ABSTRACT

The subject of this thesis is narrative organizational team coaching. The object has been to examine how organizational team coaching can be understood from a narrative point of view. The thesis idea arose from a combination of an interest in narrative theory, which was originally developed in a therapeutic context, and its potential in regards to team coaching and also an interest in coaching being a highly topical. The idea was developed further as it became clear, that narrative team coaching in organizations is not an especially examined area. On this basis the following thesis statement was drawn up;

How can organizational team coaching be understood from a narrative perspective?

Being a quite broad thesis statement, it was delimited to concern the perspectives of the narrative fundamental elements and also perspectives from narrative organizational development and narrative mediation.

These elements and theories combined with a specific understanding of organizational coaching and teams have been outlined in the thesis. Afterwards they were complied in one chapter aiming to relate the elements to each other in order to discuss how narrative organizational team coaching then could be understood.

On that basis narrative organizational team coaching was described as a framed conversation where a coach helps the team. By identifying different special features from the narrative fundamental elements, two points that had to be included in the understanding of narrative organizational team coaching was found;

➢ The team's problem narratives, that also contain subject positions, are the object of examination in the coaching conversation.

➢ In the process of the coaching conversation past, present and future are included. As a starting point, focus is on the problem, but with a forward-looking perspective on new and alternative narratives.

These alternative narratives are constructed on the basis of marginalized discourses that exist in the discursive terrain of the team. They exist as a sur-plus of meaning that represents other ways of understanding a specific field of the team's working practice. One particular discourse can only exist on the basis of a counter discourse. Discourse is understood as predisposing to objects, events and subject on the mentioned fields of working practice. The narratives, which the team tells about its way of working out specific tasks, are built on these discourses. On that basis the team is considered as a dispositive, which, because of these discourses, is predisposed for certain discursive formations. The team is not determined by these formations though, because the discursive terrains, as mentioned, always hold marginalized (counter) discourses by which the team members can position themselves. By focusing on deconstructing and externalizing the problem narratives agency is established within the team to construct new and alternative narratives. Hence an attempt to change the team's discursive formation is made.

Working with the team's discursive formation and thereby its narratives has to take into account both the organization, the team as a whole and the individuals that make the team. The organization is considered the biggest context, which means that the narratives that are examined in team coaching must concern organizational matters. In organizational team coaching many different identities are at stake. Every individual in the team have their own identity, the team develops a common identity and the organization as a whole has an identity. Identities and our view of them depend on the dominating discourses of the world around us. In cases where one identity does not correspond with the dominating discourses, negative identity conclusions occur and result in problem narratives. Such problem narratives are interesting for two reasons;

- They have the ability to disable the team to develop, because the problem narratives becomes the truth about "how the team works and solves its tasks"
- They have the potential of developing the team, because problem narratives also encompass sur-plus of meaning – marginalized, different and perhaps more constructive ways of considering the field of working practice within the team.

Hence it becomes important, from a narrative perspective, to create a space within team coaching where these problem narratives, that have a negative effect on the team's ability to work and reach their common goals, are heard and acknowledge.

On the basis of all these reflections, narrative organizational team coaching is understood as;

A conversation where a coach helps the team to deconstruct problem narratives that have a negative effect on the team's ability to solve work related challenges with the object to develop alternative narratives based on marginalized discourses within the team, which benefits the team in solving their work tasks. On that basis the discursive formation of the team is evolved.