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Carnivalization as a new mode of collaboration

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to develop a conceptual model of carnivalization. The paper aims to widen the understanding of client initiated attempts to break away from a conflict of motives between conventional models and new ways of acting in service provision. Carnivalization emerges when the standard script falls apart and the actors start to construct unexpected meanings for the activity and create innovative solutions for the conflict of motives, which leads to new mode of collaboration.

Design/methodology/approach – The study analyzed the key features and significance of carnivalization in home care service encounters. The theoretical–methodological framework of the study draws on Bakhtin's dialogical theorizing and cultural–historical activity theory. The analysis traces the processual movement from standard script toward carnivalization.

Findings – The key features of carnivalization involve conflict of motives between the actors, client initiatives, multiple chronotopes, artifact and role mediation, different modes of collaboration and the intertwining of seemingly disconnected objects of collaboration. The findings indicate that carnivalization can enhance a new type of client–service provider collaboration. It can become an especially significant mode of collaboration for transforming an activity in which a historically established, stabilized script dominates the interaction. This paper suggests that the carnivalization type of collaboration should be deliberately fostered via organizational interventions to develop client-centered services.

Originality/value – As a consequence of the study, a new conceptual model is proposed for the analysis and promotion of carnivalization that can be applied in different organizational contexts.

Keywords Collaboration, Artifact, Carnivalization, Chronotope, Conflict of motives, Object

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Bakhtin (1984) introduced the notion of *carnavalesque*, which is a literary mode in which the traditional world order is turned upside down. The carnivalesque, which is derived from the tradition of the carnival, is marked by a contesting or subversion of the dominant order, style of narration and social hierarchy of the participants by the voice, humor and chaos created by usually suppressed parties. Organization studies have showed an interest in the notion of the carnivalesque, but it is still seldom applied in this study field (Boje, 2001; Engeström *et al.*, 2015). We are especially interested in exploring new forms of collaboration which may help to transform an activity in which a historically established, stabilized script strongly dominates the interaction. The aim of



this article is to analyze the key features of carnivalization and to explore what significance it may have in the tightly scripted work activity of municipal home care.

Previous home care studies have identified *scripted coordination* as the dominant mode of collaboration in the field of home care activity (Nummijoki and Engeström, 2010). In scripted coordination, the worker follows a predefined care plan in the home care visit that requires carrying out specific tasks, or the “presentation of the self” (Goffman, 1959). Conflicts of motives and discoordinations between the client and the home care worker have been reported (Nummijoki and Engeström, 2010; Engeström *et al.*, 2014). Clients’ initiatives are often disregarded in home care encounters focused on home care service tasks (Kajamaa and Hilli, 2015), as the tasks are done for the client and not with the client (Nummijoki and Engeström, 2010). We introduced photography to the home care workers to enhance the interaction between the actors of the visits.

During the observed home care encounters in a client couple’s home, we witnessed unusual interaction, which did not respond to the traditional mode of scripted coordination. The character of this mode of interaction seems to go beyond it in some respects and to resemble Bakhtin’s (1984) notion of carnivalization (Engeström *et al.*, 2015). Thus, the case of Hannah and Thomas is chosen for presentation in this paper.

Inspired by Yrjö Engeström’s interest in collaboration and carnivalization (Engeström’s, 2014 keynote) and by our previous study (Engeström *et al.*, 2015), we here develop a conceptual model for the analysis of carnivalization. The model of the general structure of carnivalization proposed by Engeström focuses on the depiction of object construction and tool mediation in a carnivalization type of collaboration. It has not previously been used in the analysis of empirical data. We will empirically test the model in the analysis of five home care visits in municipal home care in Finland.

Based on the findings of our study, we expand Engeström’s model to include communicative aspects of carnivalization, namely, conflicts of motives, client initiatives and chronotopes, as well as the role of mediation between subjects and objects during the home care encounters. Our findings indicate that the carnivalization mode of collaboration, together with the powerful artifacts and expanded roles mediating it, can potentially transform a tightly scripted work activity toward a more client-centered orientation and expanded conceptualization of the object of the activity. Our attempt to model carnivalization aims at providing a generalizable model for the fostering and analysis of collaboration in organizational contexts beyond this study.

2. Research site: home care encounters in a client couple’s home

The research site of the study is five municipal home care visits at one client couple’s home in Finland. Subsidized municipal home care is a service for Finnish elderly people in their homes. Supporting the elderly to live at home as long as possible is cost-efficient for society in comparison to institutionalization. Cost-efficiency pressures currently push health care workers to provide care with limited human and financial resources for numerous clients with increasingly complex and multiple illnesses, weakened physical states and memory loss. The home care activity is task-oriented and based on what can be called scripted coordination. The script is a care plan in the home care visit which consists of predefined tasks, for example measuring blood pressure and managing medication (Engeström, 2004). Many of the workers acknowledge the need to develop a more holistic approach to their work. Although this work supports a high quality of life

for the elderly at home, the clients' desire to be seen as more active collaborators with expertise in their own life (Engeström *et al.*, 2012, 2014).

The clients of home care are either single elderly individuals or an older couple who need support because of various health impairments or a reduction of physical mobility. The typical home care client is over the age of 75 and physically fragile. The sizes of the elderly clients' homes vary. The number of visits and types of services provided depend on the clients' needs and condition. The home care visits vary from a few times a week to four times a day, and a single home care worker usually conducts the visit.

A new form of practice, called a Mobility Agreement, which is presented in the case example of this study, was created and has been implemented to further develop home care services in the city of Helsinki in Finland (Nummijoki and Engeström, 2010). The agreement contains physical mobility exercises the clients can conduct in their homes with and without the home care worker and instructions for exercises for balance and muscle strength. The exercises are, to a large extent, embedded in normal household chores such as washing dishes and cooking to encourage the clients to do them on a regular basis.

In this study, we present a client couple Hannah (82 years of age) and Thomas's (89 years) case, including five home care encounters with a nurse and an occupational therapist. Hannah has a memory disease (Alzheimer's) has restricted physical mobility and uses a walker. Her husband Thomas is a former craftsman who takes care of Hannah in their three-room apartment. The couple became clients of municipal home care services in the autumn of 2013 because of Hannah's weakened state of health and Thomas's impaired ability to take care of his wife. The municipal home care service gives them continuous support at home by visiting them every morning. In the case, the home care workers were the same in all five visits. The home care workers were asked by the researcher to use photography to facilitate the interaction between the actors in the visits.

3. The conceptual framework

To trace the key features of a new mode of collaboration, we use the notion of carnivalization from Bakhtin's (1984) concept of the carnivalesque (Kristeva, 1980, 1986). According to Bakhtin, (1984, pp. 122-127), the carnival act represents "the reverse side of the world" and a worldview where "life gets turned inside out". In this act, all distance between people is suspended and everyone is an active participant "living in it". The structure, customary order, etiquette, authority and socio-hierarchical positions of the actors get shifted and renewed.

All were considered equal during carnival. Here, in the town square, a special form of free and familiar contact reigned among people who were usually divided by the barriers of caste, property, profession, and age (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 10).

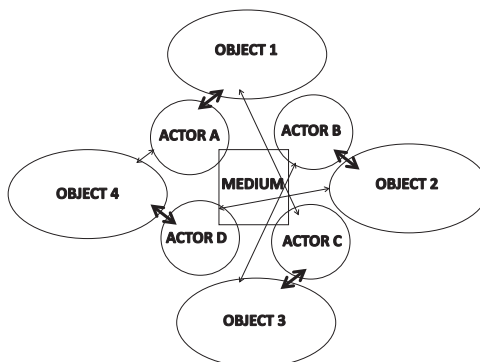
"Carnival brings together, unifies, weds, and combines the sacred with the profane, the lofty with the low, the great with the insignificant, the wise with the stupid" (p. 123).

Drawing on Bakhtin's dialogical theorizing and cultural-historical activity theory, we define *carnivalization* as a rare form of collaboration which provides possibilities for the equalization of the parties of a collective activity and gives voice to those who are not typically perceived as active participants, such as the home care clients. We see carnivalization as a new form of collaboration that destabilizes or breaks the standard

script which defines the proceeding of the activity and the actors' roles. It opens up possibilities for innovative artifact use and reconceptualization of the situation and the objects. Carnivalization is a nonlinear event including discursive references to multiple time–spaces. In our understanding, the emergence and development of carnivalization calls for role changes of the actors involved as well as qualitative shifts in interaction.

Activity theorists have identified three modes of collaboration, namely, scripted coordination, problem-oriented cooperation and reflective communication (Engeström *et al.*, 1991; Engeström, 2008), which ground our analysis and understanding of the notion of collaboration. In *scripted coordination*, the actors are following their scripted roles, each concentrating on the successful performance of the assigned actions. The script, coded in written rules, plans and instructions or engraved in tacitly assumed traditions, coordinates their actions as if from behind their backs, without being questioned or discussed. The entities of interaction are not the focus of the subjects' critical attention. In *cooperation*, the actors, instead of focusing on performing their assigned roles, focus on a shared problem. The actors are trying to find mutually acceptable ways to conceptualize and solve the problem. The participants go beyond the confines of the given script, yet they do this without explicitly questioning or reconceptualizing the script. In *reflective communication*, the actors focus on reconceptualizing their own organization and interaction in relation to their shared objects. Both the object and the script are reconceptualized, as is the interaction between the participants. Transitions to reflexive communication are rare in the ongoing flow of daily work actions (Engeström *et al.*, 1991; Engeström, 2008). Carnivalization can be seen as an understudied and potentially useful fourth, new mode of understanding collaboration. It may include features of cooperation or reflexive communication, but these should not be understood as its only prerequisites.

Taking an activity theoretical stance, we utilize and try to further develop the following figure (Figure 1) illustrating the general structure of carnivalization (Engeström, 2014). The two-headed arrows in the figure refer to the nonlinearity of carnivalization. In the figure, the object of collaboration is understood as heterogeneous, as the actors have diverse interests and worldviews (see in Figure 1: Object 1, Object 2, Object 3, etc). The concept of object is crucial in activity theory. The sense and meaning of actions are attached to the object of an activity, and the identity of any activity is



Source: Engeström (2014)

Figure 1.
The general structure
of carnivalization

primarily determined by its object (Leont'ev, 1978). Collective activity is seen as driven by a partly shared, partly contested object-related motive. The carnivalization is a form of collaboration that breaks the dominant, given script which defines the participants' roles and opens possibilities to reconceptualize the situation and the objects of collaboration.

Originating partly from Vygotsky's (1978) ideas, activity theory stresses the central role of mediation. In this view, artifacts (tools and instruments) mediate actions between actors (see in Figure 1: Actor A, Actor b, Actor C, etc.) and their objects. Mediation via artifact mediums is seen as an essential issue in the general structure of carnivalization in promoting new expanded forms of collaboration.

As Bakhtin states, in carnivalization, the contact among the parties becomes free and familiar, and the hierarchical structure is suspended. Thus, the strong historically established boundaries can be crossed between the different actors and their life worlds. Through breaking the organizational boundaries between the distinct actors (Kajamaa, 2011) and via chronotope breaking and the destabilization of time–space narrative structures, we can explore and possibly transform the deep, invisible meaning-making frames linked with the service providers' and clients' identities (Lorino and Tricard, 2012, p. 37). Breaking the traditional, often taken for granted, script can enable the parties to establish collaboration and a shared authorship of their past, present and future actions.

In tracing the evolvement of carnivalization, we apply Bakhtin's (1984) notion of *chronotope* originally developed as a lens for analyzing the interconnected temporal and spatial categories represented in texts. Chronotope literally means "time–space", and, more precisely, the configurations of time and space represented in language and discourse. This notion has received increasing attention among literary works (Ganser *et al.*, 2006; Bemong *et al.*, 2010) and in organization studies (Pedersen, 2009; Lorino and Tricard, 2012; Vaara and Pedersen, 2013; Engeström *et al.*, 2015).

We use the notion of chronotope to explore how the participants of the home care encounters create multiple meanings in conceptualizing the activity taking place in the surrounding world. For us, a chronotope is the configuration of time and space categories represented and merged into discourse and actions, and the modeling of the structure of the carnivalization mode of collaboration. In a chronotope, the physical environment, community and different dialogues merge into the individual's experience, and every participant in the interaction holds his or her personal experiences of the collective situation.

4. The data and methods of research

In this section, we will present the data and the methods of data collection and data analysis. The data for this paper comprise five visits of home care workers (a nurse and an occupational therapist) to an elderly client couple's home. The home care workers do not change between the visits. The data consist of audio and video recordings of the home care encounters at the client couple's home, interviews, and artifacts mediating the interaction, such as photographs, painting, drawings, the Mobility Agreement and the care plan of the client couple. This study is part of a larger research and development project aiming at helping elderly home care clients to live safely and

autonomously at home in the city of Helsinki. For this project, data on 39 home care visits to 16 clients' homes during the years 2013–2014 were collected.

4.1 Methods of data collection

The researcher (the second author) started recording the home care encounters just before the home care workers entered the client's home to ensure that the whole discussion was captured. The researcher used an mp3 player and video camera to record the visits. Before the first encounter, the occupational therapist and the nurse were asked by the researcher to take photographs and use them in a way that could support Hannah's physical mobility. The home care workers decided on the uses of the pictures, for instance, as a tool for documenting the clients' progress in physical movements. The workers were encouraged by the researcher to also utilize the clients' own photographs to evoke memories of the clients' physical exercise experiences. During the visits, the researcher's role was to be an observer and as a participant focused on collecting the data and observing the home care activity.

All participants were interviewed. The interviews provided us information on how the participants evaluated the proceeding of the home care visits, how they viewed their roles as participants in them and what the clients' needs and physical conditions were. This information also helped us to get a preliminary understanding of whether the studied encounters resonate with the traditional mode of scripted coordination reported in previous studies (Engeström *et al.*, 2014; Nummijoki and Engeström, 2010).

The length of the visits varied from 33 to 72 minutes. The observed encounters took place within the time span of 12 months, with intervals between them ranging from one month to four months. All of the collected data were transcribed by a professional transcriber for detailed analysis. The data of this paper are illustrated in [Table I](#). Please note that the nurse was not present in the second encounter and the occupational therapist was not present in the fourth and fifth encounters.

In a sensitive research setting, such as the private homes of elderly clients, trust and confidentiality between the researcher and participants are central issues. Before we began our study, all of the participants completed a written consent form for data collection for this study. The consent form was read and discussed thoroughly among the clients and nurses. It provided the clients with information on the research, such as the purpose of the study, the methods and the use of the data. The following ethical concerns best suited for ethnographic field research for this type of research design were strictly followed by the researchers during the whole process. First, in the cases of clients with memory diseases, the researcher repeatedly confirmed verbally, at the beginning of each visit, their willingness to participate in the research. Second, the researcher was prepared to withdraw from the observation if the client's state of well-being decreased or in case she or he started to show resistance toward the research. Third, the video- and audio-recorded data was protected by keeping the data in a locked cabinet. Any identification of the participants was removed from the archived data to ensure the research participants' anonymity.

4.2 Method of data analysis

We have developed a four-step analysis for the depiction of the key features and significance of carnivalization. The videos of the encounters were used alongside the transcribed data to analyze the embodiment of the interaction (the information which

Table I.
The collected data

Home care visits	Visit 1 November 4, 2013	Visit 2 December 9, 2013	Visit 3 April 7, 2014	Visit 4 August 19, 2014	Visit 5 November 3, 2014
Participants	Hannah, Thomas, Occupational therapist, Nurse	Hannah, Thomas, Occupational therapist	Hannah, Thomas, Occupational therapist, Nurse	Hannah, Thomas, Nurse	Hannah, Thomas, Nurse
Absent Mediating tools	– Photography, the Mobility Agreement the care plan	Nurse Photographs the Mobility Agreement	– Photographs, painting, the Mobility Agreement	Occupational therapist The care plan	Occupational therapist Painting, the care plan
<i>Collected data</i>					
Length of the audio recording	01:03:49	01:02:53	01:01:19	00:44:18	01:12:15
Length of the video recording	00:53:05	00:55:42	00:48:08	00:33:08	01:06:46
Interviews	Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 2	Interview 2	Interview 3
	Hannah and Thomas: November 4, 2013, length: 00:18:10	Occupational therapist: December 11, 2013, length: 00:21:10	Occupational therapist: December 11, 2013, length: 00:21:10	Occupational therapist: December 11, 2013, length: 00:21:10	Nurse: March 25, 2014, length: 00:22:33

was not expressed verbally but only by means of physical actions and gestures) in the home care encounters. Our interpretations are supported by the interview data with the actors who had been involved in the home care encounter.

In the first phase of the analysis, we identified a conflict of motives between the actors in the studied five home care encounters. The notion of *conflict of motives* comes from the work of Vygotsky (1997) and is understood as a manifestation of historically accumulated systemic contradictions. Mediating artifacts can function as useful stimuli and devices to a actor who is facing a paralyzing conflict of motives to break out from the difficult situation.

In the second phase of the analysis, the different roles (Benson *et al.*, 2008) and initiatives (Kajamaa and Hilli, 2015) of the actors involved were then explored. Initiatives are reactions unconnected to the preceding conversation and in which the speakers have the freedom to change the topic (Linell, 1998). Subjects of the activity systems (in our case, the clients and the home care workers) mediate their activities through roles (Benson *et al.*, 2008). We marked down on the transcripts, the roles and changes in the role-taking of the actors, such as who initiated topics of discourse and who responded to or disregarded them.

In the third phase of the analysis, we identified representations of chronotopes (Bakhtin, 1984) used by the different actors in the discourse during the home care encounters. We traced the expressions of the different temporalities, such as the past, present and future of the client, and connected them to spaces, such as the living surroundings of the clients. These configurations of time and space were named (see Appendix). The discursive analysis of the actors' meaning-making by using different chronotopes made visible the configurations of time and space (Engeström *et al.*, 2015). The third analytical phase was conducted with the help of the model of the general structure of carnivalization (Figure 1).

In conducting the fourth phase of the activity-theoretical data analysis of the artifact mediation, and the different modes of collaboration and objects of collaboration, we went through the transcripts and identified the segments in the transcript that represented each component of the model of the general structure of carnivalization (Engeström, 2014). This phase of the analysis enabled a shift from discursive analysis toward a depiction of the actions, different objects (Kajamaa, 2010; Kajamaa and Hilli, 2015) and the use of mediating artifacts (Engeström *et al.*, 2014; Nummijoki and Engeström, 2010) during the home care encounters and the interviews. By using the structural model of carnivalization (Figure 1), we then drew figures summarizing our analysis of the key features of carnivalization in the studied home care encounters. We finally added the conflict of motives, roles, initiatives and chronotopes as new components to the model (see Figure 4 presented in the discussion section).

5. Tracing the carnivalization mode of collaboration in the home care encounters

In the following, as results of the data analysis, we present the proceeding of three home care encounters to the client couple Hannah and Thomas's home. In these encounters, carnivalization, or at least its limited version, emerged. These three encounters include key features of carnivalization, namely the conflict of motives between the actors, client initiatives, multiple chronotopes, artifacts and role of mediation, different modes of collaboration and the intertwinement of seemingly disconnected objects of collaboration.

These key features of carnivalization co-exist and intertwine in the encounters providing possibilities for a new type of collaboration. During the second and the fourth encounters, client initiation and multiple chronotopes also emerged and developed in the discourse of the actors; yet, the other key features of carnivalization were not visible. Thus, we decided to leave these encounters out of the presentation.

5.1 *The first encounter: from scripted coordination toward carnivalization*

The first encounter to the client couple's home included the client couple, an occupational therapist and a nurse. In the beginning of the visit, the home care workers strictly followed a scripted coordination mode of interaction. Their object of collaboration, dominating the beginning of the visit, was *the Mobility Agreement and the exercises included in it and the formal tasks of home care*. The home care workers took an active role in initiating a discourse including chronotopes around these objects of collaboration. A predetermined standard script (care plan) seemed to at first guide all the home care workers' actions. In the beginning of the visit, the clients Thomas and Hannah took the role of passive recipients of the home care service.

A conflict of motives emerged between Thomas and the workers, as Thomas started to talk and seemingly felt a need to shift the employees' focus from their core tasks to his object of collaboration, which we here call *the client couple's shared history and experiences*. Thomas's chronotopes related to this object were about the couple's travels to places such as Florida, Sochi and Tbilisi. The occupational therapist suddenly responded to Thomas's initiative and became actively involved in the discussion with him. The occupational therapist also mentioned Thomas's enthusiasm toward photographing in relation to the couple's traveling experiences and referred to the discussion of the previous visit. At this point, carnivalization started to emerge; the interaction was rather chaotic-like when the participants carried out two disconnected discussions in the client's small kitchen area. The nurse, however, disregarded Thomas and continued focusing on the formal tasks of home care, such as the condition of Hannah's hearing aid batteries.

Then the interaction turned to the exercises of the Mobility Agreement. The participants moved from the kitchen to the living room to perform the muscle exercises. The nature of the interaction resembled, again, scripted coordination. Hannah was still a rather passive recipient of the service and Thomas followed nearby when Hannah, the nurse and the occupational therapist performed the exercises for mobility and took photographs of Hannah exercising. Hannah was still a rather passive recipient of the service and followed the instructions given by home care workers. Thomas tried several times to shift the discussion from Hannah to his object: life and his interests. He made initiatives in regards to his own self and condition, such as his leg and back problems, the state of his memory, his army time in the past and the drawing school from his childhood. Only one of the chronotopes (drawing school) was recognized, but was not furthered by the nurse. The initiatives were suppressed by the other participants and Thomas gave up. He adapted his participation to fit with the dominant topic by starting to share his experiences and knowledge of Hannah's physical deterioration. This way he contributed toward developing the concept of mobility and improving his wife's well-being.

Suddenly the new chronotope, a trip to Bulgaria emerged and the painting on the client couples' wall Thomas had made when visiting Bulgaria functioned as a mediating artifact in the interaction. The occupational therapist's object of collaboration shifted from the mobility exercises to the client couple's shared history and experiences. This time also, Hannah

responded to Thomas's chronotope by remembering the swimming experience in Bulgaria, but the nurse was passive. The moment was chaotic-like when the participants carried out temporarily two objects of collaboration: performing the mobility exercises and remembering the travel experience to Bulgaria. However, the occupational therapist suppressed the chronotope by shifting the focus to the mobility exercises. Thus, the interaction turned back to the scripted coordination mode. After the mobility exercises, the participants went back to the kitchen to have a discussion about developing the practices of the Mobility Agreement.

Carnivalization started to further develop in the kitchen when Thomas initiated a new line of discussion, triggered by the researcher's use of the video camera (recording the home care encounter). He shared his interest in photography with the researcher by taking out his own camera and then an old photograph album from a bookshelf, which he brought to the kitchen where the other participants were. The occupational therapist became enthusiastic about the photographs, which turned her object of collaboration toward Thomas's interest and life. Thomas told stories about his experiences in the army and from the wartime of the 1940's. Photography as a mediating artifact broke the dominant object of collaboration and the script, the Mobility Agreement and the exercises included in it. Then, the discourse moved between two disconnected objects. Unexpectedly, the photographing was incorporated in the formal tasks of home care, as the nurse suggested that photos of Hannah could be taken and used to support her in doing mobility exercises. The occupational therapist also responded to this initiative. Now the discourse moved vividly between two disconnected objects, and all the participants were involved. Then, again, the photographing was also incorporated into the client couple's shared history and experience, as the occupational therapist surprisingly initiated this new line of discussion: the client couple's photographs from a trip to Florida. This time the chronotope of Florida was suppressed by the other participants, but the discourse continued between two other disconnected objects. The occupational therapist shifted her focus vividly between those two objects of collaboration.

The carnivalization continued when Thomas told more stories about his family, especially his brother and their family business as carpenters, which the occupational therapist became enthusiastic about. The nurse and Hannah also started to listen to Thomas's storytelling. Then, the occupational therapist again turned the focus strictly to the Mobility Agreement and its exercises by asking Thomas to help Hannah to perform self-contained exercises at home. This changed Thomas's object for a short time toward Hannah's mobility. The Mobility Agreement again mediated this part of the discussion and its development was discussed together with the clients. It was collectively planned and decided that the use of photographs of Hannah's exercises taken in the first visit will take place in the next home care visit. At this point, the role of the occupational therapist moved from service provider to the client-oriented service developer. This created a shift in the mode of interaction from scripted coordination toward collaboration and reflexive communication. The previously conflicting interest, motives and objects were featured and empowered, intensifying carnivalization.

Thereafter, carnivalization again diminished when the nurse started to give instructions and returned to the formal tasks of home care and to the mode of scripted coordination. The encounter continued in a seemingly chaotic way toward its end. Thomas again talked about his interest and life. This time, the nurse disregarded this and the occupational therapist acknowledged Thomas's chronotopes, but did not encourage them actively, as the workers

were about to leave. The key features of carnivalization in the first encounter are illustrated in Figure 2.

5.2 *The third encounter: continuation of the carnivalization*

The third encounter included the client couple, an occupational therapist and a nurse. In the beginning of this visit, the home care workers again first strictly followed a scripted coordination mode of interaction. Their object dominating the beginning of the visit was the Mobility Agreement and the exercises included in it. The home care workers took an active role in initiating a discourse including chronotopes around this object of collaboration for enhancing Hannah's mobility. They had kept their promise about using the photographs taken from the first visit and used them to stimulate discussion. The nurse, Hannah and the occupational therapist discussed the photographs and tried to actively stimulate Hannah's memory and mobility. Hannah's role started to change from passive recipient to conductor of the mobility exercises with the help of the photographs taken by the home care workers. This shifted the mode of interaction toward cooperation and reflective communication with Hannah. Yet Thomas did not take part in this and remained silent for the time being.

Thomas first followed the given script and silently viewed Hannah's mobility exercises but quite soon he started trying to shift the home care workers' focus from mobility to the objects crucial to him: his life and interests and the client couple's shared history and experiences. The carnivalization which had emerged in the first visit here continued as Thomas pointed out a painting on the wall and started telling about how he used a photograph from Bulgaria as a model when painting it. The home care workers were seemingly distracted by this and disregarded Thomas's initiative. This created a conflict of motives and Thomas continued talking about his childhood and his interest in drawing.

In this visit, the Mobility Agreement and the exercises included in it remained the dominant object of the interaction. Toward the end of the encounter, the interaction seemed rather chaotic, as several chronotopes were simultaneously expressed and the different times and spaces were present in the actors' distinct topics of discussion. The encounter

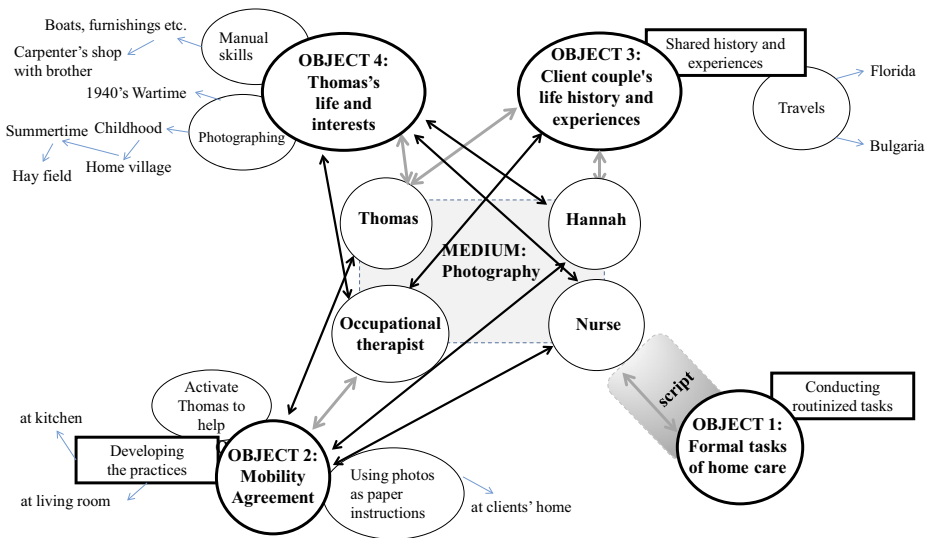


Figure 2. The key features of carnivalization in the first home care encounter

included key features of carnivalization, such as the innovative use of mediating artifacts (photography, painting) and Hannah's role change. Thus, this visit can be seen as a continuation of the carnivalization which emerged and developed during the first encounter. Yet the third encounter is a limited form of carnivalization, as the conflict of motives between Thomas and the home care workers as Thomas's initiatives were disregarded by the workers. The chronotopes and objects of collaboration of the different actors did not start to intertwine during the encounter.

5.3 *The fifth encounter: the intensification of carnivalization*

The fifth encounter to the client couple's home included the client couple and a nurse. The occupational therapist was not present. In the beginning of the visit, the nurse strictly followed a scripted coordination mode of interaction. Her object was the formal tasks of home care, and she initiated a discourse around this object that included various chronotopes and actions, such as hygiene-related tasks with Hannah in the bathroom. At first, a predetermined standard script (care plan) seemed to guide her actions. In the beginning of the visit, the clients Thomas and Hannah were passive recipients of the service.

The carnivalization which we had witnessed in the first and third visits started to again intensify here, as Thomas suddenly mentioned his advanced age and started telling about his long-lived parents, his father's work in St. Petersburg and his brother. The nurse responded to this while performing the tasks for Hannah, and this shifted the object of collaboration from the formal tasks of home care to Thomas's interests and life. Thomas's chronotope then included the shared travel history with Hannah to St. Petersburg, Cyprus, Turkey and to the Canary Islands. The enthusiasm of the nurse toward his story encouraged Thomas's chronotope to further evolve, and their distinct objects started to intertwine.

The development of the carnivalization mode of collaboration was then temporarily suppressed when the nurse continued to contemplate the formal tasks of home care. Even though the topics promoting carnivalization gradually dissipated, they emerged again when Thomas continued to tell about his father's work. The nurse participated in these chronotopes and asked Thomas questions about his past while she was helping Hannah by combing her hair and giving her water. All of a sudden, the nurse asked Thomas about a painting on the client couple's wall. The nurse's initiative in relation to the mediating artifact and her active participation in Thomas's storytelling regenerated his chronotopes. The chronotopes of Thomas vividly moved between two objects: his life and his interests and the client couple's shared history and experiences, including stories about his interest in painting and the couple's travels while the nurse performed the tasks of formal home care with Hannah.

In the fifth visit, the nurse's role changed for the first time from a caregiver to an active listener, willing to form a free and familiar interaction with her clients. This further intensified the carnivalization mode of collaboration. Yet we acknowledge that the absence of the occupational therapist, who had previously responded to some of Thomas's initiatives, may have caused the change in the nurse's role. This role change enabled Thomas's chronotopes of his life and interests and the couple's shared history and experiences to evolve. The key features of carnivalization, the intertwining of Thomas's and the nurse's objects of collaboration, the use of expanded roles and the artifacts mediating between the subjects and objects, and the hybridization of the actors' chronotopes were clearly present. During this encounter, an equalization of the different actors took place more visibly than in

the previous visits. The key features of carnivalization in the fifth encounter are illustrated in Figure 3.

6. Discussion

In this paper, we analyzed the key features of carnivalization in five home care visits and will here discuss what significance carnivalization may have in the tightly scripted work activities. In this study, we combined the discursive analysis of carnivalization, focusing on chronotopes and initiatives with the activity–theoretical analysis of the conflict of motives, artifacts and the role of mediation, and the different modes of collaboration and objects of collaboration.

The different chronotopes, along with the artifacts, such as the photographs and other visual illustrations used in the interaction, were crucially important, as they constructed “a time bridge” across the past, present and future of the actors. The home care workers discourse and actions, however, differed from the temporality expressed by the clients. The workers were present at the clients’ home only for a very limited time. They mostly sought meanings for the interactions by referring to the present and taking a future orientation, whereas the elderly clients often referred to their past experiences. Yet in three of the studied encounters, time and space was given for the initiation and the evolvement of the different chronotopes and for innovative artifact use. This enabled changes in the traditional roles of the actors involved, usually predefined by the scripted coordination typically applied in home care encounters.

The home care workers’ object, the Mobility Agreement, a tool which has recently been implemented in home care activity, and the exercises included in it had an interesting double function, as it also functioned as a mediating artifact. On the one hand, the Mobility Agreement triggered carnivalization mode of collaboration, and on the other hand, it was implemented in a very instructional and task-oriented manner. A strict focus on this object-artifact, for instance, led to suppressing the

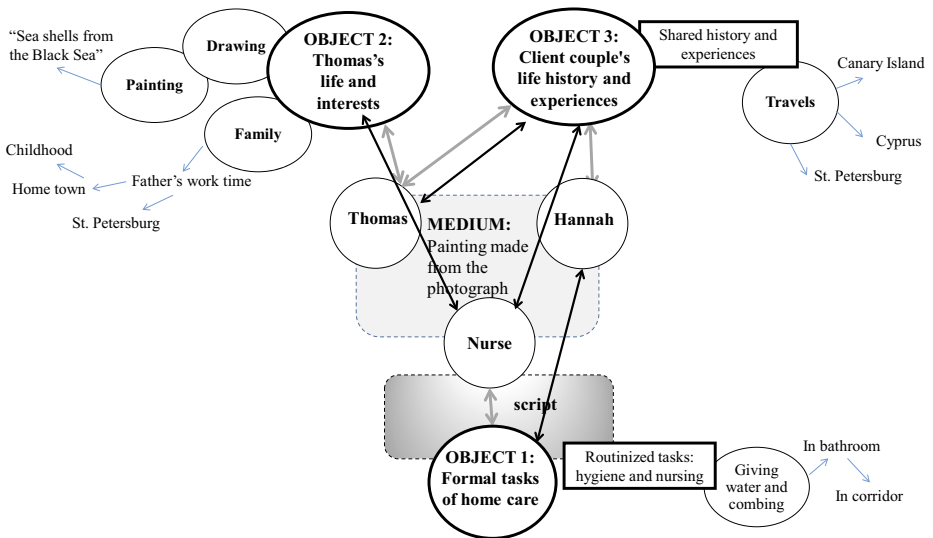


Figure 3.
The key features of carnivalization in the fifth home care encounter

89-year-old client Thomas's initiatives and supporting the other object of the home care workers: the formal tasks of home care. Thomas's objects, namely, the client couple's shared history and experiences and Thomas's life and his interests, were strongly focused on the client couple and aimed at shifting the mode of the interaction away from the formal home care tasks.

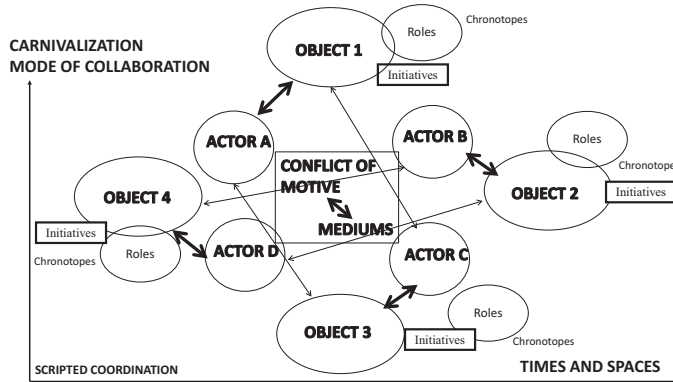
Hannah suffered from a memory disease and did not speak much during the encounters. However, she actively participated in the interaction, for instance, by doing mobility exercises and allowing the home care workers to photograph her doing them. In the next visit, she participated in the viewing of the photographs and was very much involved in the interaction. The photos functioned as powerful mediating artifacts for embedding the mobility exercises into the home care activity and the lives of Hannah and Thomas, and they also evoked Hannah's role change and the remembrances of the clients' past, experiences and perspectives on their physical mobility.

In his discourse, Thomas wanted to present, not only himself but also his wife Hannah as an autonomous and agentive couple with a long history and many experiences. Thomas's swift role change, already during the first home care encounter, from a passive recipient of services to an active participant taking initiatives, broke the traditional script of home care activity, created almost chaotic-like situations and thus challenged the workers. Thomas's various chronotopes started to claim the home care worker's attention and slowly intersected and hybridized with some of the chronotopes and objects of the home care workers. Carnivalization became especially significant, as it provided possibilities for the equalization of the parties of a collective activity and gave voice to those who are not typically perceived as active participants, such as the home care clients.

Our study shows that a complex process of the emergence and development of carnivalization can enhance the transforming of an activity in which a historically established, stabilized script strongly dominates the interaction. The carnivalization is a multidimensional phenomenon and a collective learning process in which a conflict of motives between the actors creates a need state for change. Carnivalization may proceed if time and space are given by the actors to each other's initiatives, role changes and meaning-making by using different chronotopes. On the basis of the results of our study, the carnivalization mode of collaboration requires mediational means, such as powerful artifacts and expanded roles mediating between the subjects and their disconnected objects. On the basis of our analysis, we propose a conceptual model (Figure 4), which is an expansion from Engeström's, 2014 general structure (presented in the Figure 1) for identifying and analyzing carnivalization in organizations.

Figure 4 aims at illustrating the complex process of carnivalization, including a constellation of different actors (in our case, the home care workers and the clients) and their distinct objects of collaboration. The thin arrows in the figure refer to the potential and possibility of mediational means to create connections between the actors' distinct perceptions of the object of the activity. The object evolves in time and space when the multiple chronotopes start to co-exist, intersect and hybridize. Moving from a singular, given chronotope to another (or several other chronotopes) and their hybridization usually requires placing them into dynamic interplay, resulting in negotiation and the transcending of conflicts of motives between conventional models and new ways of acting. Mediating artifacts that open up unexpected topics, perspectives and voices, such as a camera, painting or an old photograph, can become an important stimulus, which replaces the disintegrated

Figure 4.
A conceptual model
for identifying and
analyzing
carnivalization in
organizations



Source: Modified from Engeström (2014)

script as a source of coherence and intersubjectivity. This can lead to the collective construction of hybrid meanings for the activity and the creation of innovative solutions for the conflict of motives.

7. Conclusions

Carnivalization is an understudied mode of collaboration in organizations where historically established, stabilized scripts strongly dominate the interaction. Carnivalization seems to be rare, and it qualitatively differs from scripted coordination. It may include features of cooperation and reflexive communication modes of interaction (Engeström, 2008; Engeström *et al.*, 1991; Raeithel, 1983), but as our findings indicate, these are not its only prerequisites. In carnivalization, scripted coordination, understood as the predefined division of roles and planned sequences of actions, starts to fall apart, but the parts still seem to feed one another and form novel patterns. Although the situation looks chaotic, it has recognizable dynamics which are tacitly appreciated and enacted by the participants. It is a mode of interaction that facilitates breaking away from stagnant coordination and enables the emergence of something unexpected.

The unexpected initiatives, role changes and chronotopes introduced into the interaction by the participants challenge the core of the dominant script and foster collaboration. The script is also challenged when the home care workers take actions toward unexpected topics and are willing to engage in free and familiar interaction with their clients. This reveals the heterogeneity of the chronotopes in the objects, potentially enhancing their intertwinement. In carnivalization, the actors are actively involved with several objects of collaboration. The objects may first seem separated, but they slowly start to feed each other during the interaction as the actors attempt to make sense of to conceptualize the surrounding life world and the motive of their collective activity.

We suggest that conscious, interventionist efforts to promote the carnivalization type of collaboration in workplaces can potentially expand the object of productive work activity to include flexibility and creativity in the traditionally used script and to embrace the clients' life worlds and concerns. Figure 4 may be used as a mediating tool in interventions aiming at an expanded mode of collaboration. Such workplace interventions should include the clients' voice and invite them to become active co-authors of the work activity and their own future.

Allowing time, space and meditational resources for the carnivalization mode of surprising collaboration is particularly important when a stagnant and restrictive organizational practice needs to be revitalized and expanded.

As public sector services are pressured with demands such as cost efficiency, it is important for workers to efficiently carry out their pre-planned tasks. Yet breaking the normative script by allowing and taking part in the initiatives and chronotopes proposed by clients can improve the activity. This does not mean doing so at the cost of the tasks required in high-quality home care service provision. We suggest that workers should more consciously pay attention to and manage the chronotopes and their nurturing alongside the scripted tasks. Triggering carnivalization requires the introduction of novel mediating artifacts for articulating and enacting multiple kinds of roles, chronotopes, concerns, topics and objects. We know very little about workplace interventions and the properties and functioning of specific mediating artifacts that have the potential to trigger carnivalization; thus, more research and experimentation are needed in this promising line of organizational inquiry.

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Further reading

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Appendix

Carnivalization
as a new mode

The Mobility Agreement and the exercises included in it	The formal tasks of home care	Thomas's life and his interests	The client couple's shared history and experiences
<p>Documenting the exercises</p> <p>Developing the practices: Planning the photographing and using photos in home care Paper instructions on the wall New exercise of standing up on the toes in the corridor</p> <p>Activating Thomas: Using the chair and paper instructions at home</p> <p>Remembering the people from photographs: Looking at the photographs (present) in the living room</p>	<p>Hearing aid batteries</p> <p>Hygiene and nursing: In the bathroom Giving water and combing Hannah's hair in the corridor</p>	<p>Drawing: Drawing school Elementary school Encouraged to continue education but had to withdraw Painting on the wall from Bulgaria made of sea shells from the Black Sea with photo as model</p> <p>Interest in photography: 1940s wartime memories</p> <p>Family and work: Siblings (brother and sister) Carpenter's shop with brother Childhood in hay field and home village and town Long-lived parents and brother Father's work history and locations</p>	<p>Traveling: Florida Sochi Bulgaria and hotel St.Petersburg Turkey Canary Islands Cyprus</p>

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Table AI.
The development of the chronotopes in carnivalization

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