improvement groups that represent almost every aspect of the community. The different groups cooperate, and the members use...
their personal and professional networks in their improvement work. The association’s council consists of a chairperson, a project leader and two representatives of each improvement group. An improvement group in Åseda consists of people working with improvements in a particular domain. The improvement groups are very important for the improvement work as a whole. It is here that new ideas are presented and the real work with improvements and changes takes place. Each improvement group could develop its own goals built upon the association’s vision and mission. (Fredriksson, 2002, 2004)

When analysing the organisation of “Progressive Åseda” from a TQM perspective, one finds that the association uses values and methodologies and has a system approach to its work. “Progressive Åseda” developed core values, used the methodology of improvement groups and the PDSA-cycle. However, one conclusion drawn from earlier studies is that “Progressive Åseda” has not used any particular tool. (Fredriksson, 2002, 2004)

Earlier studies (Fredriksson 2002, 2004) show that the leadership of an Åseda type of work should be firm, but still very diplomatic. The leaders of this type of cooperation must be enthusiastic and gain respect. There is an obvious need for the association’s improvement work to be accepted among the rest of the community residents.

The respondents think that they have reached several positive results during the last few years thanks to this way of organising the improvement work. The clearest positive effects mentioned in the questionnaires are the increased well-being and ease among the residents of Åseda, the improvement of common activities, and the increased cooperation between companies, organisations, private persons and politicians. Another conclusion from earlier studies (Fredriksson 2002, 2004) is that it is crucial to cross boundaries when working within a system. A clear ingredient seems to be that the participants have used their existing personal and professional networks in the common improvement work.

The respondents gave similar answers to what strengths they have experienced during the association’s improvement work. First of all, they think “Progressive Åseda” provides opportunities for having a system view and assuming responsibility for the community. All the respondents see the division into improvement groups and their way to
represent almost each part of the community as an important strength. People with different views work together and share interests and goals. The most important strengths experienced may be summarised as:

- Residents take responsibility for their own community and development
- Improvement groups represent the conditions in the community
- Local politicians are regularly invited to dialogues
- Comprehensive view in spite of many aspects

The respondents also gave different answers as to what weaknesses they experienced in the association’s work with improvements. The most important weaknesses may according to the respondents be summarised as:

- There is a lack of mandate for the project among residents
- It is hard to get people involved
- There is inertia in the societal system
- The pressure on the active members might be burdensome

It has been hard to keep up the interest, involvement and commitment of the residents. Committed people get tired, and it is difficult to increase the involvement of the residents. Another experience is the difficulty in communication between those active in the project and the political powers of the municipality, and to anchor the work together with the idea of “Progressive Åseda” in the municipal executive board.

**Results of the second dimension in Åseda**

The second dimension is to present improvement work from the perspectives of local residents. Here a questionnaire was sent to 500 randomly chosen residents over 18 years of age; for details, see Fredriksson (2003b).

The gender representation was just about equal among the respondents in Åseda. The question about the respondents’ knowledge of the societal development project “Progressive Åseda” in Åseda was answered by 255 persons, of whom 229 claimed such knowledge.
The respondents thought that they had gained knowledge about the project “Progressive Åseda” by, for instance, actively participating in improvement groups, and through written information, public meetings or conversations with active persons. The respondents could also be either active or passive members of the association with the same name as the development project, “Progressive Åseda”. However, a majority 73% (187 out of 255 respondents) were not involved at all in active improvement work.

The active respondents in the projects were asked to specify their involvement. The answers varied from participating in the board of the association to attending meetings, donating money and assisting in different activities, for example voluntary work. Some respondents also answered that they were leaders of improvement groups.

The respondents were asked if they thought that the work that has been conducted in the societal development projects has led to any results. In Åseda 44% of the respondents answered “yes”, 9% “no” and 47% “do not know”. The respondents were also asked to give examples of such results and the answers are divided into positive and negative results. Several respondents gave similar answers; see Table 2.

The respondents active in the work were also asked if the methodologies used were especially good. In Åseda 17 out of 52 respondents thought so. The answers may be summarized in the same groups as those the respondents call results: see Table 2. The opposite question was also asked and six out of 52 respondents thought the methodologies were bad. The answers are summarised as: Top-down management; Unrealistic goals; and Undemocratic.

The last question that was asked was if the respondents had other opinions or matters to communicate. There were 97 respondents that had points of view to communicate. The opinions may be divided into “for” or “against” the project in both communities. The results are further described in Fredriksson (2003b). The answers may be categorised as criticism of management, organisation of improvement work, information and communication, and finally the importance of anchoring this kind of societal development project among the residents, i.e., the mandate for this kind of project.
The Seskarö case study

Background to the Seskarö case study

The island of Seskarö in the Haparanda archipelago is a part of the municipality of Haparanda. Haparanda is, in turn, a part of the County of North Bothnia in northernmost Sweden. The municipality of Haparanda has about 10,000 inhabitants, living in communities, as well as in the country. Haparanda is an industrial and commercial municipality on the Finnish border, dominated by paper and pulp industries, the public sector and private service enterprises.

Seskarö has had a long negative demographic trend and decreased public service. In 1997 approximately 60 persons were employed at the sawmill and there were approximately 550 inhabitants. The primary school still exists, although a shutdown has been discussed. The library has been closed and the organisational activities are limited, and directed towards adults. In the light of this, a societal development project called “The Future of Seskarö” started in 1997. The aim of the project is that Seskarö should be a community with its own power to shape its future development. Funds were granted from the European Union, the municipality of Haparanda and the Norrbotten county administrative board.

Results of the first dimension in the Seskarö case study

As in Åseda, the first dimension in Seskarö is to study how the community of Seskarö works with improvements from the perspectives of the initiators, dedicated persons and local business representatives; see Fredriksson (2003a, 2003b) for more details.

A non-profit organisation was established, a Local Folklore Society called “The Future of Seskarö”. The improvement work was organised by this association during the first phase. A decision was taken to start a local organisation with special resources, and the development company “Seskarö Future Ltd” was created. It is an “umbrella organisation” for development of Seskarö. Its economic surplus is to be re-invested in the future development of Seskarö.

All residents were invited to buy shares in “Seskarö Future Ltd”. The company was established during phase I. The societal project was followed by phase II, where the company was planned to be self-supporting and to create new job opportunities. The company is owned by residents of Seskarö and has approximately 165
shareholders. The Local Folklore Association continues its work, for instance by arranging study circles and art exhibitions.

The respondents on Seskarö also think that they have attained several results since they started “The Future of Seskarö”. All respondents were actively involved in improvement work and some were local business representatives. The majority of the respondents were men of 51-70 years of age, not born on the island of Seskarö but living there now. Not all the respondents agreed about the achieved results, but some said that approximately five new companies had been established giving six new jobs. New projects are planned, for instance, in tourism.

The most important experienced strengths may be summarized as:

- New jobs and enterprises
- Increased cooperation between organisations and associations
- Network creation
- Participation by residents and their involvement in their own situation
- Involvement and belief in the future
- Some knowledge has been acquired of cooperation, economy and board meetings.

The most important experienced weaknesses may be summarized as:

- The residents were not given enough information
- Different wishes and expectations did not point in the same direction
- Results of the projects are lacking
- Difficulties in cooperating with authorities
- Difficulty in engaging many residents in improvement work.

A majority of the respondents think that the effects are positive, for instance concerning work opportunities, the number of people moving to Seskarö, and the number of common activities. Cooperation has increased and seems to work well. The clearest positive effects expressed by the respondents are the increased ease and well-being among the residents, the improvement of common activities, and the increased cooperation between companies and organisations; for details, see Fredriksson (2003a).
Results of the second dimension in the Seskarö case study
As in Åseda the second dimension in Seskarö is to present the improvement work from the perspectives of local residents. To get the answers a questionnaire was sent to 500 residents over 18 years of age; for details, see Fredriksson (2003b).

The gender representation was just about equal among the respondents on Seskarö. The question about the respondents’ knowledge of the societal development project “The Future of Seskarö” was answered by 230 persons, of whom 174 claimed such knowledge.

The respondents answered that they gained knowledge about the project “The Future of Seskarö” by for instance being members of the board of “Seskarö Future Ltd”, by working in the Local Folklore Association or from the local newspaper. The respondents also gained knowledge through information in the same way as in Åseda. However, here too a majority (185 out of 230 respondents) did not work at all in the project.

The respondents active in the projects were asked to specify their involvement. The answers varied from participating in the boards of the communities to attending meetings, donating money and assisting in various activities, for example voluntary work. Some respondents also answered that they were shareholders in “Seskarö Future Ltd”.

The respondents were asked if they thought that the work that has been conducted in the societal development project has led to any results. Out of 228 answers, there were 75 “yes”, 9 “no” and 144 “do not know”. The respondents were also asked to give examples of such results and the answers are divided into positive and negative results. Several respondents gave similar answers and these are divided into groups shown in Table 2.

The respondents active in the work were also asked if the methodologies used were particularly good, and 28 out of 216 respondents thought so. The answers may be summarized in the same categories as those the respondents call results; see Table 2. A difference here compared to Åseda is that in Åseda only those active in the project were asked this question, while in Seskarö all respondents were asked.
The opposite question was also asked and 12 out of 216 respondents in Seskarö thought that the methodologies were bad. The answers are summarised as: top-down management; not enough information and bad communication; and bad anchoring among the residents.

Table 2. The table shows what the respondents think are positive and negative results of the work with their societal development projects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job opportunities</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Åseda</td>
<td>Preservation of job through rotation between work places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The residents are more loyal to the local shops and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seskarö</td>
<td>There are plans for new enterprises and tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New companies have been established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Åseda and Seskarö</td>
<td>The job opportunities have increased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wellbeing</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Åseda</td>
<td>The wellbeing has increased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There are more joint activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A &quot;We&quot; feeling has been created</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased harmony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased faith in the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Åseda and Seskarö</td>
<td>Divided the community into classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attention</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Åseda</td>
<td>Increased advertising outside the local community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nice logotype</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Road signs have led to an increase in the number of visitors to the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seskarö</td>
<td>People have moved to the island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Åseda and Seskarö</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engagement</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Åseda</td>
<td>Stimulating the residents to do joint work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The formation of improvement groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seskarö</td>
<td>The Local Folklore Association was established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There are good debates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Åseda and Seskarö</td>
<td>Increased cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased involvement among the residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environment</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Åseda</td>
<td>Nicer external environment with trees and flowers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased adaptation to the handicapped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There is an assembly hall</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents were also asked if they had other opinions or matters to communicate. On Seskarö 43 respondents had points of view to communicate. Their opinions may be divided into “for” or “against” the project in both communities. The results are further described in Fredriksson (2003b). The answers may be categorised as criticism of management, organisation of improvement work, information and communication, and finally the importance of anchoring this kind of societal development project among the residents, i.e., the mandate for this kind of project.
Conclusions and further research
Conclusions drawn from the first dimension
The improvement work in Åseda has been organised through a non-profit organisation. This organisation is divided into so-called improvement groups representing possible situations in life. This non-profit organisation “Progressive Åseda” has to a certain extent used values, methodologies and tools from Total Quality Management, with a system perspective.

In Seskarö the improvement work also started in a non-profit organisation, but most of it was later transferred to a company called “Seskarö Future Ltd”. This umbrella organisation took the work from the third sector into the commercial one, but still with the perspective of the whole community. The profits were supposed to be re-invested in Seskarö enterprises. In Seskarö the participants have not used values, methodologies or tools from Total Quality Management.

There are experienced strengths and weaknesses, and several of them are in many ways similar in the two communities. A particular strength in Åseda is the use of TQM methodologies such as improvement groups and the PDSA-cycle. The weaknesses in both communities are difficulties in getting residents involved or active, the mandate for this kind of project, the leadership, and communication with, for instance, local politicians. In the U.S. there are several examples of organisations that have successfully applied concepts from Total Quality Management to other segments of society than just the commercial sector. The state of Oregon is striving to create a high-performance society through benchmarking and human investments strategies. Communities in California, Wisconsin and Arizona are establishing mutually profitable partnerships among schools, city government and private business; see Osborne & Gaebler (1992) and Brown et al. (1994). These are examples of communities where people work with TQM in other sectors than in just the first or commercial one, and where they collaborate across sector boundaries, and the community is seen as a system; see also Knapp (1998) and Kinney (1998). All these experiences give clues to a cooperation model based on TQM for a non-profit organisation in the third sector. The model is illustrated by Figure 1.

In the start-up phase 1 of the improvement work, the leadership, the communication, the organisation of the work, the education, the
relations to others and the involvement are the main issues. Here a core group is created, for instance, like in both Åseda and Seskarö a non-profit organisation. However, it is preferable to have persons with skills from the TQM area, because knowledge about systematic improvement work is useful. In phase 1 there is also another difference between Åseda and Seskarö, namely the development of local business. In Åseda local business that worked pro-actively, was already established. On Seskarö the creation of local business took place in phase 1. It is essential that an inner core group is created in phase 1, consisting of the leaders and the association council.

**Figure 1.** The model illustrates how the improvement work in a local association such as “Progressive Åseda” and “The Future of Seskarö” can be conducted in three phases. An inner core group is created in phase 1 and extended with improvement groups in phase 2. In the last phase 3 another enlargement is made in order to include other stakeholders in the community. The model is partly inspired by a model described in Kinney (1998).

In phase 2 the important factors of distinction, praise and reward are added. Some of these factors existed in Åseda, but not in Seskarö. Seskarö, on the other hand, never expressed that they used concepts from TQM. In phase 3, where the continuous work is supposed to be established and to function, there might be a change of leaders and the issue of mandate. Two important factors permeate all three phases, and those are leadership and communication. In phase 2 the core group is extended with (in this case) improvement groups and other
advisory groups. In Seskarö the “Seskarö Future Ltd” could be one of the partners. In the final phase 3 another enlargement is made, in order to include other stakeholders in the community. Included here are the personal and professional networks of the core group and of the improvement groups. In each phase methodologies and tools from TQM can be used to systematize and structure the improvement work.

The earlier studies and this empirical study presented here show that methodologies and tools from TQM may be beneficial in the third sector. TQM may also be used in support of societal development, in accordance with how “Progressive Åseda” has used the chosen methodologies, with a system approach and cooperation across organisational boundaries. The model suggested in Fig. 1 may be used for pro-active improvement work, that is, for identification of the possibilities and for realising them. The model may also be used in a cooperation network with a specific aim, for example, solving a certain problem in a local community. What type of network is established in phase 3 may depend on the problem to be solved or the possibility of realising it.

**Conclusions drawn from the second dimension**

In the first dimension the research question was to create a TQM-based cooperation model for non-profit organisations in the third sector. The model may, however, also be used in network cooperation between organisations from the commercial, public and third sectors. The second dimension was to present the improvement work from the perspectives of local residents. The research question was whether this kind of extensive societal improvement project has acceptance among the residents.

Most residents seem to know about the improvement work, in both Åseda and Seskarö. However, not many of the respondents participated actively in the improvement work. Those who did, worked in various ways, for instance, as leaders or members of boards or by assisting in various different activities. Some respondents remained more passive in the project, but donated money or were shareholders. The results and effects that were experienced by the residents varied to a great extent. However, the answers show that it is difficult for this kind of societal development project to gain acceptance by the residents, and that it should perhaps not be seen as a new model for direct democracy. However, the results of the second
dimension support the model as a model for cooperation between organisations across boundaries.

**Suggestion for further research**

One suggestion for further research is to investigate the opinions and experiences of the local politicians in the municipalities described. Respondents in both Åsedal and Seskarö said that they experienced difficulties in communicating and cooperating with politicians. This will be a third dimension, where the knowledge of political science is to be used in order to adjust and develop the model. Such studies will hopefully provide hints for how to establish acceptance of improvement work in local communities.

**References**


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Paper IV

Opinions by Local Politicians on Community Development Projects – two Swedish studies


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Opinions by Local Politicians on Community Development Projects – two Swedish studies

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Key Words: Total Quality Management, Cooperation Model, Politicians, Community Development

Abstract
Appropriate solutions are needed for the current problems in the European Union with unemployment and the cut-down of the public sector. Various initiatives within social economy and the third sector, initiated by dedicated private residents or others, might be one way to find such solutions, and Total Quality Management (TQM) might be a proper methodology for the practical work and the management, as shown by various community development projects in different countries.

Earlier studies have identified difficulties with getting other than the most dedicated residents involved, active, or even interested in local societal improvement projects. This includes also the local politicians within the region where such a project is running. The purpose of this paper is to present the politicians’ opinions about, and experiences from, such societal development projects, so that propositions for an improved cooperation can be made. It is one part of a major study of such local societal projects in two small Swedish societies. The first project has used concepts from TQM as transferred to community issues, while the other has not. An interesting side-question is therefore if the politicians have experiences that can be related to the different approaches in the two communities. The study is based on telephone interviews with local politicians, as well as on some conclusions from earlier parts of the main study of these projects.
The main conclusion is that local politicians find this kind of societal improvement work not only possible, but also fruitful and maybe the best future way for societal improvements in rural areas.

The difficulties that have been experienced can be reduced if the improvement work gets clearly defined and organized, and if information and communication channels are improved. A few suggestions are presented for how a better cooperation can be conducted between “private” projects and the political level in local societies. Concepts and methodologies from TQM can be used as guidelines for such a development, in line with what has been done in one of the studied projects.

Introduction

The current societal problems with unemployment, the cut-downs in public sector, and the difficulties in rural areas to maintain public services need new thinking, including new approaches to find appropriate solutions; (see, for instance, Isaksson, 1997, Ministry of Trade & Industry, 1998 and Messing, 2001a & 2001b).

According to Sätre Åhlander (2001), the interest has increased in recent years within the European Union (EU) in finding new strategies based on local initiatives in order to solve problems with, for instance unemployment. One strategy can be to use and develop the social economy, instead of just trying to find traditional solutions in the commercial or public economies. Some politicians also try to include social economy in their visions and ambitions for further societal development, as has been noted by, for instance, the Swedish Ministry of Trade & Industry (1998). One way might be to develop the third sector within the social economy, not the least in order to mobilise engagement and local competence; (Berge, 1999). Valuable activities and job opportunities can evolve from local needs and resources when residents of local societies get engaged in their own future. Local societies in rural areas can be vitalized and threatened services can survive. The social capital funds are of vital importance for industrial life, politics and the public sector. All this has been stressed by, among others, the Swedish Minister of Infrastructure, Ulrica Messing (2001a & 2001b).
There are many successful examples from the area of social economy, motivated by the commonweal, both in the U.S. and in Europe. One example in Sweden is the company Salubrin/Druvan Ltd and its charitable foundation, created about a century ago in order to support, mainly, medical research with the profit of the mother company. Another initiative from about the same time is Protite Ltd, which was created by the employees of the bankrupted South Swedish Leather & Belt Ltd in order to save the company, the jobs and the local community. Protite Ltd is still owned by the employees. A more recent example of a similar kind is the northern Swedish community of Seskarö, where the residents try to help their local society from a system view, and started, among other things, a joint-stock company, which is meant to be an umbrella-organization for creating and supporting local commercial enterprises. Lundstedt et al. (1999) and Ekblom (1999)

There are also several examples of using concepts from Total Quality Management (TQM) in the social economy, most notably in the U.S.; (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992, Brown et al., 1994, Kinney, 1998, Reavill, 1999, Corpuz & O’Hanlon. 1999). TQM can be seen as a management system consisting of values, methodologies and tools, and has been used mainly in the private, commercial sector for decades, and more recently also in the public sector. Hellsten & Klefsjö (2000)

An example is provided by the community of Tacoma in Washington State, where the residents have worked with concepts from TQM and studied how compatible “the citizen-as-customer model” has been on community-wide improvement work. The project started as a research programme, initiated by the American Society for Quality (ASQ); (Jacques, 1999). Another well-known example is that the American Society for Quality (ASQ) has worked with the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) within a TQM-based project where a community health improvement model has been created in order to bring down traffic injuries; (Kinney, 1998).

There is also a probably unique Swedish example of applying TQM in a non-profit organization aiming at a systematic improvement work for a whole society, and based on a system approach. It takes place in the community of Åseda in southern Sweden.
In this paper two local Swedish communities, the above-mentioned Åseda and Seskarö, are described with a focus on the experiences and opinions of local politicians about the ongoing improvement work within the social economy. This is one part of a major research project, with the purpose to present a TQM-based cooperation model for community development; (Fredriksson, 2004b). This cooperation model evolves from the perspectives of three different groups of stakeholders, the initiators, the “third person” resident and the local politicians. This paper is hence about the latter group. One of the reasons for comparing these two communities is that the Åseda project has used concepts from TQM, while the Seskarö project has not. The two projects are studied in relation to how they manage their organizations and to the problems that have occurred.

**Problem discussion**

The two examples of improvement work in Åseda and Seskarö differ in structure, organization, management and work processes, but are alike concerning their purpose, i.e., to help the whole local society with improvement work. This purpose identifies the projects as belonging to the social economy. Both also see their communities as a system with interdependent parts, such as the residents, the local business life and the local politicians. In addition, both projects were initiated by representatives from the local business.

The many strengths and difficulties that have been experienced by the engaged local residents are often similar in the two Swedish communities. The most obvious strength in both communities is that this improvement work ever was initiated and started. The most obvious experienced weakness in both societies is difficulties with communication with, for instance, local politicians.

Jacques (1999) notes that communication and focus on processes, are keys to overcome such political barriers, in community improvement efforts. This is one conclusion from his discussion of differences between the commercial, public and social economies. According to TQM top-management commitment and a critical mass of support are crucial for success with improvement work, and in community improvement work there is also a need for top-level political commitment.
Therefore it is interesting to investigate the opinions and experiences of the local politicians in the municipalities, which are political entities, where the two communities are located.

The overarching question in this paper is hence:

**How can the cooperation between local politicians and active residents in societal improvement projects be improved?**

Some concepts from Social Economy and Total Quality Management are used in this paper. In order to facilitate the reading they are presented in Table 1, with a further elaboration in the theory section.

**Table 1.** The table contains explanations of some concepts used in this paper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>A densely populated society, which is part of a municipality.</td>
<td>Hornby, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation model</td>
<td>Refers in this paper to a collection of, from different perspectives, recommended strategies, activities and methodologies for societal changes over organizational boundaries.</td>
<td>Hornby, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>A part of Sweden with its own regional government.</td>
<td>Hornby, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County administrative board</td>
<td>The highest administrative level for county administration.</td>
<td>Hornby, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer</td>
<td>Those individuals, groups or organizations for whom someone wants to create value.</td>
<td>Bergman &amp; Klefsjö, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement team or improvement group</td>
<td>A group of individuals that discuss problems and suggest improvements in a systematic way.</td>
<td>Bergman &amp; Klefsjö, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandate</td>
<td>The authority to do something.</td>
<td>Hornby, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>A set of methods and principles used for a particular activity. This definition is used here when describing research strategy, approach and methods. In the part about TQM it is, however, used in the sense of “ways of working” with, for instance, solving a problem.</td>
<td>Hornby, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality</td>
<td>A town, city or district with its own local government.</td>
<td>Hornby, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Societal development</td>
<td>A new event or stage, likely to affect what happens in a society.</td>
<td>Hornby, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System</td>
<td>A whole, with interdependent elements or components affecting each other over time, and working toward a common aim.</td>
<td>Denning, 1994; Kehoe, 1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Quality Management, TQM</td>
<td>A system for continuous improvements. It consists of three interdependent and mutually supportive components, which are core values, methodologies and tools, and the aim of the system is to increase external and internal customer satisfaction, with reduced resources.</td>
<td>Hellsten &amp; Klefsjö, 2000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Theory**

**Social Economy**

According to Danielson (2001), the social economy, including the third sector, with non-profit organizations, is increasing and has a long tradition in Europe. The concept of social economy, which became an official term in the EU in 1989, was first established in France, in order to distinguish those economic activities that are managed democratically, with commonweal as the purpose. In Sweden the term is in recent years used in the contexts of regional policy and employment policy. EU has established the demarcation CMAF,
which stands for Cooperatives, Mutuals, Associations and Foundations. CMAF is to a great extent synonymous with the concept social economy. Lundstedt et al. (1999)

Social economy is a manifold concept. Westlund (2003) notes that it has different names in different national and cultural contexts, such as, the third sector, the non-profit sector, and the third system; (see also Gidron et al., 1992). There is a rich literature about the social economy and its management; (see, for instance, Nutt & Backoff, 1992, Hudson, 1995, Isaksson, 1997, Mertens, 1999 and Lyons, 2001); and attempts to define what the third sector is; (see, Mertens, 1999 and Westlund, 2003); and also about the third sector with sociological and political science approaches; (see, Anheier & Seibel, 1990).

The Swedish Ministry of Trade & Industry (1998) uses a specific illustration of the relationships between the different economies in society, as shown in Figure 1.

![Figure 1. Relationships between the different economies in society. From the Swedish Ministry of Trade & Industry (1998).](image)

Social economy is a fairly diffuse concept, which contains parts from public, commercial and non-formal economy. This means that an organization in social economy can, for instance, be created on political initiatives and funded by taxes (A). Social economy can include, for instance, for-profit organization (B) and even families
(D). It is the purpose with the activities that identifies the organization. Swedish Ministry of Trade & Industry (1998)

The Åseda project belongs mostly to (D) and the Seskarö one to (B). The former is organized as a non-profit organization while the latter has gone from a non-profit to a for-profit organization, but both have purposes typical for social economy.

The social economy has variety, complexity and dynamics, and there are different models for governance and decision-making in its organizations; (see, for example, Lyons, 2001). It is common, in many countries that the social economy consists of organizations whose primary objectives are social rather than economic. They can vary from religious organizations to trade unions and community organizations, but all are value-led, and established and managed by individuals believing that changes are needed, and that they must engage themselves. Hudson (1995)

According to Hudson (1995), the social economy is quite influential in the U.S., and many social changes have evolved from its organizations, for instance, social welfare services. Social economy exists in both industrialized and developing economies, as well as in both free and less democratic societies. This is because of the human characteristics that bring individuals together to provide, or prevent, something. The characteristics for social economy differ among countries, depending on, for example, the political culture.

Management
The mainstream of management thinking is still dominated by Scientific Management, developed by Taylor, the Classical Theory, developed by Fayol, and Bureaucracy Theory, developed by Weber, as reviewed by Beckford (1998). These three have the very notion of management in focus, i.e., that it stands for theories for planning, organizing, leading and controlling the work within an organization, and using its resources in order to reach its goal. TQM is one example of a modern management system.

Total Quality Management (TQM)
TQM is a concept that has traditionally been connected with business, e.g., commercial and industrial organizations for manufacturing and production. It has recently been applied to community issues as well,
There are ideas about the definitions and evolvement of TQM; (see, for instance, Brown et al., 1994, Kehoe, 1996, Beckford, 1998 and Hellsten & Klefsjö, 2000). The definition used in this paper is the one by Hellsten & Klefsjö (2000), where TQM is seen as a system for continuous improvements. It consists of three interdependent and mutually supportive components, which are core values, methodologies and tools, and the aim of the system is to increase external and internal customer satisfaction, with reduced resources.

TQM is based upon a common organizational culture, and a commitment to reach the common goal. The core values are the foundation of TQM. They are the basis for the culture of an organization, and should be clearly stated. Values are best expressed in terms of behaviour, i.e., how an organization wants to behave internally and externally. They are guiding principles for the participants to work toward the organization’s vision, by picturing the desirable future. For discussions of values within TQM, see Schein (1992), Deming (1994), Senge et al. (1994), Kehoe (1996) and Hellsten & Klefsjö (2000). System thinking is another important aspect of TQM, (as stressed by, for instance, Deming, 1994 and Kehoe, 1996).

Figure 2. Role of core values, methodologies and tools in TQM. From Hellsten & Klefsjö (2000).

Figure 2 illustrates that the use of TQM, according to Hellsten & Klefsjö (2000), is meant to increase external and internal customer satisfaction with reduced resources. Core values are, for example, continuous improvements and a focus on processes. Core values, methodologies and tools in an organization may vary over time. Methodologies are ways to work within the organization in order to
reach the goals set by the organization, which, in turn, are based on the core values. A methodology consists of a number of activities performed in a certain order. One example of a TQM methodology for solving problems is the PDSA cycle; (see Deming, 1994). The third TQM component is tools, i.e., rather concrete and well-defined tools to structure numerical or verbal data, used to support decision-making or facilitate the analysis of data. Examples of tools are different kinds of diagrams.

Case Selection

The community of Åseda in the municipality of Uppvidinge was chosen because there the residents explicitly use concepts from TQM when working with community development within a project called “Progressive Åseda”. Åseda is the major community of Uppvidinge municipality, which is a part of Kronoberg county in southern Sweden. The nearest political level for Swedish communities is the one of the municipality. Accordingly, the politicians of Uppvidinge municipality were interviewed about the Åseda project.

The community of Seskarö in the municipality of Haparanda was chosen because there the residents work with societal development, but without using concepts from TQM. The project is called “The Future of Seskarö”. Seskarö is a part of Haparanda municipality in northern Sweden. Hence Haparanda politicians were interviewed.

Research Method

In the research project of which this paper is one part, qualitative traditions with a case-study approach is used, including different data collecting methods. In this particular investigation about the opinions of politicians telephone interviews were used. Addresses and telephone numbers to local politicians in the Uppvidinge and Haparanda municipalities were first searched for on the Internet, and explaining letters or e-mails were then sent to them.

An interview protocol with questions was constructed, which means that the clustering of answers was prepared. The protocol was discussed with colleagues before the telephone interviews began. Ten local politicians from each municipality were chosen, from political parties in approximate proportion to the distribution of mandates in
the municipal councils. These were then notified and a time for the interview was booked by phone with each one of them.

The telephone interviews were recorded and the answers were written down. The answers were then reduced, categorized, and grouped according to the experienced strengths and weaknesses. The written versions were also sent individually to all respondents for possible adjustments.

Case Descriptions

**Municipalities in general**
It should be kept in mind that a municipality is the smallest political entity in Sweden that has its own local parliament; the municipal council. It is directly elected by the residents every fourth year, and have the supreme right of local decisions. The municipal council decides, in meetings open to the public, the limits for the municipal activities, budget and rates. There are national laws and work plans that regulate the work. Essentially, the municipalities handle schools, children day care, some care for the elderly and some local, public transportation, as well as a spectrum of minor issues. There is a municipal income tax of the order of 30 percent, including also a “county tax”, which is the highest tax paid by normal residents. Still, most Swedish municipalities depend on substantial subsidies from the state, in particular for duties that the Swedish parliament “forces” upon them. The municipal council appoints the municipal executive board, the local government, which prepares, governs, manages and controls the municipal activities. The two higher political levels with elected “parliaments” in Sweden are the county and the national ones.

**The Åseda case study**
Uppvidinge municipality has some 10,000 inhabitants, living in six communities, where Åseda is largest with its 2600 inhabitants. At the latest municipal government election, 2002, the Social Democrats and the Centre party gained a joint political majority in the municipal Town Hall, located to Åseda. It is notable that no such coalition exists in the Swedish parliament. Uppvidinge is an industrial municipality, dominated by manufacturing industries, the public sector and private service enterprises. The nearest city is the county capital of Växjö, some 50 km from Åseda.
The main goals of Uppvidinge municipality are to maintain a high level of employment and to stimulate the residents to stay. As an example, the municipality tries to encourage the young residents, and to give them more opportunities to engage themselves in the municipal development. Other goals are to raise the quality of life and of living for all residents and to strengthen the cultural identity of the region. The municipality tries to accomplish this through an improved interplay between itself and the economic situation in the communities, and to extend the possibilities for the residents and organizations to influence the development through participation and commitment.

Since 1994 there has been a negative population development within the municipality of Uppvidinge and the community of Åseda, with residents leaving the area for employments elsewhere. This negative trend has, among other things, affected the services in the community. In order to break this negative trend some residents from the local trade and industry started an improvement project in 1996. They were all experienced in working with TQM within their organizations and wanted to use this concept to develop Åseda and its possibilities.

The improvement work is organized through a non-profit organization, called “Progressive Åseda”, which was established for that purpose; see Figure 3. It soon became the hub for all “non-political” improvement work in Åseda.

The organization’s main council consists of a chairman, a project leader and two representatives from each domain group. Its quality council has representatives from the sponsors, for instance, the Swedish Institute of Quality (SIQ) and the Kaizen Institute in Sweden. Other economic sponsors are the municipality of Uppvidinge, the Council of the Kronoberg county, NUTEK (the Swedish Business Development Agency) and the EU. The engagement of EU shows that the Åseda project is considered interesting for communities with similar problems in other countries.

“Progressive Åseda” has a system view with a progressive approach, which means that the project work is built upon trust, cooperation and the wish to please all residents. It is also based on the conviction that there are always opportunities to improve and that a progressive
The purpose with “Progressive Åseda” is to engage the residents in a continuous improvement work in order to support and stimulate the societal development and to reach an improved life quality for everyone in the community. The organization’s culture is built upon shared values, which originate from the Swedish Quality Award (SQA), with its customer-focused agenda based on 13 core values. “Progressive Åseda” has therefore developed 13 similar values, suited for work within local communities. Helling et al. (1998)
These 13 values, which have been distributed to all residents, are:

1. Citizen orientation
2. Engaged leadership
3. Participation by everyone
4. Competence development
5. Long-range perspective
6. Public responsibility
7. Process orientation
8. Prevention
9. Continuous improvement
10. Learning from others
11. Faster response
12. Management by facts
13. Interaction

In “Progressive Åseda” the residents active in the project belong to improvement groups, called domain groups; see Figure 5. A “domain” is defined as a part of societal life, and the twelve existing domain groups are meant to represent the major societal activities in a small community. Any resident can contribute to the project within one or more groups, depending on interest. Nevertheless, all groups work with the shared goal of improving the whole society, implicitly or explicitly, and collaborations between the groups are common. Examples of domain groups are those of parents with young children (“Parents”) and of residents over 60 years of age (“60+”).

When using the interpretation of TQM as in Figure 2, the work in “Progressive Åseda” can be illustrated as in Figure 4, with the core values, the methodologies and the vision of the improvement work. The use of particular tools has not been clearly described or defined in the project.

![Figure 4](image-url)

**Figure 4.** Roles of core values, methodologies and tools in “Progressive Åseda”. Inspired by Hellsten & Klefsjö (2000).

The domain groups, having 2-30 members, work with improvements in their own domains, although often in collaborations, when interests...
overlap. Networks have been established between the Åseda project and its groups, the county council, private residents, high-schools and public authorities. For more information, see http://www.offensiva-aseda.com/.

A wide range of improvements are due to activities by the domain groups. One example is that the “Parents” group has improved the environment for children, with, for instance, traffic speed limits near schools, and by providing educational material for the local day care centres. Another example is the work of the group “Industry”, leading to the establishment of a new curriculum with national recruitment at the local high-school. The idea originated from the main Åseda company ProfilGruppen AB, which was established in the early 1980s. The company identified a clear need of educated and competent new collaborators within its speciality, aluminium-profile manufacturing. A complete high-school curriculum was developed by the domain group “Industry”, in collaboration with, above all, ProfilGruppen AB, the Uppvidinge municipality and TeknikCentrum AB in Växjö. It was approved by the national school authorities in 1997, and gained from a relatively fast realisation and national marketing. Helling et al. (1998)

To summarize, the Åseda project has, to a large extent, been planned, managed, organized and conducted according to concepts typical for TQM. The most eminent ones are the access to TQM expertise, the use of core values for defining the aims of the project, the creation of improvement (domain) groups, the use of the PDSA cycle and the ambition of continuous improvement in all sectors of the local society.
The Seskarö case study

Seskarö Island in the Haparanda archipelago belongs to Haparanda municipality, which is a part of the Norrbotten county in northernmost Sweden. Also here the Social Democrats and the Centre party have a joint political majority in the municipal council. The latter is located to the city of Haparanda, which is the main community of the municipality, around 20 km from Seskarö. The municipality has some 10,000 inhabitants, living in communities, as well as on the countryside. It is an industrial and commerce municipality on the Finnish boarder, dominated by papermaking pulp industries, the public sector and private service enterprises.

Seskarö has a history from the mid-16th century when it geographically and linguistically belonged to Finland, which was then a part of Sweden. When Finland was lost to Russia two centuries ago, Seskarö ended up on the Swedish side of the border, as defined by the Torne river. The population, of mostly fishermen, hunters and peasants, grew, and at the end of the 19th century a first sawmill was built. A hundred years ago the population was approximately 3000 persons, of which some 700 worked at the sawmills. Seskarö was then
the major community in Haparanda municipality, until the community of Haparanda grew into a city. In 1928 the Seskarö sawmills were closed, when they could not make a profit, the public service decreased and many younger residents had to move. In the 1930s a government decision led to the start-up of a new sawmill, run by a state-owned company, which has been running since. This sawmill has through the years since been the most important employer in Seskarö.

Seskarö has had a long negative demographic trend and a decreased public service. In 1997 approximately 60 persons were employed at the sawmill and there were approximately 550 inhabitants, to be compared with the numbers 700 and 3000 a century ago. The primary school still exists, although a shut-down has been discussed. The library has been closed, and the organizational activities are limited, and directed towards adults. In the light of this a community development project started in 1997, with the ambition to break the negative trend and exploit existing opportunities. It was called “The Future of Seskarö”. The aim is that Seskarö should develop into a community with a force of its own for future development. Economic support has been granted from the municipality of Haparanda, the Norrbotten county administrative board and the EU.

A plan for coherent improvement activities was created by a development group of Seskarö residents. It has representatives from the four major non-profit organizations on the island. The plan was distributed to other organizations, as well as to the municipal council, various private enterprises and Seskarö residents.

Already in 1996 a non-profit home-district organization had been established as well as a forum for the future of Seskarö. This non-profit organization became the hub of the project “The Future of Seskarö”. The organization has a meeting place, headquarter called Fridhem. The project was then subdivided into two phases. The first one, between 1998 and 2000, was the establishment of the project. The second one, between 2001 and 2003, is called the phase of growth.

Examples of results accomplished by the work within the improvement project, as experienced by those active in the project, are new work opportunities, two new companies and an increased faith in the future among many residents.
Earlier analyses within these case studies have shown, however, that the structure and organization of improvement work in Seskarö has not been as transparent, clear and well documented as within the Åseda project; see Fredriksson (2004b). Hence it is difficult to describe the organization and management of the Seskarö project in more detail, although it is clear that none of the TQM notions listed in the summary of the Åseda project above has been used in Seskarö, at least not in a planned or documented fashion.

For more details of the case descriptions of Åseda and Seskarö, see Fredriksson (2004a, 2004b).

**Analysis and Conclusions**

Within the social economy there are several kinds of organizations and ways of work, in which there are possibilities for residents in local communities to work with improvements in their own community and for their own future. This paper has presented two different ways of organizing improvement work, like the ways used in Åseda and Seskarö, and one problem that can occur, the communication with local politicians. This problem was experienced by the initiators and some active persons in the improvement work. Therefore, an investigation of how the local politicians’ experiences this kind of improvement work in general was interesting to conduct. Also what opinions the local politicians, in these two communities, have in particular about how the cooperation between politicians and the active can improve.

Table 2 summarizes the questions and some typical, reduced answers. It should be stressed that identical questions were asked to all politicians, and that none of them contained the notion of TQM. The Seskarö project has not used TQM, and since very few politicians were active in the projects, it was considered unnecessary to confuse them with “theoretical” concepts that they probably had limited knowledge about. Any conclusions about experiences of “TQM” effects must therefore be drawn indirectly from answers to more general questions.

In the empirical results there is no major difference between the two cases. The politicians in ether of the municipalities seemed to be very familiar to the organizing of the work. All of the respondents were
familiar to the projects and organizations of “Progressive Åseda” and “The Future of Seskarö”.

All the respondents in both municipalities thought that it is positive when residents take initiatives and work for their own future. Respondents in both Åseda and Seskarö also said that this kind of project may be the future to engage residents. One slight difference is that in Åseda some politicians were more negative and also expressed concerns. For instance, the project started because the residents have disbelief in the local political system, which cannot be seen as positive by politicians.

**Table 2.** The table shows a summary of the questions to, and answers from, the politicians in the two municipalities of Uppvidinge and Haparanda, to which Åseda and Seskarö belong.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question asked</th>
<th>Åseda politicians</th>
<th>Seskarö politicians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1) Do you participate in the improvement work, or have you done so? | *All the respondents were familiar with “Progressive Åseda”. Some of them have also visit a few project meetings.*  
*6 out of 10 respondents have not participated at all, while two have participated more actively.* | *All respondents were more or less familiar with “The future of Seskarö”.*  
*None had participated. Almost all had followed the improvement work, as reported by the media or through the municipal decision processes, or paid visits to the Seskarö community, and talked to persons active in the project.* |
| 2) What is your opinion about this kind of community improvement work? | *All respondents think that it is positive when residents take initiatives and work for their own future and society.*  
*The engagement in society increases and also includes those residents that are not politically active.*  
*3 out of 10 respondents even believe that this is the best way for the future to engage citizens in societal improvement work.*  
*3 out of 10 also think that this kind of community activity can have negative aspects:*  
*The project started because of negative trends and by residents with a disbelief in the local political system.*  
*This kind of work in one community can be seen as an injustice to other communities in the municipality, especially if local politicians support the project.*  
*When the private initiatives are not related to the municipal responsibilities, they cannot be supported economically by the municipality, which might be misunderstood as an ignorance, or even* | *All respondents think it is positive when residents take initiatives and work for their own future and society.*  
*Such initiatives are considered necessary, especially when the national policies are so diffuse, and municipal and national efforts cannot cover everything.*  
*It is crucial that the right persons run and organize the work.*  
*Every project is unique, with its own value and purpose, and different projects and methods should be tried for the societal development.*  
*The project can be a model for other communities within the municipality.* |
3) Are there any problems with this kind of community improvement work?

* 6 out of 10 respondents mentioned such problems.
* There has been a crop of rumours around the project, and not everyone feels involved. There is a risk of splitting the society into “audience” and “spectators”.
* It is crucial that the right people initiate the work and take responsibility.
* The visions and goals of the project are too high and difficult to obtain and some initiatives cannot be supported economically from the municipality council for formal reasons. It is therefore important to get in touch with the municipality and other authorities in the very beginning of a project or activity.
* This kind of participation and voluntary work can decrease the interest in political commitment, which can jeopardize the local democracy.

4) Are there any strengths with this kind of community improvement work?

* All the respondents think that the engagement by residents is a strength.
* It is good that this kind of work is not delimited to the boundaries of political parties, and the cooperation between different stakeholders therefore has increased.
* ‘Progressive Åseda’ has shown to all residents that one can make things happen through voluntary active work.
* This has probably also given positive spin-off effects, since other, independent residential projects have started.
* Individuals are welcome to participate in arrangements and activities without necessarily being a member of a core group or some club.
* Perhaps this is a good future way for societal improvement work when a municipality does not have enough economic resources.

5) Are there any constitutional difficulties with this kind of community improvement work?

* 3 respondents did not see any such problems.
* Several other respondents thought that both residents and politicians should be aware that there are rules, laws and decision-making processes to take into consideration, and that these can be experienced as an annoying inertia in the system.
* Associations like “Progressive Åseda” are not democratically ruled, and only those interested are members.
* The more the residents work in such projects the less they want to work politically.
* The accessibility to the services etc provided by the project. Everyone in a society has to have
6) Do you, as a politician, have any needs or expectations to improve the cooperation in this kind of community improvement work? If so; What?

- Residents need to understand the political process and political work, what problems there can be and the economic situation.
- At the same time we politicians need to care and engage in societal development work so that we all work toward the same goal.
- ‘Progressive Åseda’ has illuminated that politicians have to increase their engagements not only in those residents who already take initiatives.
- The local improvement work is a valuable and very positive complement to the municipal work. Residents should work in this type of project within areas where the municipality perhaps lacks financial resources or even authority.
- Several opinions were related to the fact that information, communication and dialogue are very important, and not necessarily through formal political or municipal channels.
- The scorn for politicians has to be changed, whereby mutual information and communication is important, with engagement from both residents and politicians, and personal visits by politicians are necessary, and not only information on paper.
- At the same time trying to reduce the bureaucracy within the project. There are needs for good evaluations and reports within the project.
- Similar projects should be pursued in other places as well, and that they all get support from the municipalities so that residents and politicians strive towards the same goal.
- Information, communication and dialogues are very important and should include local politicians, as well as both the active and non-active residents.
- This kind of project is perhaps the only way for future development work because of the municipal economic situation. It is then valuable that some residents, and financial supporters, think in untraditional ways, and are allowed to try and also to fail. To prevent the latter, it is, however important to have a good management and economic handling of the projects.

An interesting comment about the Åseda project was that this kind of work can be an injustice between the different communities within a municipality, at least if they get political support. Municipal politicians must act for the best of the whole municipality, and cannot easily support more local initiatives, especially if there are objections and jealousy in neighbouring communities. In the Seskarö case there was, on the contrary, comments that the project might be a good example for other communities in the region. A reflection to this difference between is that the politicians in the municipality of Uppvidinge work in Åseda, where the city council is, and perhaps know the project and its active members more closely, and experience them as “competitors” for governing Åseda. In the Haparanda municipality the politicians work in the city of Haparanda, 20 km from Seskarö, and do not confront the project as often. Another reflection is that Åseda is, by a margin, the major community in Uppvidinge, while Seskarö is a minor one in its municipality. It might be difficult for local politicians to take actions in advance of a major society, where they also work, to the “expense” of smaller communities.
In Åseda 6 out of 10 respondents could see problems with this kind of projects, while in Seskarö all the 10 respondents could do so. The difference between the two communities is that in Åseda the politicians could point out such problems in more detail, while in Seskarö there were mostly general comments, for instance, about the economy.

All respondent saw strengths and expressed that the engagement by residents is the biggest one. The difference between the two communities was that in Åseda the politicians could see several strengths from the aspect of “Progressive Åseda”. For instance, the work has probably given positive spin-off effects, and that “Progressive Åseda” has shown that it is possible for residents to accomplish something together for their own good. In Seskarö the respondents saw the creation of the joint-stock company as positive, while other mentioned strengths were only from the aspect of the municipality, i.e., what positive things it had contributed to the project.

There were differences concerning experienced constitutional problem with this kind of work. Politicians in Åseda mentioned that associations like “Progressive Åseda” are not democratically ruled since there are only those interested that are members. Another comment was that the more the residents work in such projects the less they want to get engaged politically. In the Seskarö case no one could see any constitutional problem. A reflection here by the author is that the concept of democracy can differ among politicians. One of the democratic rights is to be able to belong to different organizations, and if those are open only to members, the choice is whether to be a member or not.

The expectations that the politicians expressed concerning an improved cooperation in this kind of project were all very similar. The major one was about communication, which is elaborated further below, with suggestions for improvements. An earlier study showed that the residents active in these projects have experienced some problem in the communication with the local politicians. The local politicians have probably similar experiences, though expressed differently, and with suggestions for improvements. None of the two “sides” took any explicit blame for this situation.
According to the local politicians most of the apprehensions experienced by them can be dealt with if the improvement work is organized in well-defined processes, and if information and communication channels are improved. The residents can communicate with politicians through, for instance, informal channels, personal visits, articles in newspapers, visits to regular municipal council meetings, and by trying to get a current issue on the agenda of the municipal executive board. Here the politicians have an opportunity to answer and treat the suggestions politely and openly. Also, politicians can be invited to visit the community and to participate in meetings concerning community improvement work; see Figure 6.

![Communication with politicians can be done, for instance, through creating a ‘Core group’ containing the project leader, the association’s council, which has representatives from all the improvement groups]

**Figure 6.** *A suggestion for how contacts and communication between a project organization of the Åseda type and the local political sector can be arranged.* From Fredriksson (2003) and modified.

To invite politicians to participate in meetings concerning community improvement work requires a strict organization of the work, with regular meetings, planned long in advance. The ways, in which the residents have worked in Åseda, with a spectrum of improvement groups open to all, have facilitated the information and
communication with politicians and other stakeholders. One conclusion is therefore that using concepts from TQM give a more structured, transparent and process focusing improvement work. The so called domain groups in Åseda can be interpreted into the methodology improvement groups in TQM. These groups have helped, proportionately, far more residents in Åseda to be active and involved in the community improvement work.

In Seskarö the transfer of improvement work from a non-profit organization to an incorporated company has excluded many residents from the project, while protecting mostly the interest of the shareholders. This can be dealt with if the company is looked upon as a part of the local business life and a complement to other societal improvement activities. The core of the improvement work should not, however, be organized as a limited, commercial company.

On the other hand, the Haparanda politicians seem to be more in favour of this kind of societal improvement work than what was expressed by the Uppvidinge politicians. This might be due to the fact that Seskarö is a geographically peripheral and small part of the municipality, while Åseda is the main community of its municipality, where also the politicians meet. The “undemocratic” development project by private residents might therefore be seen as a threat to the political level in Uppvidinge but not in Haparanda. This might also explain why the Åseda project sometimes was considered “unfair” to other Uppvidinge communities, while the Seskarö project was mentioned as a good model for other communities.

Nevertheless, in both cases several politicians saw this type of private initiatives as maybe the only realistic future way to work with societal development in small communities. This is for good or for worse, since one of the reasons would be the ever-shrinking economic resources on the municipal level. Most Swedish municipals can no longer afford development projects, when the running activities like schools and care of the elder take more and more of the tax incomes.

Such a development will naturally require a deep collaboration between politicians and private initiatives. Jacques (1999) states that communication and processes are keys to overcome political barriers in community improvement work. This investigation supports that conclusion. Difficulties in communication with local politicians were
experienced in both Uppvidinge and Haparanda, and by both the active residents and the politicians

In conclusion, there are some crucial factors for a successful cooperation between, on one hand, the active residents and groups in an improvement project and local politicians, on the other. The process for achieving a successful collaboration between the private societal activities and the political level can be structured around the points mentioned as advice by the interviewed politicians, and integrated with similar concerns by other stakeholders in the two cases, as documented during earlier phases of the major study:

- Both parts should adopt a mutual system-approach thinking
- The improvement work should be strictly organized and the ideas refined all from start
- The work should be divided into clearly defined sub-processes
- The politicians and project leaders should inform active residents about municipal rules and laws, and possible limits for municipal and political involvement and support
- All improvement activities should be thoroughly documented and the information be public
- The information channels to residents and local politicians should be defined and used on a regular basis, including news media, project bulletins, informal channels, “chats on the street”, invitations to politicians to meetings and participation in public municipal council meetings
- The issue of possible distrust between politicians and residents active in the project should be addressed in joint meetings, in order to, for instance, prevent mutual misunderstandings
- The politicians, or the political parties, should make clear that, if, they consider voluntary societal improvement work a viable activity, with an increasing role for societal development in the future, whether there is a decreasing municipal economy or not
- Politicians and project leaders should jointly define the role of the voluntary work in terms of social economy, especially in relation to publicly funded projects

Although the politicians were not explicitly asked about their comprehension of TQM, one can draw some conclusions about its relevance in societal improvement work from the more general questions and answers. Among the points listed above, as based on the
advice given by the politicians, a few are typical focus areas for TQM, such as a system approach, a strict organization and planning, an identification of the work in terms of processes, proper and publicly known documentation, communication and feedback, and an integrated element of learning (groups) within the project. Both projects have adopted at least some of these notions, but it is clear that the Åseda one has reached further than the Seskarö project in terms of practical results, just because of its use of TQM. The use of TQM “guarantees” that all crucial aspects of improvement work will be taken into account. In the Åseda case it is even obvious that some of the negative local experiences can be helped with an even stricter adoption of TQM concepts.

In spite of the fact that all politicians ask for work methods typical for TQM, there is not much difference in their opinions about the two projects. This is probably due to the fact that they are all positive to initiatives of this type, and will judge them only later according to how the goals have been reached, and to how many practical results there have been. It is also noteworthy that they were not asked to compare the two projects, or to analyse the methodologies in detail. It would therefore be interesting to return to them with more detailed questions when the two projects have “settled” and reached some of their major goals, and gone into more permanent or stationary states of continuous improvements.

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Paper V

TQM – Terrific Quality Marvel or Tragic Quality Malpractice


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Key Words: Total Quality Management, Criticism, Debate

Abstract
Total Quality Management has seen a tremendous rise of popularity in the eighties and nineties. However, questions of effectiveness, utility and use of TQM arose among many people, practitioners as well as academics.

In this paper, the lack of common interpretations when discussing TQM is emphasised, based on literature study.

The answer to the question if TQM is a marvel or malpractice depends on several factors, for instance, in what kinds of organizations TQM is applied and what interpretation of TQM is made, and what input the theorists and practitioners have, i.e. their earlier environment, culture and values. Often respondents and opponents use the same word but mean different things.

TQM should not be rejected as a whole if one or even if many applications fail. TQM should however be applied with considerable
consideration of the specifics of the target organization, the purpose of the organization, and the purpose of applying TQM.

**Introduction**

Total Quality Management, TQM has gone from buzzword to fad in many people’s opinion. Having seen a tremendous rise of popularity in the eighties and the early nineties, questions of the effectiveness of TQM arose, as many of the implementers did not collect the rewards of their investments. A *Wall Street Journal* article where executives were asked if their TQM involvement had a significant impact on the financial outcome received a lot of attention, since only one third of the respondents were positive (Fuchsberg, 1992). This was followed by an article in *Quality Digest* posing the question “Is Quality Dead?” by Paton (1994). The article included material from several sources including the results of a Rath & Strong survey, where it was claimed that only 20% of the Fortune 500 companies were satisfied with their TQM processes. These results were of course unpleasant for the TQM advocates while bringing grist to the mill of the adversaries. Some people thought that they recognized the shortcomings of the TQM concept, added and retracted a few components and sold similar concepts under different names, such as Business Excellence, or recently Six Sigma (Dale et al., 2000).

But there is also more recent criticism. Park Dahlgaard (2002) has, by referring to other authors, identified two main forms of negative criticism against TQM. One group concerns implementation of TQM and its failure to deliver what has been expected. There is a debate about whether the failing organizations really have adopted TQM or something else. The other form of criticism refers to the position TQM has as a general management theory. The criticism here is that there is a lack of consensus about definitions and that the main characteristics of TQM are not unique at the same time that TQM is not linked to other management theories.

The TQM movement has often responded to criticism or to failure by picking winning strategies, adding ideas or tools into the TQM definition. It is therefore difficult to give one definition of what TQM really is and what it is not, which is problematic if one is to examine the positive or negative outcome of such implementations. Several of the published definitions of TQM appear more as fairly vague descriptions. TQM has been described as a set of improvement tools
useful in an organization; see Olsson & Bokor (1995), and as a management philosophy; see Hackman & Wageman (1995). TQM has also been described as a programme for changes based upon organization culture; see, for instance, Witcher (1995) and James (1996), and as a management system; see Boaden (1997), Dale (1999) and Hellsten & Klefsjö (2000). During the last decades, criteria for quality awards such as the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, have been used and seen as definitions of TQM by many different organizations in their work with quality, see e.g. Juran (1995). Some also propose that the label “TQM” should be replaced by “Business Excellence”, see e.g. Dale et al. (2000).

This confusion or diverging opinions is partly due to the TQM evolution and that the meaning of the word quality itself has shifted over time and from author to author; see, for instance, Hellsten (1997), Kroslid (1999), Boaden (1997) and Hellsten & Klefsjö (2000). There is no general agreement on where and when TQM was first used. Leonard & McAdam (2002) refer to Boaden (1997) when claiming that TQM was not developed by one person. Rather, they argue that quality efforts have always existed, in one form or another.

There are several ways of describing the evolution of TQM. Three ways of Dale (1999), Kroslid (1999) and Park Dahlgaard (2002) are shortly described here.

According to Dale (1999), one common description of the historical development of quality improvement is the use of four stages ‘quality inspection’, ‘quality assurance’, ‘quality control’ and finally ‘Total Quality Management’, the latter with a focus on external and internal customers, processes and quality improvements. The four stages represent the broadened and shifted focus of systems for improving and managing quality since the end of the 70s (Dale, 1999).

Kroslid (1999) suggests instead that the development should be described by the use of two different and parallel ‘schools’. On one hand, there has been “the deterministic school”, which had its starting point in ‘taylorism’ and has since then passed the stages ‘standard development’ and the ‘zero defect principle’. On the other hand, “the continuous improvement school”, which in its early state sought to
reduce variation, has been developed. The continuous improvement school grew in time to what is now known as Total Quality Control and Company-wide Quality Control, meaning that quality improvement should involve everything and everyone in an organization.

A third view of the evolution of TQM is described by Park Dahlggaard et al (2001), who has suggested that it might be seen as a continuous process, as a “fusion of eastern and western ideas”, which has gradually shaped TQM. The result is a theory, characterized by both the rational and logical parts stemming from western theorists, and by the holistic, dynamic and humanistic parts transmitted by Japanese practices, according to Park Dahlggaard (2002).

There is also other development connected to TQM. TQM is a concept that has traditionally been connected to business life, commercial and industrial organizations for manufacturing and production. However, the domain of TQM is changing, and TQM has been applied also to public issues. Research has been conducted in the area of managing the third sector, such as non-profit organizations; see for instance Hudson (1995), Lyons (2001), Nutt & Backoff (1992) and Mertens (1999). Reavill (1999) discusses the current status and possible future of TQM as a major management concept.

Consequently, the different views of the evolution of TQM and the different views of the definitions of TQM generate problems both for those practitioners who are applying TQM, and for those theorists who are studying TQM. There are consequences when discussing the effectiveness, use and utility of TQM. The development of TQM implies new definitions, or modifications of existing definitions, for instance, the interpretation of the word customer.

The purpose
Advocates and opponents of TQM often use the same word in discussions about TQM and quality, but how the words are defined depends on who is using them. So, the purpose of this paper is to emphasize the problems related to the lack of common interpretations when discussing the use and utility of TQM.
Method
In this discussion the data-collecting method used is literature study. The intention is to give some representative examples from different types of organizations within society, and these choices depend on the authors’ different research areas within the discipline. A society as a whole might be described as consisting of two main parts, namely households and organizations respectively. The organizational part can be divided into the three different sectors, ‘the commercial sector’, ‘the public sector’, and ‘other organizations’ (Johansson, 2004). The public sector in turn can, according to Tarschys (1978), be defined as the part of the society that is commonly called either governmental or municipal.

The organizations exemplified in this paper are shown in Matrix 1. The discussion in this paper is structured by use of these three different organizational sectors is and the headings follow that structure. The order of the examples of organizations is due to the development of TQM, i.e. it started in the commercial sector, with manufacturing and production.

Matrix 1. In the matrix, the ovals illustrate issues discussed in the paper. In the examples of commercial organizations the output in the sense of profit is discussed. The example with TQM in educational organizations concerns more the interpretation and the use of TQM. Lastly, the examples from other organizations concern the use of TQM.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input</th>
<th>Total Quality Management</th>
<th>Output</th>
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<tr>
<td>Earlier environment, culture and values</td>
<td>Interpretation of</td>
<td>Use of</td>
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<td>Commercial sector, here in the sense of enterprises</td>
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<td>Public sector, here in the sense of educational organizations</td>
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<td>Other organizations, here in the sense of non-profit organizations and temporary organizations</td>
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Since TQM evolved from business life, some examples from such organizations are given, and here the utility of TQM, in the sense of profits, is discussed, and literature positive to TQM is studied. In the public sector examples from educational organizations are given, and the examples concern more the interpretation and the use of TQM and we have focused on critical literature to see what this criticism is about. Lastly, some examples of applying TQM in other organizations than the commercial and public ones will be described, e.g. non-profit. The use of TQM is also discussed here. Mostly positive literature is commented on, since very little negative literature has been published.

**TQM and results as profit in commercial organizations**

One of the main goals of a business is to stay in business and to be profitable to its owners. Other goals may be that the work environment should be good, that customers are satisfied, that the company has a good reputation and provides jobs. If the business is a loss, the other goals are of little value, as the business will go bankrupt. The big question for companies about to implement new strategies or working methods is thus often “Will it pay?” This is a difficult question to answer, but some have tried.

Quality authorities such as Deming (1986, p. 2) think that if the organization redirected efforts to improve quality, costs would decrease, productivity would improve, the competitive position of the firm would improve, firms would provide jobs and people would be happier. Deming did not present empirical results in support of this, but relied on logical reasoning. Another model of thought is that high quality satisfies customers. Satisfied customers are loyal customers and loyal customers are profitable customers and profitable customers make lucrative businesses and happy owners and co-workers. A similar line of thought is proposed by Bergman & Klefsjö (2003, p. 332).

There is empirical evidence of a link between customer satisfaction and loyalty or repurchase behaviour; see, for instance, Fornell (1992), Söderlund (1998), Söderlund & Vilgon (1999), or Kim et al. (2004), but the link is not as compelling as one might at first suspect, and correlation coefficients between such constructs are often below 0.5. The link is also strongly branch dependent, e.g. on the amount of competition that exists within a market and so on. People may be loyal to the companies that they are dissatisfied with or disloyal to
companies that have completely fulfilled their expectations. You may be completely satisfied with a restaurant or a tourist resort or a car, but either you like to switch just to try something new or you switch simply because your needs have changed. A two-seat convertible or a party-oriented tourist resort may suit a single person without children, but as s/he forms a family of her own, her/his preferences will be directed more to sedans or minivans and her/his travel to more family-oriented locations. If you are not satisfied with a company, you may stick with it because a cost is associated with a switch (switch barriers could, for instance, be frequent-flier programmes and such), or there are no better options because of monopoly or oligopoly situations.

According to Reichheld & Sasser Jr. (2003), there is a link between customer loyalty and customer profitability. They claim that there is a strong link in service organizations, stating that a reduction of customer defections of 5% boosts profits by 25-85%. A more recent study of how willing customers are to promote a service, relates to the company growth-rate. The authors claim that a cause-and-effect relation between the two constructs exists because of a positive correlation for three types of services (Reichheld & Sasser Jr., 2003). On the other hand, Reinartz & Kumar (2002) have questioned the strong relationship between loyalty and profitability and claim that this link is weak and sensitive to the market type. Loyal customers are more demanding and often more costly to serve, and loyal customers also expect to get pay-cuts or other bonuses for being loyal, which reduces the profit margins of these customers.

These links between constructs, such as customer satisfaction and loyalty, and between loyalty and profitability are often present, but the longer the chain of reasoning is stretched, the harder it is to find correlations between constructs. It is possible to find research concluding that there is a relationship between customer satisfaction and profit margins as well as investigations where this link is not evident. Laitamäki (1997) claimed that such a relationship exists, whereas Söderlund & Vilgon (1999) did not find any correlation between customer profitability and customer satisfaction for a European paper wholesaler. From this we conclude that a strategy for improving profits by aiming for high customer satisfaction may be a very worthwhile proposition, although for some businesses and products it might be difficult to see the pay-off. This may be one of the reasons for some of the instances of TQM implementation failure.
In Hendricks & Singal (1999), the authors have used companies that have received a quality award as a token of these companies having successfully implemented TQM. The quality award could be a national or regional award as well as an award given by customers to their suppliers. The authors have studied some financial performance measures of these firms and compared them with a group of similar “average companies”. Their conclusion is that during the implementation phase of TQM (defined as six years before until one year before receiving the award), there is no significant difference between the group of forthcoming winners and a group of control companies. In the time span including the year of the award up until four years after reception, the award winners outperform the control companies (Hendricks & Singal, 1999). Hansson & Eriksson (2002) show similar results as Hendricks & Singal (1989) in an investigation based in Sweden. The Swedish study compared financial performance of Swedish quality award (SQA) recipients, both regional and national and a control group of companies selected from similar branches. These attempts to correlate profitability to TQM implementation also have drawbacks such as the difficulty in isolating which part of the profitability came from the implementation and which might have been a spin-off from receiving the award. Still, a conclusion that can be drawn is that top quality TQM implementation of TQM appears to be a profitable proposition.

**TQM reaches the public sector**

From a situation where TQM was used only in goods producing companies, TQM has reached and also been used in the public sector. The interest in working with quality in this sector has grown during the last decade; see for instance Lagrosen (1997). This growth can also be illustrated by the establishment of a large number of regional, national and international quality awards in a lot of countries; see e.g. Eriksson (2002) and Chuan & Soon (2000). Examples of awards are the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (NIST, 2003) in the USA and the Europan Quality Award (EFQM, 2003) and the Swedish Quality Award (SIQ, 2002). In many cases, applicants from different parts of the public sector, including the school sector and health care sector, participate in these award processes. In year 2000, in fact, all these awards had recipients from the school sector. In Sweden a particular award for the school sector, the Swedish Schools Award (Svenska Kommunförbundet, 2003), was founded by the Swedish
Association of Local Authorities in the mid-1990s. Another example of the increase of interest in TQM among public organizations, is the number of participants at quality conferences directed to the public sector.

An example of, and perhaps even an explanation of, the increased interest in quality management for the public sector in Sweden might be the escalating requirements made by different authorities. Since 1987, a new administrative law is in force in the Swedish public sector, which calls for counteracting of inconveniences and improving accessibility among authorities. For instance, the Commission on Advanced Vocational Education in Sweden requires, in the directions for educational organizations working with such education, that they use Quality Assurance and some form of evaluation. One part of the public sector consists of schools and universities, especially in Sweden, where most of the educational sector is owned by the government or local authorities. This is a strong motive for a study of TQM usage in the public sector.

**TQM in the educational sector**

When studying the criticism against the use of TQM in the education sector, it seems that it can be divided into at least two different forms and that the criticism emanates from different perspectives. One of these forms is the criticism of the transfer of concepts from one context to another. One example is the introduction of methods and adaptation to ways of thinking and values that were developed in goods producing companies. Another form of criticism is also connected to the transfer of TQM to a new area, but also based upon an ideological view. In this paper the use of TQM in educational organizations is seen as a part of an economization within the education area.

**Use of TQM as management concepts within the education area**

Kohn (1993) discusses the use of TQM in schools, and questions the use of TQM in the classrooms. He describes this as educators trying to transplant a model, methods and metaphors included, stemming from the business world, into classrooms. And, classrooms are not comparable to companies, Kohn says. Another example of a similar criticism is made by Scherp (2004), who claims that TQM originates from Japanese efficiency moves and that the use of TQM implies that quality is defined by the customers. According to Scherp (2002),
learning within the TQM-field is emphasized by learning about ‘doing’ and best ‘practice’. In his discussion he also says that students are customers and quality improvements might be carried through by influence of the customer’s expectations. Consequently, according to this reasoning, quality will be a matter of marketing and having a good reputation, which is not necessarily connected to the performance of teaching. Scherp (2004) also says that the quality within the TQM perspective means putting customer experience in relation to customer expectation, and that quality in this view is measured by inquiries among customers in order to determine to what extent customer expectations are satisfied.

But this presupposes that quality defined in a customer perspective is based upon their expectations only. Other definitions also include customer demands; see, for instance, Dahlgaard et al. (1998) and Bergman & Klefsjö (2003) base their definition of quality on both customer needs and expectations. The latter definition implies the importance of not just trying to satisfy explicit demands, but also implicit needs that customers sometimes even do not know of, or cannot appreciate at the moment.

The perspective of quality that is emphasized by Scherp (2004) is founded on a problem-based attitude seeking to create a learning environment for pupils based upon their different needs. So, even if there are differences between his preferred view of quality and the one presented by Bergman & Klefsjö (2003), these differences do not seem as diametrically opposed as he asserts. This is another example of the problem caused by the lack of an explicit definition of TQM, the differences in interpretation of TQM or the lack of a distinction between different conceptions in the field of quality work.

**Use of a customer-view in the education area**

The ideological aspects of TQM include among other things customer-view, system-view, continuous improvements and focus on processes. However, in this paper the customer-view is discussed. The ideological discussion often emanates from the use of the word *customer* in the TQM-perspective. This customer perspective often leads to TQM being criticised as something connected to a market perspective. Whether this is true or not partly depends on which implications a market perspective is given. In the TQM-perspective the word *customer* is usually not used as a synonym of *buyer*. In this
perspective customers are persons or organizations that are the reasons for the existence of the organization and those that the organization should create value to; see Bergman & Klefsjö (2003), for example.

However, one criticism against quality work in schools emanates from the point of view that introducing TQM in the educational sector implies an economisation of that sector and at the same time an introduction of a new set of values that challenge the traditional educational ones; see Kenway (1994) and Kenway et al. (1995). Changes in educational organizations involving the use of approaches that incorporate managerial and market driven responses are also discussed by Mcinerney (2003). According to this discussion the use of the customer perspective might be seen as a means to increase the number of private schools. On the other hand, it could be asked whether use of TQM in schools in the public sector might strengthen the ability of public educational organizations to compete instead of being a threat. Now that the word compete has been mentioned in the educational field, it might be asked whether the use of TQM really opens up the ability for competition, or if the use of TQM is just one way to act in an environment already characterized by competition. In other words, it is possible that the use of TQM might not necessarily be a threat to the public sector, but an opportunity. So, it may be discussed to what extent TQM leads to economizing or to what extent a new environment leads to the need for perspectives like TQM in the educational sector.

Another aspect of the use of a customer perspective is that it might imply a shift of power to some extent. This because it reduces the possibility for some sort of ‘experts’ to make decisions founded just upon their own views and agendas. Once again the discussion of TQM in an ideological view appears, and a similar issue is discussed by, for instance, Mcinerney (2003). The shift of preferential right of interpretation about what quality is, a shift from ‘experts’ to customers, does not mean that an organization has to follow strictly what customers explicitly say about their wishes. Instead, Arnerup & Edvardsson (1992) think that an organization should listen to their customers, and through the professional knowledge in the organization, such as education and training for example, help their customers to express their needs and expectations. But in the end, customers always have the opportunity to leave for another supplier, as long as there are no legal obstructions.
At this point, the use of a customer perspective has called attention to the different needs of customers. A third aspect also appears; there might be more than one group of customers. It is possible that not just one person or group should be put in focus; there may be several persons or groups that should be focused on, whose expectations, demands, and needs should be taken into consideration. On the one hand this makes it possible to see other people than pupils or students as customers, which provides the opportunity to broaden the perspective. On the other hand, this might result in a more complex picture for an educational organization. A discussion about different customers might be necessary. The customer view involves work in order to find out and meet the needs of students, pupils, their parents, the next school or educational level, future employees or others, as the basis for the design of activities in an educational organization. But this condition leads to a fundamental question: whose expectations, demands or needs should be fulfilled? The reality might look that way and therefore require a broader overview of which customer needs should be prioritized and which should not.

Aspects of use of TQM in other organizations than public and commercial ones
Reavill (1999) discusses the status and possible future of TQM as a major management concept and suggests that non-profit organizations could benefit from adopting TQM concepts. The systematic approach, the system view and the preventive thinking in TQM can be used not only in manufacturing and service-producing organizations, but also as a way of cooperating in societies.

The literature on organizations other than public or commercial ones includes experiences of using TQM concepts in cooperation between organizations to achieve improvements; see, for instance, Fredriksson (2003, 2004). The experiences of such applications are both positive and negative. However, there is not much criticism of TQM in the context of community issues. Here some experiences of applying TQM in communities will be presented in an attempt to give examples of where and how people have worked with concepts from TQM in their societies, and applied to community issues.

Temporary organizations
The American Society for Quality (ASQ) has, together with the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI), worked on a project
where a community health improvement model (the ASQ/IHI model) has been created as an approach to working with community issues; see, for instance, Kinney (1998).

This community health improvement model has similarities to other improvement practices, for instance, reliance on a team and attention to human and organizational dynamics. According to Kinney (1998), there are several important differences in applying improvement methods in community settings. Examples are when the system boundaries and roles are unclear; when cause-and-effect relationships are complex in the community; when ownership of the community improvement aim is not always clear and is difficult to maintain; and when customer connections are diffuse.

Tacoma is another example. Residents of the community of Tacoma (Washington State) have worked with concepts from TQM. They have studied how compatible “The citizen-as-customer model” has been with community-wide improvement work. One assumption in that project was that collaboration across traditional community boundaries is a key ingredient for successful communities. Improvement community work requires that the work benefits and interests people from all walks of life; is preventive or proactive; offers both short-term and long-term benefits; has measurable results and offers opportunities for the residents to be involved. Jacques (1999)

**Non-profit organization**
Åseda, a community in southern Sweden, is an example of applying TQM in a non-profit organization. The non-profit organization is the hub in improvement work that concerns a whole community, which indicates systematic improvement work and a system approach.

The improvement work started during a period of decreasing economic and demographic trends in Åseda. There was not enough public service, and it was difficult to get people to move to Åseda, and for the local industry to find competent personnel.

Some representatives of the local business life, who used to work with continuous improvements, discussed Total Quality Management in companies and how to transfer this experience to the whole community. The business representatives created a non-profit
organization ‘Progressive Åseda’, which became the main foundation for the improvement work. (Fredriksson 2003, 2004)

The purpose of ‘Progressive Åseda’ is to engage the residents in continuous improvement work to support and stimulate the societal development in order to attain improved quality of life for everyone in the community. Total Quality Management is based on a common organization culture, and a common commitment in the work to reach the common goal. The idea and form of activity for the non-profit association is founded on the quality work in, above all the manufacturing industry. Several positive results were reached, such as for the well being of the residents. However, during the improvement work the participants also experienced some difficulties, for instance, in engaging residents and some difficulties in communication with politicians. (Fredriksson 2003, 2004)

The new area of TQM application can be related to the more general criticism of TQM. Should TQM be applied to other contexts than in manufacturing and production? Another criticism relevant here is the lack of one sustainable definition of TQM and empirical support in academic contexts.

Furthermore, a strong criticism of TQM concerns its lack of connection to other theories. Foley (2003) refers for example to Kuhn and Popper when discussing the importance of theories in an academic discipline. Using Hempel’s (1965) distinction, Foley states that quality management seems to have neither “support from above”, i.e., theoretical support, nor “support from below”, i.e., empirical support.

Conclusions
In the long term, the openness to various types of criticism will hamper quality management, since the definitions are vague. It is not only the development of TQM that is the subject of different opinions. In international research there are several different descriptions of the concept of TQM, often lacking clear definitions.

TQM and results in commercial organizations
One of the problems encountered when trying to answer the question whether TQM is efficient and effective for different types of organization is that there is a bewildering array of definitions of what TQM is. It is also common to confuse quality control and systems
such as ISO9000 with the more proactive emphasis in total quality management.

The confusing definitions reflect not only the lack of a common theoretical basis, but also that the quality community has often responded to new ways of leading businesses as if they were methods within TQM. This was the case with Business Process Reengineering, and so is the TQM movement responding to Six Sigma. The quality movement’s eagerness to respond to new challenges and working methods by adopting them and including them under the TQM umbrella is in line with the war cry of “continuous improvement”, and indeed, TQM is constantly evolving. The major drawback of this is that the person who is a TQM enthusiast wanting to implement it, will have little guidance of what to actually implement. Another drawback is the academic discussion of the usefulness of TQM. It is like discussing apples and pears; researchers may arrive at diametrically opposite conclusions depending on what they want to prove or where they start to look. Critics will always find people who are not satisfied with what they have implemented or have been subjected to, and supporters can always refer to the ever moving TQM target that the studies where conducted on – something that is no longer the current state-of-the art.

The particular usefulness of TQM in educational organizations
As described above, there is some criticism about the use of TQM in educational organizations. Whether the criticism is justified or not depends, among other things, on the critics’ definition or view of what TQM is. It is difficult to discuss the usefulness of TQM as long as there are different opinions about what TQM is. Scherp (electronic source, no date) criticised TQM and at the same time proposed a different approach for educational organizations. But it might be argued that the proposed approach has strong similarities to TQM. Other factors that might affect the improvement work is how the work is done, in what environment, and what culture and values, other than the TQM corner stones, characterize that environment.

Conclusions on the use of TQM in other organizations than public and commercial ones
The examples of TQM’s usefulness in other organizations also show that different problems occur when transferring TQM to other domains than the traditional one. The examples from cooperation
between different organizations, here called temporary organizations, and the example of the non-profit organization in Åseda, show that TQM is beneficial when used for community issues. The usefulness was seen in both pro-active and re-active perspectives. The conclusion is that TQM is useful in other organizations, but the concept must be customized to the particular organization.

**General conclusions**

It is difficult to answer the question whether TQM is Terrific Quality Marvel or Tragic Quality Malpractice. The answer depends on several factors, for instance, to what type of organization the TQM concepts are applied and what definition of TQM is used. The definitions used by theorists and the studied practitioners must also be synchronized. Advocates and opponents often use the same word but mean different things. Although there are obvious problems with the concept, our findings have however led us to the conclusion that TQM still generates benefits if used properly. Since TQM is a concept that is hard to grasp, and since it is difficult to implement, another conclusion in this paper is that semantics is important.

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IV: The enclosed letter to the questionnaire
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Appendix I: Structure for preparing telephone calls


Som Du kanske vet pågår ett forskningsprojekt ("Offensiv kvalitetsutveckling som stöd för lokal samhällsutveckling") vid vår avdelning. Jag genomför arbetet och det är inom ramen för min forskarutbildning.

Som en del av forskningen ingår en kartläggning av det förbättringsarbete som utförts av områdesgrupperna i "Offensiva Åseda". Det handlar om att kartlägga erfarenheter och synpunkter ni har på arbetssätt i ert arbete med förbättringar för samhällsutveckling.

Jag delar upp forskningsarbetet i intervjuer av områdesgrupper. Denna undersökning fokuserar på det lokala näringslivet och era erfarenheter och genomförs med hjälp av telefonintervjuer. Ditt telefonnummer har jag hittat i dokumentation gjord av samhällsföreningen "Offensiva Åseda". Den finns på föreningens hemsida.

Jag vill fråga Dig dels Får jag intervjua Dig?
Får jag bestämma tid med dig nu för en telefonintervju inom snar framtid?

Om ja, bestäm tid!
Om nej, fråga om den 1, 2 och 3 oktober?

Intervjutiden kan ta 20 minuter och uppåt.

Kan jag få Ditt Fax nummer så jag kan skicka frågorna och ett brev där jag förklarar lite mer om detta?

Jag vill också säga att inga företag eller personer kommer att nämns vid namn i kommande forskningsrapporter eller uppsatser/avhandlingar.

Tack skall Du ha och på återhörande!
Representanter för områdesgrupperna:
industri, handel och service samt
projektledning inom ”Offensiva Åseda”

Kartläggning av arbetet med förbättringar för lokal samhällsutveckling

Som Du kanske vet pågår ett forskningsprojekt (”Offensiv kvalitetsutveckling som stöd för lokal samhällsutveckling”) vid Avdelningen för kvalitetsteknik och statistik vid Luleå tekniska universitet. Arbetet genomförs av doktorand Maria Fredriksson, inom ramen för hennes forskarutbildning. Som en del av forskningsprojektet ingår en kartläggning av det förbättringsarbete som utförts av områdesgrupperna i ”Offensiva Åseda”.

Studien av förbättringsarbetet som utförts av områdesgrupperna i ”Offensiva Åseda” handlar om att kartlägga erfarenheter av och synpunkter på arbetssätt från människor som i sitt lokala samhälle arbetar med förbättringar för samhällsutveckling.

För att kartlägga erfarenheter och synpunkter delas forskningsarbetet upp i intervjuer av områdesgrupper. Denna undersökning fokuserar på det lokala näringslivet och dess erfarenheter och sker med hjälp av telefonintervjuer. Telefonnummer till företag och personer är hämtade från dokumentation gjord av samhällsföreningen ”Offensiva Åseda”.

Ditt deltagande i undersökningen är mycket viktigt eftersom Din roll som representant för näringslivet och en viss områdesgrupp är av stor vikt i forskningen om förbättringsarbete i samhällsutveckling. Dessutom önskar vi få en så korrekt bild som möjligt av arbetssätt i de olika områdesgrupperna. Inga företag eller personer kommer att nämnas vid namn i kommande forskningsrapporter eller uppsatser/avhandlingar.

Har Du några frågor eller vill ha mer information innan vi kontaktar Dig är Du välkommen att kontakta någon av oss två.

Med tack på förhand för Din medverkan!

Maria Fredriksson  Bengt Klefsjö
Doktorand, telefonintervjuare  Professor, handledare

Postadress  Telefon  Telex  E-post
Luleå tekniska universitet  0920-911 23 Professor Bengt Klefsjö  0920-721 60
971 87 LULEÅ  0920-917 28 Doktorand Maria Fredriksson  0920-721 60
Bengt.Klefsjo@ies.luth.se
Maria.Fredriksson@ies.luth.se
Appendix III: Questions for telephone interviews

Frågor för telefonintervjuer med områdesgrupper som representanter för näringslivet i Åseda och ledningen för kartläggning av arbetet med förbättringar för lokal samhällsutveckling.

Denna telefonintervju är en del av bakgrundsarbetet i forskningsprojektet om samhällsföreningen "Offensiva Åseda" (se följebrev). Genom bland annat telefonintervjuer undersöker jag hur ni har arbetat och arbetar med förbättringar i er samhällsutveckling.

Inledning
Vad menar Du med följande begrepp?
- Förbättringsarbete
- Kvalitetsutveckling
- Samhällsutveckling
- Utvärdering

Bakgrund
Hur gick det till när samhällsföreningen ”Offensiva Åseda” startade?

Syfte och mål för samhällsföreningen
Känner Du till syfte, mål, visioner och modellen för ”Offensiva Åseda”? Hur gick ni tillväga när ni tog fram dessa för föreningen? Nedan följer frågor om hur ni arbetar och hur ni har arbetat med förbättringsarbete i ”Offensiva Åseda”.

Initiativ
Hur går ni tillväga när en fråga skall tas upp i områdesgruppen?

Själva förbättringsarbete
Hur går ni tillväga när ni arbetar med förbättringar? Har Du utbildats i dessa arbetssätt?

Beslut
Hur fattas beslut inom områdesgruppen? Hur ser gången ut om en fråga hänskjuts utanför områdesgruppen? Hur fattas beslut i föreningen?

Utvärdering
Arbetar ni i områdesgruppen med utvärderingar? Arbetar föreningen ”Offensiva Åseda” med utvärderingar?

Återkoppling
Arbetar ni i områdesgruppen med återkoppling av resultatet av ert arbete? Det vill säga tar ni tillvara resultatet av ert arbete?
**Information/kommunikation/Dokumentation**
Vad anser Du om informationen i föreningen?
Hur går ni tillväga när ni kommunicerar inom områdesgruppen?
Hur går ni tillväga när ni kommunicerar inom föreningen?
Hur går ni tillväga när ni kommunicerar med andra utanför föreningen?
Dokumenterar ni ert arbete i Din områdesgrupp?

**Samarbete/Samverkan**
Hur går ni tillväga när ni samarbetar med andra än inom den egna områdesgruppen?

**Avslutning**
Vad anser Du är styrkor i ert sätt att arbeta med förbättringar i samhällsutveckling?
Vad anser Du är svårigheter i ert sätt att arbeta med förbättringar i samhällsutveckling?
Arbetar ni med kvalitetsutveckling inom Ditt företag?

För att stärka pålitligheten i denna undersökning har jag för avsikt att skriva ut Dina svar från denna telefonintervju så att Du får läsa igenom och lämna synpunkter.

**Tack så mycket för Din medverkan!**
Enkätundersökning av upplevda effekter


Enkäten vänder sig till områdesgrupperna i näringslivet (handel, industri, service) i Åseda. Enkäten består av ett antal frågor där Du kryssar för det svarsalternativ som överensstämmer med Din uppfattning. På enkäten finns också ett antal påståenden som Du ombeds ta ställning till.

För att ge anonymitet åt svaren, ber vi inte om Ditt namn. För identifiering i samband med uppföljningsarbetet är dock var och en av enkäterna kodade med hjälp av nummeringen i det övre högra hörnet. Orsaken till detta är att vi behöver veta vilka som eventuellt inte returnerat enkäten till oss, så att påminnelse kan skickas. Det är också viktigt att Du som mottager enkäten själv besvarar den.

Vi behöver svaren för uppföljningsarbetet och har behov att ta del av Din uppfattning och Dina synpunkter. Därför är vi tacksamma om Du kan returnera ifyllt frågeformulär snarast dock senast den 8 juli 2002. Om Du har frågor eller funderingar är Du välkommen att kontakta någon av oss undertecknade.

Med vänliga hälsningar

Maria Fredriksson Bengt Klefsjö
Doktorand Professor, handledare

Bilagor:
Frågeformulär
Svarskuvert

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Postadress</th>
<th>Namn och Telefon</th>
<th>Telefax</th>
<th>E-post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kvalitetsteknik &amp; statistik Luleå tekniska universitet 971 87 LULEÅ</td>
<td>Maria Fredriksson, 0920 – 49 17 28 Bengt Klefsjö, 0920 – 49 11 23</td>
<td>0920 – 49 21 60 0920 – 49 21 60</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Maria.Fredriksson@ies.luth.se">Maria.Fredriksson@ies.luth.se</a> <a href="mailto:Bengt.Klefsjo@ies.luth.se">Bengt.Klefsjo@ies.luth.se</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix V: The questionnaire to the improvement groups

Enkätnr: ________

Enkätundersökning om upplevda effekter av föreningen ”Offensiva Åsedas” arbete

Denna enkät sänds till medlemmar i områdesgrupperna handel, service och industri inom föreningen Offensiva Åseda. Frågeformuläret handlar om vad Du har upplevt vara effekter av det arbete som föreningen Offensiva Åseda genomfört. Syftet med enkäten beskrivs närmare i följebrevet. Det är viktigt att få ta del av just Din uppfattning om effekter. Enkäten består av frågor och påståenden som Du ombeds besvara respektive ta ställning till. Kryssa för det svarsalternativ som Du anser stämmer bäst överens med verkligheten! Skriv gärna på baksidan av enkäten om utrymmet skulle ta slut!

Arbetar Du inom näringslivet (dvs. handel, service eller industri) i Åseda? (Markera endast ett svarsalternativ.)

( ) Ja ( ) Nej ( ) Vet ej

Är Du medlem i någon av nedanstående områdesgrupper? (Markera endast ett svarsalternativ.)

Handel ( ) Service ( ) Industri ( ) Ingen av dem ( )

Har Du upplevt att arbetet som genomförts av föreningen Offensiva Åseda haft några positiva eller negativa effekter för Åseda samhälle? (Markera med ett kryss på skalan det svarsalternativ som Du anser stämmer bäst överens med verkligheten.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mycket positiva effekter</th>
<th>Positiva effekter</th>
<th>Varken positiva eller negativa effekter</th>
<th>Negativa effekter</th>
<th>Mycket negativa effekter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Kommentar:

__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________
Vilka effekter anser Du att Offensiva Åsedas arbete har haft på samhället Åseda? (I vänstra kolumnen står ett antal påståenden, kryssa i de högra kolumnerna för det eller de påståenden som Du anser stämmer bäst överens med verkligheten.)

… …

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Påstående</th>
<th>Ökat eller blivit fler</th>
<th>Oförändrat</th>
<th>Minskatt eller blivit färre</th>
<th>Vet ej</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antal arbetstillfällen i Åseda samhälle har …</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antal personer som flyttat till Åseda samhälle har …</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antal personer som pendlar till sitt arbete i Åseda samhälle men bor på annan ort har …</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trivseln bland invånarna i Åseda samhälle har …</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>De gemensamma aktiviteterna för invånarna i Åseda samhälle har …</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antalet ungdomar (&gt;16 år) som söker sig från Åseda samhälle har …</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antal barnfamiljer i Åseda samhälle har …</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servicen i form av handel och tjänster i Åseda samhälle har …</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samarbetet i Åseda samhälle mellan företag, organizationer, privatpersoner och politiker har …</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kollektivtrafiken till och från Åseda samhälle har …</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kontakt och samarbete mellan Åseda samhälle och andra samhällen inom den egna kommunen har …</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andra effekter, nämligen …</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Andra effekter, nämligen …</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Andra effekter, nämligen …</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vilka effekter har Offensiva Åsedas arbete haft för Dig och Dina närmaste?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Tack för Din medverkan!
Vänligen sänd enkäten i bifogat svarskuvert senast 2002-08-16
Till: Maria Fredriksson
Avd för kvalitetsteknik & statistik
Luleå tekniska universitet
971 87 LULEÅ
Appendix VI: The questionnaire distributed during the visit in Seskarö August 2003

Enkätundersöknings om EU-projektet ”Seskarö framtid”

Denna enkät delas ut till invånare på ön Seskarö, involverade i EU-projektet ”Seskarö framtid”. Enkäten handlar om vad Du har för synpunkter på och erfarenheter av EU-projektet ”Seskarö framtid”. Syftet med enkäten är att genomföra en utvärdering av EU-projektet. Även om Du är anonym på denna enkät så är det mycket viktigt att få ta del av just Din uppfattning och erfarenhet.


Bakgrund

Är Du:  Kvinna □  Man □

Vilken åldersgrupp tillhör Du?

< 30 år □  31-50 år □  51-70 år □  >70 år □

Vilken grupp invånare tillhör Du?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jag är född och har bott på Seskarö i hela mitt liv</th>
<th>Jag är född på Seskarö och flyttat tillbaka efter ha bott en del av livet på annan ort</th>
<th>Jag är inte född på Seskarö men bor där nu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

EU-projektet ”Seskarö framtid”

Är Du insatt i vad EU-projektet ”Seskarö framtid” är för något? (Markera med ett kryss på skalan det svarsalternativ som Du anser stämmer bäst överens med Din uppfattning.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jag är inte alls insatt i projektet</th>
<th>Jag känner till lite om projektet</th>
<th>Jag känner till ganska mycket om projektet</th>
<th>Jag känner till väldigt mycket om projektet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Kommentar:

Har Du aktivt deltagit i arbetet med EU-projektet ”Seskarö framtid”? (Markera med ett kryss på skalan det svarsalternativ som Du anser stämmer bäst överens med Din uppfattning.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nej, inte alls</th>
<th>Ja, lite</th>
<th>Ja, mycket</th>
<th>Ja, väldigt mycket</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Kommentar:
Beskriv kortfattat hur Ni i projektet ”Seskarö framtid” har arbetat för att nå de uppsatta målen! (Var vänlig texta och skriv gärna på baksidan om raderna inte räcker.)

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

Anser Du att arbetet som genomförts av ”Seskarö framtid” haft några positiva eller negativa effekter för Seskarö? (Markera med ett kryss på skalan det svarsalternativ som Du anser stämmer bäst överens med verkligheten.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mycket positiva effekter</th>
<th>Positiva effekter</th>
<th>Varken positiva eller negativa effekter</th>
<th>Negativa effekter</th>
<th>Mycket negativa effekter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Kommentar:
__________________________________________________________________

Vilka effekter anser Du att arbetet i projektet ”Seskarö framtid” haft på ön Seskarö? (I vänstra kolumnen står ett antal påståenden, kryssa i de högra kolumnerna för det eller de påståenden som Du anser stämmer bäst överens med verkligheten.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Påstående</th>
<th>Ökat eller blivit fler</th>
<th>Oförändrat</th>
<th>Minskat eller blivit färre</th>
<th>Vet ej</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antal arbetstillfällen på Seskarö har …</td>
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<tr>
<td>Antal personer som flyttat till Seskarö har …</td>
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<tr>
<td>Antal personer som bor på Seskarö men pendlar till sitt arbete på annan ort har …</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Trivslen bland invånarna på Seskarö har …</td>
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<tr>
<td>De gemensamma aktiviteterna för invånarna på Seskarö har …</td>
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<tr>
<td>Antalet ungdömar (&gt;18 år) som söker sig från Seskarö har …</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Antal barnfamiljer på Seskarö samhälle har …</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servicen i form av handel och tjänster på Seskarö har …</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samarbetet på Seskarö mellan företag, organisationer, privatpersoner och politiker har …</td>
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<tr>
<td>Antal företag på Seskarö har …</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kontakt och samarbete mellan Seskarö och andra samhällen inom den egna kommunen har …</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seskaröös attraktionsvärde har …</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andra effekter, nämligen …</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vilka effekter har Seskarös arbete haft för Dig och Dina närmaste?
Avslutning

Vilka svårigheter anser Du att det varit med arbetet i EU-projektet ”Seskarö framtid”?
(Var vänlig texta och skriv gärna på baksidan om raderna inte räcker.)
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Vad anser Du har varit bra med arbetet i EU-projektet ”Seskarö framtid”? 
(Var vänlig texta och skriv gärna på baksidan om raderna inte räcker.)
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Har Du övriga synpunkter så skriv dem gärna här!
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Tack för Din medverkan!

Utvärderingen med skriftlig rapport planeras vara klar i slutet av augusti ’03. 
Ditt namn kommer inte att anges i någon rapport.
Enkätundersökning av erfarenheter och synpunkter


För att ge anonymitet åt svaren, ber vi inte om Ditt namn. I samband med uppföljningsarbetet kodas dock enkäterna med hjälp av en numrering. Orsaken till detta är att vi behöver veta vilka som eventuellt inte returnerat enkäten till oss, så att påminnelse kan skickas. Enkäten är skickad till Dig personligen och vi är ytterst angelägna att få ta del av just Dina synpunkter.

Vi behöver svaren för forskningsarbetet och har behov av att ta del av Din uppfattning och Dina synpunkter. Därför är vi tacksamma om Du skickar tillbaka ifyllt frågeformulär så snart som möjligt, dock senast den 19 september 2003 i bifogat svarskuvert.

Om Du har frågor eller funderingar är Du välkommen att kontakta någon av oss.

Med vänlig hälsning

Maria Fredriksson
Doktorand

Bengt Klefsjö
Professor, handledare

Bilagor:
Frågeformulär
Svarskuvert

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Postadress</th>
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<td>Kvalitetsteknik &amp; statistik Luleå tekniska universitet 971 87 LULEÅ</td>
<td>Maria Fredriksson, 0920 – 49 17 28 Bengt Klefsjö, 0920 – 49 11 23</td>
<td>0920 – 49 21 60 0920 – 49 21 60</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Maria.Fredriksson@ies.luth.se">Maria.Fredriksson@ies.luth.se</a> <a href="mailto:Bengt.Klefsjo@ies.luth.se">Bengt.Klefsjo@ies.luth.se</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix VIII: The questionnaire to the residents in Seskarö

Enkätundersökning om erfarenheter av och synpunkter på hela projektet ”Seskarö framtid”

Denna enkät handlar om vad Du har för kännedom om, synpunkter på och erfarenheter av samhällsutvecklingsprojektet ”Seskarö framtid” som pågått 1997-2003. Syftet med enkäten är att genomföra en kartläggning för att studera genomslagskraften av samhällsutvecklingsprojektet ”Seskarö framtid”. Enkäten ingår i en större undersökning om olika arbetssätt för framgångsrik lokal samhällsutveckling. Detta är i sin tur en del av ett större forskningsprojekt som handlar om att ta fram bra arbetssätt för lokal och regional utveckling. Det är mycket viktigt att få ta del av just Din uppfattning och erfarenhet. (För mer information se följebrev.)


Bakgrund

Du är:  Kvinna  Man☐ ☐

Vilken åldersgrupp tillhör Du?

<30 år☐ 31-40 år☐ 41-50 år☐ 51-60 år☐ 61-70 år☐ > 70 år☐

Är Du seskaröbo?  Ja☐ Nej☐ Annat☐ _________________

Om Du svarat Ja på fråga 3 markera med ett kryss det som stämmer bäst in på Dig.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jag är uppvuxen och har bott på Seskarö i hela mitt liv</th>
<th>Jag är uppvuxen på Seskarö och flyttat tillbaka efter ha bott en del av livet på annan ort</th>
<th>Jag är inte uppvuxen på Seskarö men bor där nu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Kommentera gärna Ditt svar:

__________________________________________________________________
Samhällsutvecklingsprojektet ”Seskarö framtid”

Känner Du till vad hela samhällsutvecklingsprojektet ”Seskarö framtid” som pågått 1997-2003 är för något? (Markera med ett kryss det som stämmer bäst in på Dig.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jag har ingen kändedom alls om projektet</th>
<th>Jag känner till lite om projektet</th>
<th>Jag känner till ganska mycket om projektet</th>
<th>Jag känner till väldigt mycket om projektet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Kommentera gärna Ditt svar:
__________________________________________________________________

Har Du på något sätt deltagit i arbetet med samhällsutvecklingsprojektet ”Seskarö framtid” i fas I, 1997-2000? (Markera med ett kryss det som stämmer bäst in på Dig.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fas I: Etableringsfasen 1997-2000 med Hembygdsföreningen</th>
<th>Ja, väldigt mycket</th>
<th>Ja, mycket</th>
<th>Ja, lite</th>
<th>Nej, inte alls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Om Ja på fråga 6; Hur har Du deltagit?
__________________________________________________________________

Har Du på något sätt deltagit i arbetet med samhällsutvecklingsprojektet ”Seskarö framtid” i fas II, 2001-2003? (Markera med ett kryss det som stämmer bäst in på Dig.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fas II : Tillväxtfasen 2001-2003 med Seskarö Framtid AB</th>
<th>Ja, väldigt mycket</th>
<th>Ja, mycket</th>
<th>Ja, lite</th>
<th>Nej, inte alls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Om Ja på fråga 7; Hur har Du deltagit?
__________________________________________________________________

Anser Du att arbetet som genomförts inom ramen för projektet ”Seskarö framtid” haft några resultat eller effekter för Seskarö? Här menas både fas I och II i projektet. (Markera med ett kryss.)

Ja □ Nej □ Vet ej □
Om Ja på fråga 8; Vilka resultat eller effekter anser Du att arbetet som genomförts inom ramen för projektet ”Seskarö framtid” haft för Seskarö? Här menas både fas I och II i projektet.  
(Skriv ned de effekter som Du anser är positiva eller negativa under respektive rubrik.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positiva resultat eller effekter</th>
<th>Negativa resultat eller effekter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Avslutning

Anser Du att de arbetssätt ni använt i själva projektet ”Seskarö framtid” 1997-2003 har varit speciellt bra?

Ja □  Nej □  Vet ej □

Om Ja på fråga 10; Vad anser Du har varit speciellt bra med de arbetssätt ni använt i hela projektet ”Seskarö framtid” som pågått 1997-2003?

__________________________
__________________________

Anser Du att de arbetssätt ni använt i själva projektet ”Seskarö framtid” 1997-2003 har varit speciellt dåliga?

Ja □  Nej □  Vet ej □

Om Ja på fråga 12; Vad anser Du har varit speciellt dåligt med de arbetssätt ni använt i hela projektet ”Seskarö framtid” som pågått 1997-2003?

__________________________
__________________________

Har Du några andra synpunkter Du vill föra fram så skriv dem gärna här!

__________________________
__________________________

Tack för Din medverkan!

Var vänlig sänd tillbaka enkäten enkäten senast den 19 september 2003 i bifogat svarskuvert
till:
Maria Fredriksson
Avdelningen för kvalitets & miljöledning
Luleå tekniska universitet, 971 87 Luleå
Appendix IX: The questionnaire to the residents in Åseda

Enkätundersökning om erfarenheter av och synpunkter på projektet ”Offensiva Åseda”

Denna enkät handlar om vad Du har för kändedom om, synpunkter på och erfarenheter av samhälls-utvecklingsprojektet ”Offensiva Åseda” som pågått sedan 1996. Syftet med enkäten är att genomföra en kartläggning för att studera genomslagskraften av samhällsutvecklingsprojektet ”Offensiva Åseda”. Enkäten ingår i en större undersökning om olika arbetssätt för framgångsrik lokal samhällsutveckling, vilket i sin tur är en del av ett större forskningsprojekt som handlar om arbetssätt för lokal och regional utveckling. Det är mycket viktigt att få ta del av just Din uppfattning och erfarenhet. (För mer information se följebrev.)


Bakgrund

Du är: Kvinna □ Man □

Vilken åldersgrupp tillhör Du?

Yngre än 30 år □ 31-40 år □ 41-50 år □ 51-60 år □ 61-70 år □ äldre än 70 år □

3. Bor Du i Åseda samhälle? (Om Du svarar Ja på fråga 3 markera med ett kryss det som stämmer bäst in på Dig. Med Åseda samhälle menas här Åseda tätort med omnejd och tillhörande landsbygd.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jag är uppvuxen och har bott i Åseda i hela mitt liv</th>
<th>Jag är uppvuxen i Åseda och flyttat tillbaka efter ha bott en del av livet på annan ort</th>
<th>Jag är inte uppvuxen i Åseda men bor där nu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ja, jag bor i Åseda samhälle □</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nej, jag bor inte i Åseda samhälle □</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jag bor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kommentar:

__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________
Känner Du till vad samhällsutvecklingsprojektet ”Offensiva Åseda” som pågått sedan 1996 är? *(Markera med ett kryss det som stämmer bäst in på Dig.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jag har ingen kännedom alls om projektet</th>
<th>Jag känner till lite om projektet</th>
<th>Jag känner till ganska mycket om projektet</th>
<th>Jag känner till väldigt mycket om projektet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kommentar:

______________________________________________________________________________________________

Anser Du att arbetet som genomförts inom ramen för projektet ”Offensiva Åseda” haft några positiva eller negativa resultat eller effekter för Åseda? *(Markera med ett kryss det som stämmer bäst in på Dig.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ja ☐</th>
<th>Nej ☐</th>
<th>Vet ej ☐</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Om Du svarat Ja på fråga 5; Vilka resultat eller effekter anser Du att arbetet som genomförts inom ramen för projektet ”Offensiva Åseda” haft för Åseda? *(Skriv ned de resultat eller effekter som Du anser är positiva eller negativa under respektive rubrik.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positiva resultat eller effekter</th>
<th>Negativa resultat eller effekter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Har Du på något sätt deltagit i arbetet med samhällsutvecklingsprojektet ”Offensiva Åseda” någon gång sedan 1996? *(Markera med ett kryss det som stämmer bäst in på Dig.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nej, inte alls</th>
<th>Ja, lite</th>
<th>Ja, mycket</th>
<th>Ja, väldigt mycket</th>
<th>Vet ej ☐</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Kommentar:______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________________________

*Om Du har svarat Nej på fråga 7, gå direkt till fråga 14!*
Om Du har svarat Ja på fråga 7; Hur har Du deltagit?

Jag har deltagit genom att vara medlem i en områdesgrupp □  Annat □  Vet ej □
(Exempel på områdesgrupperna är Föräldragruppen, Industri, Kyrkan, Landsbygd, Skola, Handel)

Jag har deltagit genom att

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Avslutning

Vilka arbetssätt har ni använt, det vill säga hur har ni arbetat för att nå ett visst mål, när ni arbetat i projektet?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Anser Du att de arbetssätt som ni använt i projektet ”Offensiva Åseda” har varit speciellt bra?

Ja □  Nej □  Vet ej □

Om Du har svarat Ja på fråga 10; Vad anser Du har varit speciellt bra med de arbetssätt som ni använt i projektet ”Offensiva Åseda”? 

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Anser Du att de arbetssätt som ni använt i projektet ”Offensiva Åseda” har varit speciellt dåliga?

Ja □  Nej □  Vet ej □

Om Du har svarat Ja på fråga 12; Vad anser Du har varit speciellt dåligt med de arbetssätt som ni använt i projektet ”Offensiva Åseda”? 

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Har Du några andra synpunkter Du vill föra fram så skriv dem gärna här!

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Tack för Din medverkan!

Var vänlig sänd tillbaka enkäten senast den 14 november 2003 i bifogat svarskuvert till:

Maria Fredriksson
Avdelningen för kvalitets- & miljöledning
Luleå tekniska universitet, 971 87 Luleå
Appendix X: Preparing letter for telephone interviews with local politicians

Till Kommunpolitiker i Uppvidinge samt Haparanda kommuner

Samverkansmodell för lokal samhällsutveckling

Inom ramen för forskningsprojektet om en samverkansmodell för lokal samhällsutveckling genomförs en undersökning som baseras på telefonintervjuer med politiker inom Uppvidinge och Haparanda kommuner. Syftet med hela forskningsprojektet är att formulera en samverkansmodell som bygger på arbetssätt från offensiv kvalitetsutveckling. Modellen består av olika delar, varav en del är politikers erfarenhet och uppfattningar. Andra delar är invånarna, initiativtagare och medlemmar i samhällsutvecklingsprojekt.

Syftet med telefonintervjuerna är att få ta del av politikers erfarenhet och uppfattningar om större samhällsutvecklingsprojekt, som till exempel ”Offensiva Åseda” i Åseda i Uppvidinge kommun samt ”Seskarö framtid” på Seskarö i Haparanda kommun.

Telefonintervjuerna är planerade att genomföras i slutet av mars till början på april. Maria Fredriksson kommer att kontakta Dig per telefon i vecka 12, 13 eller i början av vecka 14.

Ditt deltagande i undersökningen är mycket viktigt för att vi skall få en så korrekt bild av erfarenheterna från större samhällsutvecklingsprojekt. Inga politiker kommer att nämnas vid namn i resultatet, som skall publiceras i en artikel, som ingår i en doktorsavhandling i kvalitetsteknik, som presenteras i höst.

Har Du några frågor eller vill ha mer information är Du välkommen att kontakta någon av oss.

Med tack på förhand för Din medverkan!

Maria Fredriksson
Doktorand, telefonintervjuare
Avdelningen för kvalitets- & miljöledning
Luleå tekniska universitet
971 87 Luleå
Tel: 0920-49 17 28
Telefax: 0920-49 21 60
E-post: Maria.Fredriksson@ies.ltu.se

Bengt Klefsjö
Professor, handledare
Avdelningen för kvalitets- & miljöledning
Luleå tekniska universitet
971 87 Luleå
0920-49 11 23
0920-49 21 60
Bengt.Kelfsjo@ies.ltu.se
Appendix XI: Questions for telephone interviews with local politicians

Intervjunyckel för telefon till politiker

Hälsar och ger mitt namn + LTU.

Personen har redan blivit skriven till med en förfrågan om att delta i en intervju. Därefter har jag per telefon frågat om jag får intervjuar personen och vilken tid som passar.

Ditt namn och telefonnummer/adress har jag tagit fram via er (Kommunfullmäktige) hemsida på Internet. Där inte telefonnumret står har jag fått via kommunkontoret.
Ditt namn kommer inte att anges i artikel och avhandling om Du inte särskilt vill det.

Genom telefonintervjuer undersöker vi erfarenheter av och synpunkter på samhällsutvecklingsprojekt som "Offensiva Åseda" och "Seskarö framtid" hos kommunpolitikerna i Uppvidinge och Haparanda kommuner.

Innan vi börjar skall jag fråga om:

Går det bra att jag bandar samtalet?

Banden använder jag enbart för mitt interna analysarbete.
När jag skrivit ut materialet tänkte jag skicka det till dig för synpunkter.
Vilken adress?
E-post adress?

Forskningsfrågan handlar om
politikernas syn på samhällsutvecklingsprojekt.
Syftet att presentera en modell som inte bygger på endast en part i en samverkan.

Inledning

kvinn/man

Vilken typ av politiker är Du? Rikspolitiker, Landstingspolitiker, Kommunpolitiker
Vilket politiskt parti representerar Du?

Samhällsutvecklingsprojekten

Känner Du till samhällsutvecklingsprojektet? "Offensiva Åseda", "Seskarö framtid"
Vad? Hur? Har Du deltagit aktivt i projektet?

Hur ser Du på denna typ av samhällsutvecklingsprojekt?

Har Du stött på några problem?

Såg Du några styrkor med att ha och arbeta med ett sådant projekt?

Vad har Du som politiker för behov eller vilka förutsättningar bör vara uppfyllda för att ett samarbete mellan politiker och ”vanliga” invånare i ett sådant projekt skall fungera?

Ser Du några konstitutionella problem med denna typ av samhällsutvecklingsprojekt?

Har Du sett några resultat eller effekter med projektet?

Positiva? Negativa? Vad?

Avslutning

Har Du något övrigt Du vill framföra?

Jag får tacka Dig så mycket för hjälp!

Om Du kommer på några frågor så går det bra att kontakta mig:

Maria Fredriksson  
Tel: 0920-49 17 28

Efter första intervjun justerades frågorna något.