Educational Governance Research 14

Lejf Moos
Elisabet Nihlfors
Jan Merok Paulsen *Editors*

Re-centering the Critical Potential of Nordic School Leadership Research

Fundamental, but often forgotten perspectives

Educational Governance Research

Volume 14

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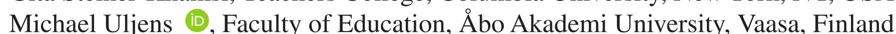
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Aims and Scope

This series presents recent insights in educational governance gained from research that focuses on the interplay between educational institutions and societies and markets. Education is not an isolated sector. Educational institutions at all levels are embedded in and connected to international, national and local societies and markets. One needs to understand governance relations and the changes that occur if one is to understand the frameworks, expectations, practice, room for manoeuvre, and the relations between professionals, public, policy makers and market place actors. The aim of this series is to address issues related to structures and discourses by which authority is exercised in an accessible manner. It will present findings on a variety of types of educational governance: public, political and administrative, as well as private, market place and self-governance. International and multidisciplinary in scope, the series will cover the subject area from both a worldwide and local perspective and will describe educational governance as it is practised in all parts of the world and in all sectors: state, market, and NGOs.

The series:
- Covers a broad range of topics and power domains
- Positions itself in a field between politics and management / leadership
- Provides a platform for the vivid field of educational governance research
- Looks into ways in which authority is transformed within chains of educational governance
- Uncovers relations between state, private sector and market place influences on education, professionals and students.

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Re-centering the Critical Potential of Nordic School Leadership Research

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Foreword 1: Towards the Future Through a Democratic and Non-affirmative *Bildung* Discourse

This exciting volume edited by Lejf Moos, Elisabet Nihlfors and Jan Merok Paulsen from Denmark, Sweden and Norway, respectively, contributes to an ongoing international paradigm shift in educational leadership research, taking it from a functionalist to a critically reflexive paradigm, more strongly based in education research.

In order to be successful with such an initiative, something has to be pointed out as less fruitful, while at the same time outlining features of an alternative agenda. The authors of this volume approach this task by successfully taking its fundamental point of departure in a distinction between two policy and research traditions. Most educational leadership researchers are familiar with the first, fewer with the second. The first approach is an *outcomes-based discourse* while the second is a *general education* discourse. The editors locate the birth of the first approach to the neo-liberal politics that developed rapidly during the 1990s after the fall of the Berlin wall. Given that education, innovation work and research stepwise got such a significant role in knowledge-driven economies, the instrumental role of education in general was emphasized. Simultaneously most western societies experienced a nationalist orientation as well as an ideological right-wing turn. In retrospect, we see how this put an emphasis on traditional back-to-basics schooling with an increased and conservative focus on subject matter teaching. Content- and context-neutral general competencies like language and mathematics were also strongly supported by OECD. This volume recognizes that a connected decentralized accountability policy strengthened and directed the interest for educational leadership research in the Nordic countries from the 1980s onwards. Educational leadership started to answer questions like how leadership could increase school's performance level.

This volume realizes and makes the case that contemporary mainstream educational leadership research came into being under the influence of such specific economic, cultural, ideological and political circumstances. The *outcomes-oriented discourse* captures metaphorically that change.

However, this instrumentalist and somewhat technical view of knowledge and education increasingly appears as a limited language for talking about what

education might mean and should be about in a deeper sense of the word. As there is a need in education of today to move beyond instrumental competencies and brute subject matter knowledge that focus the attainment of predetermined knowledge, the language of education must change. Today, not only educational researchers, trained in a *Bildung* oriented general education paradigm, but also to an increasing degree policymakers feel a growing uneasiness with such a view of education, schooling, curriculum making and leadership. After all, will we really be able to educate morally, politically, socially and culturally aware and reflective individuals, cultural beings and citizens by such a performative and instrumentalist paradigm? How can control paradigm foster citizens for an unpredictable future? Well, it cannot. That the future is radically open and unpredictable was not only demonstrated by the global Covid-19 pandemic, but something that the Western culture embraced in moving from a pre-modern to a modern view of the world. This move then required a new foundation for education. This foundation was first developed by the modern classics like Rousseau, Herder, Kant, Herbart and Schleiermacher. This *Bildung*-centred tradition of human growth has since revitalized educational research over and over again. This is also the case in the present volume.

This volume contributes to the ongoing paradigm shift to replace the outcomes-oriented paradigm with a *Bildung* oriented paradigm. In this volume, a *democratic Bildung discourse* means "empowering professionals as well as students to learn as much as possible and develop non-affirmative, critical and creative interpretation and negotiation competences in doing so."

During the second decade of the third millennium, that is during 2010s, we have witnessed several initiatives in Nordic educational leadership research representing genuine "of the box" way of reasoning. This volume definitely belongs to one of these. By viewing educational leaders as professionals in education rather than leadership, this volume sees the field as connected to educational policy and philosophy, curriculum research, as well as *Didaktik*.

After originally having been very much a US-based phenomenon, the past three decades saw educational leadership research establish itself internationally during the 1980s, where it had previously been a neglected field in educational research. The 1990s and 2000s were about expansion and differentiation. The past decade, 2010s, however, turned out as those critical years where the field restructured itself on a broader scale. This volume confirms this transitional decade. At the same time, it contributes in inspiring ways to shaping a path for future research in educational leadership research. There are promising signs indicating that the future of educational leadership research belongs to a democratic and non-affirmative *Bildung* discourse, of which the volume edited by Lejf Moos, Elisabet Nihlfors and Jan Merok Paulsen is a valuable and welcome contribution.

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Foreword 2: Forgotten – Or Ignored Perspectives in Education and Leadership?

The key topic of this book – and of the 2019 Symposium in Copenhagen on which the book is based – is *fundamental but often-forgotten perspectives in education and leadership*. In the introductory chapter, the editors set the scene by outlining the dominant discourses in education and educational research, contrasting *Democratic Bildung* with an increasingly *outcome-oriented* discourse. Demonstrating how such discourses are reflected in development programmes for school leaders, they emphasise the need for critical research in the area of school leadership in the Nordic countries. All of the contributors offer critical and nuanced perspectives on topics that range from education policy to governance and leadership practices. Reflecting on the consequent dilemmas for school leaders and the problems of data-informed decision-making, the authors highlight the need for a greater focus on horizontal structures, collective trust and well-being.

Towards the end of the 1980s, there was an increasing focus in the Nordic countries on student outcomes as an important indicator of educational quality. The publication of the first results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) represented a turning point in discourse on school quality, and over the last two decades, PISA, which is sponsored by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), has become a strategically important actor in international education policy debate. In an overview of PISA results in 2015, Secretary-General Angel Gurría made the following observation:

> Over the past decade […], PISA has become the world's premier yardstick for evaluating the quality, equity and efficiency of school systems. By identifying the characteristics of high-performing education. systems, PISA allows governments and educators to identify effective policies that they can then adapt to their local contexts. (OECD 2016, p. 2)

PISA's main functions are to describe, monitor and benchmark important aspects of education systems across the world (cf. Howie and Plump 2005). While this form of governance is relatively new in the context of education, systematic state

collection of demographic and economic data to monitor the population has a long history (Ball 2015). In education, numbers underpin the constitution of the modern school, as examination and test results are used to categorize, compare, rank and position individuals, organisations and systems. As a consequence of neoliberal policies in many countries, data are increasingly used as a management tool for continuous improvement, linked to mechanisms of reward and sanction to boost performance (Gunter et al. 2016). In England, the USA and Australia, neoliberal policies and managerialism are seen to be firmly embedded, but these ideas and associated modernization have taken longer to gain ground in Continental Europe and the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden).

At the Copenhagen Symposium, the discussion was enriched by contributions from Prof. Helen Gunter (England), Prof. Cynthia Coburn and Prof. Jim Spillane (USA), and Prof. Neil Powell (Australia), who offered external perspectives on recent developments in the Nordic countries. In this volume, Helen Gunter, Jim Spillane and Jonathan Sun address forgotten perspectives from the English and US contexts as contrasting examples of the realities facing school leaders, highlighting the consequences of this 'forgetting' for the Nordic model of education.

There is ample evidence that the global policies and perspectives on accountability advanced as recipes for education governance are translated and adapted to serve different purposes and functions in different countries. Empirical studies – some in the Nordic countries – have highlighted the unintended consequences of instruments to enhance accountability such as national testing or models and procedures for evaluating teachers' work. Nevertheless, the prevailing policy discourse continues to emphasise standardisation, performative accountability, student outcomes on achievement tests and the use of these data to benchmark school quality. Several factors contribute to this trend. First, the dominant discourse includes a range of promises that sound all the more convincing when promoted by transnational bodies such as the OECD – for example, the promise that 'increased transparency and openness' of results will lead to 'increased efficiency' and 'increased quality' or that greater transparency, openness and accountability will prevent abuses of authority, promoting ethical behaviour and a democratic and just society (cf. Dubnick, 2005). Second, the use of seemingly 'objective' data to govern education is attractive to politicians because it reduces the complexity of education-related issues (cf. Petterson et al. 2017). For that reason, politicians typically prefer research that pursues this complexity-reducing approach. However, it remains unclear whether other perspectives are forgotten or merely ignored. The authors in this volume make an important contribution to this debate by highlighting the contrasting values underlying competing discourses in education and leadership and the

consequences for actors in the school system. As well as identifying priorities for further research, the shared commitment of this intergenerational group of contributors augurs well for the future of leadership research in the Nordic countries.

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Foreword 3: Towards a Holistic Understanding of the Challenges We Face in Education

Moos depicts the influence of American-inspired theories on education as a clash between two different discourses. On one side, we have the European and the Nordic discourse. It is participant-oriented; highlights trust and professional, personal, and social skills; and prefers dialogue, formative evaluation, and "Democratic Bildung." On the other side, we have the American-inspired discourse. It focuses on results, national standards and tests, external accountability, and management through objectives, and is, according to Moos, concerned with how students are educated into useful workers. The American discourse is also characterized by "neoliberal policies based on marketplace logics, economy, free choice, rational thinking, competition and comparison, scientific management theories with performance and standard as cornerstones, a strong top-down model, and a principal-agent theory with national aims and tight accountability" (Moos 2013, p. 289).

Mainstream Theories Informed by Science

In management and organizational theory, the American-inspired theories may be grouped under the broad category of mainstream (Argyris et al. 1985) or management science theories (Wallace 2007). The term *science* is essential here. Frederick Winslow Taylor called his theories "scientific management" when he, more than a century ago, did his best to establish management as a theoretical field, as well as his own profitable consultancy. Titling his book *The Principles of Scientific Management* (Taylor 1911) was an attempt to legitimize his ideas and present them as based on solid and systematic research. Taylor did not have to force his ideas upon a market. His management science ideas were also requested in Europe, and the export of American management theory took off. Forty years later, Harold J. Leavitt experienced the same when the postwar export of US management training to Europe started. Leavitt found that the ideas were not forced on Europe. On the contrary, Europeans were fascinated by what US consultants and educators could offer. However, Leavitt urged the exporters of US theories and ideas to try more

fully to let Europeans know the implications of what they were buying, as well as to use the opportunity to examine the implicit assumptions that supported their actions (Leavitt 1957).

When Margaret Thatcher became prime minister in 1979, she also turned to the United States for help. James McGill Buchanan was brought in to conduct a series of seminars on his "public choice" theory. According to Buchanan (2003), his ideas could be summarized as "politics without romance" (p. 16). New forms of governance were needed, he brought the solution, and this solution was realistic, and based on game theory and scientific analysis, which proved the validity of the ideas. Management science with a propensity for rational, structured, systematic approaches and quantitative methods influenced by Taylor (Virtanen 1996) combined with public-sector reforms became vehicles for operationalizing "public choice" theory and neo-liberal politics. What later became known as New Public Management had begun to take a strong grip on the public sector.

Three Possible Explanations

As I illustrated above, mainstream management ideas informed by or legitimized with the help of science were not necessarily forced upon Europe. They became mainstream for other reasons. I propose three possible explanations (there may, of course, be more).

First, the ideas represent values, principles, and perspectives that are associated with science. Second, they are regarded as solutions to perceived problems and as potentially useful methods for coping with challenges. Third, they have become dominant in curricula in many management educations programs all over the world.

If these explanations are pertinent, we will probably have to live for many decades with the science-legitimized mainstream theories, as well as the unwanted consequences they produce. We may work hard to reduce the use of measurements and tests, initiate trust reforms, halt the use of result-based pay and bonuses for teachers and principals, "implement" professional learning communities, and so on and so on. And all is good, depending on the perspective one takes. However, if the often-hidden and taken-for-granted values and assumptions on which mainstream theories are based continue to exercise silent influence, we risk that change becomes superficial, and that old ideas continue to live on under new labels. And even if we, both the proponents and the opponents of the mainstream theories, become more aware of their silent values and assumptions, and their inclination to concentrate on surface phenomena, it does not imply that they will disappear. They are, and likely will continue to be, a part of our thinking and practice also because we seem to need the simplification they represent. They help us, thanks to their "eye of science," to reduce the complexity and make sense of our confusing world, and they do so in their own special way with their own distinctive angle on the convoluted reality in which we participate.

Mainstream Theories Informed by Science

Let me draw on the philosopher Ernst Cassirer to make my point clearer: According to Cassirer, who developed his theories in Germany at the same time Taylor developed his in the USA, modern science became a hallmark of enlightenment and gained an undisputed position as the highest representation of the development of humankind (Cassirer 1923/1953, p. 138). As a channel to the world, science is based on simplification through categorization and classification of our sense perceptions, which unavoidably leads to an impoverishment of the world. At the same time, science offers the assurance of a constant world. In an unstable universe, scientific thinking fixes points of rest and creates unmovable poles, he argued (Cassirer 1944).

The roots of the eye of science are first found in the early natural sciences[1] and are identifiable in traditions known as functionalistic, rational, instrumentalist, modernist, empiricist, positivistic, and analytic. Taken into the institutional field of education, the eye of science offers categories and numbers, and helps us analyze causal relationships and predict possible consequences of current actions. It might be a crude simplification and a severe reduction of complexity, but it may nevertheless, or maybe just for that reason, be perceived as helpful in providing a sense of something stable and easily identifiable, to which we can relate. It is a way of making sense, different from what theories informed by the humanities may offer (Irgens 2011).

But if the use of what Cassirer described as a scientific eye becomes dominant in education governance, we risk that institutions are seen as fixed structures and neutral machine-like bureaucracies, controlled through programming, quantitative goals, measurement, incentives, and accountability. The attention becomes drawn to tangible or easily identifiable surface phenomena, such as quantitative goals and objectives, documents, systems, and organizational charts. School leaders become outcome and manage-by-objectives oriented. We need a counterview to avoid one-eyedness.

Counterviews Informed by the Humanities

Although Cassirer regarded science as the foremost example of humankind's development, he also argued that science is just one of several ways of understanding the world that humankind has produced. Each way, or symbolic form as he called it, represents a particular channel to the same reality. Myth, language, science, religion, history, and art are all examples of different culturally and historically

[1] When Cassirer discussed the logics of science and the logics of the humanities, his point of departure was *Naturwissenschaften* (the natural sciences) and *Geisteswissenschaften* (the humanities), which he sometimes called *Kulturwissenschaft* (the cultural sciences).

developed ways of understanding, and each has its own angle of refraction. They shape and form our interpretations differently (Cassirer 1923/1953, p. 107).

Among the various forms, Cassirer discussed *art* as the one that is particularly complementary to science (Cassirer 1944).[2] The eye of science reduces the complexity of the world through categorization and classification, while the eye of art does so through illumination, intensification, and concentration. While the eye of science may favor surface phenomena, the eye of art illuminates the deeper and often hidden layers, and thus helps us gain a more objective and realistic view. However, as is the case with science, the artistic eye cannot provide us with the full picture or an absolute truth.

The eye of art may help us see the more subjective deep-level elements, such as feelings, emotions, affection, mental images, values, culture, professional norms, interpretations, and paradigmatic and cultural assumptions (Irgens 2011). These elements often pass beyond the view of the scientific eye, which is, according to Cassirer, primarily occupied with the world of facts. Deep-level elements are more difficult to identify, categorize, assign numbers, and count than the concrete surface elements that the eye of science favors (Irgens 2011). It takes judgment that is context and situation sensitive to do so, and an eye that, to a larger degree than the eye of science, draws on an interpretive, aesthetic understanding. Rather than searching for *the* answer, for evidence and hard facts, the eye of art searches for interpretations and multiple answers. This is what Argyris et al. (1985) called a counterview, the realm of the humanities and the hermeneutic tradition in the social sciences where we find a broad array of interpretive, constructivist, phenomenological, hermeneutical, postmodern, post structural, and pluralist schools and an understanding of education with a focus on welfare, Bildung, democratic equity, and deliberation that has strong roots in continental Europe.

Toward a Holistic Understanding

Mainstream theories and their eye of science seem to have had a strong influence on education governance, in particular since the 1980s. They will continue to do so as long as science holds its undisputed position as the highest expression of the development of human culture and consciousness. But Cassirer warned against the dominance of one eye. One-eyedness may lead to habitual blindness, he argued, where important aspects are taken out of sight. Understanding and navigating in the three-dimensional, symbolic, complex space of modern societies takes more than theories, policies, and perspectives informed by science. We also need the way of knowing what the humanities represent, but not as an alternative to the scientific eye. The eye of art can never replace the eye of science, or vice versa. Instead, if we

[2] It is important to bear in mind that Cassirer discussed science and art as ideal types, that is, depicted in a pure, simplified form.

are to develop a more holistic understanding of the challenges we face in education, we should regard the two perspectives as interdependent and complementary. Finally, we need a critical analysis of any theoretical or ideological perspective, regardless of its cultural origin or intellectual roots.

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Part I
Introduction

Critical Potential of Nordic School Leadership Research

Lejf Moos, Elisabet Nihlfors, and Jan Merok Paulsen

1 The Theme

> Primary school should challenge all students so that they become as skilled as they can be.

Nordic governments often use phrases like this in education policy discussions. They are vague and serve as fluid signifiers that everybody can interpret and understand in their own way. These phrases are useful when building political consensus or affirmation. The example quoted above is the first of three aims from the 2013 Danish School Reform.

Such phrases are not useful when trying to communicate or explain education and educational leadership because the elements in the phrase remain obscure: who is the political agent, and what are the relationships between policy, research, school and staff? These phrases also hide the purposes of schooling and the societal values and power in the turnaround of political interests from education towards governance that are implicit in the expression 'as skilled as they can be.' Why were not terms such as knowledgeable, enlightened or autonomous – perhaps equally valuable results – chosen instead? These fundamental phenomena in education and leadership appear to have been forgotten.

With this volume we want to return critical analyses to the centre of research as we analyse some of the dilemmas and conflicts between remembered and forgotten

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insights in education research on policy, society, schools and educational leadership, and thus between diverse and often conflicting interpretations of school leadership research that is fundamental in Nordic (Danish, Finnish, Icelandic, Norwegian and Swedish) contexts.

Many phenomena appear in the struggle between the major discourses of schooling – the outcomes-based discourse and the general educational discourse. Generally speaking, this struggle originates from a major shift in international and national policy from the governance of a welfare state and democratic-governed discourse towards a competitive state and economic-governed discourse (Moos 2018, 2019a; Moos and Wubbels 2018). These discourses are educational discourses, and thus also part of general societal, political and cultural discourses and practices. This may be why it can be difficult to notice and pay attention to their shifts (Moos 2019b).

Education research investigates relationships, values and positions based on the researcher's knowledge, but even researchers may have forgotten fundamental knowledge because other dominant discourses have overshadowed it. The new, dominant discourse may have flown under their radar, as it were, and caused them to forget fundamental perspectives.

Sometimes policymakers – and even academics – work hard to persuade populations and professionals that their political direction and ideas need to be followed. When we take on those ideas, we may forget traditional knowledge. Insights and wisdom may be intentionally or unintentionally silenced and omitted.

2 Discourses

Discourse is understood here as a way of argumentation and structuring the world. Schneider (2013) describes discourse as 'communication practices, which systematically construct our knowledge of reality'. Media used for communication are language, non-verbal communication and visual communication. Communication represents human thought and thus constructs a cognitive frame with normative foundations that is open to enlightenment and manipulation (Fairclough 1995). Discourses – as institutions – affect social relationships through the real physical effects they have on the environment.

Foucault explicitly questioned how discourse influences people's mentality and prompts them to govern themselves in certain ways – a process he called governmentality. Throughout his work, Foucault showed how specific opinions came to be formed and preserved in what is today commonly called the hegemonic or dominant discourse – the dominant viewpoint(s) throughout society which are kept stable by political power dynamics (Foucault 1972; Schneider 2013). Thus, discourses are instrumental in making people think correctly (according to the constructors or institutions of a certain discourse) about what the core and most important practices are in a field – such as schooling and school leadership.

Discourses may develop into positions of dominance over other discourses: Dominant discourses are the spoken, written and behavioural expectations that are shared within a cultural grouping. This also makes a discourse normative – meaning that it is based on our expectations as a social group. Our discussions in the seminars were often focused on this point of observation and analysis.

3 Sliding from One Discourse to Another

Analyses like those mentioned above insist that educational policies move from a discourse of *Democratic Bildung* towards an *Outcomes Discourse*. This means that one purpose of schooling, a Democratic Bildung, is being forgotten and replaced by measurable educational aims, and democratic and sense-making leadership is being replaced by top-down economical management. Fundamental aspects of educational leadership are being transformed from an educational purpose towards measurable aims; relationship-based leadership is being replaced by charismatic individual management; and beliefs in trust and responsibility as core values are being replaced by oversight and accountability.

Contemporary policies of educational leadership at most levels (transnationally, nationally and locally) and the education/training of educational leaders promote and further these transformations for a complex set of reasons, including the shift of education towards the marketplace, economic competition and the need for political legitimacy. While policymakers may want to promote such transformation, educationalists and educational researchers have different agendas because they need to remember the purpose of education.

There appear to be two prevailing discourses around education. One emerged from the social democratic, post–World War II welfare state model and can be called the Democratic Bildung Discourse. Based on works of John Dewey (1916/2005) and Wolfgang Klafki (2001), among others, this understanding of general and comprehensive education can be called Democratic Bildung because the intention is to position children in the world, in democratic communities and societies in ways that make them competent in understanding and deliberating with other people (Moos and Wubbels 2018). Basically, this is the Nordic welfare school discourse.

The other discourse is attached to the competitive state emerging from neoliberal economics and is called the 'Outcomes Discourse' (Moos 2017) because the fundamental outcomes of education in this discourse are the students' measurable learning outcomes. In discussions on education, there is a tendency to promote the homogenisation of educational practices, such as pleas for general education for the globalising world. Many aspects of the outcomes discourse were developed over time, and a coherent version of that discourse was seen in the 2013 Danish School Reform (Moos 2016b).

In the outcomes discourse, education is constructed along management-by-objective or results lines: The government draws up detailed aims and measures the outcomes, while schools, teachers and students need to learn to answer test

questions correctly. Very often, the curriculum developed in this situation has a scientific structure. Experts know how to attain their ends, and they describe every step for schools, teachers and students to follow in detail. There is a focus on 'back to basics' and 'back to skills', because these can be easily measured.

The traditional governance discourse – that is, the welfare model – advocates for democratic equity and deliberation in society and its institutions, while the competitive discourse builds on central management (i.e. managing by objectives and hierarchies in competitions). The welfare educational discourse builds on individual authority and democratic participation and deliberation for Democratic Bildung, while the competitive discourse builds on acquiring basic skills for employability.

The competitive – and outcomes-orientated discourse and associated practices are subject to more national social technologies than we have ever seen before in the history of education and educational theory. Social technologies are silent carriers of power. They are made for a purpose – often hidden from practitioners – and also specify ways of acting. They point to a non-deliberative practice steered and managed from the top down (Dean 1999).

The PISA comparison has been imported into the European space as an important means of governing education. The programme is a package of standards or indicators for learning, measurements for outcomes and tools for comparing students, schools and countries. This is not unexpected, as a working paper of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has shown (Wilkoszewski and Sundby 2014). In many ways this draft of national governance is valid for all Nordic countries, but with variations (Moos et al. 2016).

4 School Leadership

School leadership can mean very different things. If one takes as the point of observation the Democratic Bildung Discourse, school leadership would mean empowering professionals and students to learn as much as possible and develop non-affirmative, critical and creative interpretation and negotiation competences in doing so. It would also mean that professionals are given the opportunity and encouragement to collaborate with other professionals.

If, on the other hand, one wants to improve a school according to the Learning Outcomes Discourse, the focus should be on the correct and effective implementation of goals set at the national level for national testing and on the international level for PISA comparisons. Experts have described the correct answers to their own questions with the expectation that teachers and students will work towards implementing these affirmations.

We want to discuss the role and function of school leaders in more detail, as we can see how they are unfolding in the interplay between the two discourses. An overview of school leaders' functions can be found in a literature review by Leithwood and Riehl (2005), who discuss four main functions: (a) school leaders interpret external expectations and set the direction for the school by creating shared

meanings; (b) teacher education is more important than leadership for student learning, and teachers need support in this area; (c) teaching and leading take place in an organisation that needs to be restructured and re-cultured to working further towards goals; and (d) managing relationships in the political and parental environments.

The function of setting the direction for the school needs to take into account that schools are working in a political and governmental environment with expectations for work and outcomes. In the Bildung Discourse, there was generally a lot of trust between governance levels: The government trusted municipalities to manage their institutions well, and municipalities trusted schools, and so on. Regulations need only be soft and short because the next layer is responsible, and it works according to the broader culture and norms. This gave school leaders room to interpret legislation and other expectations and negotiate the interpretations with staff for clarity (Leithwood and Riehl 2005; Weick 2001).

With governance through contracts in the Outcomes Discourse, trust is replaced by mistrust and the need for documentation and accountability. This appears when governments issue national standards and measurements in great detail (Moos 2018) or assign a national inspectorate to inspect and sanction school practice (Novak 2018). This is also the case when governance is formed by governing through contracts between all levels in the educational system (Moos 2020 (forthcoming)). Because this gives much less room for manoeuvre and enhancing accountability, it might, paradoxically, make school leaders less responsible in schools (Novak 2018). Instead of interpreting expectations, school leaders implement the legislation and are accountable through social technologies.

The functions of school leaders regarding staff empowerment and support are an issue. The emphasis is on outcomes, which is the core logic in governance and schools, together with knowledge about national competences and the use of educational data such as test results. There is more interest in school leaders monitoring outcomes data than on general educational knowledge and practices. Thus, for a fee, national and international consultancies offer many teaching- and learning- assistance programmes as well as guides.

Both the Outcomes and the Bildung Discourses stress the development of school culture. In the Bildung Discourse, it is often seen as the need to develop collaboration between professionals and students to create inclusive and democratic communities that are open to student curiosity and critical reflections. In the Outcomes Discourse, more emphasis is placed on manuals for teacher collaboration and teaching for tests used to compare student outcomes.

The last function concerns the development and cultivation of relationships with the local community. In the Democratic Bildung Discourse, there is room for discussion and negotiation with parents and local political agents, because there is room for local interpretation of soft legislation. In the Outcomes Discourse, this is replaced by one-way information from school to community, with little time or room for discussions.

5 Our Point of Departure

All of the chapters are written as a result of the October 2019 Copenhagen Symposium: *Fundamental but often forgotten perspectives on/in school and leadership*. This conference was the third of three arranged by the authors. The second conference took place at Oslo Metropolitan University in October 2017 with the theme: *Leading and organising education for citizenship of the world – through homogenisation or communicative diversity?* (Moos et al. 2018). The first of the symposia took place at Uppsala University in November 2014 with the theme: *Educational Leadership in Transition* (Skott and Nihlfors 2015).

We invited colleagues from England (Helen Gunter), USA (Jim Spillane and Cynthia Coburn) and Australia (Neil Powell) to provide an opportunity to compare the Nordic perspectives with assistance from educational research grounded in very different cultures and policies, and they happily accepted. Further details will appear in the Discussion.

Helen Gunter, James Spillane, Cynthia Coburn and Neil Powell acted as keynote speakers and instructors in the master classes, where abstracts from all Nordic education systems were discussed, revised into extended versions, and then developed into full chapters here. Fortunately, Helen Gunter and Jim Spillane succeeded in writing chapters based on their keynote presentation for this volume. Cynthia Coburn and Neil Powell presented their keynotes on the basis of their abstracts but were unfortunately not able to write chapters for this volume. The keynotes were based on the thoughts in the abstracts published in the call for the symposium. These thoughts influenced the symposium and also the chapters in this volume, so it makes sense to refer to them here as aspects of our point of departure (Coburn et al. 2019):

Cynthia E. Coburn: (excerpt) Educational decision making is traditionally conceptualized as linear and rational. In this traditional model, policymakers weigh a range of possible solutions and draw on evidence to weigh benefits and drawbacks of different approaches. In this talk, I discuss the ways educational decision makers actually use research and data in their decision making. Drawing on Goffman's theory of frames alongside theories of evidence use in democratic deliberation, I provide findings from a longitudinal study of US school district's deliberation around mathematics. I focus on the reasons that deliberators marshal to provide support for their claims as they seek to persuade their colleagues, supervisors, subordinates, and the public about the nature of the problem and appropriate solutions.

Neil Powell (excerpt): Reconciling the social inequalities that leadership can precipitate under conditions of extreme societal transition requires engaging with the very foundations of social science theory: the relations between agency and structure; the shaping of knowledge and normativity's and the interplay of power, contingency and practice. Societal transition is not new, however in last decade change indexes suggest that societal transition has accelerated by several orders magnitude. As a result, the enactment of education leadership is increasingly being faced with a set of dilemmas that grow out of amplified uncertainty, controversy and power asymmetries. This can be exemplified by the social inequities that emerged in Swedish schools after the massive influx of refugees in 2015. Post 2015 educational leaders have found that many of the pre-existing norms, routines and practices, originally intended to safeguard the rights of their

students and teachers, have instead, lead to a reproduction and magnification of inequities. Drawing on a body of theory from post normal science, this paper proposes that the praxis of education leadership must increasingly transcend formal educational settings and engage in learning processes with a wider array of stakeholders.

Lejf Moos gave a keynote on the basis of this abstract (excerpt): Doing school is a very complex task for many reasons. The political system focuses expectations and conditions in line with the top-down contract-governance. This causes a narrow focus on learning aims and outcomes and on data guided practices and leadership. […] Leadership professionality is primarily being described, both in school and training regulations, as competencies to 'run a small business' and to comply with the national learning aims/ competencies and measurement of outcomes. Political regulations and discourses forget to acknowledge that schools' 'General Education'/'Democratic Bildung' purpose cannot be described fully and meaningfully by the national standards and test, because they are mainly governance concepts, not educational concepts. Thus, school leaders are left to common sense only in their practice.

These perspectives came – together with abstracts from all participants in the symposium and the discussions in the master classes – to form the basis for discussions of Nordic school leadership education in this chapter and thus for our all over perspectives on the theme together with the themes below.

When we started the project and invited colleagues to the symposium in Copenhagen in October 2019, we had the following thoughts about the theme (emphasis added):

We would discuss phenomena and conditions for schools and school leadership that are often forgotten in educational discourses and policies, but nevertheless are important aspects of educational and leadership practice:

a. Much educational reform is premised on normalising the idea that those who run schools are *leaders* and that their work is *leadership*. We want to critically review the situation and operate on the basis that the people who are required to be leaders, who lead and exercise leadership, are first and foremost educational professionals.
b. National authorities believe in *data driving*: learning, teaching and leadership must be based on solid data including evidence based on general standards for learning and measurements and comparisons hereof. The *reasons* for compiling and using data are often obscure but need to be made known and discussed by researchers and practitioners.
c. If policies, routines and actions are *maladapted* to concrete school settings, leaders are forced to act and make decisions based on their personal agency and expertise rather than existing structures and frameworks. Their actions have effects on contexts outside of school, including intersections of global, local and national education policy.
d. *Relations* between material frames, organisational structures and social relations are important in both educational practice and research because the practical construction of schools as spheres of work and learning is as important as theoretical reflections.
e. Contemporary educational policies are often designed to focus on students' acquisition of basic skills, but schools *also need to focus on* themes like democracy, equity, social skills and communication, inclusion, immigration, sustainability and local cultures.

Six more articles from the same symposium will be published in a special issue (edited by the present authors) of *Research in Educational Administration & Leadership* (REAL, Vol. 5, 2).

6 Nordic Perspectives

School leaders and other school professionals in senior roles face an array of differing expectations, demands and formal requirements (from various stakeholders) focused on the school's day-to-day operations that consume time and garner most of their attention. In Nordic countries – and many other educational systems – educational policy inspired by OECD demands (Pont et al. 2008) often focuses on a view of school leadership grounded in the corporate sector, regarding the school 'as a small business' in terms of legislation, human resource management and financial management, and gives consideration to how school leaders can use performance data and ready-made best practices and 'what works' models of corporate management. These demands are rooted in the illusion that schools must implement national objectives within a framework established by national and municipal authorities.

However, these demands by no means provide a sufficient foundation for professional reflection on and practice of educational leadership. Educational professionals in management positions experience the resulting tensions on a daily basis. Schools and school leadership are subject to a more varied and complex array of expectations from society, culture, local communities, parents, students, history and research. At the same time, the existing buildings and grounds, hierarchies and habits, technologies and societal and cultural visions from both national and transnational agents frame and condition these expectations. Such aspects are not dealt with during training programmes for school leaders, however, and are rarely explored in research on school leadership.

The concept of Nordic or Nordic-ness is contentious: are the political systems similar enough to be included in one concept, or are they so diverse that it does not make sense? Viewed from above and based on a long historical perspective, it is not difficult to find similarities:

> Another key development was the establishment of a safe welfare state. Education for all children was also considered to be the main vehicle for reducing social differences and increasing social mobility in the population. The state was considered to be the legitimate authority to have responsibility for education as a common good. Structurally, the Nordic model consisted of a public, comprehensive school for all children with no streaming from the age of seven to sixteen years. The overarching values were social justice, equity, equal opportunities, inclusion, nation building, and democratic participation for all students, regardless of social and cultural background and abilities. The curriculum plans were mainly defined at state level, and schools and teachers were trusted and respected.… major trends in current school development policies, discourses, and practices in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden since the millennium, and explores how the values of the Nordic model are affected by the new policies. It is argued that the Nordic model still exists as the predominant system for the large majority of Scandinavian children at a national level, but that a number of new technologies aiming to increase the efficiency of teaching and learning are gradually undermining the main values of the Nordic model (Imsen et al. 2016).

Very strong tendencies in the UK and the USA have emphasised a scientific curriculum and focus on national aims and measurable outcomes, with much support from transnational agencies like the OECD and European Commission. Nordic legislation has focused on comprehensive schooling and the Democratic Bildung – or

education for participation and equality. However, participation in international comparative surveys on the outcomes of schooling – such as the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMMS) and Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) – has played an important role in the development of a more goals- and outcomes-based education in the Nordic region. Trends in this transformation of education and schools are supported through the influence of superintendents at the municipal level, and school leaders at the institutional level are increasingly inspired by the global social technologies and governance (Moos et al. 2016).

Frames for Nordic school leadership practice and research are complex in this volume: Sometimes we write about Nordic leadership as a unique phenomenon, knowing, of course, that these countries have separate, distinct leadership discourses and frames. Most of the chapters have this national perspective, but in the symposium and discussion at the end of this volume, we do engage in comparison, looking for similarities as well as differences between systems. To try and span both perspectives – the shared and the individual – we decided to write short analyses of Danish, Norwegian and Swedish school leadership education. The insights from those texts are also part of our point of departure for the symposium and for this volume.

7 Denmark: Professionalism of School Leadership, Lejf Moos

'Doing school' is a very complex task for many reasons. Contemporary stakeholder expectations are diverse: Students and parents have expectations; professionals have their preferences and the political system focuses on expectations and conditions differently. The Danish public sector is heavily top-down and contract governed (Moos 2016a), which causes a narrow focus on learning aims and outcomes and on data-guided practices and leadership. The current school regulations were constructed along these lines, and the regulations for school leadership education also comply with this logic. Formal school leadership training is not compulsory in Denmark, but leadership training providers have for some years offered an optional diploma course in general public management and leadership. This is the only option for school leaders. The act was prepared in close collaboration between the national Government and the Local Government of Denmark (the association of municipal authorities responsible for local management of citizen-friendly institutions and thus the 'school owner'). A new version of the diploma course is currently being launched, but it continues to be composed of a majority of general management modules and a small selection of school leadership modules (Uddannelses-og-Forskningsministeriet 2018).

Two analyses of the Consolidation Act below will show that it is a political paper aiming to build an education programme for outcomes-based school leadership. The

first analysis points out that the diploma has been described as a generic public sector management course. There is only a small focus on the core of leadership for educational institutions. The second analysis looks at one of the standard modules in the course – the personalised leadership module. The findings of these analyses are discussed below in relation to both contemporary education discourses: the Outcomes discourse and the Democratic Bildung discourse.

7.1 Description of the Diploma in Public/School Leadership

An education programme has been created for public sector mid-level managers to gain qualifications. This could include leaders of municipal institutions like schools, elderly-care and child-care institutions or technical departments. It is a 2½-year part-time course (60 ECTS),[1] with a number of seminars over the five semesters. The course is proved by University Colleges with an option for private persons or consultancies to achieve certification and offer these modules. The course is structured as follows:

- Three standard modules (Personalised leadership, Leadership of staff and organisation, Development and co-creation) of 10 ECTS each;
- Dissertation (15 ECTS); and
- Optional modules of 5 or 10 ECTS each for a total of 15 ECTS; the act describes 33 optional modules, of which 6 have direct relevance for school leaders (Uddannelses-og-Forskningsministeriet 2018).[2]

7.2 Blurry Education

Most of these modules – and all of the modules in the Consolidation Act – are designed to provide qualifications for outcomes-based leadership: top-down management by objective and management by outcome, and data-guided leadership for strategy and accountability in a contract-governed educational system (Bovbjerg et al. 2011). The contract is a model for separating goal setting from production and for measuring results. For these purposes, clear and measurable goals/standards and reliable measurements of results/outcomes are necessary.

The neo-liberal model of governance is characterised by diverse combinations of social technologies that fall under three headings (Dunleavy et al. 2005):

[1] The ECTS point system indicates the workload – measured in time – it takes to complete a specific course. The ECTS system equates 60 ECTS points to 1 year of full-time study.

[2] These are educational leadership; school leadership; leading professionals; education, didactics and data-informed leadership; leading student-centered learning; and management and development of quality and evaluation in the Danish primary/secondary school.

disintegration of public sectors into semi-autonomous units at several levels – national, regional, local and institutional – with initiatives that involve private companies and consultancies that enter the broad competition for contracts at each level; relationships between areas are guided by *competition* between providers, and by contracts between levels (OECD 2016), which is followed by *incentivisation*, with rewards based on performance.

Disintegration is seen between levels such as the government, the municipality and the institution. Ministries are fragmented into departments and agencies. The ministry sees itself as a single co-operative (group) with one department and several contracted agencies. Contracts are often negotiated and managed on the basis of a Management by Objectives or Results (MBO or MBR) model. Those models have been criticised for not being effective, efficient or productive, and there are initiatives to construct new models focusing on collaborations between public sector agents, private enterprises and other sectors.

The diploma is described in agreement with the vision issued by the Ministry of Education in a policy paper about the Danish School Reform (Undervisningministeriet 2015). Seven themes were described illuminating the ways the ministry sees school leadership: (1) emphasis on leadership for effective learning in line with the national outcome standards; (2) production of leadership strategies to meet the aims in a professional organisation; (3) leadership based on evidence and best practices in education; (4) leaders ensure teacher competence; (5) leadership facilitates professional collaboration with experts outside schools; (6) leadership develops well-being and commitment to build a professional organisation; and (7) leaders should open up the school to the local community, finding new, valuable learning environments for pupils.

Aims and procedures are clearly described in line with the effective, outcomes-based school policy. It is obvious that schools, as public institutions, need to implement national aims and standards, but they are not asked to interpret or translate them in accordance with local and school culture, values and norms. This is a principal-agent policy: Parliament has decided on aims and standards which schools and teachers will implement and for which they will be accountable, mainly through national tests. A shift in negotiations for teachers' working conditions from teachers' unions and employees to individual school principals – Act 409 (Regeringen 2012) – has caused leadership conditions that reflect the OECD top-down recommendations, as previously described. This has meant a major shift in leadership conditions to a situation that is similar to the OECD top-down recommendations from the Improving School Leadership Project (Pont et al. 2008).

At present, we see another dominant education discourse in Denmark, which emerged from the welfare-state thinking that gained ground in countries like Denmark after World War II and can be called the Democratic Bildung Discourse. This discourse is based on works of theorists like Wolfgang Klafki (2001), John Dewey (1916/2005) and Geert Biesta (2011). This understanding of general and comprehensive education is called Democratic Bildung because the intention is to position children in the world, in democratic communities and societies, in ways that make them competent in understanding the world and other people and in

deliberating with other people (Moos and Wubbels 2018). It is also called non-affirmative education (Uljens and Ylimaki 2015) based on reciprocal relationships and the understanding of the necessity to further the curiosity, creativity and critical sense of students and staff.

In short: Policymakers developing this diploma seem to have forgotten the fundamental *educational purposes* of leadership practice in schools because they are more interested in the educational *governance aims* and accountabilities.

7.3 Personalised Leadership

The diploma is yet another example of policy visions that underscore and emphasise the image of the individual, strong leader at the top. These were expressed by the parties forming the Government – the Social Democrats, Social Liberal Party and Socialist People's Party (Regeringen 2012) – and have been summarised by Elvi Weinreich (2014). Personalised leadership is characterised by:

1. Strength, visibility, professionalisation;
2. Will, ability and courage to take on leadership; and
3. Responsibility for and strength and focus on prioritisation, operation and economy management.

Providers of the diploma may describe structure, content and aims slightly differently. The University College Metropol (now merged with UC Copenhagen) includes as part of the objectives that, upon completion of this leadership module, students must be able to: 'observe, understand and choose his/her personalised leadership in relation to the unit he/she is leading' (Metropol 2016). This description is similar to the characteristics of the charismatic leader, which is essentially leadership through encouraging particular behaviours in others via eloquent communication, persuasion and force of personality. It supports the strong, individual leader, who is capable of acting as the principal in principal-agent relations: The principal leads the agents from the top. The only issue relating to the Danish primary/secondary school that was changed in the Act (concerning the 2013 School Reform) was changing the actor from the 'school can …' to the 'school leader can'. This focus on the leader is a result of the shift in legislation from a Democratic Bildung discourse to the Outcomes discourse in contract governance. The authorities need to have somebody who can sign the contract, who can be held accountable for institution outcomes and to whom a bonus given. Judicially, this can only be one person.

We must, however, look at leadership as influence or power over the people in formal positions. Power is relational says Foucault (1976/1994). Power is the energy, the glue, that sticks relationships together and defines the poles or positions: A person is only a leader, if he or she reaches colleagues and followers, if their actions reach and include other actors, first and foremost teachers. School leaders are part of a group of professionals, who communicate and interact with each other

and their environment in making teaching and all other actions work. School leaders are only leaders.

Karl Weick has argued that organisations need to be changed through organising. It is not important to have fixed structures and bricks: It is important to remember that organising is about communication:

> An organization is "a network of intersubjectively shared meanings that are sustained through the development and use of common language and everyday social interaction." (Weick 1995) quoting (Walsh and Ungson 1991).

Ten years later Weick said it in his own words:

> When we say that meanings materialize, we mean that sensemaking is, importantly, an issue of language, talk, and communication. Situations, organizations, and environments are talked into existence. (Weick et al. 2005, p. 409).

Organisations and positions need to be replaced through organisation and communication. These are not permanent features, but are constantly being recreated through sense-making processes in which participants work to make sense of their situation, relations and practices. Weick points to insights that are also pivotal to education generally. Students need to participate in sense-making communication with each other and their teachers to gain deep knowledge. Learning is social and thus communication is essential (Dewey 1937; Moos and Wubbels 2018).

We often talk about distributed leadership, leadership stretched over several actors (Spillane et al. 2004). As mentioned, leadership professionalism is described by training regulations as competencies to 'run a small business' (OECD 2008) and to comply with the national learning aims/competencies and measurement of outcomes. Political regulations and discourses forget to acknowledge that the General Education/Democratic Bildung purpose of schools (Moos and Wubbels 2018) cannot be described fully and meaningfully by national standards and tests, because these are mainly governance concepts, not educational concepts. Thus, school leaders are left to use common sense in their practice.

In short: Policymakers confuse the aims of school leadership: To them, leadership is not a means for educational processes and interactions, but an aspect of governance and control.

8 Norway: Forgotten Leadership Dilemmas, Jan Merok Paulsen

In a recent volume on new and changing work roles for teachers and school leaders in Norway (Helstad and Mausethagen 2019), Jorunn Møller concluded that 'leading educational institutions have no doubt become more complex and more demanding during the last years. Principals have got new and more comprehensive tasks added to their role as a consequence of decentralization and accountability for student achievements' (Møller 2019, p. 185). Although the perspectives on school

leadership have changed in Norway in recent decades, there remains a dominating understanding that it is 'leadership – or more leadership in one or another form' (Møller 2019, p. 186) that provides the preferred solutions – as a set of 'promising keys' – to the current challenges in Norwegian public schooling. Rooted in this overall understanding of the impact of school leadership – largely in line with the political rhetoric of transnational bodies such as the OECD and the EU – the Norwegian government has allocated massive investments in a series of national school leader programmes organised by the National Directorate of Education and Training (UDIR).[3]

First, the National School Principal Training Programme in Norway (30 credits) was initiated in 2009 by the Directorate, and the programme has been extended to 2020. This is a state-funded leadership preparation and training programme open to application from principals, deputy principals and mid-level leaders in schools. Second, since 2018, the Directorate has launched five supplementary modules, of 15 credits each, covering the following areas: Module 1: School environment; Module 2: Digital learning; Module 3: Law issues; Module 4: Curriculum analysis; and Module 5: Change leadership. All national programmes are compatible as building blocks in master's programmes in educational leadership. Third, in 2017, the government launched a massive funding base, called *decentralised competence development*, enabling local universities to create local and regional programmes in collaboration with municipalities – of which school leadership in various forms is an important element.[4] This latter arrangement is funded by the state and organised by the Regional Governors. Taken together, the Norwegian school institution has been the target for comprehensive investments in school leadership preparation, training and education, which reflects a dominant belief that this portfolio will provide returns in the form of raised levels of student achievement. Furthermore, an explicit purpose of state investment in national training programmes is increasing the recruitment basis for school principal positions. By enrolling mid-level leaders, deputy principals and various subject leaders in the national programmes, the government and directorate aim to solve the recruitment problems for principal positions that has manifested in few applicants for principal positions and an increasing turnover rate – a development that partly also reflects international trends, especially in the USA, where a growing number of people are leaving the school profession (Louis 2019).

[3] For more information, see: https://www.udir.no/in-english/

[4] For more information, see: https://www.udir.no/kvalitet-og-kompetanse/nasjonale-satsinger/ny-modell-for-kompetanseutvikling-i-skole/modellens-fire-prinsipper/

8.1 Influence of the OECD Improving School Leadership Programmes (2008, 2015)

Based on the 2008 Improving School Leadership (ISL) project, the OECD published an analysis of the current challenges of school leadership alongside their policy recommendations (Pont et al. 2008). The image of the school organisation as presented by the OECD is that of an autonomous firm and school principals have to manage the school 'like a small business'. Central leadership issues include strategic planning, data use and monitoring results; the core elements of the 'small business model' are shown in Table 1.

The recommendations discussed in the report cluster around: Increasing autonomy for school leaders; New types of accountability; School leadership training; Leadership roles leading to better student outcomes; Supporting and evaluating teacher quality and Strategic and financial management.

When the OECD launched its ISL programme in 2008, Norway was one of the few countries without a leadership and management course for school principals, as well as lacking clear role prescriptions. In White Paper No. 31 (2007–2008), Norway took some of the recommendations from the OECD into account by establishing a national training programme for school principals. The backdrop was a growing concern among Norwegian policymakers about the quality of school leadership in general, paired with the assumption that the preparation of school leaders was insufficient. Support for this concern was drawn from the OECD TALIS survey in 2008, showing that Norwegian teachers expected their school leaders to provide supervision, guidance, day-to-day support in pedagogical matters and feedback on their teaching. However, the TALIS report showed uniformly that teachers perceived a 'surplus-deficit' related to their demands (Vibe et al. 2008). The Norwegian Directorate then developed a framework for its national principal training programme, built around five curriculum themes: Student learning; Management and

Table 1 OECD perception of school leadership challenges (ISL)

Changes in school leadership roles	Description of preferred strategies
School autonomy	Site-based management: 'Running a small business' Financial management Human Resource Management (HRM) Continuous local adaptation of teaching programmes
Accountability for outcomes	A new evaluation culture Strategic planning Assessing and monitoring student achievements Data use for school improvement External collaboration with partner schools
Learning-centred leadership	Leadership focuses on how to raise student achievement and deal with diversity Standardised approaches to teaching and student learning

administration; Professional cooperation; Organisational development and change and The participants' individual leadership role.

The most stressed of these five areas was the first: the school leader's capacity to influence teachers' instructional practices (Christiansen and Tronsmo 2013). As the programme has evolved, more emphasis has been placed on instructional leadership and distributed leadership, along with leading professional learning communities. The Norwegian National Principal Programme has been externally evaluated by research institutes for each of the cohorts during the last 5 years. The designs conducted for the evaluations were quantitative surveys with multiple measurement points. For example, the students responded to a questionnaire mapping their expectations when entering the programmes; after finishing the programme, the students' perceptions and experiences were mapped, which enabled the researchers to detect gaps related to expected outcomes. A main finding of the evaluations was a high level of student satisfaction in the form of experiencing cognitive learning outcomes, experiential learning with group methods, skills in various methods for leading professional development in schools and increased goal orientation (see e.g. Caspersen et al. 2018).

8.2 Recruitment Challenges to School Leadership Positions

Findings from a recent study undertaken by FaFO, an independent Norwegian research institute,[5] published as a commissioned research report for the Norwegian School Leader Association, suggest that the Norwegian school institutions will face significant recruitment problems in all school leader positions in the next decade (Bjørnset and Kindt 2020). The study conducted a survey among municipal school owners, accompanied by in-depth interviews, and the results showed an alarming thin recruitment basis for principal positions across the entire sector today, which was most severe in the smallest municipalities. The researchers also conducted a survey among a large sample of school leaders, principals, deputy principals and mid-level leaders. They found that the propensity to leave the school leader profession was relatively high among the youngest school leaders in the sample, and conversely, significantly lower among school leaders aged 50 years and older (25%). When examining these two specific findings, it is fair to assume that it will be difficult to replace most of the current pool of school leaders when they retire within the next 15 years (Bjørnset and Kindt 2020).

The study investigated the motivation structure among mid-level leaders to advance further into principal positions. In what must be seen as another alarming finding, from the school authorities' perspective, 49% of the mid-level leaders did not intend to apply for a school principal position. This finding indicates 'broken chains' in the career path of school leadership in Norway. A third finding, exposed

[5] See www.fafo.no

Table 2 Reasons for not expecting to continue in a school leadership position for the remainder of career

Reason	Percentage of the sample
Work pressure	65%
Prefer to try other possibilities/ self-development	46%
Overload of accountability and responsibility	30%
Increased juridification	24%

through an in-depth investigation of a sample of school leaders who responded that they most likely did not intend to continue as school leaders (N = 176), offered insight on this career preference structure; the main reasons this group of potential school leaders do not expect to continue in any leadership positions are reported in Table 2.

As inferred by the researchers, 'additional to the challenge of motivating new recruits to apply for school leader positions, it is evidently a central challenge for young and newly appointed school leaders to find job satisfaction in their jobs'.[6] Taken together, the research report portrays a 'paradoxical picture' of the current status of school leadership in Norway. There are severe recruitment challenges to the school leader profession in general, even after a decade of heavy investment in national school principal and school leader programmes.

8.3 Fundamental and Overlooked Dilemmas Inherent in School Leadership

School leaders are agents in a national discourse of schooling mainly dominated by outcomes from national tests and indicators in the Norwegian Quality Assurance System (NQAS), paired with public attention to Norway's positions on the OECD rankings. At the same time, school principals, mid-level leaders and teachers can all be seen as members of the educational profession, in which they are agents situated in a societal contract binding the profession with loyalty to that contract based on their professional judgment and autonomy (Møller 2019). From this perspective, the leadership mandate of school principals is based on a societal mandate decided by the Norwegian parliament, and, as Møller (2019) has pointed out, this mandate is open for interpretation and re-interpretation in mutual negotiation processes with

[6] For an interview with one of the FaFO researchers, Marie Takvam Kindt, see: https://forskning.no/fafo-ledelse-og-organisasjon-partner/gryende-lederkrise-i-skolen/1632185

stakeholders. It is thus shaped by the social, political and cultural contexts in which the individual principal's work is situated: 'Trust, legitimacy and authority as a leader must continuously be negotiated in the encounters with colleagues, superiors, staff and students' (Møller 2019, p. 190). Dilemma management thus remains a recurrent feature of being a school leader, as has been noted in prior research from the mid-1990s (Møller 1995; Sørhaug 1996). Specifically, school leaders are easily trapped in a network of demands and expectations from different bodies of school governance representing both the state (through national curriculum and legislation) and the local authorities as middle manager in the local civil service (Homme 2008). The argument is made explicit in the FaFo report, which states 'our findings show that it is young people with a short length of service who are either uncertain about remaining in their jobs as school leaders for the duration of their professional career or do not want to do so' (Bjørnset and Kindt 2020).

9 Sweden: The Need for a Professional Training for School Leaders in Different Contexts, Elisabet Nihlfors

The school leader's main purpose is to create the best conditions possible for teachers to enhance learning for all pupils. Although leadership is understood to be the second most important factor influencing education, principal preparation has been overlooked in research. In Sweden, principals, when appointed, are obliged to attend a three-year education programme while working as a principal. The programme is conducted by the National Agency for Education (NAE). The curricula contain information about the law and regulations that should be handled and implemented through the principal's leadership, and the purpose is to guarantee an equal education for all pupils. The extent to which the principal training is research-informed and the impact the training has on the school leader's main goal are unclear, due to the current paucity of research.

All education, at the university level, in preschools and schools, should be based on science and proven experience. This is a way to produce a democratic society built on knowledge. In some areas and subjects, this can be demanding for two reasons: knowledge production is sometimes a huge undertaking and new knowledge can be challenging and even threaten old truths. The changes in society, at home and abroad, make it even more difficult to enact educational curricula in the here and now.

A principal leads many different groups of professionals and needs to have a solid scientific grounding for his or her own work to be able to lead qualified work with others. Leadership is about building a shared commitment and building leadership teams (Wallace Foundation 2008). School leaders work in an organisation that combines a hierarchical model (where the state makes basic decisions about the school) with a bureaucratic model (national authorities and local administration), and they should, at the same time, ensure the participation of a large number of

people (employees, children/pupils) in different types of local communities. Research on, for and with school leaders needs to be multidisciplinary to catch the specific situation for this position. It also has to be critical, to take gender and ethnicity into account and be analysed in different environments based on how it relates to social and democratic values. Research in a Swedish context is lacking in several of these areas, and few school leaders are themselves active in research. If these areas are forgotten or neglected, fundamental questions are difficult to answer.

9.1 Research Overview

The latest overview of Swedish school leadership research was published in a book chapter in 2016 (Ärlestig et al. 2016), which is informed by earlier overviews and adds results from theses, articles and textbooks published between 2000 and 2013. The authors present this recent research under seven headings: policy, governance and inspection; principals' work and pedagogical leadership; gender and principalship; comparative studies; successful schools; communication; and values, ethics, and social justice. Much of the research is based on single cases and takes a qualitative approach. It covers leadership in compulsory schools, but there remains a shortage of research on preschools, secondary schools and independent schools. A few studies are built on the principals' own statements and experiences, while even fewer are based on what principals do and their roles in various processes. Few studies develop theoretical and conceptual frameworks. 'We know little about recruitment, principal training, and its effects. We also know little about whether principals' work differs in various settings (e.g. rural, urban, high schools, independent schools)' (Ärlestig et al. 2016, p. 117). Adding to this is a conclusion from an earlier research overview (Johansson, 2011) in which they note that little attention had been given to how principals are recruited, prepared, selected and socialised into their formal leadership roles in schools.

Traditionally, pre-service preparation and in-service development of principals have primarily been the responsibility of national education agencies and local municipalities. In Sweden, for example, once a principal has been hired in a local municipality, he or she is required to participate in a multi-year, university-based professional development programme that equips principals with the necessary knowledge, skills and tools to carry out their work successfully. Most importantly, these programmes provide time for critical reflection on daily leadership practices and their outcomes. To date, research 'on the efficacy of these training programmes is limited and no extant body of research exists on principal recruitment, selection and socialization' (Johansson 2011, p. 300).

Both the principal training programmes and in-service training have not been analysed in relation to the effect they have on the way the schools are run by the principals. We do not know, for example, if courses in capacity building lead to different role behaviours on the part of the principal. There is a need for studies of different training programmes and their effects. Studies would benefit from having a comparative design and being carried out across different countries (Johansson 2011, p. 306).

9.2 The Swedish National Programme for School Leaders

Even if leadership is understood to be the second most important factor influencing student outcomes, principal preparation continues to be overlooked or neglected. The following two examples highlight important areas to consider when designing an educational course for new principals.

Most principals have experience as teachers, and specific preparation is thus needed to go from the classroom to leadership for a whole school. According to Bush (2018), this involves three phases of socialisation – professional, personal and organisational – which are essential for learning to lead in a specific school. Another important aspect is the difference between being a principal at a large or small school and the school's position in the municipality. Bellamy (2015) thus argues for job-embedded leadership development that can take advantage of the possibility for emerging leaders to develop expertise in instructional leadership in a specific context.

In Sweden, newly appointed principals are obliged to attend a three-year education programme while they work as principals (SFS 2010:800). This programme is run by the NAE and distributed by teams, selected by the NAE at six different universities. The curriculum is clear: the content includes knowledge about the law and regulations that should be handled and implemented through the principal's leadership (NAE 2010, 2019a, b). The purpose of this programme is to give all principals the prerequisites that can guarantee an equal education for all pupils throughout the country. There are 12 distinct goals in the programme, one of which touches upon the democratic values in education (i.e. to develop forms of collaboration for participation and influence for both staff and students). It is unclear of the scientific basis for this programme, as there are no references to research in the document outlining the programme's goals and vision.

9.3 A Swedish Study

Over the course of 3 years, two researchers met and held discussions with 12 principals throughout their participation in the principal education programme (Skott and Törnsén 2017, 2018). The researchers were interested in learning how principals learn and develop professionally. The starting point was the fact that the principals were working as principals while also studying in the programme. The findings showed that the principals' experiences differed greatly, and these experiences affected their learning. The study highlights the importance of context both in research and in the principal's daily life (cf. Hallinger 2018).

Skott and Törnsén (2018) offer a way to visualise the situation around single principles using six different factors: position (principal or deputy); school owner; geographic position of the school; the size of the school; local 'micro-geography' (physical, etc.); and the school population (pupils/parents and teachers). To give an

example: two school leaders in two upper-secondary schools seem to have rather similar prerequisites until one compares the programmes they offer, the background of the pupils and the background of each principal. The results indicate that one principal can be well functioning in one setting but not in another. The principal training is meaningful for most of the principals, as it provides them with an opportunity to meet other principals and to create networks, as well as giving them time to 'step aside' and reflect. Some principals go from having a solid teacher mentality to seeing themselves as principals.

This is one of the few studies that examine national education for principals. One interpretation of their results is that the national programme must be complemented with some other sort of programme to align with the different contexts and experiences principals bring into their work. From other studies we know that principals themselves say that they lack knowledge and skills in areas like student health care, employee issues (HR), economics and alternative organisation patterns (Nihlfors and Johansson 2013). Such areas are not included in the national education programme but are areas where school leaders make decisions and need knowledge to be able to fulfil the goals of the curricula (Johnson and Kruse 2009).

The NAE works with a concept called Cooperation for the Best School (CBS). CBS is offered to school owners who have been judged by the National Agency of Inspection to be in need of support to fulfil criteria determined by the School Law. So far, over 300 schools have accepted this offer. NAE (2019a, b) concluded, in their yearly report, that this support gives the schools and principals a better systematic quality of work, increases the quality of teaching and develops a clearer student focus. CBS is one of several three-year long contributions from the NAE. One question arises here: is there something missing in the NAE's education programme for new principals? This is worth asking as the NAE still has to conduct several projects throughout the country to create more equal schools where all pupils can achieve better results – which is, as such, the main goal for the national programme for new school leaders.

9.4 Conclusion

The forgotten or neglected areas in research on, for and with school leaders are important to bring to the fore. Few principals are involved in research and few have a master's or doctoral degree, which means that they cannot be educators at the university level for the new generation of principals. There might be a possibility soon that all teachers will have an ongoing in-service training at an advanced level for those who want to become a school leader in the future.

All education levels, both at the university level and in preschools and primary/secondary schools, should be based on science and proven experience, which includes the preparation of new school leaders. To educate school leaders based on solid knowledge from independent and critical research is a task far beyond leadership in schools; it is a question of willingness to create high quality education for all children throughout the whole country.

10 Overview of Themes and Chapters

This volume is a result of a collaborative-individual process. Individually written abstracts were interpreted and discussed in the symposium. That was a source of inspiration to the individual writing of full chapters. Editors task was to review and feed back to authors and to collect chapters so they could and form a comprehensive whole. The basis for that has all through the process been described as analysing phenomena or relations that we consider to be fundamental in educational leadership, but that seem too often to be forgotten.

For that purpose, we wrote introduction and discussion and we found that chapters could be compiled under four themes across the Nordic education systems, that made sense: Challenges in policy context and reality: Perspectives on research; Dilemmas in school leadership; Data-informed decision making in school leadership and Impact on school leadership. We describe themes and chapters in combination below.

11 Part II: Challenges in Policy Context and Reality: Perspectives on Research

The first theme continues and deepens some of the research questions that were introduced in this introduction: how research on education and educational leadership is changed over time as results of international and national, political, social and economic movements and changes of contexts. Helen M Gunter argues that the intellectual history of the field of educational leader, leading and leadership continues to be determined by a 'what works agenda' that is enabled by privatised forgetting in Chapter "Forgetting Our Intellectual Histories and the Implications for Educational Professionals". Educational professionals as researchers and/or teachers and/or role incumbents learn to forget and keep forgetting that another way is possible and desirable. Individualised commitment to modernised know-how is evident in identities and practices that demonstrate enthusiastic conformity. Historically this is rooted in 'The Theory Movement' from the 1950s and the development of 'The Corporatisation Movement' from the 1980s, where the abstracted reality of the organisation and the demonstration of required behaviours as accepted. I use the case of T. B. Greenfield's challenge to demonstrate the fundamental fact of plurality in knowledge claims, where in 1974 he gave a paper in which he questioned field orthodoxy by arguing that organisations exist in perceptions and practices of those who form the organisation. Greenfield emphasised the importance of values, and of enabling educational professionals to engage in preparation experiences that helped them to think through realistic cases and strategies. Greenfield's legacy is to remind the field to think otherwise, and his contribution to acknowledging and understanding the human condition means that privatised forgetting is actually pointless.

Merete Storgaard discuss general trends in the international field of educational leadership research in Chapter "Local and Global? Challenging the Social Epistemologies of the Educational Leadership Field". It is, she claims, predominantly a construction of knowledge using functionalistic and normative prescriptive approaches. According to the scholarly critique of this tendency, this leads to a scientific situation whereby educational leadership research is predominantly published within a school – and leadership effectiveness tradition primarily focusing on constructing universal knowledge claims. This book chapter presents perspectives and empirical findings from a study that aims to challenge the dominant social epistemologies of the educational leadership field. The attempt to contribute to future research developments is done by applying a fundamental, but often forgotten relational and discursive power perspective in the international comparative study of school leadership in high achieving schools. This approach elaborates school leadership as a complex, social phenomenon dialectically related to both the institutional and the local context. The leading subject thus enacts policy in the local field in subject positions related to either a neoliberal competition or improvement order. Moreover, the contours of a monodisciplinary academic achievement order emerge internationally in the governing rationales of the school leadership regimes. The analytical findings hereby represent a knowledge contribution that forms a deconstruction of the dominating tendencies seen in a critical mapping of the research.

12 Part III: Dilemmas in School Leadership

The issues for analyses in the second group of chapters are close to leadership practices and the governance relations and the rationalities that guide them. The strong emergence of technical rationality in governance is one subtheme. The human relations between students, teachers and leaders is another subtheme, and relations between governance levels yet a third subtheme. In Chapter "The Press for Technical Rationality & Dilemmas of Professional Practice: Managing Education in a Pluralistic Institutional Environment", James Spillane and Jonathan Sun, explore principal sensemaking about their work in the U.S. education sector, as technical rationalization ideas about schooling increasingly inform and guide educational policy and school reform initiatives. Using a sensemaking framework, they explore the process of on the job professional socialization for two cohorts of new principals in one urban education system. Specifically, examining the core challenges identified by principals over their first 5 years on the job, paying special attention to the salience and persistence of these challenges over time and surfacing a particular sort of challenge - dilemmas. Their analyses show how these dilemmas of principals' practice cannot be solved as they involve roughly equally desirable (or undesirable) alternatives so that choosing one over the other is difficult, if not impossible. Rather, because dilemmas require compromise among alternatives, they have to be managed rather than resolved. Based on their analysis, they argue for attention to dilemma management as a central, if mostly forgotten or ignored, aspect of school

principal practice in an era when problem-solving and evidence-based decision-making have come to dominate the discourse about educational leadership.

Eric Larsson and Pia Scott looks close to the core activities in leadership, teaching and learning in Chapter "Study Environments – A Neglected Leadership Concern". The point of observation is that principals have been identified as key actors for students' performance. Accordingly, how leaders affect classroom activities has also emerged as a research field. One basic argument is that principals should focus on activities that can affect students' learning outcomes. In particular, they should develop their instructional leadership, close to the core activities of teaching. However, schooling does not only consist of classroom activities – students, teachers and other professionals spend a lot of time in school long after the bell has rung. This chapter explores the potential benefits of considering schools not only as places for knowledge production towards academic achievement, but as a whole study environment that includes multiple spheres of activity and learning. They argue that, while the inner sphere is given a lot of leadership attention, there are several reasons for principals to also discover what we call the outer and middle spheres of schools and education. The authors consider the complexity of the local school context as the fundamental but forgotten, or unexplored, aspect of school leadership.

Cecilia Bjursell and Annika Engström extend these analyses in Chapter "Horizontal Structures – A Fundamental and Forgotten Perspective in School Governance?" They look into the relations between school level and municipal level in governance. It is of fundamental importance that school superintendents engage in the vertical dimension of school governance within the national education system, but have these vertical structures been given too much attention, to the detriment of horizontal organisational structures? The chapter is based on material collected at a workshop where 52 Swedish school superintendents were in attendance. A conclusion is that superintendents are faced by fields of tension in both the vertical and the horizontal dimension of organisational structures. Three types of tensions were identified in relation to: (i) administrative questions, (ii) the students' experiences, and (iii) organisational units. It is furthermore suggested that the superintendents see themselves to be the 'victims' of these tensions. They introduce the concept of 'unmanaged spaces' to address the need for competence to act in a constructive and responsible manner to diffuse the above-mentioned tensions. Their hypothesis is that far too narrow a focus on-line management and governance documents has resulted in superintendents who are unable to properly manage collaboration in complex situations. This state of affairs is somewhat worrying in a government agency that is expected to be essential to democracy and should pursue ways of working where coordination and collaboration are fundamental.

13 Part IV: Data-Informed Decision Making in School Leadership

Education policy has for years focused attention on data in governance of and in schools with inspiration from transnational agencies like the OECD. The chapters in this group discuss the relatively contemporary urge for data and evidence in leadership and at the same time not forgetting basic educational values, norms and technologies. In Chapter "The Struggle for Data – A Ghost Goes Through the World – A Data Ghost", Finn Wiedemann, highlights some of the often neglected or forgotten practices in data-driven or data-informed school leadership, since many forms of data or knowledge in this field are not classified as such, including implicit, personal, narrative or qualitative knowledge. Nevertheless, those forms of knowledge are important for professional reflection as well as for developing educational leadership. Educational leadership is a social and cultural praxis based on values not a technical discipline. Too often, that fact is forgotten. This study focuses on a selection of key publications on the Danish educational system that have been published in recent years and use discourse analysis to identify their central ideas and assumptions about data-informed leadership. The increased focus on data in school are interpreted in line with comprehensive changes in society. A specific understanding of knowledge, research and the development of school and society walks hand in hand. It is argued that a pragmatic position is the most useful perspective for taking advantage of the opportunities recent technological developments have made possible. The pragmatic perspective is useful because it is aware that a qualitative, pluralistic and dialogue-oriented understanding of data is essential.

In Chapter "Principals' Decision-Making for Organizing the Educational Organization", Tina Bröms argues that over the past several years, there has been a greater demand for accountability of principals for the education they provide. A call for data-driven decision in the context of the accountability movement have had an increased focus for raising standard in education. This requires principals to engage in complex decision-making for educational improvement. It is a fundamental but often forgotten perspective that the principals develop knowledge about how interpretation and analysis of data should be made in order to make valuable data-informed decisions. This study is part of a larger project and form a contribution to provide a picture of what actually happens when different levels in the steering system in Sweden make sense with common data. The study contains observations of dialogue about the results, which is a conversation between a superintendent and a principal about the results of the schools. A tentative result is that the outcome data in the dialogue about the results were overrepresented and rested foremost on quantitative data. Focus was usually on statistics on the results of the national test in relation to the students' final grade. A presumption is that the dialogue about the results is data-driven approach to measure student outcomes.

Renata Svedlin argues in Chapter "Local Evaluation Practice as a Mediating Tool", that *t*he accelerating supply of data for comparisons and evaluations is neglecting consideration and attuning as being fundamental aspects in education

and Bildung. No more obviously can it be seen than in studying the approaches to school-based evaluation. In following the narration of local-based evaluation, evaluation is analysed as a mediating tool in between functions of leadership and of development of school. In the local context, the municipality carries out a dual leadership practice, where school administration and residential democracy is intertwined, – an aspect that separates it from the characteristics of national evaluation. Thus, local-based evaluation mediates in aspects of reflecting over educational aims and goals and the current local situation. Another dimension is the adjustment and attuning of actions of development with respect to the municipalities existing fields of organisation. A forgotten perspective is detected in leadership responding and adjusting to local circumstances, to correspond in meaning making and being sensitive to changes at the local level – a potentiality where school-based evaluation is well equipped to be an element.

14 Part V: Impact on School Leadership

Included in this theme are discussions and analyses of emerging roles and functions; of university-influences on education and the pivotal role of well-being and trust. First, Hedvig Abrahamsen and Kristin Helstad explore the development of a new leadership role in an upper secondary school in Norway in Chapter "Leadership in Upper Secondary Schools: Exploring New Leadership Roles and Practices". It concerns the emergence of a leader role situated between the middle leaders and the teachers, described as a 'teacher leader'. School leadership is regarded as fundamental for ensuring quality in teachers' instructional practices, and school leaders should be active players and initiators of development work. However, a forgotten perspective regarding research on the emergence of new leadership roles is considering the traditions of the teaching profession where teachers historically have worked autonomously and independently. Drawing on focus group interviews the findings in this study reflect the complexity when new leadership roles are emerging from within the school. The teacher leaders are positioned as change agents in their departments, but they strive to make meaning of the new role and their tasks and responsibilities. Both the middle leaders and the principal express uncertainty about how to support the teacher leaders, and they struggle to define how to get involved with and to follow up the work of the teachers. Consequently, both the teachers and the school leaders work in a blurred landscape of roles and responsibilities that are constantly changing.

Guðrún Ragnarsdóttir and Jón Torfi Jónasson discuss organizational analyses in Chapter "The Impact of University Education on Upper Secondary Education Through Academic Subjects: School Leaders' Perceptions". When making this kind of analyses in particular of schools, some scholars have argued that the lack of an institutional perspective notably diminishes the understanding of the dynamics of educational change. Thus, the theoretical notions of institutions are also important when examining change in schools. This chapter explores the impact of the

university level on upper secondary education in Iceland using data from interviews with upper secondary school leaders. The study indicates that the university level controls high-status academic subjects in upper secondary schools through both the normative and regulative pillars of institutions. The study also provides compelling evidence of how the university level is seen to reinforce existing institutions in the guise of high-status academic subjects. However, the authors have identified signs of higher education gradually losing some of its institutional hold, particularly when considering tasks such as the use of new teaching methods and modes of assessment. The study provides valuable information on the controlling and direct, but non-formal, influence the university level has on upper secondary education. This, paradoxically, emerges very clearly, even though it is normally not very visible; a fundamental issue that is often neglected, even forgotten.

Ulf Leo, Roger Persson, Inger Arvidsson and Carita Håkansson argue that the link between expectations, health and well-being is a fundamental and often forgotten perspective in school leadership in Chapter "Well-Being, Based on Collective Trust and Accountability, as a Fundamental and Often Forgotten Perspective in School Leadership". The principals' work situations contain many possibilities that may evoke unclear, or negative outcome expectations, which may trigger the physiological stress response and associated feelings of stress and discomfort. These expectations are companioned with signs of an imbalance between personal resources and the challenges faced, preventing the principals from achieving their full potential for both their own benefit and that of the organization. A contributing factor to the orchestration of the principals' stressful expectations is the introduction of more layers of leadership. This has led to a clash between different forms of accountability; distrust and uncertainty about what mandate, responsibility and accountability the principals have in their schools and, in the process, created a feeling of inadequacy among the principals. The study is based on nine group interviews conducted in three cities. It seems like a healthy and well-functioning balance between different external expectations, challenges, resources, trust, control and different forms of accountability are health-promoting factors. Well-being will certainly be an important factor in recruiting new principals in the near future.

15 Part VI: Discussion

It appears that many Nordic experiences and concepts developed up until the 1990s are being contested, if not pushed into obscurity. New international ideas of public governance and education are now centred, built on neo-liberal economy ideas and global market-place logics. As mentioned in the beginning of our concluding chapter, this is often described as a struggle between the discourse of learning outcomes and the discourse of Democratic Bildung.

Most chapters give detailed examples of concepts and discussions of fundamental educational values in school leadership, educational governance, educational professionals and use of data and the contestants from technical and economic

models like the contract; technologies like international comparisons and accountabilities of outcomes measures. The discussions here explore the purposes and contexts for education and leadership and therefore analyse transnational and national influences. Soft governance in the form of such things as social technologies are being used more often today than ever with the consequence that changes are made invisible and less easy to interrogate and challenge. Many valued, fundamental aspects of Nordic education and leadership risk being subdued and forgotten by global marketplace technologies.

The education of the next generation can be seriously compromised when school leaders' sense making and trust building is substituted by control and mistrust; when teachers professional reflections and judgements are replaced with generic standards and accountability systems; when students' need for comprehensive Bildung and agency is undermined by a focus on testing that measures a narrow set of outcomes; when the context of teaching and learning is reduced through technocratic organisation and preconstructed programs. It seems obvious to educational professionals that the risks facing human kind are serious. The fate of humanity is tied to the visions for and processes of schooling and the contributions brought together here provide much guidance for reflection and action.

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Part II
Challenges in Policy Context and Reality: Perspectives on Research

Forgetting our Intellectual Histories and the Implications for Educational Professionals

Helen M. Gunter

1 Introduction

A fundamental and often forgotten perspective is that the field of educational leaders, leading and leadership has a long and distinguished history of plural intellectual resources available to support professional decision-making. However, educational professionals who undertake organisational roles in schools and universities continue to be provided with 'one best way' models of 'best practice' that are characterised by 'what works' requirements enabled by 'no excuses' claims regarding 'getting the job done'. Much is demanded, with public approbation and rewards for success, and condemnation and contract termination for those who do not deliver preferred outcomes. There may be a range of available knowledge traditions and ways of knowing in the field, but the dominant focus is on technical delivery training and accreditation means that professionals are denied access, and work in organisational and systemic cultures where thinking and studying otherwise is regarded as eccentric and even oppositional. In order to examine the proactive suppression of professional and research access to their/our own intellectual inheritance I take a specific case of Greenfield's work on humane values. I deploy a novel conceptualisation of *privatised forgetting* where I examine the intentional narrowing of the types of knowledges and legitimate ways of knowing for educational professionals. Modernisation requires *a* professional and *the* profession to forget what they know, and to ensure that they do not engage with their own intellectual histories in ways that allow them to know differently.

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2 Remembering Greenfield

What, how, and why do people do what they do in organisations? This is an enduring question for those who practice and do research in educational organisations, and Thomas Barr Greenfield as a professor who turned his back on the knowledge orthodoxies promulgated by professors of educational administration, requires us to challenge the organisation as an 'it' based on reality outside of the perceptions and practices of those who work within. Greenfield matters because the focus on decision-making and the interplay with activity within contextual settings continues to fascinate and frustrate (Gronn and Ribbins 1996). The field has abundant evidence from professionals themselves regarding doing the job (e.g. McNulty 2005), where some present their prescriptive approaches (e.g. Goddard 2014). There are ethnographic studies of professionals at work (e.g. Southworth 1995; Wolcott 1973), along with in-depth interviews about doing their work (e.g. Hall 1996; Ribbins 1997), and professionals working in partnership with researchers reflecting about their work (e.g. Evans 1999; Ribbins and Sherratt 1999). It is out of the scope of this chapter to provide a detailed presentation and analysis of this major body of knowledge, but working on intellectual histories of and for the field for the past 30 years I have identified that despite plurality there are dominant knowledge traditions located in the positivist and behavioural sciences, with espoused purposes of providing an educational professional with *the* model for organisational efficiency and effectiveness (Gunter 2016).

In modern parlance this model is summed up by the 'what works' and 'best practice' agenda and claims, and is evident in waves of energetic modernisation: first, the *Theory Movement* in North America from the 1950s, based on organisational systems theory together with the identification and measurement of leadership behaviours (e.g. Griffiths 1979; Halpin 1958); and second, the globalised *Corporatisation Movement* from the 1980s, based not only on 'systems' and 'behaviours' but also on militant pro-private ideology that espouses the replacement of public services by private providers led by an entrepreneurial leader who may or may not be an educational professional, and where leading and leadership are leader-centric (e.g. Astle and Ryan 2008). Both 'Movements' produce animated claims about the best way of leading and leadership by controlling and eradicating professional experiences and knowledges developed by doing the job as the leader, and by marginalising and deeming irrelevant independent primary research located within and theorised by the social sciences. Greenfield's contribution was to question the Theory Movement, where field history over the past 50 years shows that the dominance of the unfolding Corporatisation Movement means that he interrupted but did not defeat the knowledge production claims located in the drive to produce one best way of running a school or university.

The debate that Greenfield is famous for instigating goes to the heart of the question that opened this section regarding people in organisations. As noted the Theory Movement was rooted in project work and debates in North America from the 1950s onwards, and by the 1970s the possibility was raised that it was now actually dead.

In 1974 Greenfield gave a paper at the University of Bristol session of the International Intervisitation Programme (IIP) hosted by the UK field (see Hughes 1975), where he challenged the ontology and epistemology of the knowledge traditions and purposes of the field (for accounts see: Greenfield 1974, 1975, 1978b, 1979a; Macpherson 1984). Greenfield (1986) argued that "the study of educational administration is cast in a narrow mould" (p 57), where he questioned the reality and predictability of a 'group mind' in a system, where he presented an interpretive and co-constructivist ontology and epistemology for thinking about the reality of decision-making. For Greenfield, organisations exist in the subjective phenomenology of the individual and are an invented social reality:

> "If we seek to understand the world as people experience it, we come to see that they take the world very much as they find it. Each lives in his own world, but he must deal in that world with others and with the worlds they live in. Organizations come into existence when we talk and act with others. We strive to communicate with these others, to touch them, to understand them and often to control them. Generalisations and metaphysical justifications that tell why things are as they are or how they might be different and better are totally irrelevant to them… People do what they have to do, what they can do, and what they want to do. They have opportunities to act, to remain silent, to maximise their pleasure or to forswear it, to prevail upon others or to submit to them. Concrete specific action is the stuff organizations are made of. In both their doing and their not doing, people make themselves and they make the social realities we call organizations" (Greenfield and Ribbins 1993 p 53).

Notably the 1974 paper together with a wider range of publications (see Greenfield and Ribbins 1993) challenged the dominance of systems theory (Greenfield 1978a). Greenfield recognised a tension between the organisation as the "objective structure" and the "human action" of people doing their job (Greenfield 1973 p 551), and proposed that organisations can be best understood as anarchies (Greenfield 1982).

The Greenfield challenge was in essence twofold: to the substantive field knowledge claims, and to those who had invested a life time in producing them. Greenfield defied the intellectual orthodoxy based on the values-free management of Simon (1947), where he argued that "we must understand that the new science of administration will be a science with values and of values" (Greenfield 1986 p 75). In doing so he was challenging the control of knowledge by professors who had knowledge convictions through positivist science where:

> "their theories and methods enable them to know administration in a way mere practitioners never could. The reverse assumption now seems a better point of departure: administrators know administration; scientists don't" (Greenfield 1986 p 75).

In that sense, as Hartley (1998) argues, the pursuit of what we now call the 'what works' agenda presents a legitimate fidelity between theory and practice that is impossible and undesirable because "there can be no truth, only truths for the moment, contingent and provisional" (p 154). Consequently, the implications for professionals in the 1970s and currently is huge, where the focus should be less on training according to codified prescriptive models of 'best practice' and more on preparation where values require a focus on the purposes of education and the context in which children are growing up (see Winkley 2002, and with Pascal 1998). Such 'preparation' is based on a "humane science":

> "…I think the most valuable form of training begins in a setting of practice, where one has to balance values against constraints – in which one has to take action within a political context. I think only somebody who has acted in that way is ready for true training in leadership. In that context I would be Platonic, not striving to make philosophers kings, but kings philosophers, are artists maybe. To make them more humane in any case, more thoughtful of their power, more aware of the values it serves or denies" (Greenfield and Ribbins 1993 p 257).

Preparation requires different approaches to professional learning, where access to thinking with and through the arts helps to focus on values, particular through "three-dimensional characters and situations found in poetry, film, novels, novels and plays" (Harris 1996 p 489, see Ribbins 2006).

3 Forgetting Greenfield

Greenfield had begun to think and write about field knowledge production and claims earlier (e.g. Greenfield 1973), and questions had already been raised from within the Theory Movement community before the 1974 IIP conference (e.g. Griffiths 1979). However, it remains the case that the ideas in the 1974 paper are one of the significant contributions to what was described as "intellectual turmoil" in the field (Griffiths 1979), where Greenfield (1980) is explicit about the different positions regarding science and how organisational practices can be known about and for.

The impact of Greenfield's ideas can be seen to be productive. Professionals have noted how his work on values has made a difference to their understanding of practice (e.g. Evans 1999; Macmillan 2003b), and researchers have noted how important his work has been to how the field approaches the complexity of values (e.g. Ribbins 1994, 1999), and how individual researchers have framed their projects (e.g. Park 1999). A range of important landmark texts have presented and engaged with Greenfield (e.g. Dolmage 1992; EMA 1994; Gronn 1983, 1985; Harris 1996; Macmillan 2003a), and his debates with Hodgkinson (e.g. Greenfield 1991; Hodgkinson 1993) have enabled philosophical matters to be pursued. In addition, his contribution is recorded in the debates about and for the intellectual history of the field (e.g. Evers and Lakomski 1991; Mitchell 2006; Oplatka 2010), with recognised impacts on understanding the relationship between values and processes and outcomes of decision-making (e.g. Lakomski 1987; Starratt 2003). However, a brief entry into field outputs shows that project reports (e.g. Leithwood et al. 2006) and major textbooks that speak to the field as researchers and practitioners do not engage (e.g. Hoy and Miskel with Tarter 2013, list Greenfield and Ribbins 1993 in the Bibliography but Greenfield is missing from the Name Index). Influential texts note Greenfield (e.g. Leithwood et al. 1999), while others 'decorate' (e.g. Gold et al. 2003) or do not engage at all (e.g. Stoll and Fink 1996). What has happened?

A benign reading of absence or tokenistic referencing is that Greenfield's name may have disappeared but his ideas have not. For example, Gronn (1994) notes there was a lot of fuss about what Greenfield said even though it was well known, and it could be testimony to his legacy that his ideas are so normalised that readers of his work might "wonder exactly what all the fuss is about" (229). Research with UK field members who were at Bristol and/or witnessed the aftermath regarded Greenfield's paper as 'pushing at an open door' (Gunter 1999). In the early 1970s field members in the UK were establishing research and postgraduate programmes in higher education, and in order to do that field leaders not only networked internationally, but also had to establish what was distinctive about the field in ways that would enable it to be legitimate both to the university and the professional (see Baron and Taylor 1969; Hughes 1978). According to Baron (1980) the 1974 paper may have challenged the Theory Movement orthodoxy at Stanford, Chicago and Alberta, but in the UK academics where "uneasy with the formidable research apparatus of the North Americans and reluctant to acknowledge its achievements" and there was a cultural resistance to this research "by practitioners happy to seize on any vindication of intuitive judgement" (p 18). Indeed, the knowledge production traditions outside of the Theory Movement accepted the idea of questioning and debates about knowledge production described by Gronn (1985) as Greenfield's "intellectual pilgrimage" or in his own words: "a groping towards understanding, not a uniform and logical line of extrapolation" (Greenfield and Ribbins 1993 p 269).

A less benign reading of the response to the 1974 paper speaks to the intellectual health and conduct of the field, whereby very loud oppositional messages where sent out regarding what happens when orthodoxies are questioned. As Bourdieu (1988) says;

> "no groups love an 'informer', especially perhaps when the transgressor or traitor can claim to share in their own highest values. The same people who would not hesitate to acclaim the work of objectification as 'courageous' or 'lucid' if it applied to alien, hostile groups will be likely to question the credentials of the special lucidity claimed by anyone who seeks to analyse his own group" (p 5).

Bourdieu's description was lived by Greenfield. In his reply to a symposium of journal articles debating his contribution, he talks about his realisation that his call for thinking and reflection was not ontologically and epistemologically possible for the "tidy minded" (Greenfield 1978b p 90):

> "I have watched with surprise and fascination the furore which began with the presentation of my paper at the IIP in 1974. A Thursday, I think it was, in Bristol. People ask me if the reaction bothers me. No it doesn't. The slings and arrows of academic warfare are not unpleasant. Somewhat like St. Sebastian, I suppose, I'd rather be in pain as long as the crowd understands what the ceremony is about. But it is hard to be written off, ignored or buried" (Greenfield 1978b pp 86–87).

In a later interview Greenfield spoke about how he was seen as a heretic:

> "In terms of the nature of knowledge, I've turned my back on the people who were my mentors in educational administration. I have found myself going back to ways of knowing and bodies of knowledge that I had encountered much earlier. On coming to educational administration I concluded that my earlier knowledge was useless, or more exactly, valueless.

> This paper recognises that those other bodies of knowledge are relevant and are powerful. That they are not just supplements to what social science lets us understand, but are truly unique insights in their own right. Partly because they are not paralysed by the only way of knowing recognised in positivistic social science" (Greenfield and Ribbins 1993 p 256).

The critique became an attack on his professional and private lives. Greenfield was not invited to the 1978 IIP, and he was accused of stereotyping science and hence promoting "a Luddite view" towards technology (Willower 1997 p 447). Others focused on exposing his private life (Greenfield 1978a) or questioning his "administrative competence and the business about losing the leadership of the Department started to come up" (Greenfield and Ribbins 1993 p 247). He "felt beleaguered and alone" and he describes how:

> "the paper began to be talked about in unscholarly ways. I discovered something about my field: its pettiness, its calcified and limited vision, its conventionality, its hostility to dissenting opinion, its vituperativeness" (p 247).

The abuse of people who think differently continues in the field, whereby debate is replaced by private and public denunciation. This can take place in regard to doing the job in schools (e.g. Blackmore 1999) and/or higher education (e.g. Mertz 2009), through to disseminating research about and for the job, where two examples will suffice: first, Barker (2010a, b) demonstrates how school effectiveness claims are flawed, and is publicly censured (Sammons et al. 2010); and second, Hargreaves (1999) dismisses Fielding's (1999) work on radical collegiality by declaring the irrelevance of "disputatious forms of intellectual engagement" that may be "a jolly good game" but are actually unhelpful to professional needs (p 46).

This marginalisation of scholarly debates as esoteric is illustrative of what Bates (1988) describes as "parodies of scholarship discussion" (p 3), where he goes onto recognise forms of scholarly laziness in the field. Instead of debating field knowledge claims it seems that the ontology and epistemology of the Theory Movement continued to dominate in the decades following the 1974 paper because of "disillusion and ennui" (p 6). If there had been intellectual turmoil it had dissipated, where "complacency is a more apt description than turmoil" (p 7), and where Bates (1988) goes on to argue that this is "a field content with the contemplation of a further 25 years of drift and disillusion" (p 8). Those like Greenfield who had ideas that they wanted debating either remained in the field but sat "at separate tables" (Hall 1999 p 164) from those who provided one best way answers for professionals, or relocated and established education policy scholarship where social science contributions to understanding and explaining professional practice where developed (e.g. Grace 1995; Smyth 1989). In reviewing the collection of writings as a life's work in Greenfield and Ribbins (1993), Rizvi (1994) notes the death of Greenfield in 1992, and as the "*enfante terrible* of educational administration" (p 120) he did have "a strong band of supporters, among whom I included myself". He goes on to say:

> "and although I did not always agree with him, I regarded his writings as always searching and creative, as always challenging and provocative. With his death, we have lost a most astute, articulate and passionate scholar working in a field that is not widely known for these intellectual virtues" (p 120).

It seems that the problem for the field is that Greenfield stands out as a thinker in a field where there are not many thinkers and where the disposition to think is rendered irrelevant.

The ongoing reworking of the positivist science of the Theory Movement (e.g. Lakomski 1987), and Greenfield's (1991) recognition that this form of knowledge production "continues to flourish under the more acceptable name, management science" (p 3), means that the 1974 challenge has a complex legacy. There are those who have been inspired by his work and it continues to be evident in the questions and issues raised in research and practice (see Gunter 2016), but it is also the case that there are two main problematic trends. The first is that much that is written and used in professional training is codified as if 1974 never happened, and the second is that values issues are subjected to a form of damage control through the use of a benevolent gloss of 'autonomy', 'empowerment', and 'teamwork' that is sprayed over field outputs and training sessions. For example, Hartley (1998) has identified how systems theorists appropriated values through the idea of culture and so made the 'what works' approach seem humane and liberating at the same time as denying authentic professional agency. This continues today where the field embraced a number of anti-Greenfield, pro-values inclinations: first, the rationality of the school as a unified 'it' (e.g. Caldwell and Spinks 1988) enabled through "exhilarating leadership" (Caldwell 2006); second, the professional biographies of educational professionals as entrepreneurs who 'make a difference' (e.g. Astle and Ryan 2008); and third, the adoption and hybridisation of business models in order to secure improvement and effectiveness (e.g. Gray and Streshly 2008). Importantly, Greenfield's work stands as a prescient warning to the field, where he argued that:

> "…logical positivism offers us a shrunken view of the world. It offers a methodology for manipulating reality so as to control it, a methodology that promises more than it actually delivers. It ends up hiding more than it reveals" (Greenfield and Ribbins 1993 p 256).

The 1974 paper challenged the structuring of control and a denial of activist agency, and while others in more modest ways have kept reminding the field about this (e.g. Gunter 1997; Thrupp and Willmott 2003), it remains the case that the debate about utility and relevance for professionals has been captured by those who promote the control of professionals over the veracity and materiality of what it actually means for those professionals.

Such capturing has been enabled by successive generations of field members who work in schools and universities who have been complicit in the forgetting of Greenfield and the ideas that pre- and post-date him. While I have used Greenfield's contribution as a case study, it remains the case that his is not the only work that is forgotten as irrelevant or demonised as dangerous (see Smyth 1989). Furthermore, while educational professionals may be regarded as entitled to have access to their own intellectual history, with opportunities to engage with and even reject thinkers such as Greenfield, the possibilities for doing this have narrowed. This takes place in a range of ways, either through pre-packaged training that does not connect with ideas, debates and professional biographies in knowledge production, through to the censuring of thinking otherwise as unprofessional (see Gunter 2012, 2016).

This situation cannot be fully laid at the door of the Theory Movement, because the legacy of this knowledge production has been seized and reworked for purposes that are beyond the organisational functionality of a school. The Corporatisation Movement is much more ambitious in scale and aspiration, whereby the focus is not so much on providing a predictive science of organisational behaviours and systems but is about evoking science combined with common sense change imperatives in order to justify reforms that are dismantling democracy and public services. What is distinctly corporate is how the organisation is unified through: first, the framing of a compelling vision and mission that elevates autonomy above individual and shared interpretations of what it means; second, the adoption of a form of leadership that is rendered elite, out of reach but also desirable for those who want to lead or follow; third, the segregation of customers through brand and how access to the brand is controlled by corporatised organisational leaders (see Gunter et al. 2018). What makes this a 'movement' is the vibrant brutality of change, where in effect the 'movement' is not a coherent or consistent programme of change, but is made up of a range of localised 'bottom up' and globalised 'peripatetic' ideas and practices that are packaged, carried and promoted by compelling commercial knowledge actors (from business, schools, universities, think tanks, and governments) who provide and legitimise what is relevant (Gunter et al. 2017; Gunter and Mills 2017). Such knowledge actors enter into and exit from government, some through coups (e.g. Chile, see Carrasco and Gunter 2019); some through democratic mandates (e.g. US, see Ravitch 2010, 2014). This Corporatisation Movement displays success because like the Theory Movement its participants cannot and do not want to think and do otherwise, but unlike the Theory Movement its participants are involved in the eradication of public education from educational services. It is an outcome and a contributor to privatised forgetting, and it is to this that I now turn.

4 Privatised Forgetting

Educational professionals and researchers are privatised individuals and each is required to forget that there is another identity that is possible or even desirable. It is not that educational professionals are actually required to forget Greenfield's contribution *per se*, but that the wider hinterland of knowledge production in the field is intellectually barren. For example, agency for educational professionals in England is structured through the legitimacy of the private that has a number of features: first, decision-making regarding the purposes of education and the role of the professional within pedagogy and assessment takes place in depoliticised private arenas that are "*at one remove*" (Burnham 2001, p 128, original emphasis) from the teacher or headteacher, and are located in the 'head office' of the school place provider and/or the 'homes' of the school place consumer, or are actually nowhere because there is no longer any viable public scrutiny (see Gunter 2020); and second, the professional's engagement with privatised decisions is premised on the private enactment of "possessive individualism" (Macpherson 2011), whereby

effervescent forms of corporate entrepreneurialism and brand loyalty feature as data-determined empowered and autonomous professionalism. For example, the conceptualisation of success is based on a refusal to accept or retain teachers who do not produce the correct type of performance outcomes (Courtney and Gunter 2015).

Integral to how the private works within privatisation is the endemic requirement to forget. The professional has to accept the model of identity and practice that is provided by being employed by a trademarked school place provider inter-related with the market segmentation of consumers that the provider is targeting. For example, there are now between 70 and 90 different types of schools in England (Courtney 2015), where restructuring from publicly accountable local authority schools into academy schools run by Multi Academy Trusts has resulted in some headteachers actively developing their privatised dispositions (see Daniels 2011; Hughes 2019). This has not happened at once, but over time individual headteachers have positioned in ways that combine damage limitation with corporatised advantages (e.g. McGinity and Gunter 2017), while others navigate a complex policy terrain regarding the conversion of a school into an academy (e.g. Rayner and Gunter 2020). In addition, access to plural knowledge is limited by either condemning postgraduate study as irrelevant or accessing safe sites of study where master's degrees are awarded on the basis of not knowing, particularly through focusing on 'problem imperatives' with 'up-to-date' references. The challenge for remembering is that in order to assent to and integrate with the vision and mission of the provider, and meet the needs of the purchaser, then the professional has to present a compatible version of the self in order to technically fit the segregated school through the production of the right type of data (e.g. examination results, and value added calculations) and be acclaimed as fitting in through the production of an approved of reputation and approach (e.g. deportment, dress, language, accent, credentials).

Forgetting operates in a range of ways: (a) *categorising:* identity is causally determined by market consumerism, where a school deemed 'failing' can be variously closed, merged, or rescued with a new name (and buildings, staff, students) that eradicates collective histories through a focus on brand loyalty; (b) *performing*: competence is causally determined by data, where the professional is only as good as the latest set of numbers, and so the focus is on performance related pay calculations and/or contract renewal/termination; (c) *developing*: capability is causally determined by those who know better and who give approval to particular forms of experience, whether that is the individual entrepreneur or faith organisation that 'owns' the school, and/or the company that is bought in to provide training, and/or the consumer who requires their exclusive needs to be met; (d) *voicing:* communication is causally determined by systems and processes that require know-what, know-how and know-why, where staff have to be on message, and exchanges are controlled through a 'there is no alternative' logic to the vision and mission; (e) *remembering:* knowledge is causally determined by visioning, where product development requires a focus on the interplay between an imagined past and future in ways that speak to customer aspirations, and hence school uniform, behaviour and faith are interconnected with up-to-date work-ready technologies. These five

processes produce role models whereby headteachers and CEOs not only forget but aspire never to remember that it used to be different and could be again (see Hughes et al. 2019).

How and why privatised forgetting is taking place is related to analysis of democratic retreat through the dismantling of public systems and cultures (Gunter 2018a, b). Modernisation through privatised provision of school places, the idea of parental choice for accessing those places, and a responsive profession that delivers an approved curriculum has meant that the ideology of the personal-contract (commercial, faith, philanthropic) as trumped that of the social-contract (citizenship). The concurrent denunciation of inclusive and skilled professional identities with investment in exclusive and desirable forms of leader, leading and leadership has promoted fabricated histories and futuring mythologies (Courtney and Gunter 2020). We know that education policy publicly requires researchers to be 'on board' and to provide 'what works' evidence, but we also know that knowledge actors within and external to government are resistant to evidence that contradicts ideological proclivities (Gorard 2018). There are useful dishonesties that provide protection, not only through unsubstantiated claims that the segregation of children and professionals is beneficial, but also that reforms that exclude children from a school because their parents/guardians are not savvy consumers are actually in the interests of those parents and children (Gunter 2018a). What is taking place is a restoration project of the private, and so in effect education in England is regressing from a site of democratic development to that of privatised deal-making. While I have primarily focused on examples from education policies in England, it is the case that these trends are in evidence in other systems (e.g. Au and Ferrare 2015; Carrasco and Gunter 2019; Gunter et al. 2016; Gunter et al. 2017) and are enabled by globalised companies and knowledge actors (Gunter 2016; Gunter and Mills 2017).

It could be argued that privatised forgetting has the potential to unlock the intellectual curiosity of educational professionals, not least through accessing the plural traditions and purposes of knowledge production in order to bring productive meaning and practices to leaders, leading and leadership. Notably Greenfield's claims about how organisations exist in the interpretations and practices of people has the potential to enrich such thinking, particularly by giving recognition to the individual's private views about what is unfolding. However, Greenfield may focus on individual interpretations that create organisations, but his analysis does not celebrate or legitimise individualisation. His struggle for a humane science is relational where transparent value sharing and debate matters most. This may well be the opportunity for re-remembering Greenfield as a resource to enable professionals to think and act their way out of the current predicaments that the Corporatisation Movement is generating. Intellectual activism and practice are exposing the negative outcomes of change that do enter the public domain (e.g. Saltman 2012). For example, this can be about children who wake up to find that the school they expect to go to that day has closed down and this is the second time it has happened to them; or parents who realise that parental choice is a myth because they have learned that schools choose children, and they learned the hard way because their children have been off-rolled due to the danger of their examination results damaging the brand; or headteachers

who are exposing the impact of austerity cuts on the provision of the curriculum and opportunities for inclusive learning; and whistleblowers who are making public the corruption involved in private decision-making in head offices that are at a distance from communities that the school is meant to serve (Gunter 2018a). Re-engaging with Greenfield's challenge may well act as a bulwark against the normalisation of disposability of children, families, communities and professionals. However, as Arendt (2009) has argued recognising and making decisions located in values-based judgements is insufficient to prevent, counter or reverse such authoritarian trends. Educational professionals need a plural intellectual history with a range of resources that enable them to not only do the job in ways that value people, but to be activist in their engagement with the purposes of education (Wright 2003).

5 Conclusion

Addressing the question: 'what, how, and why do people do what they do in organisations?' remains valid, and what Greenfield's contribution has done is to give recognition to how and why ideas and meanings constitute the organisation as professional practice. The Theory Movement popularised the idea that those outside of practice know better, and that power can be neutralised and accepted through a science of behaviours that separate facts from values, and organisational systems from human agency. Greenfield recognised that there is:

> "a mistaken belief in the reality of organizations has diverted our attention from human action and intention as the stuff from which organizations are made. As a result, theory and research have frequently set out on a false path in trying to understand organizations and have given us a misplaced confidence in our ability to deal with their problems" (Greenfield 1975 p 71).

In saying what he said, Greenfield's work remains a vital counter and an alternative ethical stance to the problem-solving technologies that have infected educational relationships in classrooms through to organisational purposes. However, a combination of hostility and lazy scholarship has prevented the field from taking these ideas forward, where the question I have posed has been interned by the Theory Movement, and its modern equivalent of the Corporatisation Movement. The search for the science of predictive organisational rules as a 'movement' of and for 'theory' has been reworked and developed for the purposes of corporatised entrepreneurial entryism where the 'movement' is focused on dismantling and replacing public services and professionals under the banner of efficiency, effectiveness, and improvement. There are huge consequences of this for those who take on organisational roles in schools and universities, and it has been encapsulated by Greenfield (1979b) who argued that:

> "some people invent ideas that give shape and meaning to their experience, others borrow ideas to understand themselves. And many have little or no choice as others' ideas are forced upon them in the same way that the air surrounds them. They must breathe the air or

> suffocate; so must they accept others' ideas or break through them to another atmosphere, to other ideas, to a new reality" (pp 97–98).

What privatised forgetting does is to normalise the acceptance of particular ideas in order to survive. However, the necessity to break through into a new reality is emerging as those who have taken on leader roles in schools and universities recognise that the models they are required to adopt are suffocating them. For example, while England may have rejected the Theory Movement it has become a laboratory for the Corporatisation Movement, and where the worst effects are being exposed by public campaigns led by children, parents, communities and researchers (Gunter 2018a). Following Ryan (2003) it is the case that people – at the heart of the Greenfield agenda – are fighting back against the certainty and simplicity of the school or university as a rational and orderly 'it'.

There are at least two lessons we might take from this. The first is for those who do primary research as members of staff and/or as students in higher education, where there is a need to recognise and engage with plurality in our scholarship. Positioning around the identity and practices of field erudition would enable basic research skills to act as a counter-weight to privatised forgetting. As Ribbins (2003) argues just as Newton recognised that he was "standing on the shoulders of giants" then so should we through how we locate and engage with Greenfield (p 54), and other researchers in our intellectual histories. The second is not only for researchers but for educational professionals and wider publics who live and work in the evocative present. Ultimately the Greenfield legacy is to recognise that people may not know of him or his work, but his ideas are core to what it means to be human in relation with other humans, and hence cannot actually be forgotten.

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Local and Global? Challenging the Social Epistemologies of the Educational Leadership Field

Merete Storgaard

1 Introduction

Global knowledge solutions within the educational governance field are diffused across nations and translated into educational systems through different policy borrowing processes arising from fast capitalism and globalization (Møller 2017; Carney 2008). In the travelling international and neoliberal ideas, educational leadership is often constructed within a universal and normative- prescriptive approach (Uljens and Ylimaki 2017). As known from international comparative leadership and governance research, there are still significant socio-cultural and institutional differences in how educational leadership is both constituted and historically embedded (Moos 2009). Understanding educational leadership as a phenomenon in modern, public organisations, and moving our understandings beyond a dominant 'what works' tradition (Steiner-Khamsi 2013; Møller 2017), therefore demands scientific approaches, where fundamental, but often forgotten, perspectives are included.

The exploration of a fundamental, but forgotten, power perspectives in educational leadership research in this chapter, is based on selected findings from an international comparative study of school leadership in two high achieving schools in Denmark and Ontario, Canada (Storgaard 2019b). It is initially investigated through a discussion of the dominant knowledge constructions and methodological approaches displayed in a critical mapping of research in the field (Gunter and Ribbins 2003). Subsequently, I will extract the overall findings from an international, empirical leadership study that is inclusive to a fundamental power perspective. The extracts highlight how taking alternative paths in the field both conceptually and methodologically (Gunter 2013), can deconstruct the dominating universal

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knowledge claims specifically by highlighting how school leadership in high achieving schools is a local and a global phenomenon dialectically related to the institutional context. Finally, I will discuss both the analytical advantages and the limitations of this approach, in order to bring attention as to how changing on the methodologies may contribute to the scientific understandings of e.g. the relation between educational leadership and institutions.

2 Educational Leadership as Constructs of Knowledge

As mentioned in the introduction, the purpose of this mapping of the field is not to make an exhaustive review of the existing knowledge in the field. Rather, the intention is to investigate the dominating configurations of knowledge that characterises the studies within the research field, by forming a defined historical 'snapshot' of the existing research field.

In constructing this 'snapshot' of the field, I have conducted systematic searches in international scientific databases, leadership handbooks and encyclopaedias. Arising from meeting the empirical field with the display of power formation in the social leadership relations, made it necessary to include research that not only focussed on effectiveness-studies of '*school leadership in high achieving schools',* but also on institutional and governance dimensions. Therefore, I conducted broad systematic searches in the international database Eric and Education Research Complete. My searches are defined by a broad search string including the words: *leadership, management, administration OR successful, high achieving, effective OR power, neoliberalism and governance AND school*. Furthermore, I have included articles from handbooks, encyclopaedias and relevant peer reviewed books related to the educational leadership field. Lastly, I made a broad search using a single Danish search word, 'skoleledelse', in the Danish database 'forskningsdatabasen.dk'; a database that includes all peer reviewed and non-peer reviewed work written in Danish for both the scientific and the professional field. I have narrowed down my search to the period of 2003–2014, which is a historical framing based on studies of the national and provincial policy- and reform development in both Denmark and Ontario, Canada.

The searches, after excluding overlapping references, resulted in 166 references. These were coded by the use of Nvivo 11 Pro, and the inductively developed categories are inspired by professor Helen Gunter's mapping strategies within the educational leadership field (Gunter and Ribbins 2003). This mapping strategy analyses the knowledge production in the field, taking a critical position in understanding the constructed categories as both historical and ideological knowledge constructions. In the following section, I will discuss the configuration of the existing research landscape as seen in the distribution of coded references related to categories of both methodological and epistemological perspectives. Here I will focus on both what is included – and consequently also what is either excluded or forgotten in this historical time.

2.1 Educational Leadership Research and Its Dominating Figures

The analysis of the dominating epistemological and ontological positions shows – with 85 references – a tendency of knowledge constructions predominantly being related to the 'school effectiveness tradition'[1] and studies related to the 'what works' – genre (Steiner-Khamsi 2013; Møller 2017). These leadership effectiveness studies produce knowledge claims about the most effective leadership practices, viewed in causal relation with the academic results of students. Furthermore, the leadership effectiveness references are predominantly related to the leadership understandings related to transformational and instructional leadership. Examples of this include "How Do Principals Really Improve Schools" (DuFour and Mattos 2013), "Seven Strong Claims about Successful School Leadership" (Leithwood et al. 2008) and "Student Centered Leadership" (Robinson 2011). The normative approaches in these leadership theories positions both leaders, the professionals, and the organization within a goal rational, social order and forms understandings of educational development as a technical or instrumental matter. The references related to the school effectiveness tradition is primarily based on empirical analyses from Anglo-American curriculum-based school systems, although there are also studies from Turkey (Gumus and Akcaoglu 2013), Cypres (Pashiardis and Savvides 2011) and Denmark (Qvortrup 2014). Furthermore, the effectiveness focus is, in a few studies, also covering other educational dimensions of effectiveness according to the students' academic results. This is seen in studies focusing on e.g. implementation of reform policy or digitalization, and the development of an inclusive learning environment.

Connected to the effectiveness perspective, 50 references represent empirical perspectives where 'ontologism' is a focus. This perspective refers to studies, where the individual leader, the principal, and their practices, behaviours and personal traits, are studied in order to gain insight into the most effective practices in relation to school development and improvement. These studies, i.e. the study of what effective leaders are and what they do, offer many models and suggestions of successful leadership skills and competencies, which covers specific curriculum knowledge as well as personal traits like openness, honesty, high expectations, flexibility, empathy and engagement. In general, the research landscape seems to be dominated by logical empiricism as epistemological purpose, which is a claim that is also supported by Scott Eacott and colleagues (Gunter and Ribbins 2003; Eacott 2010, 2017; Thomson 2017). Furthermore, the dominating field of '*effectiveness*' is supported by 55 references primarily focusing on the individual leader; the school principal. Interpreting the dominating figures of the knowledge landscape therefore points to the idea of the principal as an organisational entity and a human being that posits

[1] When I refer to the 'school effectiveness tradition', I refer to research with a logical empiristic character that are specifically focusing the construction of objective or evidence-based knowledge about effective pedagogy or educational leadership.

more qualities, abilities and talents than most people. Furthermore, the individual leader is also positioned as a leading subject with determining importance of the results and effectiveness of the school.

Only a few studies are centered on understanding how school leaders and teachers construct meaning and interpret their relational sociality. This is, for example, seen in Nordic case studies in the international comparative research project 'International Successful School Principal Project' (ISSPP) (Day and Leithwood 2007). In spite of these case studies' relation to the earlier mentioned 'school effectiveness tradition', the studies imply other directions. For example, the studies concerned with the contextual dimensions of school leadership, take both the historical, pedagogical and institutional development of the school system into consideration, when constructing insights into the social sensemaking processes of the principalship. The concept of *successful* is also elaborated as a broader concept, by defining successful as a phenomenon that defines school leadership, which is effective in developing the school as a democratic sociality. These national case studies are also part of international comparisons employing qualitative approaches, which forms deeper insights into national context constructions by the study of differences and similarities among nations (Moos and Johansson 2009).

2.2 Critical and Alternative Approaches

The final dimension I would like to elaborate on from the mapping of the field, is research focusing on critical and alternative approaches displaying neoliberal governance features and it's structural determinacy of educational leadership. This dominating tendency, which in other critical state of the art reviews are considered a conservatism in the field (Eacott 2010), can be observed in 32 references predominantly taking a critical sociological position. These studies investigate the challenges that arise for principals and teachers (and their respective room for professional judgements) in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia and Chile arising from neoliberal education governance and market-oriented reforms (e.g. Heystek 2004). A few other critical studies also investigate the amount of stress among principals in special schools in Ireland and tensions and dilemmas in school leadership in Tasmanias 'Successful School leadership Project' connected to neoliberal educational reforms (Edmunds et al. 2008). As exceptions to the dominating tendencies, there are three studies taking alternative approaches. One investigates school leadership in a follower centered perspective (Crippen 2012). Here school leadership is a phenomenon based on intersubjective relational constructs, where the professionals are participating in the mutual construction of legitimacy in formal leadership. Two other studies centered on the study of discursive and relational power focus on leadership teams and the enactment of micro-political negotiations or influencing strategies based on soft power forms which are indirectly mediating student academic performance. As elaborated in this mapping of the field, relational and discursive power is included in the field, but generally within a conservative approach – either

connected to the school effectiveness tradition, or a tradition displaying neoliberal structural determinacy.

I have now discussed the dominating features of the research landscape and have elaborated on the most dominating dimensions with the purpose of pointing to the elements in the social epistemologies of the field that are not being payed sufficient attention to. To develop my argumentation on how to form an alternative methodological approach to the study of school leadership, I find it necessary to engage in a critique. Here, I will specifically challenge the tendency seen in effectiveness studies of the individual, heroic principal employing functionalistic approaches. Furthermore, I will discuss how to include institutional dimensions in studies of the field without structurally determining the field.

3 Challenging the Dominating Fields in the Landscape

According to theory of sensemaking in organisations, the study of the individual principals' practices, personal capacities and traits, is the result of a scientific romance (Weick 2007). This, in turn, is based on a powerful romanticising of the principal's power to make improvements and changes in the organisation – and often changes that benefit the powerful people in society. In this type of research, there is no scientific attention to leadership as intersubjective and social constructions of legitimacy. This means, that the understandings of leadership within the studies of the individual, heroic principal's best practices, will not fully create an opportunity to understand leadership as a phenomenon in democratic and modern societies. In democratic institutions leadership decisions are co-constructions of legitimacy, therefor school leadership presuppose the individual leader *power to* influence as opposed to having *power over* the professionals (Pedersen 2004). Furthermore, research on leadership and management in the neoliberalised public sector and the modernisation of the public education governance, also displays a tendency where the traditional, bureaucratic organisational structure is transformed into self-organisation and self-governance with historical movements going from government to governance (Pedersen 2004; Moos 2016). The neoliberalisation of the education sector has hence created other constitutive conditions for school leadership, and leadership can thus no longer be understood through the lens of a sovereign power perspective, as seen in earlier, historic times (Foucault 1983).

Studies of educational leadership in modernised, democratic public organisations, I argue, should be conceptually developed so that it is possible to gain insight into leadership as dialectical and intersubjective processes centered on legitimacy, and the power to influence the governing and hegemonic understandings. This argument challenges the dominating approach of studying the individual principal, and instead 'zoom out' and include both formal leaders and professionals in empirical work. Furthermore, the consequence of the changes in modern organisations arising by neoliberal governance movements, also points to the empirical necessity of understanding the self-governing and self-managing members of the schools as

co-enacters of education policy from multiple sociological levels (Ball 2000, 2012). This means, that the conservatism seen in the tendency of structural determinism in the critical sociological approach of studies of neoliberalism (Eacott 2010), also has to be challenged. As policy-enacters, they will not only be restricted, but at the same time also be positioned as active agents who are constructive of the social reality and historical change in the empirical world.

And last, but not least, the study of educational leadership could be developed according to the tendencies in modern organisations in two ways. First, by moving away from studies of what can be directly observed as effective practices, and next by developing the study of subjective constructions of meaning in school leadership. Here, I argue, an empirical study could benefit from focusing on the (1) dialectical connections between both the epistemological positions of the subject through the study of the discursive sensemaking, and (2) by taking a deontological position and investigate how the participants are made subjects through the discursive power behind the historically hegemonic understandings dominating the schools and systems. The dialectical approach will then connect the social processes of leadership to the institutional sphere and make connections between the sociological levels visible. Hence, the approach will create an opportunity to gain insight into the social complexity of the empirical world and make new contributions to the field.

4 Analytical Perspectives and International Comparison

To operationalise an empirical approach that is able to capture school leadership as a phenomenon related to neoliberal education policy in times of globalization, I have based this study on post structural understandings of the reality as discursively constructed and embedded in historical discourses. This approach investigates the subject field as a governmental, governance phenomenon by contributing to the critical sensemaking approach, a new approach within organising and sensemaking theory (Helms Mills et al. 2010). The analytical approach is developed to understand leadership as social and relational governance processes by combining a sensemaking, and discursive power perspective and a governmentality perspective (Foucault 1983; Fairclough 1992; Weick 1995; Dean 2010). This analytical approach understands educational leadership as a coupling phenomenon, where the intersubjective sensemaking and power processes are mediating policy. The constructed meanings as discourses and discursive orders, forms the rationales that governs the future fields. Thereby, sensemaking becomes an analytical approach to understand leadership in schools as a governance phenomenon embedded in neoliberal and governmental governance tendencies seen in modern education (Gunter et al. 2016; Moos 2017). Furthermore, the study embeds the analytical approach within an international and comparative empirical setting, investigating the research field in Denmark and in Ontario, Canada, as policy webs (Winton and Pollock 2016). The use of a critical, comparative case approach combined with a sociological case selection strategy, which in turn is based on a functionalistic approach to

'comparability', creates an alternative method to trace the phenomenon horizontally across times, fields and spaces (Bartlett and Vavrus 2017).

By taking this approach, I challenge the social epistemologies of the research field. Thus, I am now able to highlight analytical findings from an international and critical comparative study of school leadership in high achieving schools, which forms a deconstruction of the dominating tendencies. By applying some of the fundamental, but forgotten perspectives, I can now make the invisible in school leadership visible. This analytical process will give insight into the locally constructed historic, hegemonic rationales that governs the sensemaking in school leadership in the two high achieving schools. To start with a fundamental dimension, I will begin by framing school leadership as regimes of governance in their contextual and historical governance relations.

5 School Leadership as a Historical Governance Phenomenon: Two Cases in Comparison

The analytical findings in the international comparison between Denmark and Ontario, Canada as historical, educational/institutional policy webs, reveals the way in which Denmark and Ontario have launched combined reforms of their governance systems by introducing various neoliberal governance logics at various speeds. These governance reforms, which were introduced in Ontario in 2003, and a decade later in Denmark in 2014, forms a similar governing order by applying aims of the reforms, which are relatively identical. Moreover, both educational governance systems make the schools accountable for a percentual increase of the academic performance within a restricted set of disciplines, such as mathematics and literacy. However, the two educational systems are presently, displaying different variants of neoliberal governance and marketisation of their school system. This is seen in the balancing of centralization and decentralization, and the use of standardisation in education. The Danish school system organise and govern the schools through decentralisation, which is supported through the free school choice and financial allocation based on the number of students. This is not the case in Ontario, where centralisation is a dominant form of organising (Flessa 2012).

The situation of the historical reform in the two policy webs, constitutes the point of departure for the current empirical situation, which emerges as discursive processes between formal leaders and professionals working in schools. In Bøgeskovsskolen, a high achieving school in the years 2010–2015 (Storgaard 2019b), the financial frame for the school (as defined by the politicians in the municipality), has been sent to the local school boards for political debate. The 600 students, the 50 employees, the principal, the department head, and a clerk, are therefore in a time of the school year, which entails a lot of political awareness. Furthermore, the school is in the process of implementing a new leadership structure inspired by new public management. This entails coordinating teachers and

local decentralization, along with a strong emphasis on self-managing teams and professionals. In Obee Tower Public School, a high achieving elementary school in the years 2009–2014 (Storgaard 2019b), the 31 teachers are writing progress reports for the 600 students. The progress reports are one of three yearly report cards, which are a governing instrument defined by Ontario Ministry of Education that holds students and families accountable for the academic results of the school. Furthermore, the principal and the vice principal (the two formal leaders of the school), has just started the process of school improvement planning. But, as a point of change in the direction of decentralisation governing decisions, the school's performance goals are no longer centrally defined. Instead, the leadership team, the POR-teachers (teachers with coordinating responsibilities), and the school community, are working on developing local, authentic goals for the academic achievement of the students.

5.1 A Monodisciplinary, Academic Performance Discourse in School Leadership

In both cases, school leadership as a governance phenomenon constructs a monodisciplinary, academic performance discourse as configurations of governance that emerge in the active meaning constructions of leaders and teachers. This dominating discursive order is in both cases expressed as the purpose of education, and in both school leadership regimes, the monodisciplinary academic performance discourse is predominantly focusing on results in literacy and mathematics.

In the school leadership regime of Bøgeskovsskolen, Denmark, the dominating governance order is a monodisciplinary academic performance order related to a neoliberal order of competition. Constructing the legitimate purpose of education, this discourse positions the monodisciplinary academic focus as the legitimate rationale. It is enacted discursively by both the formal leaders and the professionals, through an interdiscursive reference to the Danish school reform and its policy goals (Undervisningsministeriet 2013). In the discourses of the participants this can be seen, where the professionals of the school are made collectively accountable for making the students become high performers: *"We are put in this world to make students learn as much as possible"* (Principal, Bøgeskovsskolen, Denmark). This is a governing understanding, constructed through positioning the professionals as subjects, who has a moral call and societal obligation for the performance of the students. Furthermore, the dominating purpose is interrelated to a dominating competitive order where the aim at Bøgeskovsskolen is not only to make students learn. Rather, the purpose is to make the students the highest academic achievers, in competition with both the municipal and the national performance levels.

The dominating competitive order formed in school leadership at Bøgeskovskolen, is constructed through a relational order of *local top-down governance.* This social order forms a hierarchical, relational sociality, and it is enacted through proactive

performance management in the formal leadership positions, where the academic performance of the students is the legitimate purpose of education. Here, the relational discourse of *trust,* forms a disconnection in the loose-coupled organisation between formal leadership and teachers, which in the governing school leadership regime forms an ambiguous sociality with discursive struggles of power. School leadership as a governance phenomenon in this high achieving school, is therefore both constructive of a social organising where the monodisciplinary academic performance order is supported through formation of a governmental self-governing sociality in a decoupled organisation. And, at the same time, the neoliberal performance management approach, supports a strong focus on results in the professional sensemaking by the ongoing leadership control where the professionals are made accountable through a system of support and punishment in school leadership (Ranson 2003).

5.2 A Monodisciplinary Academic Performance Order in Broader Relations

In the school leadership regime in Obee Tower public school, the dominating monodisciplinary academic discourse order is related to a broader competence discourse and global educational ideas, than in Bøgeskovskolen. The dominating understanding of the purpose of the school can be seen in the following quote from the vice principal:

> So for me ahhm student achievement is the biggest goal and why we are here to move students along to make sure we are doing the best we can for our future leaders to make sure that they are academically sound and that they are ready for the future, make sure that they are prepared as individuals ahhm…so I think that my role as an administrator in any school that I go to is to make sure that we are preparing our students for the future to make them those global learners. (Viceprincipal, Obee Tower Public School)

As displayed in the constructions of meaning in this quote, the academic performance of the students is the governing rationale, "*the biggest goal*". The purpose is to prepare individual students for the future, by making them academically sound, but also by making them "*global learners*". In this citation, the vice principal enacts an intertextual reference to the international idea of a global set of competencies as outlined by the OECD (2013). Becoming a global learner or a future leader, I therefore interpret as processes of accountability that not only aims at mono-disciplinary achievement, but also competence development related to the need of future markets and economies. Moreover, the discourses in school leadership in Obee Tower Public school, forms a bureaucratic *improvement* order related to centrally standardised governance ideas. Here, the pedagogical purpose is enacted within the *improvement* order in accordance with a given set of progression standards, and the task for the educators and the leaders is" *to move students along" (Vice-principal, Obee Tower Public School, Ontario).* In this way, the purpose of education in this

school leadership regime is not locally defined goals and rationales based on professional assessments of the students' needs. It is ideas and rationales connected to both provincial and global policy ideas, which connects understandings in school leadership at the micro-sociological level to both the global and transnational levels.

The school leadership regime in Obee Tower Public School enacts a centralized, bureaucratic form of organisation, and a proactive, close coupling between formal leadership and teachers. The hierarchical sociality appears in a relational power seen in a *guidance* and *supervision relation* and the discursive order of *love*. The improvement order of the governance system is mediated through positive meaning constructions and a sense of happiness among the teachers. In general, school leadership in the two cases are in a state of change. Governance is therefore enacted via discursive negotiations and struggles of power to indirectly influence the self-governance of the teachers. This is enacted within a similar, dominating purpose as seen in the monodisciplinary academic performance order. But in the Danish school leadership regime this is constructive of a hierarchical social order related to a neo-liberal order of competitiveness, which connects the local policy-enactment to national policy – and indirectly global education policy tendencies (Undervisningsministeriet 2013; OECD 2013). This kind of relational constructs is also emerging between the local level of school leadership in Obee Power Public school, and both the provincial and the transnational policy level. But instead of forming the social reality through local hierarchisation in school leadership, the dominating academic performance purpose of education is emerging in relation to a centralized improvement order.

6 Displaying the Institutional in 'School Leadership'

To fully make the social complexity of school leadership as a governance phenomenon in high achieving schools visible as processes connected to an institutional context, I would like to elaborate on the discursive types (Fairclough 1992), enacted in policy situations in formal leadership. The institutional differences in the subject positions can be understood through the analysis and interpretation of the findings seen in the following display:

Display: Comparative subject positions enacted in formal leadership (the primary cases)

Bøgeskovsskolen, Denmark	Obee Tower Public School, Ontario
Strategic commander	Counsellor
Businessman	Servant
Manager	Bureaucratic manager
Punisher	Support and helping position
Proactive	Charismatic seduction

Bøgeskovsskolen, Denmark	Obee Tower Public School, Ontario
Decision maker	Close friend
Omniscient narrator	Supervisor
Competition order	*Improvement order*

As presented in this display, there are more differences than similarities in the subject positions that are enacted in formal leadership in the two school leadership regimes. For example, the critical sensemaking analysis shows a tendency to position the leading subject in the Danish context in relation to a neoliberal competition order. In this position, the leading subject enacts both strategic political and proactive positions connected to market logics and economic management in a private company. An example of this is seen in the enunciative modality *businessman*, where the principal strategically negotiates the employment conditions for professionals, who are available with reduced pay due to illness in earlier positions. It can also be seen in the *strategic commander* position, where the formal leader is able to enact an idealised position as a leader, who struggles against the local politicians in order to save the school and the employees from budget cuts. Furthermore, the formal leader enacts a powerful position, with the power to hire employees who can support the school's position in the competition order:" *We allow ourselves the luxury, when we are a popular school for people to work at, that we pick and choose as we want. So, we simply hire the best. And nobody gets mad at us, when we sack those who are not"* (Principal, Bøgeskovsskolen, Denmark). School leadership enacted as performance management in a *mono disciplinary academic competition order* is in the school leadership regime at Bøgeskovsskolen an institutional position, that (similarly to a sports manager) can *hire the best*. And, as seen in the text, it is an institutional position who can also manage the school through the enactment of punishment by making the employee redundant or by re-allocation.

The enacted subject positions in formal leadership is constructive of a different relational sociality in Obee Tower Public School related to Ontario as a centralized system. The improvement order that emerged in this case-study, was constructed through the enactment of a leadership position within a restricted area of autonomy. As seen in the following text, the centralized and standardised governance system constructs a leading subject with a sense of a restricted autonomous identity: *"it's almost like I'm a franchise for the government"* (Principal, Obee Tower Public School). In the improvement order, the formal position is enacting centrally defined strategies as ministerial conducted social technologies, here verbally constructed as franchises and the positioning of the leading subject as a *servant* to the system. The formal leadership position therefore takes other forms than the proactive and strategic commander position in the Danish case. Instead, it emerges through a *counselling* position and as a *helping* position, which supports the professionals in fulfilling the centrally defined performance demands and pressure of accountability. This is done through the enactment of the discursive type *close friendship,* and as connected to the earlier mentioned discursive order of *love* through a *charismatic seduction* position related to pastoral power formation (Foucault 1983).

In a further elaboration that includes qualitative findings from two more school leadership regimes, the phenomenon of school leadership emerges as a type of governance that shows a tendency of being dialectically related to the national policy web as either an order of competition or improvement. The Danish policy web constitutes school leadership as a governance phenomenon within an order of competition, in which decentralisation and the competition position involving a free choice of schooling embeds formal leadership in a highly autonomous and strategic leadership space. School leadership is a competition phenomenon embedded in ambiguous discourse orders, which balance totalisation and individualisation in various ways. The consequence is that school leadership in Denmark, in the two cases, seems to construct relational power both through democratic deliberation and low hierarchical sociality, but also the reverse. In addition, the purpose of governance may also occur within a broad discourse of cultural and social formation and academic education, or, as empirically elaborated in this chapter, within a delimited monodisciplinary performance discourse order. Ontario's policy web, on the contrary, constitutes school leadership within an improvement order, where the empirical findings includes comparative findings from two cases. In this order, school leadership is constituted as a mediation position and a concealing position. Governance, which is enacted in school leadership, conceals the centralised bureaucratic power and its extensive and detailed policy governance. This is evident in the construction of a support, assistance, or learning relationship, which makes everyone morally responsible for the organisation's goals. In organisations in which it is not possible to mediate governance by caring and building close relationships, the bureaucratic order is revealed and creates counter-discourses and powerlessness. The aim of governance is enacted primarily within the monodisciplinary, academic performance order, in which formal leadership is a pastoral phenomenon of power in a restricted room for leadership.

7 Challenging the Social Epistemologies of the Educational Leadership Field

As shown in the analytical findings of the international critical comparison, 'school leadership in high achieving schools' can be understood as a social and complex phenomenon, which in several aspects are sensemaking and power processes enacted in relation to the historical institutional contexts. At the same time, the similarities that emerge in the international comparisons, also give profound qualitative insights into school leadership as a governance phenomenon that are not only constructed in, and constructive for, the local organising. It is also an organising and sensemaking phenomenon, which through intertextual references in school leadership connects the local micro-processes with both the national reform policy level, powerful global ideas (OECD 2010, 2013), and tendencies of international test based accountability (Verger and Parcerisa 2018). In this respect, the analytical

findings point to 'school leadership' as an institutionalisation phenomenon and as policy-conversion processes, that results in international governance ideas 'sliding' into local relational constructs. This is seen in the policy enactment processes in school leadership, where powerful sensemaking is constructive of rationales of truth and a relational sociality, which forms a basis for an ongoing implementation of powerful discourses from more sociological levels (Moos 2009; Storgaard 2019a, b).

The analytical findings based on analytical perspectives within fundamental, but forgotten perspectives, forms a deconstruction of the dominating knowledge claims in the research landscape. Specifically; addressing the educational leadership field by not taking a functionalistic and effectiveness approach, and by moving away from a romanticised construction of the changing powers of the individual principal, creates new insights into the field. The results of this, I will argue, is beneficial in more ways. First, this approach has the potential to understand educational leadership as a phenomenon related to institutional dimensions. School leadership hereby becomes a policy conversion function, which enacts the dominating, historical ideas embedded in the institutions. Methodologically, this is also a tendency that is seen in contemporary educational leadership research, which (to a higher degree than in the more classical approaches), is oriented towards studies of the more implicit rationales, which are governing the epistemological assumptions in the social field (Eacott 2010). As an example of this approach, I see this new tendency displayed in the discursive institutional approach to the studies of school leadership (Schmidt 2008; Uljens 2015). This analytical direction investigates how global discourses forms the local understandings through translation processes by stakeholders at policy level. This way of thinking has, at this time, inspired Nordic scholars within the educational leadership field, and it is now possible to see the contours of a scientific approach, which aims at connecting global discourses, curriculum ideas and educational leadership at the national policy level (Uljens and Ylimaki 2017).

In these analyses the individual actors (e.g. formal leaders and professionals in schools), are positioned as translators of something already existing. On the one hand, this provides the social actors in the modern institutions a room for agency, and challenges more classical institutional approaches with social structures determining the local field. But, at the same time, it is worth challenging an approach, where the social actors primarily are translators of existing ideas, as an approach that cannot fully contribute to our understanding of how change is constructed in the field. Consequently, I argue that taking a more inductive approach and constructing a dialectical analytic, as it is done in a critical sensemaking approach (Storgaard 2018, 2019b), has the potential to empirically capture the autonomous room for agency. This will not only make a point for empirical studies, that makes the ideational and processual dimensions of historic changes in modern, public institutions visible, but also allow for an analytical approach, which will capture the relations between the local micro-processes in leadership as well as the global and transnational. Through the investigation of the discourses constructed in sensemaking, this approach allows for understandings of the discursive power formation working behind the social actors' sensemaking. Furthermore, it gives insights into the policy

enactment processes, where these understandings are materialised through intertextuality and interdiscursivity.

In this empirical study, school leadership in high achieving schools is not constructed as a universal phenomenon. As a consequence, I cannot produce normative and prescriptive knowledge for effective leadership practices in high achieving schools. Instead, a study that does not center its analytical focus on the individual, formal leader, gives important, qualitative insights into the social patterns and dialectical mechanisms of power constructed intersubjectively by more policy-actors in institutionalised settings. The analytical results can potentially give an insight into how formal leaders, professionals, and other actors in the modern societal institutions are both constructive of, and, at the same time, embedded in historic legitimate understandings of what the human can and should be. These are valuable insights that, instead of informing policy on what school principals or formal leaders should do, creates knowledge about what society, policymakers and educationalist within the educational leadership field should be aware of in the coming years.

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Part III
Dilemmas in School Leadership

The Press for Technical Rationality & Dilemmas of Professional Practice: Managing Education in a Pluralistic Institutional Environment

James P. Spillane and Jonathan M. Sun

1 Introduction

Over a quarter century, the US education sector has changed considerably as reform discourses and policy texts pressed standardization, test-based accountability, marketization, along with evidence and research -based approaches to decision-making in schools and school systems. These logics have become staples in broader policy discourses – systems of practice, beliefs, and values outlining what is acceptable, "obvious, common sense and 'true'" (Ball 2008, p. 5). Such rationalization efforts reflect the emergence of an "audit culture" across institutional sectors globally (Strathern 2000; Boli 2006; Colyvas 2012; Sauder and Espeland 2007; Mehta 2013; Power 1994; Zucker 1987). While these rationalization efforts have changed the environment in which US schools operate, they are not the only logics in play. Rationalization efforts were layered onto and into an educational sector where other logics, such as professional and democratic ones, were already in play.

In this chapter, we explore school principals' sense-making about their environment in an era when technical rationality has gained traction with policymakers, school reformers, and the public more broadly. Our chapter is organized like this. We begin by describing the conceptual framework that motivated and framed the research. Next, we describe our research approach involving a longitudinal study of two cohorts of new principals over their first five or six years on the job in one of the largest school districts in the U.S. Turning our attention to our findings, we do three things. First, we identify the core challenges of practice that school principals construct over their first five or six years on the job documenting their prevalence. Second, we argue that many of the key challenges that principals construct are not

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problems that lend themselves to technically rational conceptions of problem solving, but rather are *dilemmas*. Although problem definition and problem solving are an important part of the principal's job, we argue that attention to dilemmas is also critical though mostly forgotten or ignored in current writings about educational leadership. We identify some core dilemmas and link them to contending institutional logics including standardization, test-based accountability, marketization, professionalism, and democracy. Using exemplars from our analysis we show how dilemmas of professional practice cannot be solved as they involve roughly equally desirable (or undesirable) alternatives so that choosing one over the other is difficult, if not impossible. Third, because dilemmas require some compromise among alternatives that involve roughly equally cherished values or goals, they have to be managed rather than solved. Specifically, we argue for attention to dilemma management as a central, if mostly forgotten or ignored, aspect of school principal practice in an era when problem-solving and evidence-based decision-making have come to dominate the discourse about educational leadership. While the school principal's work involves solving problems, it also necessitates managing dilemmas of leadership practice.

2 Framing the Work

We adopt a sense-making perspective to frame our empirical work. A sense-making perspective goes beyond investigating how people interpret or read particular things (e.g., a particular policy text) in their environment. Rather than assume that people are attending to particular cues (e.g., regulations, events, professional training) in their environment, a sense-making frame takes a step back and begins by examining what people notice in their environment. In this way, sense-making is as much about how people author their environment as it is about their reading of that environment (Weick 1995).

Taking a sense-making perspective, we focused on how new principals made sense of their new positions over their first five or six years on the job. Sense-making is triggered when automatic processing is interrupted and people are prompted to extract puzzling cues from their environment and work to reconstruct their understandings of the novel situation (Louis 1980; Louis and Sutton 1991). Situations involving ambiguities, contrasts, discrepancies, uncertainties, and surprises can trigger sense-making. Though most new principals come to the position with considerable experience as teachers and even as school leaders, albeit some more than others, they still encounter numerous situations that are novel or surprising in their new position (Browne-Ferrigno 2003; Crow 2006; Crow and Glascock 1995; Spillane and Anderson 2014; Spillane and Lee 2014; Weindling and Earley 1987). These novel situations can trigger sense-making.

Sense making is an ongoing process, focused on and by extracted cues in the situation, involving noticing, bracketing, and interpreting these cues (Weick 1995). Sense making is grounded in identity formation (e.g., who am I as a principal?) and the maintenance of a consistent positive self-conception. It is also retrospective and

social as one's own actions, interpretations, and expectation take shape in interactions with others as well as the interpretations and expectations of others. It is enactive of 'sensible' environments and motivated by plausibility rather than accuracy (Weick 1995). For novice principals, the novelties, ambiguities, uncertainties, and surprises that come with changing occupations, and often changing organizations also, are rife with situations where existing scripts – ways of doing things – fail and necessitate sense-making (Crow 2006; Crow and Glascock 1995), thereby triggering sense-making (Spillane and Anderson 2014).

3 Research Approach

Our chapter uses data from a longitudinal study of two cohorts of new school principals in one US city spanning their first five or six years on the job.

3.1 Sample and Sampling

We selected a sub-sample of principals from each cohort for an in-depth interview study using their survey data and administrative records. For Cohort 1 we purposefully sampled 18 principals selected to ensure diversity in gender, race/ethnicity, pathway, and school characteristics. From Cohort 2, we randomly sampled 17 principals from the population of all novice elementary school principals in the district for that year (36% of the 47 new principals).

The 35 principals in the in-depth interview study include a variety of principal and school types. By race, 12 principals identified Black, 15 as White, and 8 as Latino. The sample includes 20 Female principals and 15 Male principals. Principals were also diverse in their experiences prior to assuming the principalship. Of those who previously completed a principal preparation program (N = 15), they came from three different principal preparation programs. Across both cohorts, principals typically had extensive prior teaching experience, as well some prior administrative experience such as serving as an assistant principal (see Table 1).

3.2 Data Collection

Data collection involved multiple approaches including surveys, semi-structured interviews, administrative records, observations, and public documents. For the purpose of this chapter, we focus mostly on interview data.

Interviews ranged from 45–100 min in length and were conducted by members of the research team after study participants were hired but prior to the start of the academic year (T1). Subsequent interviews were conducted after a principal's first three months on the job (T2), at the end of their first year (T3), the end of their

Table 1 Overview of principal characteristics by Cohort

Demographics	C1	C2
Race		
Black	7	5
White	7	8
Latino/a	5	3
Other	0	1
Gender		
Female	10	10
Male	8	7
Age		
30–39	8	7
40–49	8	8
50+	2	1
Principal Preparation Program		
New Leaders, New Schools	4	3
LAUNCH	3	0
University of Illinois – Chicago	3	2
Years Experience – Teaching		
3–7	7	6
8–15	6	7
16+	5	4
Years Experience – Administration		
0–2	6	6
3–5	7	5
6–12+	5	6

second year on the job (T4), and again at the end of their fifth or sixth year on the job (T5), depending on the Cohort (see Fig. 1). The number of interviews was consistent from year to year (35 in T1, T3, and T4 and 34 in T2) except for during T5 (N = 26) (see Table 1). Of the principals who were not interviewed at T5, four identified as Black, two as Latinx, two as White, and one as mixed-race. While six of these principals remained at their T1 school during the T5 interviews, three others had moved on to positions as an educational consultant, a Network Chief, and a principal position at another school within the same district. These principals were not interviewed because they either declined a final interview or did not return contact with our team.

We developed semi-structured interview protocols to ensure comparable data were collected across school principals in our study, while also allowing for flexible probing in relation to participants' unique responses and situations as they became socialized into their role. The T1 interview protocol was organized around seven topics—views on what a good principal is, the transition into the principalship, goals for the first year, expected challenges, role in developing others, the expectations of different stakeholders, and the interviewee's path into education and administration. The T2 protocol was organized around seven topics: how things are going, what has gone as expected, what has been surprising, challenges, goals, role in

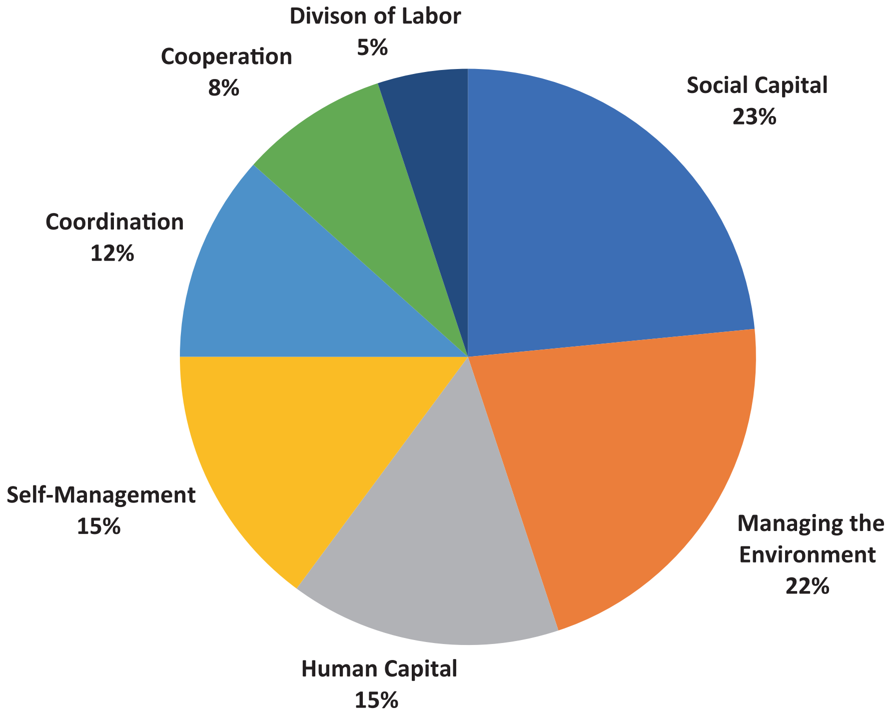

Fig. 1 Types of challenge for all time periods

developing others, and staff's response to the interviewee's leadership (see website for sample interview protocol). While the interview protocol was revised based on our ongoing analysis, 65% of the interview protocol remained constant for T2 through T4. At T5 additional questions were added to reflect emerging claims from our ongoing analysis.

Interviews took place at locations of participants' own choosing, always in a private space, and usually at participants' respective school sites. Interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and then double-checked for accuracy and cleaned of all identifying information by the interviewer.

3.3 Data Analysis

Interviews were compiled into an NVivo project file to facilitate collaborative coding alongside other data sources. Our analyses involved a combination of inductive, deductive, and abductive approaches depending on the particular research questions.

For the purpose of this paper, data analysis involved three coding phases. Phase 1 involved coding all interview transcripts for 'challenges' defined to mean principals' descriptions of puzzles or hindrances that principals encountered while

carrying out their work across instructional, political, and personal domains. Examples include inadequate teacher preparation, system-wide budget cuts, poor school climate, personal time management issues, and so on. We focused on these challenges because, as Becker et al. (1961) note in their study of occupational socialization, "If it is true that conflict and tension arise when the expectations governing social relationships are violated or frustrated then it is clear that study of such instances will reveal just what those expectations are" (p. 21).

In Phase 2, we open coded 10% of the data coded under challenges in Phase 1 in order to identify different types of challenges. Based on our open coding we identified and defined 8 types of challenges – Cooperation, Coordination, Division of Labour/Delegating Responsibility/Sharing Decision-making, Human Capital, Social Capital, Other Resources, Managing the Environment of the School, and Self-Management (see Appendix A). In Phase 3, all data excerpts coded under challenges in Phase 1 were coded as particular types of challenges using our code book. Using the report functions of NVivo, we then explored patterns (both similarities and differences) both within principals over time (T1 through T5) and between principals. To ensure inter-rater reliability, two researchers independently coded interviews until reaching kappa of .75. For the remainder of the interviews coded, researchers compared approximately every 15th interview, with an average kappa of .82 across all IRR interviews before merging. For each round of coding, 16 out of 166 interviews (9.6% of interviews) were coded with two researchers; the remaining 90.4% were coded independently.

4 Findings: Managing Dilemmas of Professional Practice

Based on our analysis we develop and support three arguments about school principals' sense-making about their practice as educational leaders. First, we identify the challenges that principals encounter in their new positions and examine their relative prominence and persistence over time. Second, we argue that even though problems and problem solving are an important part of the principal's job, many of the challenges that principals experience involve dilemmas that cannot be addressed with exclusively rational problem solving strategies. We unpack the nature of dilemmas with examples from our analysis. Third, we argue for attention to managing dilemmas in efforts to understand and support school principals.

4.1 Common Challenges of Leadership Practice

Our analysis identified six prominent challenges in school principals' sense-making about their work. First, principals identified challenges that centre on managing external pressures and developments, reflecting schools' dependency on their environment for legitimacy, as well as other essential resources including students,

funding, staff, and essential services. Thirteen principals, for example, identified addressing competition from private and charter schools as a critical aspect of maintaining or improving student enrolment, which they construed as critical to surviving as a school.

Second, principals talked about the challenge of cooperation as they described efforts such as getting teachers involved in efforts to improve the educational program at their schools and engaging both students and parents in school improvement initiatives. Third, principals identified coordination as another core challenge as they worked to align the efforts of teachers and parents toward a shared sense of school improvement. Principals' attempts to alter school schedules, establish working instructional leadership teams, and promote communication between teachers and parents on student progress were examples of coordination challenges. Fourth, principals also identified challenges having to do with division of labour for their school's core educational functions. These challenges involved principals needing to stretch limited personal and staff capacity for a daunting number of tasks, including planning for instruction, leading extracurricular offerings, and responding to the needs and concerns of parents. Fifth, principals also identified challenges related to human capital especially with respect to teachers but also with respect to other school leaders. Virtually all principals construed the human capital challenge as a critical need to expand instructional capacity through professional development and promoting teacher leadership. Principals identified multiple areas of concern with teacher practice, including inadequate or missing lesson plans, a lack of cultural competency, and an inability to deliver developmentally appropriate instruction. Sixth, principals also identified challenges that centred on developing social capital including building relations with and among teachers, students, parents, and community members. Several principals, for example, identified disrespectful interactions among students and teachers as a major challenge that had to be addressed if students' opportunities to learn were to improve at their schools.

Some challenges figured more prominently than others and their prominence also differed by principal and across time. To gauge prominence of challenges we use two metrics: the percent of principals mentioning a challenge during any one interview, as well as the overall percentage of all text coded under a specific code (e.g., Managing the Environment, Social Capital) By percentage of text coded, Social Capital and Managing Environment each comprised a little less than a quarter of all text coded as challenges. Human Capital and Self-Management each comprised 15% of the text, and Coordination, Cooperation and Division of Labour together made up the last 25% (See Fig. 1).

With respect to number of principals mentioning a specific challenge at each interview time, an overwhelming number of principals (over 85%) mentioned the Social Capital, Managing the Environment, and Self-Management challenges at least once during each of the five interviews (See Fig. 2). Principals mentioned the Human Capital Challenge at similar levels for all time periods except during T1, when it was mentioned only by 57% of principals. Prominence of the other three challenges was markedly less, but still mentioned by between 50% and 75% of principals at each time period.

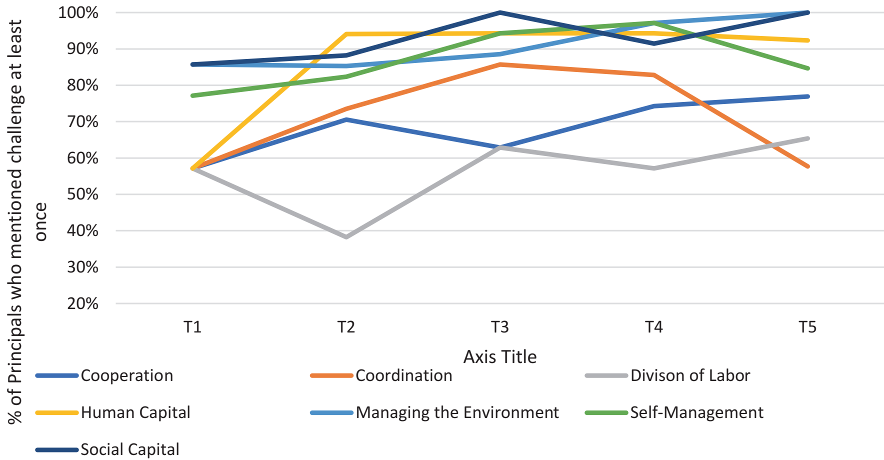

Fig. 2 Percent of principals reporting challenges at least once during each interview

The principals in our study had no shortage of challenges as one might expect given that they were new principals and working in an urban school system where threats to their legitimacy tied to high stakes accountability were prominent. Some of these challenges were problems that lent themselves to problem solving approaches. Other challenges, however, involved a particular type of problem – a dilemma – and we turn to these special challenges next in an effort to draw attention to this forgotten aspect of leadership practice.

4.2 The School Principal and Dilemmas of Leadership Practice

A dilemma involves a situation where the alternative solutions are roughly equally desirable (or undesirable), either of which necessitates compromising on some fundamental values. Choosing one alternative over the other is difficult, if not impossible, because it would involve undermining some fundamental and cherished value(s) or goal(s). Moreover, these situations more often than not do not rest solely on the personal or professional preferences of the individual school principal because they are conditioned by structural arrangements. Public schools, for example, operate in pluralistic institutional environments where they have to attend to the diverse and sometimes conflicting demands of different stakeholders. Parents, community members, local and state policymakers, all place demands on schools that principals cannot ignore easily as they depend on these stakeholders for resources, including legitimacy, critical to the operation of their schools. Hence, principals' choices are constrained by the structural arrangements in which they work.

To explore the nature of dilemmas in principals' practice we describe, based on our analysis, two core dilemmas of principal practice linking them to contending institutional logics (Spillane and Anderson 2014). Our aim is not to provide a comprehensive account of the different dilemmas that principals encounter but rather to capture the nature of dilemmas and in doing so foreground a fundamental but forgotten aspect of educational leadership practice (see Spillane and Lowenhaupt 2019).

We begin with a dilemma anchored in the core educational function of schooling – teaching – what children should learn in school. Next, we turn our attention to a dilemma at the core of school principals' efforts to enable improvement in teaching and learning at their schools – deploying commitment and control strategies. Each of these dilemmas is anchored in challenges identified by principals, particular challenges related to Managing the Environment, building Social Capital, gaining Cooperation, and addressing Human Capital. The persistence of each of these challenges across time and principals in vastly different circumstances suggests that they cannot be completely resolved, and as a result, require principals to dedicate considerable time, resources, and personal and school-wide effort toward managing them. To illuminate and bring the dilemmas alive, we use examples from principals in our study.

The 'Academically Tested Child' and the 'Developmentally Unabridged Child' Neo-liberal policies increasingly hold school principals and their staff accountable for their performance usually on a handful of performance metrics. In the US, standards and high states accountability tied to student assessments have become staples in public schools. All school principals in our study, were well aware of the need to attend to performance metrics especially student achievement as measured on standardized tests in core school subjects, but also other metrics such as student attendance. Emily, principal at Ficus, a school that was 'turned around' prior to her tenure as principal, acutely feels the pressure of meeting performance metrics set by the district. At the end of Emily's second year, she reflects that Chicago Public Schools (CPS) "expects us to be green in terms of metrics and to make the impossible happen … as long as our test scores keep improving and our attendance is up … I would say that's what they expect from us." Owing particularly to her school's previously poor academic performance, Emily was aware that school district administrators would interpret a lack of growth in these metrics to measure not only Ficus's performance but also her own performance as principal. For Emily, the threat of her school being placed on probation or taken over by the district through the turnaround process was real.

While attention to metrics were especially pronounced in school's where student achievement was low, principals in relatively high-performing schools and under no threat of being placed on probation or closed, were also well aware of metrics such as student achievement scores. As one principal of a high performing school explained the school district "expects me to take the school to the next level, they expect the reading scores to be higher." Further, district administrators were not the only ones attending to metrics such as student achievement. In many schools, principals were well aware that parents and community members took these metrics into

account in evaluating their school and the principal. During Steve's second year in the principalship at Ash, Steve meets with an alderman who expresses his preference for "a good school where they can pick their good kids and then get good test scores." Following a difficult year in terms of growth in student achievement as measured by standardized tests, Steve reports the alderman as "unhappy … that the school sucked and it should be closed." Though principals attend to a diverse array of tasks as a part of their role, other stakeholders who are not privy to the day-to-day work inside of schools often use test scores and other performance metrics as shorthand for school, teacher, and principal quality.

Student achievement metrics focused rather narrowly on children's academic growth in a couple of school subjects – English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. Even though principals took these metrics seriously and felt they could not ignore them, they also appreciated that these metrics promoted a limited vision for child development and learning. Most principals were of two minds with respect to notions about child development and learning promoted by performance metrics such as student achievement tests. Consider Emily again by way of example. Emily knows that student test scores figure prominently into Chicago Public School's assessments of school improvement and student progress. Still, she laments this focus and in particular how it presses notions about child development that fail to capture a school's responsibility to "deal with the whole child … and tend to that child's social/emotional needs." External stakeholders' focus on test scores, Emily argues, presents a dilemma because "teachers have to respond to [stress and trauma and violence … on a daily basis] and then have to worry about test scores … It's very difficult and very discouraging."

While accountability pressures anchored in student testing loom large, Emily and other principals still attempt to maintain a commitment to do more than just teach material that is test. Emily, like other principals in our study faced a dilemma between two contending notions about learning and development – the 'academically tested child' focused on narrow notions of learning in ELA and mathematics and the 'developmentally unabridged child' centred on not only ELA and mathematics but the arts and humanities as well as children's socio-emotional development. Principals were torn between focusing on student achievement in a couple of school subjects and promoting broader holistic ambitions for student learning and development. Choosing one of these visions of child development and learning, structural in origin, would be difficult, if not impossible, for school principals.

For principals in urban districts facing system-wide decreases in student enrolment, the dilemma of contending visions of child development is particularly salient. Owing to the growth of charter schools and an emphasis by many school reform advocates on school choice, principals in these districts must tend to families and students as consumers who opt-in to their schools and, if dissatisfied with the quality of services, can just as easily opt-out. For about a third of the principals in our sample, this increasing 'marketization of schools' was cited as a major and persistent challenge. While this phenomenon has favoured academic performance in a few subjects as a measure of quality, it has also elevated other parental concerns about schools, such as school climate, student safety, and community engagement.

As Oscar, principal at Tonti, explains, "You want to have a place where parents and children want to be." Principals like Oscar know that the competition for students requires considering factors beyond how well the school does in terms of the handful of metrics that district administrators use to evaluate a school. Parents' broader repertoire of concerns and their leverage in choosing where their children enrol contributes to principals' dilemma of charting a course between narrow academic notions of learning, as measured by standardized tests, and more holistic and encompassing notions of child development.

Some might argue that school principals should take a more activist position, resisting and ignoring state- and district-mandated student performance metrics, and embracing and promoting visions of learning and child development that they believed were fundamental. But this is easier said than done when one is running a school. Principals can't ignore student achievement metrics because they have real consequences for the school and for a principal's job performance and security. Further, principals understand that student achievement on state mandated tests matter to parents and for students themselves, whose achievement on these tests will very likely matter to their futures including entry to more desirable high schools. Rather than a problem for solving, these different notions and ambitions for child development and learning were a dilemma that school principals had to manage.

Commitment and Control Strategies for School Improvement An ongoing challenge for principals involved getting staff and stakeholders, especially teachers, to cooperate in a coordinated way in their efforts to improve teaching and learning at their schools. As we described above, cooperation and coordination were two challenges that principals faced.

Engaging others such as teachers or students and their parents, principals often used a commitment strategy working to create a sense of community and shared ownership of improvement initiatives and visions for improvement among stakeholders. Principals worked to cultivate among staff, sometimes parents and students also, a sense that we are all in this together, that it is a joint effort, not simply my initiative or ambitions as principal. To do so, principals worked on things such as creating a sense of school pride, listening to the opinions and ideas of different stakeholders, engaging staff in decision-making and planning, striving to ensure everyone had a voice in developing educational improvement efforts, and distributing responsibility for the work among staff. For example, Sally, principal at Damiana, describes a challenge during her second year having to do with improving teacher capacity across teachers with varying levels of trust for her as the principal. In an effort to establish benevolence among her teaching staff for her leadership, Sally makes it a priority to "try to treat each case equally. The same expectation I have for a teacher who I think is doing well is the same expectation I have for a teacher is doing poorly … that's helped with how they view me as an instructional leader." Alongside working to ensure a perception that she is treating her teachers equally, Sally stresses the importance of "making a big deal out of successes [for teachers] just as we would for kids. And helping them to take ownership of what they're doing." By establishing a baseline level of trust between administrator and

principal and channelling positive messages about student growth, Sally worked at cultivating a sense of ownership among staff for improvement efforts.

Still, at times most principals find themselves turning to a control strategy, using the positional authority of the principalship in their efforts to improve teaching and learning at their schools. Encountering resistance to change from some teachers or even parents, often after having used a commitment strategy that worked for some teachers but not for others, felt compelled to use their authority to get teachers improve their practice. Some principals reported that adopting a control strategy was challenging because teachers were accustomed to closing their classroom door and doing their own thing. A few months into his first year at Tonti, Oscar describes encountering this challenge. Seeing "people working in isolation, even closed doors," Oscar knew that "I was going to get challenged." Oscar's response in "making sure that everybody has a part … making sure that people know that we all have responsibilities" though "scheduling grade level meetings … activities for the whole school" suggests that though principals possess formal authority over teachers, they oftentimes turn to a commitment strategy in working to address longstanding issues with teaching practice.

For most principals, the dilemma of commitment versus control did not focus on whether a principal would exclusively use either, as principals reported that a combination of strategies mediated by the specific situation were typically necessary. Rather, principals faced the dilemma of balancing the use and consequences of commitment and control improvement strategies. Using and in particular overrelying on a control strategy, principals can undermine their efforts to build commitment among staff, students, and parents. To complicate matters, while a commitment strategy might work a lot of the time and with a majority of teachers or parents, principals can still find themselves in situations that they believe necessitate using a control strategy with *some* teachers or with a subgroup of stakeholders with whom a commitment strategy just failed. Some principals, for example, reported that they often encountered pockets of resistance among teachers to improvement efforts, even when these improvement efforts emerged from the efforts of most teachers and school staff through a commitment strategy. Faced with these situations, principals reported adopting and using a control strategy *selectively* in an effort to engage teachers who were resisting improving their teaching practice. Control strategies also surfaced in situations where principals perceived some teachers', students', and parents' behaviour as persistently harmful. For example, principals felt that using a commitment strategy with teachers who engaged in "unacceptable" practices such as verbally abusing students did not adequately address the severity and the urgency of the situation. Principals' selective use of a control strategy with a subgroup of teachers or stakeholders can have broader repercussions beyond those subgroups, undermining their use of commitment strategy with staff and stakeholders more broadly.

Juggling commitment and control strategies were not simply a matter of principals' preferences. The dilemmas that principals encountered were also structural in nature shaped by the demands of the school district, the state, and external stakeholders broadly. Consider Anastasia by way of example. At the end of her second year as principal she explains that "I need to find the right balance between holding

[teachers] accountable and having them feel supported." Implementing fourth quarter peer observations, Anastasia struggles to find the best way of suggesting alternative ways of teaching a lesson to teachers so as to engage them in improving their practice. Like other principals, Anastasia works to build commitment among teachers by framing observations as an opportunity for them to improve their practice. At the same time Anastasia notes, that if staff refuse to cooperate, "I do have to fall back onto doing what I need to do because I'm accountable for it." Using a control strategy, Anastasia runs the risk of undermining her efforts to build commitment among teachers who are sensitive to criticism that might be reflected in their annual performance reviews.

Sometimes principals report experiencing even more direct intervention by the school district, pressing them to employ a control strategy, such as fire a low performing teacher or change their school improvement approach abruptly despite their better judgement. Jennifer, principal at Sweetgum, recounts the differences between her first and second years in the role, noting that principals have to deal "with new district mandates after mandate after mandate after mandate." Viewing these external disruptions as especially damaging to her efforts to build trust, Jennifer comments "and then you have teachers that are mad at the district but they're mad at you because you represent the district. And you're just trying to build relationships and [teachers are] like 'Ah! Uh! I'm not going do that!' So, you're caught in the middle of all that." For Jennifer and other principals this presents a dilemma as she cannot afford to choose between the school district's mandates and her commitment building with her staff. Rather, she has to juggle and balance these contending demands.

Charles encounters a similar dilemma at the nexus of commitment and control approaches to improving instruction at Bradshaw during his second year on the job. During his first year on the job he adopts a commitment strategy working to build relationship and among his staff in order to develop a joint approach to improving instruction and student learning. While Charles is happy with Bradshaw's progress using a commitment strategy, his approach is upended by the school district in his second year. In his second year, this relationship with his staff is undermined when district staff, concerned that Bradshaw is on probation, visit his building regularly telling him how to approach instructional improvement and telling teachers how to change their teaching. The school district's efforts involving a control approach undermines the commitment approach to improvement that Charles and his staff had developed together the previous year. Further, the school district's control approach threatens to undermine the relationships that Charles has developed with his staff using a commitment approach. As Charles explains with respect to the school district's intervention, "It's not a true way to help turn around a school, let alone change a system because you destroy relationships in the manner in which they were going about trying to make change." If not carefully and continuously managed, dilemmas like these can undermine principals' efforts to build commitment among staff in order to enable instructional improvement.

Principals used a combination of commitment and control strategies in their efforts to gain the cooperation of teachers and other key stakeholders in their efforts

to improve the quality of instruction. In doing so, they face the dilemma of juggling two necessary but potentially conflicting approaches.

4.3 Managing Dilemmas

School principals must learn to distinguish between problems that are solvable and amenable to problem solving approaches, on the one hand, and dilemmas on the other hand that do not lend themselves to such approaches. This is especially important at a time when experts push schools and other public service enterprises to use data and research to identify actionable technical solutions, what have been referred to as "performativity" (Ball 2003) and "decisionism" (Majone 1989). School principals and educational leaders more broadly are increasingly pressed to be technical-production managers collecting and crunching data to define problems, crafting solutions based on the outputs, and measure the subsequent impact. While such approaches have an important role in leadership work, they are not a panacea because school principals also have to wrestle and live with uncertainty, ambiguity, and conflicting values and goals.

Appreciating and acknowledging the dilemmas that are part and parcel of educational leadership is imperative. School principals must not only learn to distinguish dilemmas from problems but also learn to engage with these unsolvable conflicts rather than ignoring them. Adopting a problem-solving approach when dealing with a dilemma, can easily make things worse (Cuban 1988). Because dilemmas derive from a clash of values that are often almost equally compelling and often in conflict too, they cannot readily be solved.

Instead, dilemmas must be managed through a process of ongoing negotiation and renegotiation. Managing dilemmas involves juggling values and approaches and taking positions that can easily be seen to conflict and even undermine one another. It necessitates trial and error and ongoing monitoring of the situation. School principals learn to manage – cope with – dilemmas. For some principals, managing dilemmas comes in the shape of shifting approaches to the work, prioritizing certain demands and backgrounding others. Reflecting on her five-year tenure at Goldenrain, Andrea recounts the pressure she always felt from the district to "get these scores up. Urgency, urgency, urgency." In her role, Andrea must balance the urgency for improvement posed by the district while carrying on the day-to-day instructional work at Goldenrain. Over the course of her tenure, she comes to realize that "some of those things you put in the back of your mind … you're going to get all this garbage from all these people. [You have to] do what's best for your school." At the same time, Andrea responds to the district's press for results by emphasizing that "it [takes] 5–7 years for everything to completely change … but I always kind of knew it takes time … if you're going to sustain it [then] it definitely takes time." For Andrea, managing the dilemmas presented by competing stakeholder demands means adopting a long-term perspective in which her efforts toward school

improvement will produce results satisfactory to different parties with time. Andrea comes to understand that managing dilemmas entails making compromises, valuing nuance, and appreciating that challenges often do fall into the either or category: despite "a lot of sleepless nights" grappling with the districts' demands and her own concern for students, Andrea takes the perspective that "you can't save them all. You worry about the ones you can save."

Principals experience numerous challenges. Some of these challenges are problems that lend themselves to problem solving strategies and approaches. Others are rooted in perennial dilemmas of leading an organization, such as a public school, that operates in a pluralistic institutional environment where stakeholders place multiple and often competing demands on the organization.

The principal's job involves solving problems but it also involves managing dilemmas, a forgotten but fundamental perspective on leading organizations that reside in pluralistic institutional environments such as public schools. M*anaging* dilemmas is not pejorative; it implies neither mediocrity nor failure. Managing dilemmas is an essential aspect of educational leadership.

5 Conclusion

Several scholars have documented the centrality of managing dilemmas in the education sector. Magdalene Lampert's (1985) work on classroom teaching practice frames teaching as dilemma management. Larry Cuban's (2001) work on school leaders and educational administrators also surfaces key dilemmas of leadership practice. Michael Lipsky's (2010) work on the public sector more broadly captures the dilemmas of street level bureaucrats. While this works documents how managing dilemmas is fundamental to the practice of teaching and the practice of leading and managing teaching, *dilemma management has been mostly forgotten, or at least ignored*, in the literature on educational leadership with the rise of technical rationality over the past quarter century.

In this chapter, we have worked to redress this forgetfulness by foregrounding dilemmas of principal practice and focusing on dilemma management as an important aspect of leadership practice in the schoolhouse. The work of the public school principal is littered with challenges, some of which can be addressed by defining problems and crafting solutions using evidence and research. But other challenges are of a different ilk – they are dilemmas that persist over time and are not amenable to everyday problem solving. Dilemmas are part and parcel of life in general and in schools in particular, where competing values and demands, the unpredictability of human interaction, and uncertainty and ambiguity confront teachers and principals daily. For these reasons, it's essential for principals, and educational leaders more broadly, to learn to cope with and manage dilemmas rather than burn themselves out trying to solve the unsolvable.

Recognizing that these dilemmas are structural rather than purely a product of the personal or professional preferences of the school principal is also important. As

captured in our account, school principals find themselves having to manage in the middle between the demands of multiple stakeholders. While the school district, sometimes parents, press them to attend closely to student test scores as a measure of school quality and of their own performance as principal while they and other stakeholders (parents, teachers) appreciate that schooling must embrace a more holistic view of child learning and development. Similarly, principals' efforts to employ a commitment approach to reform have to be balanced with the need to adopt a control approach for some staff or parents who resist improvement efforts or when pressed by the school district to do so. Dilemmas of principals' professional practice are structural.

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Study Environments – A Neglected Leadership Concern

Eric Larsson and Pia Skott

1 Introduction and Aims

In recent decades, there has been a global trend of focusing on the outcome of schools, i.e., students' results. This can be seen, for example, through international comparisons, where students' knowledge is measured and compared. The Swedish National Agency for Education (2014) has counted the number of international comparisons from the 1960s to 1995 (15) and compared the numbers between 1995 and 2012 (40), concluding that both the quantity and frequency of such comparisons has increased. These measurements compare results over time and success is defined by measurable differences between students' performance, which has prompted scholars to try and explain what works and why (Leithwood and Riehl 2003; Robinsson et al. 2009; Pashiardis and Johansson 2016; Day et al. 2016).

In this performance orientation, school principals have been identified as key actors. The principal role has been strengthened and is now a position responsible for the implementation of national policy (Gunter and Thomson 2009). Principals have also become responsible for managing change and building organisations, while striving to improve their schools' effectiveness and enhance students' learning outcomes (Hallinger 2003; Hargreaves and Fink 2006; Day et al. 2007; Leithwood et al. 2012; Nordin and Sundberg 2016; Sivesind and Wahlström 2016). Accordingly, the effect of leaders on classroom activities has also developed as a research field. One basic argument is that principals should focus on activities that can affect students' learning outcomes, that is, the teaching in the classrooms. In particular, they should develop their instructional leadership, close to the core activities of teaching (Robinson 2006; Hallinger 2010).

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However, schooling does not only consist of classroom activities – students, teachers and other professionals spend a lot of time in school long after the bell has rung. In this chapter, we explore the potential benefits of considering schools not only as places for knowledge production towards academic achievement, but as a *whole study environment consisting of multiple spheres* of activities and learning. Our aim is to explore the character of what we identify as the whole body of study environment of schools and to discuss the consequences for principals.

The research questions are:

– How can study environments be understood?
– Why are these environments important for school principals?

The paper starts by identifying the main focus of school leadership research. By zooming out from what are considered core activities, we will use space as an analytical tool to analyse the study environments of two upper secondary schools in the Stockholm area. We will identify three interlinked spheres of the study environment: the inner (core), the outer, and the middle spheres. We will argue that, while the inner sphere is given a lot of principals' attention, there are several reasons for them to discover the other spheres of schools and education. That is to say, the school as a formal institution and physical place of education, as well as other fundamental aspects interlinked with educational activities. We will argue that the complexity of the local school context is the fundamental but forgotten, or unexplored, aspect of school leadership. We will comment on all three spheres, but focus predominantly on the middle, since this has long been particularly neglected.

2 Previous Research on Leadership Practices and Models

As mentioned above, performance orientation has meant that successful school leadership practices have become defined by students' results in national, state or provincial tests. In *Seven Strong Claims About Successful School Leadership* (2008), which was built on a meta-analysis of previous research, Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins argue that almost all successful leaders draw on the same repertoire of four general domains of basic leadership practices: setting directions, building relationships and developing people, redesigning the organisation to support desired practices, and improving the instructional programme. In 2019, Leithwood et al. revisited their findings, questioning whether these practices needed revision. For us, there are two important aspects worthy of consideration.

The first is about the starting point for school leadership actions. Leithwood et al. (2019) state that their basic claim, that school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on students' learning, is one of their most quoted claims. Revisiting what successful school leaders do, they maintain that success depends mainly on factors within the school's walls. And when they focus on factors within the schools, they are considered synonymous with teaching activities. Nevertheless, they add some important new aspects: "for example, socio-economic

factors (Domina et al. 2018), features of the home and relationships between the home and school (Jeynes 2011; Goodall 2018)" (Leithwood et al. 2019, p. 2). Hence, socioeconomic factors are considered important, but are strictly defined in relation to teaching.

Our starting point is a bit different. To begin with, schools are places where students spend a lot of time outside normal hours, doing activities other than being taught. And schools can be understood from perspectives other than principals' or society's interest in academic results. What if we consider schools from the perspective of the learner? Could it be that learning is not only restricted to classroom activities? Could it also be that the background of the students matters in terms of the totality of the learning done at school?

Before that, we will examine a second aspect, i.e., the recognised leadership practices. Leithwood et al. (2019) report a change between 2008 and 2019, where the previous four domains consist of a large number of leadership practices. Below, we reproduce their table to show the growing complexity (Table 1).

Table 1 What successful school leaders do[a]

Domains of practice	Specific leadership practices
Set directions	Build a shared vision**
	Identify specific, shared, short-term goals
	Create high-performance expectations
	Communicate the vision and goals**
Build relationships and develop people	Stimulate growth in the professional capacities of staff
	Provide support and demonstrate consideration for individual staff members
	Model the school's values and practices**
	Build trusting relationships with and among staff, students and parents**
	Establish productive working relationships with teacher federation representatives
Develop the organization to support desired practices	Build collaborative culture and distribute leadership**
	Structure the organization to facilitate collaboration**
	Build productive relationships with families and communities**
	Connect the school to its wider environment**
	Maintain a safe and healthy school environment
	Allocate resources in support of the school's vision and goals**
Improve the instructional program	Staff the instructional program**
	Provide instructional support
	Monitor student learning and school improvement progress**
	Buffer staff from distractions to their instructional work

[a]The practices in Table 1 with asterisks beside them (**) are, according to the authors, close approximations of the labels awarded the ten equity leadership practices by Ishimaru and Galloway (2014)

According to the Leithwood et al. (2019) the number of effective leadership practices has grown from 14 to 22 over the past decade, which presents a more complex picture of what it means to be a successful school leader. But the focus is still on performance and not on other outcomes, such as equity. It is here that our forgotten perspective can fill a gap. What if the successful school leader not only needs to learn the above identified 'whats' of a school leader, but also practice the 'hows' behind them? From a complexity perspective, we are particularly interested in the invisible 'whats' that remain in the shadows because of the repeated research focus on the same output variable. This is to ask: could the narrow focus on instructional aspects be concealing important aspects of which principals need to be aware?

This is where we need to remind ourselves that instructional leadership is one of the three most commonly featured leadership models in the research – the other two are distributed leadership and transformative leadership (Gumus et al. 2018). *Instructional leadership* is about focusing on the core of school activities. It is about leading the identified practices to qualify the work of teachers (Hallinger 2015). Instructional leadership is known the world over, even though the concept doesn't match the complex role of the principal. In several parts of Europe, the expression *pedagogical leadership* is far more common, which means that the instructional aspect needs to be translated into different contexts (Hallinger 2018). In Sweden, for instance, a principal is legally required to do a lot more things other than performing instructional leadership (Rönnström and Skott 2019).

Intertwined with leadership practices is the question of who the leader is, and if leadership can, or even should, be distributed in a school organisation. Here, it is important to note that different countries have different regulations concerning what a principal is formally allowed to distribute. But if leadership, at least informally, can be performed as a collective function, and if the spheres of school environments are larger than the core, who can leadership be distributed to and what kind of leadership is necessary?

In *Meaningful and Sustainable School Improvement* with *Distributed Leadership*, Supovitz, D'Auria and Spillane (2019) argue that the focus should be on interactions with others, including the development of different leadership skills. They consider it wise to involve more stakeholders in the developing processes of schools when searching for problems and designing solutions. These are all aspects to be considered when broadening the focus from core activities to the multiple spheres of schools.

3 Theoretical and Methodological Outline

In the paper, we examine two high-performing upper secondary schools in Stockholm (post-16 schools). We chose high-performing schools to go beyond the dominant focus on results in contemporary educational discussion. In these schools, a large proportion of the students have the highest grades (As) in all subjects, which means that these schools have achieved the key aim of the principal. But what else

has been constructed at these schools? The study draws on examples from two research projects. The first project includes a one-year ethnography study of the abovementioned schools, combining data such as observations (classrooms, meetings, hallways), interviews with key actors (pupils, teachers, principals etc.), documents, pictures and secondary statistics. The second project takes a leadership perspective on high-performing schools, working with stress reduction and sustainable learning in one of the schools. From this, we had recurrent meetings with the principal's team, as well as records of interviews and observations.

The theoretical frame is mostly inspired by a Bourdieusian perspective, but also by the work of geographer David Harvey. This includes the use of concepts such as assets (capitals), strategies and space to explore the 'rules' and 'stakes' of the 'game' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). These concepts give us the possibility to explore the social and symbolic hierarchies *between* schools, the dynamics *within* schools, and how all of these dimensions affect what we call the 'study environment'. We want to show that students are not only objects for teaching, but subjects in constructing the everyday life within a specific school, and that this hidden aspect is important if leaders are to understand what works and why. The study environment is important to uncover what Bourdieu would call a school's doxa (for discussion, see Bourdieu and Eagleton 1992), which is the given order that we, in a specific practice, tend to take for granted. In the end discussion, we will come back to how the doxa is important when considering fundamental and forgotten leadership perspectives.

Our analysis depends on the construction of three different spheres, which all schools to some degree enjoy. First, the inner or core sphere, which represents formal educational settings, and the outer sphere – the informal place of activities that students do. Nevertheless, as we mentioned before, while the inner and outer spheres are important, this chapter focuses on the place in between, i.e., the middle sphere. We argue that the middle sphere is something that all schools have and can develop, albeit in different ways. It depends on contextual variations, such as student group composition and the specific characteristics of the school. To comprehend how we understand the interlinked spheres of the study environment, we start with an exploration of space as an analytical concept.

3.1 Space as an Analytical Concept for Understanding Study Environments

While space is a common analytical term within disciplines such as geography and sociology, the "spatial turns" is fairly new within education (Taylor 2009). This is also why a range of spatial theories from other disciplines have not yet been discussed in educational research. However, similar to Robertson (2010, p. 15), we argue that "[b]y tracing out the ways in which space is deeply implicated in power, production and social relations", we can "reveal the complex processes at work in

constituting the social relations of 'education space' as a crucial site, object, instrument and outcome in this process." In this chapter, we do not intend to uncover previously unknown theories of space and how these could be used in educational research. Neither will we provide a general overview of different theoretical perspectives on space. As discussed above, we use space to explore forgotten areas of school leadership.

Both Harvey and Bourdieu offer several ways of exploring the spatial analyses – especially how we could include the analytical tension between different spaces to understand social phenomena. The foundation of such spatial analysis is relationality. To cite Harvey (2004, p. 4), "[a]n event or a thing at a point in space cannot be understood by appeal to what exists only at that point. It depends upon everything else going on around it (although in practice usually within only a certain range of influence)". Similarly, Bourdieu (1996, p. 11) writes, "[t]his idea of difference is at the basis of the very notion of space, that is, a set of distinct and coexisting positions which are exterior to one another and which are defined in relation to one another through relations of proximity, vicinity, or distance, as well as through order relations, such as above, below and between […]". We, likewise, start our analytical exploration from these ground rules. First, we use analytical concepts such as *physical space, relative space, social space and symbolic space* to organise our own analysis and understand our data. All of our constructed spheres are related to these spatial concepts, which the reader will see in how we use our empirical examples. It is by integrating and combining them that we are able to provide illustrative cases. Secondly, for us, *relationality* is important since it explains why certain actions are recognised in some schools. Similarly, it helps us to compare and analyse the differences between our constructed spheres of the study environment. In other words, one sphere could not be defined by itself; rather, it needs to be analysed in relation to others to be properly comprehended. Although the frontiers of the constructed spheres are not always sharp, the differences between them still constitute defining boundaries.

Both Harvey (1990, 2004) and Bourdieu (1996, 2018) recognise the crucial component of an "absolute" or "*physical space*". Physical space, as we will call it here, is territorial and can be measured in various ways. Thus, it is physical in the sense that it is fixed and material. For instance, a school building has a certain geographical position on a map and the size of it can be measured. There is also a distance between the school and other kinds of infrastructure. But it also covers the everyday sphere for students, teachers, school leaders and other individuals, and also classrooms, lockers, places to eat and libraries. It is the essential physical place where activities and social processes takes place. Here, Harvey also emphasises the importance of acknowledging the concept of *relative space*. Relative space is connected to time and suggests "that there are multiple geometries from which to choose and that the spatial frame depends crucially upon what it is being relativized and by whom" (Harvey 2004, p. 3, further discussion in 1990). For our analysis, this means that, depending on the specific individual, the physical is perceived and appropriated differently. For instance, some students may only regard school as a place of education, while others may also see it as place for interaction.

Another vital component is *social space*. Although Harvey sometimes discusses the term social space in his analysis (e.g., Harvey 1970), the Bourdieusian concept is more tangible and fruitful in this chapter. For Bourdieu, social space is entwined with physical space and reflects how the latter is constituted and appropriated. To put it in another way, "[s]ocial space tends to retranslate itself, in more or less direct manner, into physical space in the form of a definite distributional arrangement of agents and properties. This means that all the distinctions proposed about physical space can be found in reified social space […]" (Bourdieu 2018, p. 107). However, unlike physical space, social space is an empirical construct. It is an analytical instrument for mapping social groups, based on the dispositions of economic and cultural assets (capitals). It displays the objective relations and differences between social agents by accounting for the 'structure' and 'volume' of capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). Consequently, it unfolds the variations and hierarchies in and between those groups (classes). For us, social space provides an insight into the social origins of the students and the composition of their assets. It helps to explain why some students are more dominant and more able to navigate the study environment than others, due to their social origin. Moreover, social space corresponds to *symbolic space*, which reflects the practices, lifestyles, visions and beliefs of different social groups. Or, to simplify, symbolic space illustrates the practices and choices of social groups in their everyday activities. Therefore, it becomes necessary for our analysis, since it helps us to understand how the constructed spheres function and differ, depending on the student group's composition and the social origins of specific individuals. For example, it gives us the opportunity to explore whether schools dominated by students from well-educated families have the ability to foster other kinds of middle sphere than schools with more heterogeneous student populations.

4 The Multiple Spheres of the Study Environment

As discussed above, our study concerns the importance of understanding contextual complexities and the multiplicity of study environments. While recognising that all spheres are important, we focus on the middle sphere of the school, as it is a forgotten research area. In this empirical section, we explore the three different spheres by illustrating examples of what they might mean. To provide the reader with a thorough understanding of the middle sphere, we begin by defining the other two spheres – the inner and outer sphere. By doing this, we are able to relationally explore what constitutes the different spheres and what a middle sphere might or might not be. The theoretical dimensions of physical space, relative space, social space and symbolic space help us in this analytical exploration. First, we start by discussing the boundaries and definitions of the inner sphere as a formal sphere of education.

4.1 The Inner Sphere: A Place of Formal Education

To be able to understand how we define the middle sphere, it is crucial to comprehend the relationality between different spheres. The inner sphere could be regarded as a formal sphere of education, or the core of formal education, which usually includes institutionalised practices such as classroom activities and organised classes. Likewise, it contains scheduled school activities in other settings, such as visits to libraries, museums and parks. One key component is that the inner sphere is designed to meet the necessities of curricula and mandatory school activities. As such, teachers, principals and other personnel embrace an administrative legitimacy and therefore govern school activities and inner sphere hierarchies to provide students with certain skills.

As discussed above, the inner sphere is contextually bound to topics and subjects of education, though the constitution of it varies substantially between schools. While the curricula and mandatory activities are similar, the student group composition, resources, physical milieu and teachers' expectations differ. The same goes for the approach to education (holistic, results-driven etc.) that schools provide. That is to say, what becomes recognised in the study environment of the inner sphere depends on the positions that the larger student group endure in social and symbolic space. Since students arrive at school with different social origins (i.e., the composition of their cultural and economic assets), the lifestyles and beliefs of the students need to be accounted for. If the inner sphere is not recognised by students due to their expectations, they would hesitate to attend that specific school – mostly since it does not represent their own vision of what a good educational setting should include. Therefore, schools also experience different opportunities and results.

In the schools we feature in this study, the inner sphere can be very competitive – both for students, principals and teachers. The demands are often high, and students are generally high-achievers. The large majority of students come from homes with highly educated parents and are well endowed with cultural assets. They know how to navigate the system and are often well-prepared for their studies. This means that the inner sphere is significant for their everyday school activities, since high grades allow them to take the next step in their educational trajectory – it's the place for them to show their abilities to the teacher.

4.2 The Outer Sphere: The Place of Informal Activities

Outer sphere undertakings include studying, doing homework and preparing for class, but also friendly conversations and networking. That is to say, the purpose of these activities varies, as do the locations students use. For instance, study activities can be mixed with friendly conversations and non-interaction. Students use open areas within the school as well as libraries, coffee shops and restaurants. The outer sphere, or the informal place of school activities, is therefore not formally guided by

hierarchies and mandatory activities. In some cases, there are principles and conventions for what to do, and what not to do, which are governed by the school. The latter primarily relates to activities that are done within the school building. Mostly, however, the informal activities of the outer sphere are decided and organised by students. For instance, if students complete their homework at school, it is not because the school leaders or teachers require them to, but because they prefer to. The same could be argued for how the students manage their own time. In this sense, the use of physical space becomes relative since students decide their own activities and how they organise time and place. These decisions might also relate to unofficial hierarchies based on social norms, conventions, abilities and lifestyles, where students might follow the directions of friends and classmates.

Since the outer sphere needs to contain some relational demarcations that separate it from the other spheres, we argue that time and place become crucial markers to do so. Otherwise, it would be hard to separate student activities and decide which activities are informal or not. In a sense, by not making such a distinction, everything that students do that is included in the inner sphere activities would be informal. For us, the relational definition of the outer sphere either means that students use the school as a place to practise informal activities, or that they use places outside of school for educational activities. This means that it contains activities that are non-formalised and done outside of school hours (before and after school, during free periods etc.). In the schools featured in this study, the outer sphere is often used as a place to interact and/or study. Within this context, it could be done with various intensities and at different times of the day, although usually after the school day ends. The fundamental component of the outer sphere is that students are not regulated by formal hierarchies or mandatory activities – they can change the activities and the place of activity. Furthermore, besides the principles and conventions within the school, principals and teachers have little or no input in organising these activities.

4.3 The Middle Sphere: Between Formal and Informal Activities

The middle sphere has some regulations, but few formal hierarchies shaping the relationship between the school and students. Similar to the outer sphere, there are principles and conventions that guide what students can do within the physical and symbolic boundaries of the school – we will discuss this in detail later on. Moreover, on some occasions, parents, parent organisations, teachers or principals can contribute to organising activities within the middle sphere. For example, teachers provide foundational structure for some activities by attending events, and principals can organise schedules and physical settings for the students. Also, parents and parent organisations have the ability to help students with practicalities, which could mean

partaking in fundraisers and providing practical advice. In this chapter, we use four examples to illustrate our analysis of the middle sphere.

4.3.1 The Middle Sphere as a Physical Place to Raise Awareness and Interest

Locker doors and noticeboards are sometimes unfilled at schools, or used only to circulate daily messages about changed classrooms, sick teachers and test scores. At some schools, student councils use noticeboards to deliver information concerning meetings and questions – something also true for our schools. However, these physical places are more often used to raise awareness and interest amongst students to help less fortunate people by taking action or gathering resources. A recent example was collecting aid for arriving migrants in 2015, where students at one of the schools raised 250.000 Swedish crowns (approximately 23.000 EURO), in a short period of time. During this project, they organised bake sales, flea markets and collected money through a text message campaign. While the student council provided directions and knowledge, classes and individuals organised their own events. For instance, to stimulate students' participation, there was an in-between class competition concerning who could raise the largest amount of money. Throughout this process, noticeboards and lockers were crucial to distribute information (see Larsson 2019). They provided information on how to raise money and other resources, but also stipulated why it was important to contribute. Here, we can see how physical, social and symbolic space interact within the inner sphere. The ambitions, practices and lifestyles of students can be displayed in the physical environment of the school building. These actions also provide an insight into the social origins of the students and what they feel is important in contemporary society.

Similar events, although smaller in size, are continuously present. For example, groups with interests in biology, literature, theatre and music have get-togethers to discuss, share information and hang out. Noticeboards and lockers are also used to offer information concerning visiting scholars, Non-Governmental Organisations or speakers. Students communicate directly by handing out flyers or using information desks. In our schools, there are even an extensive set of associations that complement other extracurricular activities. These associations include a wide array of subjects, often connected to societal issues, debating, literature and culture.

The public areas of the school are a crucial part of the middle sphere as a physical place. They offer the best place to be noticed, since students regularly pass by, stop, read and discuss. They also remind students and visitors about the specificity of study environment of the school, i.e., recognised values and expectations. By this, we do not mean that each student needs to be informed and up-to-date with all activities and happenings, but that the information provides a framework of basic topics students need to be aware of. This includes information about sporting events, competitions against other schools and which universities to apply for.

4.3.2 The Middle Sphere as a Place of Interaction and Developing Skills

To continue from our earlier example, the middle sphere is a site for interaction and for developing skills. It is a physical space where people with different lifestyles, opinions, interests and positions gather. Students learn from interacting, communicating, discussing and debating. They absorb how to shape arguments, become rhetorically skilled and formulate statements properly. Furthermore, they learn how to interact properly, organise events and appropriate social skills, which means that the middle sphere is a space of contest or continuous struggles in the Bourdieusian vocabulary (Bourdieu 1989). There are several forums for students to engage and interact, yet the debate societies and associations are probably the best places to develop such skills.

> I would say, partly that you learn how much young people can handle without adults. […] Yes, it's very nice to avoid the monitoring, that 'now you are actually starting to get quite old, now you have to do something yourself'. [It is] a lot of commitment, also that you learn to look at people in a different way. […] So, it's like a big group work, but it's a voluntary group work. It contributes a lot, I know, to focus. So, to meet people who really voluntarily stay in school two hours after school […]. So, that it contributes to a community and a positive attitude towards 'geeking out'. [Student]

Generally, however, established student associations and other extracurricular activities can foster interaction. Students in charge of such associations sometimes have to lead and deliver information to parents, other students and others about their specific organisation.

Similarly, engagement and activity are required of the student council and student unions. Often, positions within these councils and unions are highly sought after, and there is competition among students to fill them. In some cases, students have to promote themselves through various campaigns to become elected, and they need support from other students. Such campaigns include motivation, debating and knowledge about how communicate to others, which sometimes leads to a very competitive environment.

> I joined many associations – as most of us do. Then I had very much hope of joining the Student Union. [I] worked very actively with a friend and lost on the last day. Not really happy about it yet, still a bit bitter. I think it may have to do with a conflict of interest or what to say, between me and the sitting Student Union. But that's when I joined the debate team. [Student]

To a certain degree, the student councils and unions have power to represent the whole student group. They meet with principals and deliberate questions and organise several events during the school year.

The middle sphere as a place of interaction and development, however, is not always equally open for all students. Since there are many processes at stake, there are also a range of social boundaries that separate students with different origins. This means that it is easier for students with larger cultural assets to succeed, whether it concerns being able to communicate in a certain way, use knowledge about specific topics, or being aware of the social codes. One consequence of this, including the language skills used to deliberate topics, is that some students do not

necessarily want to participate in discussions. They can feel out of place in relation to students with larger cultural assets. This does not mean that the latter always have more knowledge, but that they are recognised as skilful due to having a broader repertoire of experience and references.

4.3.3 The Middle Sphere as a Place to Gather Credentials

Speaking to parents, engaging in activities or organising an event builds recognition, character, and experience, confidence and social skills. Therefore, students in our schools know that they can do similar things in the future without support from parents, teachers or school leaders. Yet, the middle sphere is not only a place for raising awareness and interest, or interaction. It is also a place to gather credentials that cannot be rewarded within the formal school setting of the inner sphere. Partaking in activities or having leading roles in events improves the student's CV. These credentials function as a currency and can be used to compete for internships and employment, or for applications to prestigious universities (Bourdieu 1989; Brown et al. 2011). As one student put it, "So, it is just kind of a community you get and then it is like one thing to write on the CV of course. [...] There's a lot that can happen and you don't want to miss out on it."

Thus, students are often conscious that they have the privilege of being provided with what Bourdieu (1986) called 'scarce resources'. An important part in the accumulation of these recognised symbolic assets and credentials is that students at other schools have fewer possibilities to receive them. While the latter students might find it more important to gain experience in, for example, management, construction or childcare, in our schools, the possibility to work and study abroad is regarded as more interesting. This is a difference that relies on the nurturing of a specific kind of school environment. It is connected to the interaction between students with comparable social origins, ambitions and skills within a limited physical space.

4.3.4 The Middle Sphere as a Place of Action and Competition

The students attending the schools featured in this study are often well-organised. The same organisational skills reflect their engagement in activities that go beyond the inner sphere. In some cases, they lead like adults, though they lack the understanding of adult responsibilities. This tension makes the middle sphere interesting to analyse since it is an important part of adolescence. As we have shown in the previous examples, it provides room for negotiation and developing skills, as well as taking responsibility. It is a place of struggle, engagement and becoming, while also providing a place to relax and have fun.

The activities, events and engagement within the middle sphere are part of a holistic approach to education, which many prestigious schools around the world attempt to encapsulate (Cookson and Hodges Persell 1985). It includes the idea that

students need to know more than what formal education can offer, and become cultivated, multi-skilled citizens with character. At the same time, prestigious schools can postulate such ambitions due to the social and academic composition of their students. Numerous students we met come from middle-class, upper middle-class and upper-class backgrounds and are interested in becoming part of a global society. Hence, their vision of the world and ambitions are tied to a more holistic approach of education and not just being well educated. They know that there is a continuous struggle for positions (Brown et al. 2011) and that there is a need to stay ahead and not relax.

In summary, the middle sphere needs to be seen primarily as a place of action and competition. It is a place of action since it includes activities that are organised by students. It is competitive since it is unevenly accessed by students with different backgrounds and since all schools do not enjoy the benefit of a vibrant middle sphere.

5 Study Environments – A Leadership Practice or a Fundamental But 'Forgotten' Dimension?

The aim of this chapter is to explore the character of what we identify as the whole body of the study environment of schools and discuss the consequences for principals. In the previous section we explored the complexity of the study environment through the use of space as an analytical concept. To uncover the multiple spheres, we went beyond the classroom to better understand the multiple hierarchies and complexities of social processes within schools. To more thoroughly understand a school from the perspective of the learner, we used four concepts: physical space, relative space, social space and symbolic space. Through a combination of these concepts, it is possible to understand not only how the physical aspect of the spheres matters for what kind of learning the school makes possible, but also how aspects like socio-economic background are intertwined with other spatial aspects. We identified three different spheres: the inner (the core), the middle and the outer sphere. While the first is equivalent to the formal sphere of education, the two others also include informal activities. We showed that, for the students, the three are intertwined through multiple combinations of important aspects, which is also why we pointed to the importance of relationality. What happens in the inner sphere is related to what happens in the other two, and therefore schools must be understood as a whole. In this final section, we will further discuss the consequences for principals.

It can easily be argued that these high-performing schools can be seen as the result of ultimate instructional leadership, but only if we see high-quality teaching and excellent student performance as results of leadership. This is where the focus on results runs the risk of mistaking what counts and why. Instead, we ask: what is the role of the principal in a school with only high-performing teachers and

students? After working with one of the schools over a three-year period, we can now uncover fundamental but forgotten aspects of leadership.

The background to the project was that the principals had identified that students, in their narrow ambition to receive As, showed an instrumental way of learning, and that several students were very stressed. The project was called 'sustainable learning' and aimed for 'sustainable knowledge and sustainable people', i.e., teachers explored how sustainability in both senses could be reached through teaching. It was the intention that highly developed teaching practices could be used to make a difference. The teachers explored a lot of aspects, such as how to develop sustainable assessment and what we call 'health-preventing assessment practices' (Mickwitz and Skott 2020). In this chapter, we have identified the extreme difficulty of getting beyond the students' fixation on getting As. Many of the students have never failed academically in their lives. 'Only the sky is the limit' and 'failure is not an option' are phrases they live by. Hence, no matter how the teachers try to develop their teaching, there is still a struggle to change what can be understood as the doxa of the high-performing school. This in turn leads to the question: what does a school leader need to consider, beyond performance? In the following we will problematise the previously identified leadership practices from the empirical findings.

The first important leadership practice is *creating high-performance expectations*. But what if it is exactly these expectations that are at the core of the schools' problems? Secondly, what does it mean to stimulate *growth in the professional capacities of staff* when the teachers are excellent, but don't know how to go beyond the instrumentality of the students. Thirdly, what does *building productive relationships with families and communities* mean when one of the challenges is the high-performance pressure from parents? And finally, how should *buffer staff from distractions to their instructional work* be understood when we see that it is the relationality between different spheres that matters most, not the complete focus on the core?

The questions above lead to the overall question of whether the multiple spheres can uncover fundamental but 'forgotten' leadership practices. We start by asking if there are invisible 'whats' that a principal should consider, that run the risk of remaining in the shadows because of a repeated research focus on the same outcome variable, i.e., results. We finish by stating that this is most definitely so. Awareness and knowledge of the whole study environment is crucial. When we interviewed principals and teachers over time, a recurring comment was that student stress could be reduced if they didn't participate in all the side activities in the school. But from what we have shown, this wholeness is what makes the school attractive and special. The students learn a lot and receive more than only curriculum-based education, which means that the important middle and outer spheres should not be side-lined. Rather, they are important to understand the doxa and how to work with change.

It can be questioned, however, whether study environments are a forgotten dimension of all the leadership practices or if it is worth considering a practice in itself. As several other practices are repeated within different domains, we argue for both. *By focusing on study environments as a practice in itself*, principals can perform better analysis of what schools are all about, and what matters and why. In the

schools we have analysed, it is obvious that parents need to be involved and agree on the importance of the health-preventing aspect of being a high performer. Getting As is considered as making the future possible. But if stress leads to mental illness or burnouts, the high grades are not of any worth. This is why it is important that the students, like the knowledge they develop, are sustainable over time. By leading the multiple spheres and not strictly being instructional, leaders' principals do not only lead to learning through teaching, but to learning through a wider understanding of education. Even if this conclusion is built on data from high-performing schools, it is evident that all schools have middle spheres, albeit different in character. By working on the middle and outer spheres, schools can actively work to handle the challenges of the socioeconomic and contextual factors in the school environment. We can see that in other projects on low-performing schools as well. The characters of the spheres and student groups, however, are of course different.

By using the insights of the multiple spheres as a dimension to be present in other leadership practices, the socioeconomic and equity aspects would not end up as a peripheral, but main aspects of leadership. Recognising the middle sphere as an important leadership concern can widen the instructional leadership paradigm. Leaders and teachers need to understand more about the multiple hierarchies and complexities of social processes to be able to change the invisible aspects of schools. It could even be that middle spheres are important arenas for distributed leadership and involve more stakeholders in analysing problems and identifying solutions. The students are not only the objects of teaching, but fully capable of leading change. If students are capable of fundraising for a better world, they can also be the co-leaders for their own changes of behaviour. This is also the main reason why we argue that student environments, as part of the complexity of the local school context, should be recognised as a fundamental leadership concern.

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Horizontal Structures – A Fundamental but Forgotten Perspective for Superintendents in School Governance?

Cecilia Bjursell and Annika Engström

1 Introduction – From Vertical Structures to Horizontal Structures

Education organisations are complex organisations, were superintendents have to navigate through systems of national control and municipal-level support functions (Johansson and Nihlfors 2014; Moos 2013). In the literature, the Swedish education system is often described from a vertical perspective; from policy makers on the global level, to the state level, the national level, and so on to the municipal level, and finally, to the individual school level. If the chain of command in this vertical structure is broken, then important issues may fall between areas of responsibility and be overlooked, including fundamental rights and regulations (Moos et al. 2016). To operate as an agency in a municipal organization and simultaneously be subject to national policy initiatives and inspection creates a situation where school superintendents have two governance systems which they have to follow. 'Role intrusion' or a lack of a common formal understanding of the role between superintendents and politicians may cause conflict in overlapping areas of engagement (Skott 2014). Any ongoing change may also affect the focus of superintendent leadership. Such change may concern political ideology, responsibility for education, and the changing nature of what a superintendent's leadership consists of (Björk et al. 2014). We should also take into account that school governance at the state and the municipal levels has become all the more standardized, more prescriptive, and less based on person-to-person relationships. This state of affairs thus contextualises superintendent leadership in the crossfire between the state's priorities *versus* local government's priorities (Paulsen et al. 2016).

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Significant interest has been shown in the connections in the vertical chain of school governance; however, school superintendents are also expected to collaborate with actors across different professional and administrative domains. Superintendents often state that their mission is to work for and promote student learning, which places superintendents in a position that often lies in between different stakeholders' demands (Paulsen et al. 2014). The inclusion of various stakeholders entails that we must recognise that superintendents have to work with both the vertical and the horizontal structures in the education system. However, we will argue that the horizontal aspects of this structure seem to have been forgotten and have fallen to the wayside. The inclusion of horizontal aspects of organisational structure highlights the fact that superintendents are not only managers and educational leaders, but they are also engaged in moving the system towards a broader sunlit democratic upland, where the inclusion of different points of view is central to the way work is performed. The inclusion of multiple perspectives results in the surfacing of tensions and paradoxes. Notwithstanding this, shared meanings and contradictory opinions can be understood as constituting the very nature of leadership in complex organisations (Bjursell 2016). However, a risk remains that tensions are dealt with as 'problems to be solved' instead of being considered to be a source for learning and development (Smith 2014). Based on the argument that tensions and discrepancies can be potential sources for learning (Engström 2014, 2017), in this chapter, we identify a number of tensions which emerge in the everyday running of an educational organisation. Our purpose is to investigate where in the organisation tensions are situated and relate these to the vertical and horizontal structures that exist in the system. We also discuss possible ways of dealing with these tensions from a school superintendent's perspective.

2 Situated Governance in Education Organisations

The educational system and educational organisations are the heart of a democratic society. Considering the important role that education plays and the complexity inherent to the educational system, researchers have highlighted how necessary it is to take national culture and local context into account. Context is of importance because the same individual can behave in different ways, depending on the circumstances. This entails that we move from focusing on leadership to focusing on a repertoire of practices and abilities to act in specific situations. In the context of educational organisations, we thus speak of *context-responsive leadership*, referring to a mix of knowledge, skills, and dispositions which are deployed by leaders in a dynamic interaction with situational variables (Bredeson et al. 2011). Contextual factors are crucial to a proper understanding of how leadership supports learning and, conversely, how leaders can create functional learning environments in organisations (Wallo and Ellström 2016). The size of an educational district, organisational culture, community characteristics, geographic location, financial situation, and political climate are context variables where differences can provide one with

insight into leadership and governance (Bredeson et al. 2011). An overview of differences in relation to the degree to which school superintendents are involved in the community that they work for revealed that superintendents who worked in rural districts reported on higher levels of community involvement than non-rural superintendents (Kowalski et al. 2013). The identification of the larger social context where power is exercised, entails an approach where the superintendent adopts a supportive, guiding position instead of a controlling position (Møller 2018). By adopting a guiding approach, the superintendent can show consideration to the school principal's (in Sweden, legally mandated) scope of operations and encourage the principal to act independently.

An approach to governance which creates conditions for work instead of a controlling approach characterises what is called the 'Nordic cooperation model' (Irgens 2018). This is an approach which includes cooperation between management and workers and is embedded in a national culture which is characterised by democracy, equality, an orientation towards the collective and high levels of trust (Moos et al. 2018). The creation of successful schools entails interaction between leaders at different levels, but also a respect for the different areas of responsibility that each person has. The avoidance of 'micro-management' is a common challenge which is reported on in the literature on school superintendents, including the relationship between the school board and the superintendent (Bridges et al. 2019). It should be noted, however, that this does not entail that the superintendent must abandon his or her leadership responsibilities, but, instead, this person should understand what this approach requires at different levels within the organisation. Establishing an approach to work which includes democratic decision-making, cooperation, and openness takes time; a situation which increases the risk that managers at different levels within the organisation will introduce an instrumental perspective where 'leadership' is interpreted as a one-sided transfer of information. Within the leadership of the school system, two parallel discourses can be found. The one discourse is concerned with standardisation and a focus on results, whilst the other addresses the foundation to citizenship and education in a broader sense (Moos et al. 2018). The discourse which is given a voice in an organisation will then come to inform the organisation's character – which entails that school superintendents can position themselves with regards to what is emphasised and highlighted in the dominant discourse, and with regards to what is not emphasised and highlighted. The fact that the school superintendent plays a key role in how the school system is defined is more important than ever since there exist expectations from society that the 'tools for education' must ensure growth. Political reforms determine the nature of the control, governance, and roles within organisations (Björk and Browne-Ferrigno 2014).

In addition to dealing with operational issues, such as strategic planning and recurring administrative tasks, it is also important that a school superintendent spends time communicating with other stakeholders, whilst supporting the emergence of organisational learning environments (Hilliard and Newsome 2013). The establishment of learning environments is one way of supporting school development; something which Swedish school superintendents are keen to engage in. In

one study, it was reported that 80% of school superintendents thought that school development was of great importance, 84% thought that this was of particular interest to them, whilst 61% reported that school development was time-consuming (Moos et al. 2017). The identification of 'school development' as a central part of a school superintendent's work assignment may be uncontroversial, but it can be a delicate question to ask how school development actually takes place. This involves understanding how an initiative is legitimised, irrespective of whether it addresses democracy and citizenship, or whether it is a demand for increased efficiency and effectiveness (Moos 2018). Assuming that we construe our understanding of the world by means of language, we interpret *discourses* as a form of governance in organisations. This is especially the case with respect to discourses that address leadership ideals and governance ideals which place emphasis on the vertical model, since it can be difficult for certain people to gain access to processes where meaning is (re-)negotiated. One study of the importance of power in the context of meaning-making found that there was a tendency to include those individuals who already shared the aims and understandings of the powerful in society (Storgaard 2018). However, if a discourse is loosely coupled, then space emerges where renegotiation of meaning and participation at different levels of the hierarchy can take place. Such governance entails that leaders create space for reflection and democratic processes (Henriksen 2018). The theoretical point of departure in this chapter is based on the idea that governance in educational organisations best takes place when individuals on the same or different levels of the hierarchy interact with each other, in the interaction between interpretation and action, and in unique contexts. In these interactive encounters, it is quite natural that tensions will arise, and so, to be able to identify where in the organisation these tensions exist, we employ the concept of 'organisational in-betweens'.

3 Organisational In-Betweens

To identify that which falls outside the organisation of both horizontal and vertical structures, we refer to Mats Tyrstrup's concept of 'organisational in-betweens'. 'Organisational in-betweens' within the administrative level of school governance can occur in processes which deal with complex issues, and where different people's expertise and interests have to be weighed against each other, often within regulative frameworks. In organisations which contain specialised units, in-betweens can emerge in situations where coordination between such organisational units is needed, as they strive to achieve a common solution to the problems that they are faced with. 'In-betweens' indicate a situation when the need for coordination exists but the governance of an agency is focused on the division of work.

> An organisational in-between emerges when a person, group, or organisation's responsibility, authority, ambition, competence, information, etc. comes to an end without another person, group, or organisation addressing this situation. (Tyrstrup 2014, p.37).

The discussion of in-betweens touches on a fundamental aspect of organisational theory, namely, the question of the division of labour and the need for coordination of such labour. Two primary models which Tyrstrup (2014) appeals to in his discussion of 'organisational in-betweens' are *governance by division* and *governance by linking together*. The division of labour encapsulates the principle which was developed during the emergence of mass production in the 1900s, where efficiency was achieved by large-scale operations and management which focused on the delimitation and assignment of different parts of a work task in a standardised process where the same task was repeated over and over again. The principle of 'linking together' in the context of work is common in network- and project organisations, where expert knowledge is brought together to fulfil a certain need. In this approach, focus is placed on managing relationships instead of units (Tyrstrup 2014). The logic of networks is thus quite different from the logic of industry[1] where, in the latter, the separation between management and the operative aspects of the work is self-evident: "A great deal of what is classed according to the logic of industry as 'management' is, in knowledge intensive businesses, more of just an aspect of the actual carrying out of the business" (Tyrstrup 2007, p.7). A common misconception within the social welfare sector is that since this includes large organisations which are tasked with the provision of healthcare, education, and welfare, then these agencies are, by definition, suited to large-scale (industrial) operations. The majority of the cost incurred by the school system is covered by municipalities, but state funding is also directed within this area, too. During 2018, the provision of education (in its various forms) constituted 44% of municipal total costs, which, across all Swedish municipalities, came to a total of 293 billion (SKR 2019). It is thus a very large area of the public sector, where it is possible to work with economies of scale in several areas, but value is added in the core business where operations are constituted by interaction between people. When the creation of value in a knowledge intensive sector is absent, this may be caused by the presence of 'organisational in-betweens'.

Organisational in-betweens appear when experts are expected to solve complicated work tasks, and where their scope of operations in certain regards are quite broad, but there are gaps between expected results and actual events. Such gaps usually appear in connection to questions where cooperation with others is necessary. This entails that an organisational solution which allows certain complicated activities to take place can make other activities more difficult or even impossible to perform (Tyrstrup 2007). These gaps are usually solved by the introduction of a new organisational unit which is tasked to deal with the 'in-between', but such a move often creates new boarders and new in-betweens. The key to this problem, according to Tyrstrup, lies in viewing these in-betweens as indicators of a lack of relevant competence. It should also be made clear that 'in-betweens' are areas which a person cannot address alone, but rather, in-betweens demand cooperative action.

[1] The logic of industry has subsequently been adopted in the public sector under the designation of *New Public Management* (NPM).

However, they cannot be dealt with by the institutionalized ideas which determine which activities and approaches are of importance. Instead, the question of what is considered to be a competent response in the presence of an in-between should be discussed and negotiated according to the details of the specific situation. This approach stands in contrast to a corporate construction where management is often concerned with standardisation, uniformity, and volume.

One benefit associated with Tyrstrup's concept of 'organisational in-between' is that it can identify space where the development of important competencies can take place, which can be then used to deal with central issues for the business. By understanding the nature of an in-between, one can also come to an understanding of what a competent response might entail, and thus develop the competence that is needed so as to address the in-between. This thus involves processes which take place between actors and/or between activities:

> Knowledge of these processes also allows us to understand both how and why structural problems can appear with respect to the ability to cooperate. And they give us an idea about where it is both possible and suitable to try to influence the development of knowledge-intensive business operations. (Tyrstrup 2007, p. 55)

Competence is thus viewed as something local and context-specific: "What is or is not a competent response is determined by who observes and judges the response." (Tyrstrup 2007, p. 9). Given this point of departure, management should adopt a local understanding of how a specific organisational activity can or should be conducted. Thus, in contrast to the view that management should employ general management models, 'in-betweens' are dealt with according to local consensus.

The consequence of this approach is that familiarity with the specific operational environment and the people who populate that environment is necessary. The solution is not to be found in dealing with in-betweens with standard approaches, but rather, to develop approaches specific to the in-betweens. Management of in-betweens entails creating conditions where other people can deploy their competencies in a coordinated fashion. Inherent to this approach is acknowledging that *competence* is fundamentally inter-personal or inter-organisational, and not limited to a person or a unit. This way of understanding what competence is, according to Tyrstrup (2007), entails the following:

(i). In an organised context, everyone finds themselves in the role of judging other people's actions but they are also subject to judgement by others, be it formal or informal in nature.
(ii). There exists a hierarchy in terms of which judgements are deemed to be of significance, which is based on who possesses the legitimacy to decide what 'competence' is in a particular situation.
(iii). A relational perspective with respect to 'competence' entails that there is space to interpret what is competence and what is not competence, and this takes place quite naturally.

When management begins to devote serious attention to in-betweens and horizontal coordination, this will influence the vertical aspects of management. Tyrstrup claims

that horizontal cooperation must define the scope and conditions for how the vertical management should be structured. This entails that different models are needed to address what is a functional vertical management system. In other words, it is not the business which should adapt to the governance approach, but rather, the governance approach should be adapted to the business (Tyrstrup 2014). When the understanding of the everyday operations is to change, then leadership and governance need to be directed towards sensemaking and (re-)interpretation (Holmberg and Tyrstrup 2010). Sensemaking has been developed as an alternative framework to linear, rational decision-making models. Sensemaking emphasises meaningful interpretations of situations which influence action and well as the perception of identities (Weick et al. 2005). Quite some time ago, Weick (1976) argued that educational organisations are not characterised by 'tight linkages', and thus introduced the concept of 'loose coupling' so as to describe how the parts in such organisations are related to each other. However, despite the fact that Karl Weick and many others have identified the complexity of organisations and thereby encouraged us to consider management as the interaction between people's actions and interpretations, it seems that the idea of a linear, vertical model of management has become more predominant in educational organisations. Does this mean that school superintendents are more intent on addressing questions which are related to the vertical structure of the organisation? And, if certain parts of the education system receive more attention by school superintendents, does this mean that other parts are being forgotten? To answer these questions, we present a study of where school superintendents identify tensions in the vertical and horizontal structures in the education system.

4 Context and Methodology

In the description of organisational in-betweens it is argued that competence and the logic of the agency's operations are the mirror image of each other (Tyrstrup 2007). From a theoretical perspective, this entails that both competence and the logic of the agency's operations can be analysed in terms of different actors' way of describing an agency. During a workshop with school superintendents, we worked on different ways of describing the agency. In this chapter, we provide an analysis of the areas which the school superintendents chose to highlight as being problematic in their everyday work by employing the concept of 'organisational in-betweens'. Before we report on how we performed this investigation, we provide a description of the Swedish context.

4.1 The School Superintendent in a Swedish Context

The provision of education is a national affair, as seen by the instructions provided in the Education Act (2010: 800) which was passed by the Swedish parliament. The principal actors in this context include municipalities, school groups, and individual owners. They are responsible that the Act be complied with. However, in reality, education administrations and individual schools are the organisational units which comply with the Act in their practical, everyday work (Norén Bretzer 2016). The school superintendent has a delegated responsibility for the expertise held within the municipality and is responsible for continuity in the organisation and management of the provision of education. The role of school superintendent was subject to a legal act up until 1991 (Nihlfors 2003), when responsibility for this role was moved from the state level to the municipal level (Wahlström 2002). From July 1st, 2018, the role of school superintendent was again governed by a legal act. The new regulations in the Education Act mandates a principal actor to appoint a school superintendent who will assist the school board in ensuring that the regulations which are relevant to the provision of education are followed in the principal's agency within the domain of education. Given that, in practice, each municipality already had a school superintendent before the introduction of the new regulations, this did not entail any great changes, besides the fact that this role is legally mandated by parliament. Whether this results in any practical consequences is a matter to be seen.

A school superintendent's role may vary, depending on the size of the organization in which he or she works. This may range from a small unit with only a few employees, to large organisations with hundreds of employees in the larger municipalities. In the large municipalities, this entails that school superintendent(s) are responsible for several organisational levels just within their own administration. Furthermore, some larger municipalities have several administrations which deal with issues relevant to the school system, for example, a cultural administration, after-school administration, and social welfare administration. Each administration is governed by a board of administrators, but the day-to-day work is actually managed by a superintendent. There is also some variation across municipalities with respect to how they organise issues relevant to education and students, but as a general rule of thumb it is the case that the larger the municipality, the more people are involved in these administrations. In addition to the administrations and units which are tasked to deal with educational issues, there are also other administrative units which, for example, manage building premises and support services; such as financial services, HR, and IT. Irrespective of the size of the municipality, a school superintendent has to engage with other administrations and support units.

4.2 Data Collection and Approach

The collection of data for this study took place during a 2017 workshop which included 52 school superintendents (25 female, 27 male) from different parts of Sweden. The theme of the workshop was "Leading complex agencies" and was scheduled over 2 days. During the first day, the participants worked with several theoretical models and concepts. During the second day of the workshop, an inductive analysis of the results of the previous days was the basis for discussion. This present chapter presents a close analysis of one of three sessions that took place on the first day. The school superintendents were divided up into groups and received a short introduction to the theoretical models which have been chosen according to the theme of the workshop. The concept of 'organisational in-between' was introduced, with the following description: In an *in-between* there exists (i) what is new, unknown, and unexamined; (ii) what the organisation fails to address but is still requested to do so by its 'customers'; (iii) what the organisation should do, but does not, because it does not know how to, has no time to do so, or does not manage to do so; (iv) what is difficult to detect, which no one is able to grasp. In-betweens exist between units, divisions, and functions. The description was thus quite simply stated and quite general. During this presentation, horizontal and vertical structures were not mentioned. Instead, the participants were free to merely talk about their experiences of in-betweens.

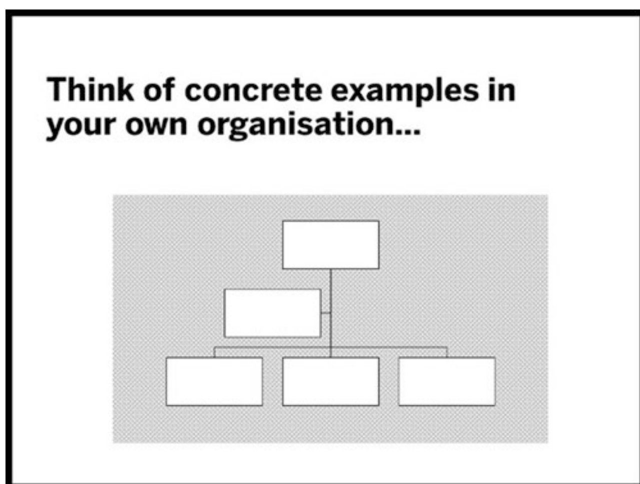
In terms of our methodology, we employed an approach which has previously been described by one of the authors as 'pictureviews' (Bjursell 2007). 'Pictureviews' involves a projective method where a person receives a picture to report on and relate to their own experience. The picture that is used can be said to function as a 'boundary object'; an object which brings the participants together around a theme whilst simultaneously enabling the individual to include their own experiences and knowledge (Styhre and Gluch 2010). 'Boundary object' is thus an analytical concept which is said to describe a material or abstract object which possesses some degree of plasticity. Thus, the concept includes different interpretations, whilst remaining sufficiently robust in the establishment of a shared representation of a particular phenomenon (Star and Griesemer 1989). Three features of boundary objects are that they can provide individuals: (i) a shared language which they can use to represent their knowledge; (ii) a concrete way to explore and learn about differences and dependencies; and (iii) support for shared knowledge transformation (Carlile 2002). By using 'pictureviews', one can achieve communication about an object either individually or collectively. Individual reflection entails that communication takes place between the object and the individual, whilst verbal communication in a group places focus on communication between people about the object. In this study, we have only included individual reflections, because such reflections are less 'processed' in their nature.

Because the workshop with the school superintendents dealt with abstract concepts and theories, we tried to make the discussion less abstract by using a picture that would guide communication. The idea behind the picture was that it would

tease out the individuals' representations of the theoretical phenomenon (in this case 'in-betweens') whilst encouraging various interpretations. The participants formed small groups consisting of 6–7 people. After being provided with an oral presentation of the theory, the participants received a handout which presented the model as a figure. They were then tasked to provide concrete examples of organisational in-betweens which they had identified in their own organisation. In the case of an organisational in-between, we presented a simple picture of a symbolic, formal organisational structure (see Picture 1). The participants were asked to write down their own thoughts and ideas on the page, which we then collected and used as data.

The written statements were collected from those participants who consented to the request that we use this material in our research. The participants then discussed in-betweens in their groups before moving on to a new exercise. The analysis that is presented below is thus based on the part of the exercise where the participants, on their own accord, identified the organisational in-betweens which they encountered in their everyday work and in their own organisation. The advantage of this approach is that it gave the participants free range to identify and formulate tensions in the in-betweens that they perceived existed in their organisation. The pages that were collected were left anonymous; thus, we do not know the size of the municipality where the in-betweens were reported on. Anonymity was important at this stage of the workshop since it allowed the participants to be freely open about their experiences.

This study should be seen as a first attempt at identifying how school superintendents experience organisational in-betweens. We believe that important knowledge can be developed by studying larger groups in relation to contextual variables for this purpose. The analysis of the material that was collected included a two-stage



Picture 1 The picture that was distributed to the school superintendents as basis for their thoughts on organisational in-betweens

inductive approach: (i) coding of remarks according to different categories of meaning elements; and (ii) grouping of categories into types of in-between. This analysis resulted in the identification of three types of areas where tensions emerge.

5 Results

In total, 63 comments about different types of organisational in-betweens were received from the 52 participants. 40 of the comments addressed issued related to horizontal coordination, 6 addressed vertical coordination in the school system, 10 dealt with in-betweens which appear because of deficiencies in leadership and governance in general, and 7 comments included ideas about how organisational in-betweens can be dealt with (see Table 1).

Table 1 Summary of the categories which were identified during the inductive analysis

In-between	Name of category	Number of statements	Quoted examples
Administrative questions	Finance and administration	4	Isolation. The development of a budget model and following up on quality assurance is performed completely without contact, coordination, or influence from the operative core but it is still intended that they will use it.
	Buildings and premises	4	The administration. Premises. Our biggest problem is the coordination with another administration, namely the civil administration. Questions disappear, are forgotten, dealt with incorrectly – Strange decision-making – New people in important roles are exchanged – Lack of continuity.
	Human resources	2	The work with respect to recruitment, the attractiveness as an employer. Maintains municipality's work with this but with focus on the individual agencies' needs.
	IT and systems	3	Develop an IT unit which recognises that its function is to serve the school/co-workers/students, and not the other way round. Inefficient organisation. Operating problems (?) today with 1:1, cloud services and costs for existing tools.
Student experience	Student health	13	Student health – Students with special needs where the parents and students are bounced between different organisations without a holistic view or responsibility.
	Children and parents	5	The school day – Afterschool. See the children/students 24/7. The whole child – The whole day and the parents' responsibility.

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

In-between	Name of category	Number of statements	Quoted examples
Units in the organisation	Between administrations	9	Drainpipe-thinking (vertical thinking) versus (horizontal) → rain gutters. Every agency is involved in its own ‘race’. This results in a lack of a shared view, equality, common strategies, etc.
	Within the administration	6	Organisational in-betweens. Between pre-school (pre-school class) – Primary school. Compulsory school – Compulsory school (when changing schools) – Between different principal actors. Between compulsory school and high school.
	Management and governance	10	Different cultures. In an organisation where both the state and the municipal levels examine the results and school unit performance. How does one then work with school cultures for different school units? How does one show the value of a stable and clear school culture in a goal-driven organisation?
Solutions	Learning and development	7	Professional development – Parallel with the organisation.

The last category listed in the table, ‘Solutions’, are, of course, not comments which provide examples of tensions. Instead, this category seems to list thoughts concerning how the participants would deal with existing tensions, and they were basically recommendations for more learning and development for staff members at different levels in the organisation. This category is not subject to further discussion below, as the focus is on organisational in-betweens, which, according to the school superintendents, included tensions regarding (i) ‘Administrative questions’, (ii) ‘Student experience’, and (iii) ‘Units in the organisation’.

In-betweens in administrative questions appear between support functions and the core business of the organisation. The areas which were remarked on were finance and administration, buildings and premises, Human Resources, and IT and systems. Each individual support function did not receive particularly many comments, but the total number of remarks does demonstrate that the in-betweens between the core business and the support functions do not always function properly, according the participating school superintendents. This category of in-between relates to practical issues in the everyday running of the organisation. These tensions can be included when the school superintendents refer to in-betweens between

administrations in general, because, for example, buildings often have their own administration in a municipality and the support functions, finance, HR, and IT can also be thought of as their own organisational units, especially in large municipalities. The in-betweens in administrative questions are characterised by a tension between coordination and adaptation between quite different competencies.

In-betweens in 'Student experience' include in-betweens which appear with respect to issues which concern pupils and students and where several different professional roles must coordinate with each other. 'Student health' may well be included in the educational administration, but this issue may also lie within the remit of the municipality's social services administration. Irrespective of which, staff members working with health care are subject to a different set of confidentiality requirements. Thus, despite the fact that all staff members may have the students' best intention in mind, contradictions may arise because employees have different areas of responsibility. Furthermore, certain questions may be found in the tension between different perspectives which are the result of the employees' professional education and understanding of the situation. We thus observe that in-betweens can arise between similar areas of competence, and questions can concern whether the students' learning or their health be placed in the foreground. The issue of special needs is also the concern of other administrative units. For example, the county council are responsible for the provision of healthcare. In such cases, in-betweens can be considered to be quite critical because they cannot be solved with the competence of one organization only. Instead, different peoples' expertise has to be coordinated across organizations. This type of in-between is different from administrative in-betweens where coordination takes place between areas within an organization of a particular agency, whilst, with respect to student experience, coordination within and between organizations is the issue that needs to be dealt with.

In-betweens across organisational units are described at a more overarching organisational level. One class of these in-betweens can be found between administrations, where school superintendents report that what is metaphorically referred to in terms of 'drainpipes' and 'rain gutters' is a common occurrence. In public administrations, it is not unusual for people to speak of their organisations featuring 'drainpipe thinking', when they refer to the administration in the context of the whole, so called 'chain of command' – i.e., from state control, via different departments, and so on to local solutions. It is also usual for municipalities to organise themselves into classic functional organisations with a hierarchical flow of information and decision-making mandates from directorships out to the different municipal agencies. The in-betweens emerge in the 'rain gutters', i.e., in the horizontal structures. This is clear when questions which are relevant to the responsibility of administrative support functions or the responsibility of certain professions are to be dealt with, as described in the two previously-mentioned in-betweens above. The school superintendents also reported that in-betweens emerge in both horizontal and vertical structures. In-betweens exist both in and across administrations.

6 Discussion

The analysis of the empirical material that was generated at the workshop confirmed the results of previous research that identified tensions in the vertical chain of command (Moos et al. 2016). However, the school superintendents who participated in this study did not mention the existence of tensions between politicians and superintendents. Instead, the superintendents identified organizational in-betweens between school levels (for example, pre-school, primary school, high school, and adult education). A possible reason as to why they mentioned hierarchical levels within their administrations is the previously-mentioned orientation towards (vertical) line management that exists in the public sector. In addition to this, the school superintendents identified tensions in the horizontal structure of governance. These tensions were mentioned in relation to administrative in-betweens and in-betweens that concern student experience. Regarding administrative in-betweens, it is not unusual for personnel within an organisation to request uniform solutions and overarching work routines, but when such administrative approaches are implemented, they are often on a far too overarching level and thus do not properly fit in with the individual parts of the administration's operations. The quality assurance system used by municipalities is an example of such a paradoxical state of affairs in cases where a particular system does not provide the expected results (quality) if it is not adapted to unique contexts and situations. Regarding in-betweens in the area of student experience, they are primarily caused by a lack of consensus and agreement between professions; the student health administration and teachers have a shared responsibility for the students, where the one role is not more important than the other. The three types of in-between which were identified in the analysis were presented as similar to each other, but the way in which the school superintendents wrote about the different in-betweens raised questions as to whether similar distinctions should be made regarding in-betweens which touch on direct problems and in-betweens where, more generally, additional coordination would be a good thing. An example of the first type would include questions which concern students who need adjustments of the educational system. An example of the second type is when personnel wish to coordinate with each other to simplify their own work assignments. These are areas which we encourage future research to consider more closely.

Based on the theoretical assumption of in-betweens, we argue that they can be understood as areas which show a lack of leadership. These areas can thus be considered to be 'unmanaged spaces'. This concept includes the content of Tyrstrup's 'organisational in-between', but also reveals to us an opportunity (and need) to deal with such issues by means of governance. Governance is sometimes divided up into two separate practices, controlling and leading, but if they are to have a positive effect on the development of an agency, then they must be integrated with each other. However, exactly like Tyrstrup, we attach a great deal of importance to the fact that this approach to governance should be special in that certain parts of the system are left 'loosely coupled' whilst other parts are actively managed and are thus more closely bound together. The way that school superintendents encounter,

recognize, and deal with these unmanaged spaces is an important part of learning within the organization. To focus on learning, instead of adapting to policy and management trends, it is important that school organizations develop as active and reflective institutions in society. One reason why this does not take place is because public administrations are sometimes equated with the logic of a service organisation or a production organisation. However, with respect to the context of the provision of education, such a characterisation is not quite accurate, even if one can identify the presence of both logics. Education is a fundamental part of, and a condition for, a democratic society (Moos et al. 2018). Education is thus not just a product or a service which one provides. In contrast to being a product or a service where the customer is the person who decides whether the service lives up to their expectations, it is the case that in the area of education the *teacher* is the person who decides on what learning level the student has achieved (Bjursell et al. 2015). The organisation of the provision of education demands coordination of both horizontal and vertical aspects of the relevant administrations, as well as an ability to adapt to different situations in everyday activities. Such a mind-set is difficult to achieve if one merely proceeds from an industrial, linear logic.

Governance and management must be adapted to the agency's character (Bredeson et al. 2011). This point was also made in the empirical material used in this study when the school superintendents requested new ways of working, the establishment of a new culture, so as to deal with the organisational gaps, challenges, and demands which exist in their agency. In goal-driven municipal organisations, it is common to find governance which is based on rules and policy documents, including job descriptions and specifications of areas of responsibility. With the problems discussed in this study in mind, we wish to question whether this is the most suitable form of governance and management. The reason for this is because goal-driven organisations employ a logic of governance which is not adapted to organisations which are expected to operate based on knowledge and competence. If one were to take change from direct, linear governance to governance in both vertical and horizontal structures seriously, this would entail a shift from (A) indirect leadership via paper to (B) a direct and physically present leadership approach. In-betweens are more difficult to address with an indirect leadership approach, i.e., via regulatory documents of various kinds. Instead, in-betweens demand a direct form of leadership which is based on personal conversations and encounters. It is during these conversations and encounters when the relevant actors can (re-)calibrate their perceptions of the agency, its content, and its purpose. Using in-betweens as a point of departure, we can develop principles for how work tasks and activities should be coordinated with each other. This is a central issue because "[t]here, in the organisational in-betweens, things which are most probably very crucial to shared learning take place, and thus constitute the development force in a knowledge-intensive agency" (Tyrstrup 2007, p. 64). Instead of focusing on certain physical or technical aspects, *people's knowledge* constitutes the strategic raw material in a knowledge-intensive agency. The consequences of such an assumption is that governance and management thus becomes social and mental in character, and includes regular contact with other people so as to bring people together with the different

expertise and knowledge which is needed to address questions that arise. This involves creating the conditions where different parts of an organisation or agency can be coordinated with each other; something which, to a large degree, demands understanding of and participation in *operative* business.

Regarding the ‘unmanaged spaces’ that were identified by the school superintendents, one might ask whether they are of equal importance. How reasonable is it that they spend time on unmanaged spaces? With respect to the vertical structure, there were several remarks made about how desirable it would be if the different school levels were connected more closely together. With regards to this issue, further research is needed so as to identify what does not function well in the transfer from one school level to another. This research should be performed, so as to avoid the idea that *everything* must be connected. What is the actual tension or problem? On closer inspection, it may be the case that parts of the tension involve a desire to establish a linear organisation which links the different school stages together – but perhaps this would be irrelevant to the students or to the democratic assignment that the school system is tasked with. It is not unusual for managers to want a neat and clear organisational structure, instead of a somewhat chaotic structure which grows in response to an agency’s needs. Another interesting aspect of the comments made about unmanaged spaces is that school superintendents apparently can identify the disturbances which appear in in-betweens. Notwithstanding this ability, they seem to perceive themselves as being subject to these disturbances and not responsible for dealing with them. The tensions that have been explored in this chapter can, however, provide guidance in identifying key areas that need to be addressed in horizontal collaboration and learning between municipal units which superintendents can be made responsible for dealing with. In the empirical material used in this study, two categories were more frequently mentioned than the others, namely, ‘Student health’ and ‘Governance and management’. The remarks made about both of these areas indicate where problems exist and the fact that issues relevant to identity, power, and establishing limits/boundaries are central. How should school superintendents then approach these areas? Unmanaged spaces are not automatically equivalent to an area which should be characterized by a loose connection. If a tension exists, then it can sometimes demand that a tighter connection be made with respect to the constituent parts. This connection, however, does not need to be structural in nature or be formalized in a regulatory document. As mentioned above, it has become common practice that the governance in public organizations takes place by closing up holes in the organization with pieces of paper – rules and documents are created which are supposed to solve the problem and provide the agency direction. The problem with this approach is that it is difficult to formulate complex events in writing. Establishing an operational boundary which is supported by documentation furthermore entails that directors and managers within the organization are denied training in dealing with tensions in their personal encounters with their fellow employees. This, in turn, diminishes the directors’ and managers’ knowledge and skill to take action in unmanaged spaces in response to specific issues and contextual variables. At this point, however, we wish to remind the reader that an organization does not exist for the purpose of developing its directors and managers.

Educational organizations primarily have a democratic assignment. These two issues – the directors' professional competence development and the democratic assignment – can be linked together, however.

7 Conclusion

The overarching conclusion of this study is that, in their everyday work, school superintendents are confronted with tensions in both the vertical and horizontal structures with which they work. The three types of in-betweens which were identified in this study involved: (i) 'administrative questions', (ii) 'student experience', and (iii) 'organizational units'. Both administrative questions and student experience entail a horizontal orientation for school superintendents because they do not exist in the current 'chain of command'. In the research literature on this area, horizontal structures have been somewhat ignored, but for the school superintendents who participated in our study these in-betweens are everyday realities. A horizontal orientation is also a fundamental dimension of the logic of democracy which is based on the agreement of a multitude of different voices. A democratic approach and a democratic way of working entail the inclusion of many different actors, levels, and interests. However, in a discourse based on 'efficiency', such an approach to governance may seem to be far too complex and diffuse. Work that is to be done in a complex organization can be given clear direction by identifying the areas which the organisation experiences as problematic since they demonstrate the existence of the potential for learning, innovation and areas which need further professional development. We have called these areas *unmanaged spaces* so as to emphasise the importance of governance. However, we refer here to a special type of governance which features a combination of loose and tight couplings with relation to the situation's unique character.

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Part IV
Data-Informed Decision Making in School Leadership

The Struggle for Data – A Ghost Goes Through the World

Finn Wiedemann

1 Introduction

Over the last few years, data-based leadership and data-informed leadership have become prominent subjects in scholarly research examining the Danish educational system. In support of this trend, it has also become possible to study Data in Leadership while pursuing a Diploma in Educational Leadership.

As a result, school leaders are regularly expected to use specific forms of data to develop their schools, and many research projects have taken place under this perspective, e.g. the Program for Leadership of Learning on data-based school development supported by A.P. Moeller (2015–2020), which involves 10% of all Danish Schools. There, systematic data measurement is being used to inform school initiatives.

In addition, to help school leaders and teachers with access to data, the Danish Ministry of Education has established a data-house where school leaders and teachers can pick up many different forms of data regarding documentation, benchmarking and development.

Other currently popular central concepts in school leadership, such as Student-Centred Leadership, are also using data as a central component in recommendations for practicing leadership (Robinson 2011).

For many years, I have worked as a head of studies at the University of Southern Denmark and have personally noticed this enormous increase in data use. A few years ago, access to data was limited. There were no expectations that initiatives or actions were founded on data. Now, one has access to large samples of data concerning the students' attitudes and experiences, including dropouts, lateness, study

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engagement, study intensity, job acquisition, and internationalization etc. In other words, there is a widespread expectation that school leaders and educational leaders are working with data.

A new report also confirms that Danish school leaders are increasingly using data in practicing leadership (Vive 2019). At present, school leaders and teachers are widely expected to have competence in data literacy, which is the ability and willingness to use specific forms of data (Datnow and Park 2014; Søland Klausen 2018; Olsen et al. 2018).

The argument for using data is that it gives school leaders many new discipline-oriented pedagogical and strategical possibilities. School leaders are now able to act in a more systematic and knowledge-based way instead of primarily relying on individual perspectives and experiences (Dahler-Larsen 2006).

These increasing expectations for school leaders to use data can be understood as part of a longer tradition of educational discourses inspired by Anglo-Saxon thinking and research, which is a tradition that plays an even larger part in educational policy and educational science than it has in the past (Wiedemann 2017; Moos et al. 2019).

My view is that school leaders are not able to work or lead without data, but we need to be more critical of the idea that data can answer every question and meet every expectation that school leaders and educational institutions face. Sometimes, it is better to use one's experiences, make observations, conduct a few interviews or meet with the central actors instead of relying on quantitative inquiry.

The increasing use of data also raises new problems. How can we define data? What kind of data should we be governed by? Are we able to rely on data? Who has the right to decide what sort of data we should use? As Spillane puts it, 'data do not objectively guide decisions on their own – people do' (Spillane 2012). In a greater sense, we might ask what ethical and democratic challenges the increasing use of data raises for us as users, respondents and citizens (Zuboff 2019).

In this paper, I will discuss the previously mentioned questions and problems and try to identify some of the consequences for school and school leadership created by the increasing use of specific forms of data.

In recent years, it has been assumed that a pragmatic approach must be taken while working with data (Wiedemann 2019). To a large extent, literature recommending the use of data is founded on a reform-oriented position, but that is a narrow and quantitative view of data, causing specific assumptions about leadership, knowledge, school development and pedagogy to dominate current discussions. As a result, many forms of data are not classified as data, e.g. implicit, personal, narrative and experience-oriented or qualitative knowledge. Consequently, knowledge which traditionally has played an important role in school leadership is forgotten or plays only a secondary role.

In this paper, I will argue that dealing with education and teaching calls for other competencies than data literacy, including critical thinking, close analysis, people skills, and interpretation of subtext (Geertz 1973).

Seen from an overall perspective, the aim of this paper is to highlight some of the often neglected practices in data-driven or data-informed school leadership.

2 Empirical Method

As background for the study, I will focus on a selection of key publications on the Danish educational system that have been published in recent years, including the works of Søland Klausen (2018), Olsen et al. (2018), Datnow and Park (2017(2014)), Qvortrup (2016a, b), Hornskov et al. (2016) and Nordahl (2015). These publications introduce current ideas concerning data use in schools, particularly the notion of data-informed leadership.

I will then try to identify the central ideas and assumptions found in the literature concerning data-informed leadership particularly in terms of methodology. These publications will be viewed as texts promoting regimes of knowledge, technologies and agents in an attempt to naturalize and spread specific ideas about education, leadership and school development. The resulting discourses frame school leaders and educational leaders as subjects. For instance, they describe the role as a leader to other leaders, teachers and pupils (Foucault 1972, 2002; Hermann 2007). The analysis will not directly rely on Foucauldian terminology, but the analysis will be in line with the discourse analysis method developed by Foucault.

3 The Use of Data in Schools

Schools have always been knowledge institutions. Teachers and leaders have always used data in an attempt to know where they have come from, where they are and where they are going. The fact that schools are using data is not a new trend; the new trend is that schools have begun to use specific forms of data in a more systematic way.

But what exactly is data? Søland Klausen (2018) provides an answer in the following quote from the Ontario Ministry of Education:

> Data is information which is collected and organized in a systematic way. It can be used to draw decisions about learning and social well-being and/or decisions concerning organizational decisions and priorities.

Søland Klausen (2018) does not discuss the definition any further. But this definition of data excludes observations done by individuals that were not collected in a systematic way. The other part of the definition is that data can have an application-oriented perspective on pupils' learning and social well-being, as well as organizational decisions. Observations not dealing with the mentioned issues may not, from that perspective, count as data.

In their instruction on data work in schools, the Danish Ministry of Education (2019) writes as follows:

> Data is characterized by being knowledge that can be the subject of joint discussions by being retained in a form where they can be re-visited, even by other than those who have collected this date. In addition, data is characterized by being valid, i.e. based on a transparent and systematic basis.

In addition to overlooking the demands for data use in specific contexts, this definition repeats other problematic elements from the previous example.

In the two mentioned definitions, data is defined as *explicit knowledge* (Scharmer 2001). Data is therefore knowledge that can be found in a material form, e.g. as numbers or written words. However, neither definition includes *implicit knowledge*, e.g. tacit knowledge based on experiences or embodied knowledge (Scharmer 2001).

In contrast to this relatively narrow definition, many introductions to data-based knowledge put weight on a broader and more diverse perspective of data. Data comes in both quantitative and qualitative forms, including numbers, observations and narratives (Olsen et al. 2018, 14; Jensen 2016; Søland Klausen 2018).

One example is the work of Olsen et al. (2018), who distinguish between small and broad data, e.g. national tests as small data and surveys dealing with students' well-being as broad data. These categories can be divided even further into formal and in-formal forms of data, e.g. a national test as formal data decided by school authorities and a reading tutor test as in-formal data not decided by low. Observations and interview notes are examples of broad and non-formal forms of data.

Søland Klausen (2018) also distinguishes between qualitative and quantitative data, as well as pedagogical data (e.g. national tests and products made by pupils), outside world data (e.g. socioeconomic data) and qualitative data (e.g. narratives and rumours).

4 What Is Data?

From a semiotic perspective, small data is formal data and very often a number. A number is a sign that can be classified as a digital symbol (Pierce 2004). The relationship between the sign and the signified are arbitrary, meaning that a language or social convention decides that 'twelve' is more than 'eleven.' This concept contradicts an interpretation of words, sentences or pictures where the meaning is more socially insecure and mostly determined by the culture and context.

Small formal data, such as numbers, are abstract and general. They are fast communication modes that can easily move around in the social, cultural and global orbit, a feature that is both an advantage and disadvantage. Numbers eliminate ambiguity. Despite being often highly abstract and generalised, numbers are not simple to contextualise or explain. Nevertheless, an interpretation of numbers is still based on social conventions. Social conventions and interpretation are not neutral. Some people, institutions or interests have the power to decide the exact interpretation, such as what a specific number means or what action is going to be taken (Spillane 2012). In a school context, the school leader or the school principal have the formal competence to make decisions about how to understand and use data, though school leaders very often will be competing with informal actors and other interests in and around the school about the precise meaning of the data.

5 Background

The idea of using data in a more systematic way has reached Danish schools within the last few years. Why has this happened? In the following section, I will outline the different explanations for this trend.

Technological development is one reason. Big data and the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Schwab 2017) have influenced schools to adopt practices such as learning analytics and educational data mining. It is also much easier than ever before to complete surveys and manage big amounts of complex data. Earlier on, these were time-consuming tasks requiring specific skills and competences. Five to ten years ago there were also only a few statistical school datasets available. Now, the actors in and around the school are offered detailed information about teaching, learning processes, student achievement and school performance. We are indeed entering an era of learning environments mediated by digital technology, as the Finnish educational researcher Pasi Sahlberg (2018, 30) clearly puts it.

From a broader perspective, the effort to put more weight on quantitative data for governance, leadership and school development goes back to the 1990s. At that time, international data on student achievement produced by PISA and TIMMS began to play a role in educational policy and educational research. New international surveys based on quantitative research had a quick and enormously political and pedagogical influence throughout most of the world. Suddenly, actors in and around the school had access to huge amounts of data about the school and the educational system.

In a Danish context, different initiatives were outlined. As an example, the 2014 decision to establish learning platforms in Danish municipalities has contributed to this development. Another example was the 2014 establishment of the earlier mentioned data-house, where school leaders and teachers can pick up many different forms of data regarding documentation, benchmarking and development. At the Warehouse of Data school leaders are offered information about national test scores, measurements of social well-being and other information. The purpose of the data-house is to deliver data and statistics about the quality of each school's work to the municipalities (https://uvm.dk/stil/uddannelsesdata/datavarehuset).

In 2014, a new School Act was also established in which accountability was introduced as a common and widespread instrument (Jensen 2016). Søland Klausen (2018, 17) describes this act as a reform founded on learning and governing, while Hornskov et al. (2016) argues that leadership played a significant role in the reform. According to different authors, the reform paved the way for systematic work with data and accountability in which actors at all stages of the educational system would be held responsible for efforts and effects (Søland Klausen 2018; Datnow and Park 2014).

In addition, the increased use of data in the educational world may be interpreted as a part of a much bigger educational change that has taken place through the 2010s. Educational policy has begun to prioritise data and empirical evidence over

a Democratic Bildung tradition, moving from a tradition inspired by Germany and central Europe to a more Anglo-Saxon tradition.

Qvortrup (2016a) and Hornskov et al. (2016) argue that this focus on data may be linked to the success of the school effectiveness movement. This movement focused on the relationship between efforts and effects, encouraging educational leaders to use data in a systematic way in order to increase the students' learning and create organizational learning.

This development has also contributed to the current emphasis on empirical research. Responding to Helmke (2013) and Hattie (2009). Qvortrup (2016b) argues that a major educational change has happened in educational science. Educational science has become more effect- and learning-oriented.

Notably, all of the above research comes from the Anglo-Saxon world, e.g. USA, England, Australia and New Zealand (Olsen et al. 2018). One might also notice that a lot of the concepts about learning and leadership that have emerged in Denmark in the last few years treat data work as essential, as exemplified by Visible Leadership, Student-Centred Leadership and Leadership for Learning.

From an historical perspective, the tendency towards working with quantitative data in educational policy and educational research is relatively new in Nordic countries. First, working with data showed up as external requirements, e.g. through quality reports, national tests and PISA measurements. Now, the trend also encompasses internal tools. Quantitative data are used for measurements, monitoring and development to contribute to strategic and pedagogical school changes.

From an even larger perspective, the increasing use of data in education is a change at the macro level, where a new perspective on society, organization and leadership dominates.

From an educational perspective, a global educational space has consequently developed. New political technologies or soft laws have emerged where data, measurements, comparisons and accountability play a larger role than before. The OECD, World Bank and different private and semi-public organizations are leading this development (Ball 2013; Wiedemann 2017, 48; Moos et al. 2019). The global competitive state or the market state can be considered the central frame for this development, where benchmarking, measurements, accountability and strategic development are placed as central and inevitable instruments (Pedersen 2011, 2018).

In summary, the increasing use of data in schools and education through data-based leadership and data-informed leadership can be interpreted in line with major worldwide changes, where specific notions of knowledge, research and the development of society and organizations are intertwined.

6 The Advantages of Working with Data

In the following section, I will outline three common explanations for i this increased use of data in education.

Datnow and Park (2014) argue that using data will lead to better qualified decisions and more effective organizations.

Qvortrup (2016b) argues that you become a better teacher or leader when you use data because you will make more intelligent and well-informed decisions. Using data is a way to practice better professional judgement and strengthen your knowledge base.

Nordahl (2015), Jensen (2016), Robinson (2011) and Datnow and Park (2014, 18) argue that data can be used as an instrument to develop student learning and well-being because when you use data, it becomes easier to closely follow and document your pupils' development.

7 The Leaders' Role in Data Work

Olsen et al. (2018) outline three reasons why school leaders should work with data: better alignment, better visibility and strengthened practice. Working with data can create better alignment between the different levels of management surrounding the school. As a community, the teachers, leaders, school administration and politicians can be more aware of the pupils' learning and well-being. According to Robinson (2011), this awareness is the most essential school task. A similar argument is used by Qvortrup (2016a), who says that you must use data if you want to strengthen your practice. When school leaders use data, the pupils' learning and the school's mission become concrete and visible to parents, politicians, teachers and leaders.

In a review concerning the use of data in school leadership by Hornskov et al. (2016, 11 ff.), the authors describe different ways in which a school leader can advantageously use data. The authors specifically outline several desirable results of this practice, including strategic decision-making, goal setting, evaluation, organizational capital and publicized outputs visible to management. Olsen et al. (2018) use similar arguments.

In dealing with data-informed leadership, a school leader has internal and external roles. The external role deals with communication with the outside world, e.g. with the political and administrative levels. Here, data is used mainly for documentation. The internal role deals with teachers and pupils. Here, data is used as input for the schools' professional development, e.g. concerning the pupils learning and social well-being (Olsen et al. 2018, 18).

A central task for a school leader is to motivate teachers to make data relevant to their work (Datnow and Park 2014), which can be accomplished through conversations with groups of teachers. Leaders also help teachers with capacity-building in the attempt to create a data-based culture. If conversations along these lines do not occur, teachers will probably not see the importance of working with data (Nordahl 2015, 19; Verbiest 2004).

Daily work with data does nearly always take place in teams or professional learning communities. The team is a part of the schools' machinery, and data is the input or the energy that makes the pedagogical machine perform in the best way

(Olsen et al. 2018; Søland Klausen 2018; Datnow and Park 2014; Qvortrup 2016b). The role of a leader is to support the professional learning community's work with data. However, research on this subject is again influenced by Anglo-Saxon literature, e.g. the works of Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), Robinson (2011) and DuFour and Marzano (2011).

Working with data forces leaders to lead upwards, downwards and inwards. Outside, the task mostly involves management and strategic decisions. Inside, the task mostly involves strategic questions focused on the students' learning and well-being.

A normative presumption in data-based leadership or data-informed leadership is that leadership is based on scientific principles and methods. Data-based leadership or data-informed leadership is the most historically developed form of leadership we have seen so far and has outlasted many older forms of leadership. This staying power is one of the consequences of technological development, the huge amounts of data we have access to and the scientific principles we rely on. The current conception of leadership is founded on scientific assumptions and principles that have dominated research in leadership from time to time, though perspectives on leadership have also been dominated by cultural traditions, values and experiences at other times (Grint 2011).

8 General Presumptions for Working with Data

If you are going to work with data, you must have data literacy, understood as the ability to gather, analyse and create sense from data (Søland Klausen 2018, 51; Hornskov et al. 2016, 21). Leaders as well as teachers need skills before they can work with data.

In addition, a data culture must be established and developed in every single organization. Data must be a natural part of the learning environment of the organization (Søland Klausen 2018, 52; Hornskov et al. 2016).

Datnow and Park (2014, 25) argue that schools have different data cultures spanning from very simple to very complex. Within the context of American research, they are referring to data cultures focusing on either analyses, data or inquiry. In data culture, you gather complex data, conduct complex analysis and have a complex process of decision-making. Nordahl (2015) speaks about a data-informed school culture as an ideal for encouraging work with data in schools.

As mentioned before, data work takes place in an organizational context where norms, values and assumptions are already found, establishing what is possible and what is valued. The meaning of data depends on already existing patterns of meaning and values. Seen through an organizational perspective, data is a new artefact that interacts with already existing experiences, values and assumptions (Schein 2016; Weick 1995). In that light, data can be interpreted and used in different ways by leaders and teachers. As argued earlier, data is not just data, and different types

of data always have to be interpreted and used within the already existing meaning and values of the social or cultural context.

9 Discussion

In Olsen et al. (2018, 21 ff.), three current educational positions on the use of data in education are outlined based on Hermann (2016). The authors first describe a reform-oriented perspective, which holds that data will make it possible to reform schools and educational systems. The second position takes a critical look at data, arguing that its implementation is about power and control and that it detracts from pedagogy, teaching and leadership. The third position is the pragmatic position, the one held by many of the authors in favour of data-informed or data-based leadership. However, many of those same authors lean more towards a reform-oriented position when it comes to practice, as I will argue later on.

With only limited space for this discussion, I will focus on two of these positions: the reform-oriented and pragmatic positions, which each reflect distinct views on education, teaching, the role of the teacher and the role of leadership, as well as distinct positions on knowledge, governing and school development. First, I will address the reform-oriented position. Then, I will identify central elements in the pragmatic position.

10 Central Elements from the Reform-Oriented Position

The educational researcher Gert Biesta (2010) claims that teaching is a value-based and symbolically mediated interaction. The aim of teaching is not to intervene with practice, like it is in the reform-oriented position. To Biesta, that use of evidence represents an overly simple understanding of pedagogical practice. Pedagogical practice is reduced to simple thinking based on means and aims. In the tradition of Dewey (2005), teaching must instead be understood as intelligent action. Based on ongoing examinations, experiences and feedback you try to get a better understanding of the situation.

The ideal in the reform-oriented position is for the teacher to be a leader of learning. The leader of learning works within a rational and goal-oriented perspective, using data and evidence-based knowledge regularly as the basis for judging efforts and effects (Qvortrup 2016b, 69 ff.).

In the reform-oriented tradition, the teacher must be understood as a social expert who can fix pedagogical problems and challenges by using numbers and quantitative knowledge. This view on teaching and education is founded in an ontology where teaching and education are viewed as activities with stable and predictable characteristics.

Working with quantitative data increases the risk of path dependency, which means that the focus falls on specific efforts and effect, increasing the probability that the teacher overlooks new possibilities for problem-solving. The reform-oriented position does not focus on interactions, subtext or context. Instead, the focus is very much on *big data* in contrast to *small data* (Sahlberg 2018).

11 The Role of the School Leader

In data-informed leadership, the central tasks of the school leader are to make the right data available to everyone in the right way so that students can enhance their well-being and learning.

However, because 'evidence-based school leadership' (Jones 2018) and the data-driven leader (Wiedemann 2019) rely on big data, some may hide behind the numbers, reports and statistics and claim to be a better leader than other evaluative measures would support. Data-driven leaders risk being cut off from the world of the phenomenon. They spend their time on data-making instead of sense-making and interacting with humans. Data-making is a method where the assumption is that you can develop and rely on safe knowledge. By using so-called 'safe' knowledge, data-driven leaders believe they can lead, govern and control activities.

As a result, numbers become the leaders' most valued tools for leading, and the leaders' capacity for inspiration, intuition, common sense and professional judgement can be reduced (Wiedemann 2019).

As Sahlberg (2018, 35) clearly puts it, 'If you can't lead with the help of small data, you will be led by big data.' The data-driven leaders' view on humanity is grounded in an assumption that people are rational and driven by utility. Each single employee has an interest in realizing and improving the activities of the school by using a numeric perspective based on efforts and effects. Thus, the data-driven leader is a rational leader founded on a machine-like view of the organization (Morgan 1986).

12 Knowledge and Governance

In the reform-oriented tradition, education and teaching are not seen as social and cultural practices, but instead activities that can be manipulated and changed in a mechanical way. Explicit knowledge, which is to say quantitative data or big data, is prioritised. The presumption is that it is possible through statistical methods and planned surveys to govern, control and monitor efforts and effects. There is a close connection between cause and effect, input and output and the identification of the problem and the solving of the problem (Boye Andersen 2016). In these ways, the concept of governing is aligned with neo-positivism.

This emphasis on quantitative aims and measurements builds on the assumptions that the activities of the school can be broken down into single parts that can measured. Advocates believe this approach gives a true and fair view of the schools' open and complex life. This view of governing is based on the idea that it is possible to develop the perfect system (Andersen and Pors 2014).

The registration and use of data taking place in schools and educational institutions can also be linked to the development of surveillance capitalism that Zuboff (2019) has identified as a central part of our present society. Data from our private lives and, one could add, data from our working lives are being watched, monitored and exploited not merely with a commercial purpose, as is the case with tech giants, but also with political and governance-oriented purposes.

13 The Pragmatic Position

The pragmatic position assumes that teaching and education are social and cultural activities. Within this framework, quantitative data might be an inspiration, but it will not be the only form of data. As a starting point, quantitative and qualitative data have the same value, which contrasts with the definition of data recommended by The Danish Ministry of Education mentioned earlier. Seen from a pragmatic perspective, that definition is too narrow, putting too much weight on a small and quantitative-oriented understanding of data.

A pragmatic perspective requires that teachers and leaders have data literacy abilities, but it requires to an even greater extent that teachers and leaders continually involve themselves in inquiries, analyses and experiments concerning their experiences with teaching and education.

After reading the works of Biesta (2010), Dewey (2005) and Sahlberg (2018), one might agree that the complexity of teaching and education calls for the use of qualitative data, e.g. observations, conversations, audio-visual expressions, analyses of student products and close analyses. The limitations of small data fit poorly with the open and unfinished character of teaching and education. Instead, thick descriptions (Geertz 1973) or narrative knowledge (Bruner 1996) are required to a much larger extent, e.g. detailed and saturated data about episodes and actions as the basis for developing knowledge, understanding and common action.

Teaching and education call for empathy and the ability to put oneself in someone else's place. This requirement could be described as a competence in phenomenology. Teaching and education also call for the ability to see patterns and connections and present analyses and interpretations with the aim of understanding a phenomenon. These responsibilities could be described as competencies in hermeneutics. The ability to spot patterns and connections across domains, use one's intuition, behave in critical and creative ways and raise democratic and ethical questions requires experience working with qualitative data and the disciplines of humanity as opposed to the disciplines of positivist sociology (Madsbjerg 2017; Bruner 1996).

The research-oriented leader and teacher Stenhouse (1975), when compared to other teachers or leaders of learning, did not primarily rely on quantitative data as the basis for intelligent action and action learning (Tiller 2006). Quantitative data might help, but it offers just one perspective among many. According to Stenhouse, the research-oriented leader or teacher must also lean on qualitative data, which can be used as a source to create ownership and common pedagogical action.

Thus, the pragmatic perspective emphasises conversation and dialogue when it comes to decision-making and developing disciplines, pedagogy and strategical questions. Quantitative data might be helpful, but it cannot be the only influence on a decision or overrule all other perspectives. The pragmatic perspective trusts that teachers' work with qualitative data is the most important use of data.

14 Conclusion

In recent years, we have witnessed an increased use of formal data and big data in educational settings that is based on a small understanding and definition of data. The use of small and formal data, which can be registered in external technical systems, has especially increased. These systems are developed by private and public organizations, while informal and broader views of data often are developed by teachers and schools themselves. From an historical perspective, the latter forms of data have played a major role in the development of schools. In contrast, qualitative or implicit knowledge has become less important in the past year.

Many introductions to data work at schools recommend a pragmatic position. Scholars argue for a mutual approach to data as an instrument for school development and decision-making, stating that quantitative and qualitative data should be valued in the same way. However, when it comes to reality, quantitative data is given a higher priority. Recommendations, examples and methods are based on quantitative data to a larger extent. Officially, the pragmatic position is recommended, but the reform-oriented position dominates in practice. The literature on this subject speaks with two tongues but walks on one leg.

When only working with quantitative data, one risks promoting specific ideas about education, teaching and pedagogy at the expense of other approaches. As a result, specific methods, identities and relationships between school leaders, teachers and pupils develop.

The central ideas identified in data-based or data-informed leadership could be described as a form of neo-positivism. Simple relations between means and aims, causality, inside and outside and cause and effect are found. The suggested methods or technologies are approaches that Nikolas Rose (1991) described as 'management by numbers'.

Externally, these methods are used for documentation in national and local statistics and the fulfilment of educational goals. Internally, they work as the basis for the development and correction of strategical, discipline-oriented and pedagogical approaches.

15 Consequences

One of the consequences of this development is that teachers are hindered rom picking their own teaching methods instead they are going to work with methods introduced and developed by others. Another consequence is that the identity of teachers and leaders' changes. The ideal is for the teacher to become a leader of learning. The reality is that a simple understanding of the complexity and flexibility characterizing education and teaching has taken hold. The data-based leader is treated as the ideal, and school-leaders have distanced themselves from teachers and pupils as a result. This approach, again, is an overly simplistic understanding of school leadership.

At present, the reform-oriented position dominates in education, even though criticisms and challenges have emerged through the previously mentioned positions, where data is viewed in a more mutual and complex way. Reality is not objective and easy to manipulate. The favouritism shown to specific forms of data comes from the outside, e.g. from school authorities and politicians. It is not something that has been demanded from within the school by teachers or local school leaders.

From a wider perspective, the tendency towards increasing the use of data in schools could be interpreted in line with wider, macro-level changes in society. An Anglo-Saxon understanding of society, organization and leadership at present dominates educational policy and educational science.

16 Central Explanations for This Development

Consequently, a globalized educational policy has developed. Specific political technologies or soft laws have emerged and reached much of the world. Data sharing, benchmarking and accountability have become expectations for schools and education. The central agents leading this development are, among others, the OECD, EU, and World Bank, as well as public and semi-public institutions supported by selected national research environments and institutional organizations. Together, these entities offer courses, education, consulting and carry out larger research projects (Lawn and Grek 2012; Ball 2013; Wiedemann 2017, 2019).

With technological development, it has become easy to manage big and complex sets of data. Earlier on, this practice was often time-consuming and required skills as a statistician or sociologist. Now, the Fourth Industrial Revolution has moved into schools (Schwab 2017) together with big data, learning analytics and educational data mining (Sahlberg 2018, 30).

As this paper has argued, this increased focus on data in school, as well as this emphasis on data-based or data-informed leadership, must be interpreted in line with comprehensive changes in society. A specific understanding of knowledge, research and the development of school and society walks hand in hand. In this article, it has been argued that a pragmatic position is the most useful perspective for

taking advantage of the opportunities recent technological developments have made possible. The pragmatic perspective is useful because it is aware that a qualitative, pluralistic and dialogue-oriented understanding of data is essential when it comes to the development of education and teaching, yet it is also open to technological developments when they offer new and interesting possibilities.

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Principals Decision-Making for Organising the Educational Organisation

Tina Bröms

In every decision, the value is at stake!

1 Introduction

Over the past several years, there has been a greater demand for accountability of principals for the education they provide. The idea that professional practices that are part of education should be founded on evidence where one dimension is different aspects of data has become influential in many countries around the world (Biesta 2009; Schildkamp et al. 2013). The call for data-driven decisions in the context of the accountability movement began with the legislation enacted by Congress in the United States – the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) 2001. This is a policy statement of educational accountability that call upon states to:

- Set measurable learning goals for all students in public education
- Allocate resources toward the achievement of these goals
- Regularly assess student and schools progress toward goal realisation
- Hold schools and districts accountable for the learning and achievement of all students (Johnson and Kruse 2009, p. 99)

Some policy makers argue, that the only way to increase student results is for school leaders and their staff to base their decisions on data – the decision-making should be data-driven (Honig and Coburn 2008; Schildkamp et al. 2013). A critic of data-driven decisions is that it represents one solution to a multifaceted reality that constitutes the schools' complexity and contingency (Biesta 2009). Other researchers underline the importance of *value –driven* decision-making, believing that if a

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decision does not have a value-driven goal it has no meaning. Decision-making should therefore according to this perspective be *data informed* (Brighouse et al. 2018). This is because almost every decision is made in the unknown as we cannot predict the future (Brunsson and Brunsson 2017).

1.1 The Swedish Context

Through the Education Act, the Swedish Parliament (2010: 800) has increased the legal regulation and clarification of the principals' responsibility in several areas, for example the responsibility to decide on the school's internal organisation and organise for continuous improvement. – A fundamental idea in the Education Act is clarity regarding responsibility and decision-making at the local school. Another purpose of the Education Act is to strengthen the child's right to education and provide increased opportunities for student achievement. According to the Swedish Government (prop. 2009/10:165), this means that decisions on educational issues such as teaching, assessment, grading and choice of support measures should be different from decisions made by the schoolboard. It should be clear that it is the principal who makes decisions concerning individual students. The establishment that the principal decides upon for the school's internal organisation should be based on the background of the principal's role as leader and coordinator of the educational work thus the decisions should be made based on this responsibility requires. According to the government, the principal is responsible, among other things, for the organisation of the educational work, the work with children and students in need of special support, the forms of cooperation between the school and the home, the school's contacts with parents, the working life and the surrounding community, competence development of staff, etc. (SOU 2015: 22).

The principal in a governance context is bounded to the local authorities in the form of resources and assignment, to be able to carry out the education that is regulated in the Education Act and the national curricula. This affects within which of the framework decisions can be made. Research demonstrate that if principals should be able to be a strong link in the chain between the state, local school authorities, politicians, and teachers they need among other things mandate. Recently principals have been experiencing lack of faith and low expectations from the school boards and are caught between diverse expectations and strong pressure from different stakeholders (Nihlfors and Johansson 2013).

Sweden has a decentralized and goal-driven school system. Local educational authorities are held accountable for the education and the state regulate by setting the overall goals for the education and moreover, there is a national School Inspectorate for ensuring that rules are followed. In the Education Act (2010), an increased legalization of the school – a juridification took place. The juridification of the school can be regarded as a governing rationality where the initiated changes

through the Education Act can be seen as an expression of the governing rationality (Novak 2018). There is governmentality expressing that the Swedish School Inspectorate (SSI) has been given greater opportunities to use sanctions against local authorities, when the SSI deems that they are neglecting their schools. Even if the juridification is intended to improve accountability, it can make principals less responsible and teachers less educative (Novak 2018).

The objectives are transferred in various governance documents such as in the national curricula and syllabuses. The Education Act (2010: 800) in Sweden demands a systematic quality work, which means that every local authority should systematically and continuously follow up on the specific school activities, analyse their results in relation to the national goals and based on that plan and develop the education in the municipality.

Sweden also has a marketed accountability system (see Brighouse et al. 2018). In this category of accountability systems parents are seen as the main stakeholder because of the so-called free school choice where parents and students are able to choose which school should provide the education. This reflects the classic conflict of values between freedom and equality (Brighouse et al. 2018). In this marked context, it is the principal's responsibility to decide how the school should be organised to achieve the best possible student results.

The increased focus on raising standards in education requires educational leaders to engage in complex decision-making for educational improvement. It is a *fundamental* but often *forgotten* perspective how the principals develops knowledge about how interpretation and analysis of data should be made in order to make *valuable data-informed decisions*.

2 Research on Decision-Making in Organisations

There is an extent body of research on the use of data for decision-making. Coburn and Turner (2012) has provided a categorisation of previous conventional research on this topic.

Initiatives on promoting data use and aggregate outcomes for example student outcomes on standardised test.

- *The data use activities*, extensive body of research that encourage data use in schools, description of data warehouses, highlight examples of strategies for data-driven decision-making systems. In this area attention is placed on describing how norms and expectations of data use are established and empowering school leaders to use data. Focus is on the interventions themselves.
- Additional wide-ranging body of research proclaiming *the effects of data use* or providing *how-to guides for handling the data* for educational improvement.

In this part a few examples is highlighted in the research field of decision-making. First normative and descriptive decision-making and thereafter different logics of decision-making.

In the research-field of decision-making in organizations, a distinction is often made between normative and descriptive decision-making. A normative as well as the descriptive decision-making seeks to maximise utility. However, the difference between the two perspectives lie in that the normative perspective means that to maximise is to optimise which is constructed on the rational choice theory's assumption that individuals are self-useful by nature and intend to maximise the usefulness through their decision-making (March 1994). In contrast, the descriptive approach focuses on satisficing. Satisficing involves treating decision options sequentially, not simultaneously, and then choosing an alternative that appears to be satisfactory, often in the understanding of appropriate. Decision making often takes place in a context where several different aspects must be handled and weighed against each other, it is the decision-makers task to find possible solutions rather than identifying ultimate decisions. Human cognitive skills are limited. Within the descriptive decision-making theory, it refers to *limited* or *bounded rationality* (March 1994). Within both the normative and descriptive perspectives, decisions preferences must be defined. Moreover, valid data must be taken into account, and conclusions drawn from these data (Johnson and Kruse 2009).

The type of data and how it is used is linked to research on *school success,* which is internationally called *School Effectiveness Research*. Initially, this research was a reaction to earlier research, which stated that individual factors were the cause of school success, for example genetic factors such as intelligence, ethnicity and gender. *School Effectiveness Research* emphasises instead that schools had an impact on student performance. School effectiveness research is characterised by identifying the importance of universally valid school-related factors for students' performance and achievement and exploring differences within and between schools. In this field of research, large amounts of data are being used as well as statistical analysis to calculate the effects of certain factors. Among other things, so-called multi-level analyses are used to compare the significance of factors that exist at different levels, such as principal level compared to teacher level. In the *School Effectiveness Research,* there is also a focus on what characterises a successful school (Jarl et al. 2017).

2.1 Different Logics of Decision-Making

A way to understand decision-making processes and how people approach decisions in organizations is thorough *different logics*. These logics are interpretations of the diverse reasoning that decisions are made upon; furthermore, although these logics are simplifications, they can fit into different situations and contexts and can be used as an analytical tool to understand a more compound reality (Brunsson and Brunsson 2017).

2.1.1 Rational Decisions

In Western society, a rational decision-making is highly ranked and constitutes a normative ideal. Research on decision-making has stated that a rational thinking model of decision is too limited to understand the complexity of decisions (March 1994; Brunsson 2007; Cabantous et al. 2008; Johnson and Kruse 2009; Brunsson and Brunsson 2017). The concept of rationality can be used in relation to all logics. Rationality then becomes what is perceived as sensible. In research, the definition of rationality is usually based on *purpose rationality*, which has strong links to the consequence logic (Brunsson and Brunsson 2017). Rationality signifies that decisions should be made before action and that the decision-maker ought to make the decisions according to the logic of consequences. The reasoning should be conducted in a systematic way. Making rational decisions means that the decision-maker in some way predicts the future and that the presumption must be carried out in a special way (Brunsson and Brunsson 2017).

To be able to make decisions established on a rational logic, preferences must be clarified. Different choices have to be examined as well as the consequences of those choices. In the end these choices have to be compared with the decision-maker's own preferences and then the alternative that has the best consequences is chosen. The argument for using rational decisions is that the decision-maker makes "the best" decision. It is also problematic to predict the consequence with the different alternatives on a long-term. Rational decisions involve assessments of preferences, options for action and consequences that must be based on predictions that are uncertain. This means difficulties in predicting all options of action. Even more difficult is predicting their preferences, as it is likely that the preferences have changed as the consequences of the action appear. The preferences of the model for rational decisions must also be arranged and weighed against each other. The problem with using rational decisions is that the decision-maker is not really rational. The decisions are based on the decision-maker's current preferences, examining a few or possibly only one action option and considering a few consequences. In reality, it is as earlier stated almost impossible to achieve the rule of rationality because most decisions are made in the unknown (Brunsson 2007, Cabantous et al. 2008; Brunsson and Brunsson 2017).

The enforcement of ***the Logic of Consequences*** is trying to say something about the future. There are alternative ways of acting and guessing the consequences of different options for action. Behaviour is determined by the valuation of the consequences and alternative choices, were consequences fit the decision-maker's own values, in other words their preferences. This logic is difficult to apply in practice, as alternatives choices exist in the future as well as the consequences and preferences with the alternatives that are to be compared (Brunsson and Brunsson 2017).

The Logic of Appropriateness is constructed on rules, and decision-making is in accordance with one or more rules. The logic of appropriateness seeks the answer to three questions (1) Who am I? Different rules apply to different individuals and depending on what role is being taken at the moment. In an organisation, different rules are applied for different positions. There are also different rules for different

organisations. (2) What is the situation? Different rules apply in different situations. Some rules that are legitimate in some situations are not legitimate in others. (3) What is appropriate action for a person like me in a situation like this? Depending on the role of the decision maker in a particular situation, the rules that must be followed have to be considered (March 1994; Brunsson and Brunsson 2017).

The Logic of Imitation is founded on something that has already happened. Imitation can be defined and understood in different ways, one definition is that imitation is seen as a process were something is created and transformed by chains of translators (Sevón 1996).

> As imitation starts from the idea that there is something a similar entity has or shows which is worth taking on as an idea for one's actions. (Sevón 1996, p. 58)

The decision-maker considers how others have acted or how decisions were made in a similar situation. Organisations also imitate each other, often a similar organisation that is more successful in some aspect. This is because they do not want to imitate anyone that is not in the same category as themselves. Imitation is seen as creation of identity and identity preservation as it can be supported by the questions such as: Who am I, And who do I want to be? And I would like to be like X. Thereafter, when the decision is made which rules are to be followed.

Sevón (1996) advocates translating and copying, two concepts that can be used to define imitation, although there is a difference between them. Copying is reproducing or transcribing an original product. Translating is about actors picking up an idea, translating it to fit into their own context and materialising it into action. When imitation is interpreted as translation, it means that there are ideas of change that travel, come back, materialise and are transformed into the local environment (Czarniawska and Sevón 1996). Translation becomes ideas that are interpreted as they are transferred from one context to another. One explanation for why an organisation chooses to implement a change could be that it imitates someone else. The purpose of imitating another organisation is to achieve the same or similar consequences (Sevón 1996). This is a way to save time and other resources to avoid making mistakes and refrain from trying other alternatives. The definition of imitation is therefore that it is a process, created and transformed through chains of translators (Sevón 1996).

An extension of the concept of imitation is the phenomenon of how organisations are becoming increasingly similar to each other yet remain different (Sahlin-Andersson 1996). Although organisations tend to be the same, the differences emerge through the local editing of the model organisation. When organisations compare themselves to others, they sort out those who are equal to themselves and begin to imitate those who are most successful. Because there is a certain discrepancy between the imitating organisation and themselves, a translation takes place where there is a space for their own interpretations and edits to fit their own context (Sahlin-Andersson 1996).

The other logics for decision-making is founded on reasoning first and action second. ***The logic of experimentation*** does the opposite, where the reasoning comes after the action. The decision-making assumes that something is being done and then it is evaluated. If the result is appealing, no new decision is made; in contrast,

if it is not acceptable, a new decision might need to be made. The experimental logic refrains from guessing what happens after a certain decision. Instead, the decision makers examine what preferences they have if they act in a certain way (Brunsson and Brunsson 2017).

2.1.2 Post-rationalization

Post-rationalization assumes that decision-makers must justify their decisions afterwards; in addition, it does not necessarily refer to the logic used when decisions were made. The motivation is usually cited for consequence-logical rational reasoning. Post-rationalisation shows the status of the various logics. According to this approach, the logic of appropriateness does not have a high status, especially if someone else has designed the rules. The justification that the decision-maker has only followed the rules is not considered particularly acceptable. Individuals who have the mandate to decide on rules are often forced to rationalise these rules, by showing that the rules have good consequences. Imitation also has low status. In retrospect, justifying that as a decision-maker did as someone else did or as everyone else does, is just as bad as saying that the rules were followed. Experiments can have a creative feel to it, if the result is successful, but not if it has had negative consequences. The use of consequence-logical reasoning in motivating their decisions is a requirement from various stakeholders towards the decision-makers, although other logics of decisions are actually moving (Brunsson and Brunsson 2017).

2.1.3 The Individual as a Decision-Maker

In a society where individuality is important, rationality is given high status. The individuals that make rational decisions are seen as intelligent, since rational decision-making is "the right way". In contrast, following rules and imitation is linked to low status because its logics does not require separate and unique individuals. Those decision-makers that follow rules designed by others show that their own self does not decide. Decision-makers using imitation do not show their individuality, nor their independence and therefore can gain lower status. In today's context, goals have become a popular version of rationality; it is important for the individual to state his or her preferences as goals. This also reinforces the logic of consequences orientation against the future (Brunsson and Brunsson 2017).

3 A Study of Principal's Decision-Making

This study's approach is relatively conventional, because it focus on the initiatives to stimulate data use and summative outcomes. On the other hand, in the process of exploration there is also an attempt to investigate the practice of data that seeks to

understand what actually happens when people engage with data in their daily work and how it relates to educational improvement. What is actually *happens* when different levels in the steering system make sense of the common data. It is imperative to study the practice of data since the impact of data for educational development has increased significantly (Biesta 2010).

The purpose here is not to define different types of data, but rather to broaden the understanding of data. A common perspective of what data means in school's is standardised assessments or national tests that are quantifiable, i.e. only data that can be *counted counts*. A definition of data is information that is collected and organised to represent some aspects of the school (Schildkamp et al. 2013). A part of a system that hold schools accountable for their education.

This contribution through direct open observations provides a picture of what actually happens when macro-structure meets micro-actions (Coburn and Turner 2012). It is an attempt to give direct access to what happens when individuals interact, interpret and make sense with available data.

3.1 A Dialogue About the Results

According to the local authority in this study, their systematic quality work allows them to collects and analyse data for each school's overall results and goal fulfilment. The local authority assesses the existing overall development needs, plans interventions and focus areas for the municipality, and carries out planned interventions at the municipality level. In order to gain greater knowledge of the school's conditions, work processes and challenges, the local authority conducts annual *dialogue about the results* through the superintendent. The dialogue about the result (DR) is a conversation between the superintendent and a principal, led by the superintendent. At these meetings, the deputy superintendent, the local authority quality strategist and 2–3 of the principals' staff are also present and participate in the conversation. The DR is an important part of the local authority's assignment to give children an equivalent education. The DR is also intended to be a tool for the principals to gain more knowledge through data about each the school's prerequisites, work processes and challenges. Such knowledge is deemed important for the principals to be able to make *well-balanced decisions* to organise their school and provide high quality of the education.

The starting point for the DR's, relates to three area of questioning: (1) the knowledge assignment, (2) the value assignment in the national curriculum, (3) the principal's management and leadership. This is based on the conclusions reached in the local authority's overall quality work for the previous year and the inspections carried out by the School Inspectorate.

The actual DR's that was chosen for observations here has a variation regarding the following parameters: size of the school, based on number of students and staff; a mix between newly appointed or experienced principals, socio-economic areas and student's grading results. I observed eight dialogues about the results and used

the principle of theoretical saturation. This means that no new information emerges that is essential to the phenomenon that is central to the study (Cohen et al. 2007).

The observations describe and make visible what was placed on the table during the dialogue about the results. The purpose here is to present what kind of data is valued during the interaction in DR's between the local authority and the local schools. The observations of the DR serve several purposes and are part of a larger project. This selected part of the project illustrates the practice of data, i.e. an image of *WHAT* the principals are doing, not HOW they should analyses the data.

4 Methods

Various methods beside observations are used within the larger study, that this study is a part of, such as documentary studies, questionnaire and interviews. The aim is to explore, in diverse ways the overall research question how principals understands their legal right to decide the school's internal organization for educational improvement. The tentative results that are presented here is from one viewpoint of the observations.

4.1 Observations

In this study I had the opportunity to get access to direct observations of the context – the dialogue about the results, from which the principals in this study are supposed to make decisions, for educational improvement. This also opened up a possibility of highlighting the data that formed the basis of the local school analyses for decision-making.

There are diverse types of direct observations where I chose to assume "the role of participant as an observer" (Cohen et al. 2007). As a participant as an observer, I took a passive role, which meant that I did not participate in the conversation at all (Cohen et al. 2007). Although I was trying to be a "fly on the wall", I as an observer might have affected the events in some sense by just being there. As a passive observer, I might have inhibited the group that participated in DR's, or on the contrary, made the conversation more active than normal. The observations lasted during the whole meeting, for about 1 hour and were recorded in their entirety. Parallel with the observations field notes were taken of the conversation. In a separate column, personal reflections and comments were also written down. Proposals for interpretations were also added.

The moderator of DR clarified my purpose and my role during the observation and the opportunity to give a short presentation about myself before the conversation started. In connection with the observations, the participants were asked to sign a consent form to allow my participation, to have the conversations recorded and to allow for observations could to be used in future studies and publications.

4.2 Data Processing

Two different qualitative methods were used to process and analyse the collected material. Qualitative content analysis is a method in which written or verbal communication is analysed step by step, focusing on differences and similarities. The interpretation process can result in one or more themes.

The first content analysis was of inductive nature, which meant that the categories emerged during the analysis. The first step in the analysis process was to gain an understanding and a holistic view of the collected material; therefore, each observation was listened to immediately after the observation. The recorded material was then listened to several times and compared with the field notes made in conjunction with the observations. The analysis was based on the three question areas of the dialogue of results, which were also used to divide the observation content into three general themes. Following these themes, categories of content were created under each theme. Subsequently, additional sub-categories were shaped (Cohen et al. 2007).

The second content analysis was deductive; the categories were predetermined and based on a previous research that characterisies successful and unsuccessful schools (see Jarl et al. 2017). These characteristics of successful and unsuccessful schools constituted categories against which the content of the observations was analysed (Cohen et al. 2007).

5 Conceptual Framework

Using the overview from Ikemoto and Marsh's (2007) categories on data, Schildkamp et al.'s (2013) interpretation can provide a way to sort the data which I have used in analysing the data from the observations. The overview is not comprehensive and some sources can fit into more than one category. The different logics of decision-making has also been applied in the analysing of data.

- Input data
- Data on student characteristic such as data on truancy, intake, transfer and school leavers, home language, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.
- Data on teacher characteristic, such as data on teacher qualifications and length of teaching experience.
- Outcome data
- Data on student achievement such as assessment results, written and oral exams, portfolios, and report cards.
- Data on student well-being such as well-being surveys.
- Process data

- Data on instruction and types of assessment such as observations and documents on instruction and learning strategies, instruction time, organisation of instruction, classroom management, and organisation of assessment.
- Context data
- Data on school culture such as survey or focus group results on the opinions of students and teachers on the school's atmospheres, climate, and discipline.
- Data on the curriculum such as subject descriptions, rosters, year guides, and special programmes.
- Data on building and materials such as data on how many times certain rooms and equipment are used and the availability on computers.

6 Tentative Results

Using Ikemoto and Marsh's (2007) categories, *the outcome data* were overrepresented in the dialogue about the results though it rested foremost on quantitative data. However, all the other categories are included. The DR began with a review of the knowledge results at the local school. The focus was mostly on what stood out in the results. The data that was highlighted by both the superintendent and the principal were *outcome data*, i.e. the students' final grades, how many students have received the highest and lowest grades in the various subjects, total student credits and total failing grades throughout the school.

Another aspect of *outcome data* that also received a lot of attention in the DR regarding the knowledge results was data in the form of statistics on the results of the national tests in relation to the final grade. Test scores on standardised national tests had been analysed by the macro level represented by the superintendent and the local authority's quality strategist through a comparison to the students' final grades. It was also compared with the results on a national level, over time at the local school level and at the municipality level. The discussion was concerned with how the principals, together with their teachers, had interpreted and analysed the students' results on national tests in comparison with their final grades. If there was a high discrepancy between final grades and national tests, a common analysis was that the national tests did not match the national subject plan; another analysis was that the national tests were more difficult than the previous year or that the students did not have enough knowledge with them from previous school to pass the national tests. A tentative result is that this is a *data driven* approach to measure student outcomes.

Input data that are represented in the DR is student absence, truancy and student socioeconomic status.

Process data contained in the DR relate to what efforts have been made to increase students' results and how the principal and teachers have analysed that

these are the "right" efforts for the students. Another example of process data is how the school has organised teaching to support students' performance development. A central question is: "What effect does the activities have of the learning?"

In the DR's there is *context data* as an annual school survey is carried out by the local authority. In the survey, students and parents get to respond to, among other things, how they experience the school climate and discipline, if students receive challenges in their schoolwork, how the work environment is at the school and if the student would recommend their school to other students.

A part of the DR related to of how the principal had organised the school in order for the teachers to be able to collaborate around the knowledge assignment and why they had created that collaboration. There was a great variation in how teachers collaborate on the knowledge assignment, both in comparison between schools and within the different schools. Several schools had developed a collaborative culture or a collaborative culture that was under development regarding cooperative teaching planning, grading and assessment. However, some schools did not have an educational collaboration and joint meetings were about administrative tasks. Some schools had a relatively developed collaboration in some subjects, while in other subjects, it was almost non-existent and a strong individualism characterised the teacher's collegium.

The principals' assignment in relation to DR is to predict the effect of various alternatives on predetermined goals (Brunsson 2007). Although the research on decision-making concludes that it is almost impossible to make rational decisions the DR rest on a relatively rational logic and therefore encourage a normative way of making "right" decisions where the consequences of the decision-making are central. The rational model is ravenous for data because it requires many different actions and consequences. The rational logic has a focus on what can be measured.

A discussion about the knowledge assignment versus the values assignment occurs in some of the DR with a focus on what is most valuable of the two. All the participants in the DR agrees that the values assignment is the most important. At the same time, the superintendent points out that when different stakeholders hold the school accountable they need to have answers. Regarding the values assignment the DR focuses on the context data in the annual school survey. The reason for this, according to the superintendent, is that the SSI views the school survey in its supervision of the schools. Another tentative result is that the local authority has attempted to adapt the local accountability system to the national School Inspectorate's focus on quantitative data and what they think is valued. The DR is an example of a local accountability system that is constructed to be able to answer against the national School Inspectorate. This is an example of a decision-making from the local authority represented by the superintendent, based on the logic of appropriateness but also on the logic of imitation. According to these logics, it is an *appropriate* decision to *imitate* the School Inspectorate that has the legal right to hold the school accountable for its action.

Another example of the logic of appropriateness and the logic of imitation, that it is also *appropriate to imitate* an organisation that is more successful than one's own organisation. In the DR, as earlier recognised, the superintendent asks in relation to the student results, what efforts considered and what effects can be traced to

these activities. The findings from the observations of the DR correspond with previous research of what characterises a successful school and a non-successful in a Swedish context (see. Jarl et al. 2017).

The concept of imitation for organisational change has for instance, spread through the *School Effectiveness Research* to the school area. In this context, it is a matter of translation, i.e. how a school picks up an idea, translates it to fit into their local context and transforms it into action (Sevón 1996). In the DR's when high results were presented by some of the schools, a number of activities were described which has led to these results. There was a developed collaboration in the working-unit of the teachers around the students, a well-established collaboration in the subject-units with a focus on teaching. Examples of collaboration were for example, grades and assessment, continuous mapping, systematic follow-ups of students' performance and development. Other characteristics were that teachers had high expectations of the students and that teaching is adapted to students' needs and conditions. The leadership of the schools is goal oriented and the principal leads the work towards the goals through collaboration with the teachers. The principal, in turn, has high expectations of the teachers and at the same time gives the teachers mandates and conditions to organise the teaching. The principals were expecting the teachers to have clear leadership in the classroom.

The schools that appears in DR where the student results are not satisfactory are characterised by not having a common systematic way for how the work with the students should be done. There are examples of work-units and subject-units that are well functioning but do their work in different ways and have no continuous contact with each other. The schools have an individualistic culture, where individual teachers have their own responsibility for their teaching. Students' results are not followed up in a collective way and there is no educational forums where educational issues are the focus. The student results is seen entirely dependent on the students. The stated reasons for the student's results are socio-economic background, the students' social problems and a weak study culture in the surrounding community.

In other words, a tentative result is that it is appropriate to imitate someone who is more successful despite the fact that, according to the logics of decision-making, it has a lower status to imitate someone else.

7 Discussion

According to the data-driven perspective, an important purpose is to improve student achievement. A central question is for this point of view is "what works"? An argument for data-driven decisions is the growing body of evidence for improvement of effective teaching and school leadership is founded on data with the goal of increasing student outcomes. (Schildkamp et al. 2013; Hargreaves et al. 2015). The legitimacy of what is often called data-driven decisions is linked to the notion of embedded and rational decisions (Hammersley 2007; Biesta 2010). *Data-driven* decision-making also assume that complete information exists, so rational decision

can be made. The call for data-driven decisions is "a new name for an old idea, a reincarnated variant expressed in classic decision-theory (Johnson and Kruse 2009, p. 100)". This signifies that the decision-maker ought to have an ability to identify and operationalise these decision goals and skills to collect and analyse *the right kind of data* that can promote strategies, with the goals of increasing student outcomes. Data-driven decisions aims to maximise the alignment between the decision and its outcome.

The Swedish curriculum has simplified two central assignments: the knowledge assignment and the values assignment. As these two missions can intervene each other, they can also contrast with one another. This becomes especially evident when it comes to the values that are set in fore front, when different stakeholders holds the school accountable. The ideal image of the value-based work being intertwined with the knowledge assignment does not always appear in the accountability of the school, as we could observed in the discussion in the DR.

A central part of the value-based assignment is to educate the children to become democratic citizens and help them develop different capacities to be able to participate fully in society. A fundamental value and goal in the value-based assignment is for students to be able to live "a flourishing life" (Brighouse et al. 2018). However, valued-based assignment is more difficult to measure. One ought to keep in mind that a test-driven accountability system has a limited content coverage and problems with converting measurement to student outcomes will arises when converting this data to measures school effectiveness (Brighouse et al. 2018). The problem with the rule of rationality is that decisions must be made that relate to the future. How can we know in advance that the activities we decide on will produce the desired effects?

Biesta (2009) claims that we must evaluate the data when we are involved in decision- making about the direction of Education. In the tides of measurement, one can argue that the often forgotten but fundamental question to ask is what is education for? Are we valuing what we measure or measuring what we value? Holding schools accountable for the outcomes of their students, it is easier to measure student performance on a few national tests on key subjects. Student performance on these test results is seen as *valuable* to support the decision-process and answer to the School Inspectorate.

Neglecting the importance of values in our decisions is easy regarding the educational direction, especially in concepts that seem to express values. This applies, for example, to the field of educational effectiveness. It is problematic to argue why education would not be effective when effectiveness actually is a value. The problem is that effectiveness is an instrumental value that signals the quality of the process and more directly about the ability to ensure secure outcomes (Biesta 2009). Whether the outcomes are themselves desirable is a completely different question. It is a question of whether we need value-driven decision-making that is not influenced by instrumental values. We always have to ask ourselves the questions in the matter of School Effectiveness: 'Effective for what'? and 'Effective for whom'? (Biesta 2009).

In the process of data use, it is of outmost importance to start from the reason that relevant data are collected. Without a clear purpose, a lot of data will be collected which are not useful and have no *value* for the decision-making. It is vital that the

analysis can respond to the purpose and that the interpretation actually gives an understanding of what data means and implications for action. The decision-making will then consist of analysed and interpretative data (Coburn and Turner 2012; Schildkamp et al. 2013). A risk of not being able to analyse and interpret data is that it is either abused or misused. The misuse of data occurs when data has been analysed and interpreted incorrectly, which leads to an incorrect focus on educational improvement at the school. Misusing data is also occurs when teachers only teach to test. Teachers streamline the curriculum to what is being assessed and might teach specific test items so that students can easily pass the test. Experienced teachers often knows that certain parts of the national curriculum will be presented on the test and train the students in these parts. Attention is paid to passing the test, not the actual learning. The abuse of data arises for example when teachers divide the students into groups and only focus on the "accountables", those students included in the school's accountability rating (Schildkamp et al. 2013).

The challenge to make *data-informed decisions* is that the principal has to develop knowledge about how to analysis and interpret relevant data for educational development, so they can also support the teachers with their data analysis. Then the decision-making has the prerequisites for having *value*.

8 Further Directions

The dialogue of results is meant to form the basis for the principals to be able to make well balanced decisions about how to organise for improved results at their school. Principals have different contextual conditions, which means that some principals work alone, others in teams and they have employees who work in different ways. The principals may also have different legitimacy in their leadership that depends on their experience. Principals have varying levels of knowledge on how to, analyse and interpret data. Questions that are raised: How is it ensured that principals develop knowledge about how they interpret and analyses their results? What types of data are valuable and relevant for the purpose of the data collection? Do principals find the DR to be relevant for their decision-making? How do principals interpret and analyses the content of the DR? What type of logic of decision-making do principal use? These issues are important parts of the larger project and will be dealt with there.

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Local Evaluation Practice as a Mediating Tool

Renata Svedlin

Research and critical discussion about evaluation of education has primarily been concerned about national comparisons of education systems or aiming at assessment of student outcomes. In between falls, the issue of school-based evaluation and the function and role it will have in the development of schools. This paper arguments for school-based evaluation to be recognized as a separate field of evaluation, so in particular in the Finnish context, where the legislative base authorizes municipalities to evaluate the provided education in the compulsory schools. Recent empirical research on local-based evaluation, mainly based on evaluation policy perspectives overtaken from the international level or national governmentality issues, is problematized when it comes to results and ability to cover local-based evaluations.

1 Where We Start

Recent studies of the discourse in the Nordic countries shows that the trends in evaluation have mainly the same direction, with Finland as the only divergent case (Wallenius et al. 2018). OECD (2013) confirms the Finnish evaluation system as being outside the main stream, when it comes to compulsory schools. At the same time the current evaluation research - including state of art evaluations (FEEC 2017) and approaches to school based evaluation seems be trapped up in the neo-liberalistic paradigm, even though some researchers (Wallenius et al. 2018; Atjonen 2014) set out to criticise it at the same time.

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The basic argumentation in this paper is based on the following notions. The core strategy of evaluation in Finland has since 1990-ties defined evaluation as a tool for developmental purpose, used for strengthening the functionality and development of the educational system (Jakku-Sihvonen 2001; FEEC 2019). The local evaluation (municipality & school-based evaluation) is to be regarded as something disparate in context and participation interests, from evaluation carried out at the national level, even if the aim to improve education is at the core. Evaluation at the national level is largely integrated in education policy, is a part of governmentality and serves as evidence of outcomes in national priority areas. The evaluation at the local level follows of the constitutional legacy (The Constitution of Finland 731/1999, 121§) saying that municipalities have an administration based on the self-government of their residents. The municipality in itself has the responsibility to advance the well-being and equality in availability of services of their residents, (Local Government Act 410/ 2015, 1§, 8§) and advance opportunities to participate and exert influence (22§). Thus, a municipality has a broad and multifunctional responsibility with large impact on the conducting of education.

The second notion is that as a tool for local educational leadership, with an interest to support and improve the educational work in the schools, the connection between leadership, improvement initiatives and the design of evaluation is at stake.

2 Previous Research on Evaluation

Finland has been participating in large-scale European research projects investigating evaluation and governance in education, such as Fabricating Quality in European Education – Effects and Consequences of Quality Assurance and Evaluation (QAE) in Basic schooling of Denmark, England, Finland, Scotland and Sweden (FabQ), and Educational Governance and Social Inclusion and Exclusion, during the period 1998–2011. Extensive reports are published on a European scale, Fabricating Quality in Education: Data and Governance in Europe (Ozga et al. 2011), and in Finnish Arvioinnin arvo (eng: The value of evaluation, Rinne et al. 2011) and Arvioida ja hallita (eng: Evaluate and govern, Varjo et al. 2016).

The Finnish empirical data is based on documents, inquiries to teachers (1500 respondents) and principals (600 respondents) from the year 2009 (Varjo et al. 2016), and interviews with approximately 30 politicians and administrators in the field of education, conducted over a period. The analyses is politically informed following the introduction of New Public Management based policy at the national level and the describing the changes and époques in evaluation policy and evaluation agencies of the compulsory school.

Reading the research focusing on local-based evaluation in municipalities and schools, some notions will be made, here with reference to parts of the report. The descriptive information presents the evaluation models (CAF, Balanced score card, EFQM, local evaluation models), as isolated technical tools, and the aggregation of analysis focuses on the distribution of models. The presentation remains

fragmental, sticking to what remains as details, but fails to create a holistic understanding of how the municipalities actually are working with evaluation issues.

As a consequence of the fragmented elaboration, the research summary points at details as … "evaluation results are seldom brought to use in the municipality" (information from principals and teachers) and "evaluations is seldom used to compare teachers and school outcomes" (Rinne et al. 2011, p. 272). The preference of self-evaluation by the teachers and principals remains unsolved in its reason-base, and figures rather as an example of old fashioned, tradition-based attitude. Still as fragments, we notice that teachers' coping with workload and the risk of marginalization among pupils, is put fore by the group of teachers and principals, as important issues of evaluation. (2011, p. 296–297).

The report is at the same time criticising the NPM influenced policy but is never the less falling into a schema where the lack of accountability and implementation of quality systems is presented as something not yet there, but still on its way. We find it rhetorically related to the idea of the "only right alternative", when other parallels are not introduced.

Studying later research results (Atjonen 2014; Varjo et al. 2016) and the national FEEC agency report on Self-evaluation and quality management procedures (2017) in municipalities, we will note that the same approach of argumentation; quality system on its way, as a simple matter of degree of application. Atjonen (2014) is mainly relaying on the research team Rinne et al. (2011), in the contextual information, when studying teacher responses on evaluation in compulsory schools by means of questionnaire. The interpretation of the data holds on to teachers being critical to evaluation and quality systems, already noted in the two earlier reports, and stressing the professionalism and autonomy of the teachers.

However, the analysis captures some interesting features in pointing out:

> "When attempting to identify concrete consequences of evaluation results, key concepts that emerge seem to be dialogue and feedback. If there is no interactive culture (between evaluators and evaluees, in creating criteria, choosing methods of data gathering, interpretation of findings), it may cause destructive misunderstandings, violations of the basic methodology of evaluation processes, and lack of proper feedback necessary to encourage empowerment and the acceptance of changes." (Atjonen 2014, p. 292–294)

Another important reflection is referred according to the concept of "process use", concerning situations where evaluation analysis is influencing by enhancing communication and engagement all along the process of putting it through (Atjonen 2014). These are aspects neglected in traditional type of implementation of evaluation, where often a causal before – after structure is presumed, thus effects can be registered only at the completion of the evaluation process.

Valovirta and Hjelt (2005) articulate these limitations and notes that the models often are presuming the decision-making to be rational, and choices between alternatives to be clear-cut. Adding that the processes are typically longstanding and dependent on social and personal dynamics, a fact that also is neglected.

Finally, the FEEC report (2017) on self-evaluation and quality management practices, continues the same pattern. The analysis is focusing on self-evaluation or systems of quality criteria put through by the providers and reported by

self-assessment, answers on a scale one to four. The large majority of providers represents municipalities 279, private providers 75, municipality federations 11 and the state is provider of education in only three responses. The FEEC evaluation is emanated on data from questionnaires structured according to quality management-systems. The respondent rate is high, about 90%, as it is a duty to participate. In the next, we follow information about the municipalities as providers of service.

The providers of compulsory education has specified the type of evaluation framework in use (2017). The Quality criteria for basic education (Ministry of Education and Culture 2012) was mainly in use (41%), but a large group represented "we don't use a framework but we use a bunch of evaluation tools" (31%), CAF was used by almost every tenth (8%), EFQM by a small number (5%), and a variety of other models by every sixth (15%). In a follow up question was assessed how well the model was functioning when it comes to coverage of activity. There were two models rising to the top; Quality criteria were assessed to the top (58% well +33% pretty well), "we are using something else" (44% well +35% pretty well).

The general information is, that the providers of compulsory education are doing follow-up evaluations and self-evaluation. The providers are thus fulfilling their obligation (FEEC 2017, p. 56). The summary of FEEC concludes that concerning quality management most of the providers are representing the category: emerging (59%) – when a little more than a third were at the developing level (38%) and (3,5%) in the category absent. None was considered to be on the advanced level. (FEEC 2017, p. 12).

Still, in the end the FEEC report summarizes explicitly that:

> "The outcomes showed that many providers lack a self-evaluation system or a systematic assessment culture as part of their quality assurance. The evaluations of some providers, therefore, do not meet the criteria and expectations based on trust, which the 1998 reform of the educational administration would require." (FEEC 2017, p. 12)

The FEEC report rises a need to problematize some aspects in the report. As the municipalities are free to decide on evaluation, the chosen methodology with quality management structure used as a matrix for the data is quite problematic and at least not neutral. It is a fact that in the sparsely populated Finland, out of 297 municipalities, nearly half (48%, 143 municipalities 2016) have a number of less than five compulsory schools. The administrative capacity of these smaller municipalities is consequently, limited and its questionable if the quality management systems are to fit within such a very moderate administration.

Then, can the question of local-based evaluation be approached from a different angel? Can we argue that local-based evaluation exists in a different context where the trends and models of national evaluation policy and international policy doesn't always fit in, as such? To get a perspective on these questions there is a need to construct a more holistic description of the function of evaluation. Instead of observing it as a separate act or procedure, we will study local-based evaluation as a mediating tool in the chain of leadership activities aiming at improving education in the context of the municipality.

3 The Concepts Mediating Tool and Trajectory

The concept of a mediating tool is originally based on Vygotsky (Engeström 1987), and has later constituted an element in activity theory. "The object-oriented and artefact-mediated collective activity system is the prime unit of analysis in cultural-historical studies of human conduct" (1987, p. xvi).

More recently Wardekker (2010) states that the cultural-historical activity theory is to understand as a paradigmatic way of thinking. The understanding of dialectical tensions that produces changes and development, where both notions of ideographic and nomothetic aspects is considered, is significant for this perspective. The cultural-historical activity theory emphasises the issue of mediating tools (artefacts) that can be mental ones as concepts or expressions, or technical ones as instruments or practical tools. Engeström (1999) argues that whether the tool is invented as a mental or technical tool, it will soon integrate both aspects in the constant movement between the two. Technical tools will have associative interpretations that makes them an intellectual mediating tool, and mental tools will sooner or later get a sign or text, schemas or the like that turns them to a material tool as well (Ludvigsen et al. 2003, p. 307–308).

The aim to construct a more holistic view on evaluation in connection to development brings in a need to explore the difference between trajectories, in other words alternative ways in how the leadership is connected to evaluation and to questions of development. Trajectories, as a concept has been used by Drier (1999) as participation trajectories, exploring individual paths and turning points in life, by Lahn (2011) as epistemological trajectories, analyzing learning contexts and approaches, and by Krejsler (2018) studying education policy in two US states. Here the concept of trajectories is used to distinguish between different approaches in linking leadership-evaluation-development.

4 Evaluation Approached in Texts About Education, Pedagogics and Bildung

To start with, we study an article about Non-affirmative Theory of Education as a Foundation for Curriculum Studies, Didactic and Educational Leadership written by Uljens & Ylimaki (2017), and doing this with a special interest on the statements on evaluation. As the main points in the article is a discussion about the odd breach between research in curriculum development and in education leadership, and the advancement of non-affirmative theory of education, we will actually find notions of evaluation as a subtext relating to leadership. Evaluation is mentioned a series of time in the text.

Thus to be acquainted with the text, we will start with referring to the fundamental pedagogical and didactical value-based principles that are put fore in the text and

made a point of demarcation in the question of education leadership, and then later turn back to the issues of evaluation.

Uljens and Ylimaki (2017) argues e that the science of pedagogy have themes that no other fields of science are articulating. The standing questions of how to choose the aims for education, when we simultaneously respect the freedom, indeterminate state and the self-active position of the individual are intrinsically of importance. In the German didactic tradition, the writers Fichte, Herbart and Schleiermacher have been elaborating the questions and gradually solved them with reference to development of a cultural dimension of freedom.

> "… in order for the individual to become free in a cultural sense of the word, education seems to be necessary." (Uljens and Ylimaki 2017, p. 84)

Following this line, the same approach that goes for education in general needs to be at work in educational leadership. Educational organizations that hosts educational activities needs to be characterised by the same traits, as well. Concerning interpersonal relationship "it is assumed that the individual can reach cultural, productive freedom (the ability to act), only by being recognized and treated as if she already is free (or reflective, capable, trustworthy)" (Uljens and Ylimaki 2017, p. 84).

There is a normative dilemma both in phases of curriculum construction and in doing evaluation, as:

> "… conservative theories tend to promote socialising into something existing for reproductional reasons while theories led by ideals for the future for transformational reasons both run the risk of turning education into a technology." (Uljens and Ylimaki 2017, p. 90–91)

Turning over to a practical example within the field of evaluation, it could mean that as an educational leader you use evaluation as a tool for a process to enhance reflectivity – in discussions with colleagues, with pupils and parents, and with super ordinates. Doing so you promote discussions about accurate evaluation results and knowledge about evaluation. The approach recognizes the individuals' independence of thought, still provoking the process of thoughts by introducing evaluation as a tool for describing different aspects of the school as a working organization. We can conclude that when it comes to the role of the actors, already mentioned teacher colleagues, parents, pupils, super ordinates is subjected to be active, engaged and constructive.

Then educational leadership (characterized by promoting summoning of reflective self-activity, and a non-affirmative approach) uses evaluation as a mediating tool to increase reflective spaces and discussions concerning educational aims, methods and information about "outcomes".

The position is explicitly elaborated in the research on evaluation and development at Aland Islands, (Uljens et al. 2016), showing how the collaborative work on development and continuous use of evaluation data increased the student outcomes in the region. An essential aspect in the change was the invitation to reflective arenas for discussion and inference, to find aspects and approaches that opens possibilities for intensified learning gains.

The **second trajectory** is based on research and experiences of development projects at the municipal level and institutions, described by Arnkil (2009) with participatory and deliberate principles as a base. The origin lays in theories by Engeström, the theory of Learning by expanding (1987) and Change Laboratory (1996), which later is modified into dialogues about the future (Virkkunen et al. 2010; Arnkil 2009), and the concept of Puimala (eng. Threshing room), a method for transferring knowledge and experiences (AFLRA [The Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities] 2010).

The starting point in the text of Arnkil (2009), is a critical view on the policy of improvement based on ideas of "best practices". Arnkil refers to his experience of a large number of projects at the municipality level, and concedes that even if excellent proceedings and activities are developed, they seldom take root in new surroundings. The text by Arnkil, penetrates the issue, scrutinizing spaces for learning and development in the community as the main interest, with leadership activities and evaluation as integrated parts. The concept "best practice" seems generally to be used with a large variation, even meaning specific technics or limited actions. Arnkil starts out with an approach to best practices as "a contextual dynamic practice, capable of connecting to a changing surrounding and changing demands constantly vertically and horizontally negotiating positions" (2009, p 327).

The Arnkil project team developed a 360-degree implementation practice, where discussions about development where to take place with super ordinates in the hierarchy of the municipality, as well as "sub ordinates", in school context to be understood as pupils and parents (vertical axe). The horizontal axe was represented by the need of negotiations with neighbouring schools, day care and other municipality sectors as social services, sports and others. What we find here is conclusions of an insight of development and leadership of schools as a part of a larger activity system in the municipality. The implementation of, whether "new" or "best" practices, are thus dependent of changes and new interpretations on a larger scale. Arnkil (2009, 332) exposes the need of leadership and encouragement from super ordinates, but support and cooperation from the horizontal partners as well. When the lack of engagement and encouragement from the super ordinates is distant and inadequate, the new practices will soon be failing. To sum up, we cannot act, as development was a linear process, something readymade just waiting for introduction and implementation, instead we need to establish a deliberate space for learning and development with actors concerned involved and engaged. Facts and evidence-based information will not succeed all alone, but needs elaboration and engagement of the people in the activity concerned.

The conclusion concerning evaluation as a mediating tool, is that Arnkil shows us the importance of the hierarchical (vertical) and the horizontal negotiation in the municipal context that evaluation-based information needs to be deliberately discussed with actors concerned. Conclusions and decisions are to be made when people have been participating in interpretations and reflections and are able to come to an understanding or can grasp the reason-base for decisions.

5 Conclusions

Finally, to summarize the previous discussion, we are returning to the question of distinct elements in local based evaluation and evaluation as a mediating tool.

The primarily statement that evaluation carried out at the local level is to be distinguished from the state level, national and international evaluations, is reinforced by referring to the legislation as evaluation is part of the internal self-correcting system in the self-governing organization. Evaluation offers also in principle, abilities for residents to exert influence. As a self-governing entity, the municipality has an explicitly defined group of residents. On the other hand, evaluation at the local level is not, utilizing per se, only locally accomplished evaluations. As the case from Aland exposes, national, even international as well as local evaluation data was benefitted and analysed.

What will we get from analysing evaluation as a mediating tool in the interspace between leadership as a function and development as an orientation? A mediating tool is something that in Vygotsky's interpretation enlarges our capacity to interfere with the environment, transforms, and influences our understanding and our capabilities. To regard evaluation as a mediating tool, will bring up issues about what this tool makes us conscious of, and in what direction it extends our cognition.

The trajectories exposes examples of evaluation as a mediating tool in between leadership as a function and development as an orientation. Local evaluation is in the example of Aland Islands used to bring forth an overview of the current state-of-affairs. It is maybe not strictly neutral, not totally objective, but it is still an analysis and interpretation of data that gives an overall exposure. The function of a mediating tool lays further in the ability to invite partners into a commonly shared reflection and discussion actualised by the evaluation information. It may be a critical discussion, it might debate about the truthfulness of the data, but still it enables a common discussion about the current state. The function of a mediating tool is also eminent in the aspect that evaluations points out phenomenon and issues that primarily have been ignored. Here is indeed presumed that evaluations are carried out adequately and correct.

The second trajectory brings out that developmental changes may have consequences on other partners and activities in the nearby organizations, and reaches over the boundaries between education, social and welfare sector and sports in a networking approach. Leadership-evaluation-development is not restricted to solely the appointed organization, but a common concern. The processes outlined are more exhaustive, but a clear counterpart to the neglect of social and personal dynamics and assumed straight decision-making – critics that was presented in earlier chapters with reference to presented models. To describe municipality driven local-based evaluations as something diffuse and barely existing is to omit the work done by the local authorities, in communicating and corresponding to local conditions.The attempt to consider evaluation at the local level as a distinct type of evaluation is driven by an interest to scrutinize the issue. It is obvious that there is a need for some international and national evaluations, as well as locally accomplished evaluations.

The study exposes that the connection between evaluation and development has not been sincerely elaborated and is in many aspects oversimplified. To overcome these explored malpractices, insights in fundamental educational knowledge in goals and objectives and of pedagogical interrelationship, is a prerequisite for a future more adequate connection.

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Part V
Impact on School Leadership

Leadership in Upper Secondary School: Exploring New Roles When Teachers Are Leaders

Kristin Helstad and Hedvig Abrahamsen

1 Introduction

Historically, the teaching profession has a strong tradition of considering teachers as equals within a 'flat' organisation, without an internal hierarchy except for principals (Mausethagen et al. 2018; Møller and Skedsmo 2013). As an institution, the teaching profession is characterised by egalitarian relationships, where school leaders act as 'the first among peers' and teachers traditionally have responsibility for teaching their subjects, while the principal does not interfere with the teachers' work (White Paper 31, 2007–2008, p. 45). There has been a weak tradition of both vertical and horizontal mobility, and teachers have had few career paths beyond becoming a principal (Abrahamsen and Aas 2019). Today, there is increased attention to the importance of leadership as a tool for school improvement (Hybertsen et al. 2014; Day et al. 2009; Leithwood et al. 2008). School leaders who engage in teachers' work appear to have greater influence on student learning (Robinson et al. 2008). Both from a research perspective and a policy perspective, school leaders are expected to involve in teachers' practices. However, these expectations involve both opportunities and challenges.

A fundamental but often forgotten perspective is that it may be complicated to introduce new expectations and new ways of working into a tradition where several schools still have an 'invisible contract' between school leaders and teachers that they should not interfere too much in each other's work (Berg 1999; Karseth et al. 2013). When school leaders are involved in teachers' work in their classroom,

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practices may be improved if teachers and school leaders, based on mutual trust, jointly explore possible adjustments (Helstad and Møller 2013). Meanwhile, this involvement leads to tensions because it challenges teachers' autonomy. School leaders' involvement may, thus, generate reactions that involve teachers experiencing that school leaders control their work. Conversely, teachers experience that leaders help motivate them for development (Mausethagen et al. 2018).

The Education Act in Norway states that all schools should have a principal, but the law does not predict what leadership is about in practice and who, besides the principal, should have leadership responsibilities. Municipalities and the individual schools therefore organise themselves locally. Traditional ways of managing schools, with the principal as the head of a hierarchical organization, no longer seem to work satisfactorily (Pont et al. 2008). In an increasing number of schools, the differentiation of responsibilities and duties occurs. Depending on the size of the school, the principal has recruited several middle leaders and teachers have been given various additional functions, such as supervisors and teacher specialists (Helstad and Mausethagen 2019).

Although there is much research on school leadership, there is limited research on the development of new leadership roles whereby conditions regarding egalitarian traditions are challenged through new practices in schools. Hence, there is a need for research that focuses on how teachers and school leaders interpret their tasks and responsibilities, how new roles interact and what characterises the work of school leaders and teachers in changing times. This chapter aims to contribute knowledge to this field.

Our research question is: *How do teachers experience their new role as teacher leaders situated in the intersection between teachers and school leaders in an upper secondary school, and how does the new role affect the roles of the principal and deputy heads within the school?*

First, we introduce the background for the present research underlying this chapter. Second, we present relevant literature on middle leadership; third, the methodology of the research project is described. Finally, we analyse core findings and discuss implications for school leadership more broadly.

2 Background

The research underlying this chapter is situated within an international discourse on school leadership. Transnational institutions such as the OECD[1] have been an important deliverer of international trends in the field of education, emphasising school leadership as an essential tool for quality improvement and increased learning in schools (Møller 2014). The OECD report 'Improving School Leadership' (2008) builds on a body of research on International Successful School Principal

[1] The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Project (ISSPP), besides bringing forward ideas for the need to develop school leadership due to changing times. A major assumption is that successful school leadership is crucial to large-scale education reform (Pont et al. 2008; Møller 2017). Because of the growing concern that the role of the principal has not changed sufficiently to deal with the increasing complexity of challenges for the twenty-first century (Rapp 2012), a conclusion is to distribute leadership and to develop schools' leadership teams to enable the raising of standards and handling the focus on increased accountability.

While the OECD recommends distributed leadership and provides higher degrees of autonomy through more leaders and learning from successful school leadership (Pont et al. 2008), another discourse of new public management with more external control and accountability for schools' and teachers' work is prevalent within the OECD recommendations (Møller 2017; Møller and Skedsmo 2013). There has been a shift from a focus on providing educational inputs and processes to a focus on measurable outcomes (Moos et al. 2011). According to Møller (2017), these two discourses operate in tandem. While the main purpose of reorganising school leadership teams and other leadership roles, such as teacher leaders in schools, is to make schooling more effective and improve student outcomes, the increased focus on school leadership might be interpreted as embedded in an outcome discourse. In a report (Spillane 2013), Spillane argued that changing infrastructure and introducing new formal positions can transform teaching leadership. The present study attempts to investigate one such example, the emergence of the teacher as a leader ('teacher leader') in one upper secondary school in Norway. Three key dimensions are often used when describing teacher leadership; influence rather than role, action for sharing practice and initiate changes and developing pedagogical excellence to influence the practice of others (Harris and Jones 2019). In the present study the teacher leader role has been developed as an example of changing infrastructure where the teacher leaders are in the process of developing a new teacher leader role.

The following section describes some characteristics of upper secondary schools, and then we present literature about middle leaders in schools.

3 Secondary Schools – Some Hallmarks

Secondary schools are often large organisations with different departments that are complex to lead (Kelchtermans and Piot 2013).[2] In Norway upper secondary schools have a fragmented organizational landscape, and a loosely coupled system, where subject departments are characterized by strong boundaries between knowledge domains (Paulsen 2019). The size, specialisation in different programs and

[2] Upper secondary school in Norway, ages 16–19, is primarily based on public schools where students can apply for general studies or vocational studies. Inside these main programs, there are many sub-paths to follow, where teachers belong to departments offering subjects as language and history (general studies) or electronics and carpentry (vocational studies).

bureaucratic structure have traditionally led teachers to work 'Balkanized' in departments (Hargreaves 1996), which, in turn, has implications for teacher collaboration, school development and school leaders' ability to coordinate work and follow up with staff. Additionally, upper secondary school is characterised by a subject-oriented culture, in which teachers' professional identity is closely linked to the subjects in which they are educated. School researchers emphasise that it is important to understand the differences between subjects and academic cultures to succeed in school development in this type of school (Grossman and Stodolsky 1995). In upper secondary school, it is assumed that the principal does not have the necessary professional expertise to lead teachers' work, and it is usually the middle leaders, not the principal, who have the responsibility for following up on the teachers and striving for a better connection between school life as an organisation and student learning (Abrahamsen and Aas 2019; Møller 2011). In the face of external expectations and increasing demands for delivering results, the principal often becomes a foreign minister responsible for different demands and expectations, while middle leaders, in the role of 'home ministers', do most of the work internally at the school (Lillejord and Børte 2018).

4 Research on Middle Leaders

Historically, middle managers have helped the principal and teachers with practical tasks and served as administrative 'caretakers' who have been responsible for practical arrangements at the school, student discipline and cleaning in the canteen (Lillejord and Børte 2018). In recent years, the traditional middle managers' role has changed names to 'department heads' and 'middle leaders,' and the role has been given a more defined responsibility for school development. The change towards pedagogical leadership can be seen as a consequence of government reform (Cranston 2009). Research on deputy heads in a Norwegian context shows that deputy heads can create leeway to become key players within the leadership team and towards teachers to create change in their schools (Abrahamsen and Aas 2019).

Research on teachers, for example, subject leaders in schools, shows that they have a strong feeling of collegiality within their departments (Bennett et al. 2007), and their authority comes from their competence as teachers and subject knowledge. However, their high professional competence does not carry with it the right to advise other teachers or to observe 'their' fellow teachers. These teacher leaders see themselves as departmental advocates, while, however, they play a crucial role in developing and maintaining the quality of students' learning experiences (Harris et al. 2019). Two key tensions are repeatedly identified in the literature: first, the tension between a whole-school focus and the teachers' loyalty to their own department, while second, a key tension is identified between a growing culture of line management within a hierarchical framework and a professional rhetoric of collegiality (Harris and Jones 2017). By motivating colleagues to open classroom doors and by supporting development initiatives, teachers with leadership responsibilities

may function as a link between school leaders and teacher colleagues and contribute to the school's overall aims. However, this situation embeds challenges. The transition from being a 'regular' teacher to taking on a differentiated teacher role may present tensions (Helstad et al. 2019).

While the principal and the deputy heads have a formal leadership role in the school organisation, the teachers, except the fact that they are leaders in their classrooms, have no formal leadership role. Traditionally, the only career step for teachers has been to become a deputy head or a principal, a formal leader role where the deputy heads amongst other responsibilities perform appraisal interviews with 'their' teachers, and the teachers report to their leader. Teacher leaders have no formal personal responsibility for their fellow teachers. As an example of this, a Swedish research project investigated the development of a more prominent teacher role, described as "First Teachers" (Alvehus et al. 2019). One of the findings from this study is that through the introduction of First teachers, the teachers as a profession was strengthened because many of the first teachers experienced themselves as spokesmen for the teacher profession.

A characteristic of the new and emerging role as a teacher leader in a Norwegian context, which we explore in this chapter is the intermediate position between the school leadership role and the traditional teacher role, an intersection which may be challenging to balance. This change means that, while the teachers who hold this new position still are teachers, some of their tasks have been changed and extended to leadership functions in various departments within the school.

Although new leadership roles can contribute to greater closeness to the teaching and learning practices embedded in schools and to stimulate development work within the organisation, increasing role differentiation can create uncertainty in the relationships between teachers and between teachers and school leaders (Helstad and Møller 2013). Disruptions in equality ideals challenge the autonomy and responsibility of the individual teacher, and it can create tensions between teachers when working together. When traditional roles in the organisation change character and become hybrid, it may be unclear how practitioners should relate. As roles and tasks change in schools, both school leaders and teachers may experience conflicting expectations (Wenner and Campbell 2017). Changes in the organisation that challenge traditional norms and habits influence the relationship between colleagues which, in turn, may be difficult to cope with as colleagues in the local school.

5 Perspectives on Leadership and Sensemaking

Educational leadership is largely about setting direction and ensuring the quality of work, while building and developing relationships with employees (Leithwood and Louis 2012). In their daily work within the school, both teachers and school leaders deal with the multifaceted practice that takes place, where the leader and who can be led will alternate between different situations. A relational perspective on leadership understands leadership as a dynamic social process of power and trust (Sørhaug

1996), in which power is based on leadership roles, such as the principal's role and middle leaders with staff responsibilities. In the Nordic countries, we have a tradition of democracy and participation, and neither teachers nor students are easily directed.

A distributed perspective (Spillane 2006) understands leadership as a practice created by several in collaboration, not just by those in formal leadership positions. Research from a Norwegian context shows that principals create good conditions for learning through their leadership team, while the principal, by virtue of being the school's formal top leader, has the power and authority to set an agenda (Møller et al. 2009). School leaders contribute to learning conditions by creating space for both teachers and leaders to exercise leadership. A combination of top-down strategies based on expectations from outside the school and bottom-up strategies in which teachers and school leaders themselves take leadership initiatives appears to constitute robust conditions for development work (Møller and Ottesen 2010).

When professionals, for example teachers and school leaders, are positioned in new roles, they must make sense of their new character and the expectations underlying the role. In sensemaking processes, the actors within a school notice and interpret information from the environment and then enact (Weick 1995). A consequence is that actors contribute to the shape of and become shaped by their context, including norms and traditions in schools and in the profession, in this case, amongst other teacher leaders, the deputy heads and the principal, and regarding the development of practices and actors' professional learning.

6 Methods

The research underlying this chapter is a part of an ongoing longitudinal study investigating leadership in upper secondary schools in Norway. The part of the study which we report on here is the first step of a five-year-long research design where we, as researchers, follow one school over time while exploring different models for leadership. The next phase will include two other schools.

The present research project has a qualitative design with the aim of generating knowledge about the practices and understandings related to the emergence of new leadership roles in the school as an organisation. The background for the research project is that, in 2016, school leaders at Viewpoint upper secondary school initiated a meeting with researchers at the university to get support in designing a new leadership role from within the school and simultaneously gain more knowledge about how the emergence of new roles may influence school development. Subsequently, researchers collected two group interviews with six of the school's seven department heads and six of the school's 10 teacher leaders. Focus group interviews were chosen because they may produce a concentrated amount of empirical data on a topic if the researchers create a situation based on trust and by letting discussion unfold between discussants (Morgan 1997). The questions guiding the interviews focused on investigating how teacher leaders construct expectations for themselves

as teachers in new roles, but also how they interact with other roles in the local school and how they develop their roles in interactions between the actors. The questions also addressed collaboration between the actors and what possible opportunities and challenges may arise when school leaders and teacher leaders get involved in closer ways to each other's practices.

When the data collection for the study based on this chapter was completed, the school had seven months of experience with the new role. Thus, the role was in an early testing phase. The interviews were transcribed, and the transcript was subjected to a first coding in which the purpose was to identify relevant experiences and perceptions that described challenges as new roles were designed locally within the school. The next step was to summarise similarities and differences between informants' perceptions and to conduct an analysis across the three interviews. The analysis revealed both concurrent and dissimilar features in informants' descriptions.

In this chapter, the analytical stance is broadly focused on how teachers and school leaders make meaning by coding and condensing interpretations of meaning (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). The interpretative analysis, therefore, aims at developing knowledge about how teacher leaders develop their understandings of their roles and their practices. In the next section, we describe the context of the study in more detail by presenting the school and the background for the new role in a broader context. Subsequently, some key findings from the analysis are discussed before we conclude.

6.1 The Case Study

Viewpoint upper secondary school has nearly 900 students and 120 employees. From the early 2000s, extensive development work has taken place within the school, which has included the growth of new forms of leadership wherein responsibilities and tasks have been distributed among several actors. From having a traditional management structure with the principal and middle managers, since 2005, the principal has recruited deputy heads with the responsibility for school development and staff follow-up, including the responsibility for student results in their departments. In parallel, an advisory team and an administrative team that handles technical and administrative tasks have been created. Today, the principal, assistant principal, administration manager, study programme leader and seven departmental leaders comprise the school's leadership team. In line with the reorganisation and establishment of new roles internally at the school, a local working conditions agreement was negotiated, which ensures a total of six hours of scheduled working hours per week at various meeting arenas. The leadership team arranges two separate meeting arenas for a total of five hours per week, which comprise meetings where the entire leadership group participates and educational meetings in which the principal, assistant principal and department leaders participate. In turn, the deputy heads arrange regular meetings with the teacher leaders in their departments.

The teachers collaborate on specific subjects in their departments, and each teacher delivers a plan to his or her deputy head for when collaboration should occur.

7 The Emergence of the New Role

Traditionally, some teachers in upper secondary school have held an administrative coordinator role responsible for a small budget and keeping track of teaching resources. At the school, this was the case until the new role emerged based on the old coordinator role. The teachers gradually got the responsibility to lead weekly meetings in their departments, to coordinate the need for learning resources and planning work, as well as to provide continuing education for teachers and create a level between the deputy heads and the teachers. When asked about the background of changing the coordinator role to a leader role, the principal explains: ‘We wanted to give the role a new name and try to make it a little wider with a different twist’. Two deputy heads took the responsibility for designing the role because, as the principal says, ‘They had the skills and energy to do so’. They justified the new role with the desire to strengthen school development to be better adapted to different subjects and teacher groups. One of the deputy heads explains: ‘We wanted to get closer to the work in the classroom and learn more about everyday reality, whether school development is actually taking place there’.

In 2017, both coordinators and teachers who had not previously held similar positions applied for a total of 10 positions as teacher leaders with a reduction in classroom teaching between 5% and 10%. The role description expresses the purpose of the role and expectations for the role’s performance, which states the teacher leader is ‘the link between the leadership team and the teachers in development work and discussion of teaching practice’ and the teacher leader should ‘help the school reach its goals, as they appear in the strategic plan’. In the list of assignments, it is stated that the teacher leaders will collaborate with deputy heads based on the aim to connect the work in the departments more closely to student learning and results. The collaboration between the teachers in the different departments is now led by the teacher leaders. The administrative tasks that previously belonged to the coordinator role have been reduced and partly taken over by the school’s administrative team.

In the following, we respectively analyse the interviews with the teacher leaders, the deputy heads and the principal, in which they reveal how they understand what is happening in the emergence of a new role between the teachers and the formal school leaders. We identify tensions that are latent in their utterances, and we discuss challenges related to various roles. We also address aspects concerning leadership and relationship in school development.

7.1 Teacher Leaders in Search of a New Role

When teacher leaders describe how they perceive their new role, they say that there has been a change towards a prioritisation of school development, but several express that they strive to get a grip on what the change in practice is actually about. One, who previously held the position of a coordinator, elaborates: 'The department is an established arena, and we still do what we did before. But the content, and the way we lead it, is changing'. Another teacher leader is thrilled to lift her gaze a little from day-to-day operations and conveys enthusiasm to a greater extent to be able to prioritise work related to teaching and classroom practices. 'That's fun', she says. 'There is a pretty big difference from before (…) from doing all the coordinating things. There is less focus on budget and management now, and we are not just passing on information from the school leaders anymore'.

Another teacher leader who had the coordinator role before experiences a positive loss of administrative duties: 'When I coordinated and managed things, the teachers knew what I was doing. I had a little control over the budget and things. It's now left out', he says. He elaborates: 'A lot of the school is about managing, and it makes sense to manage, too'. They are still discussing the new role and what distinguishes it from the role of the coordinator while using terms such as 'translator' and 'extended arm' to describe their own understandings of the new role. In the group interview, teacher leaders do not refer to themselves as 'leaders'. One expresses that, nevertheless, it is a good thing to have the role description to know what the task is about. 'I experienced that I became a secretary, but then I could say that no, that's not really what I'm going to do when I'm a teacher leader', she says.

Leading colleagues is, however, demanding. 'We only operate on trust. That's fine, but it's challenging', one expresses. Another teacher leader says that it feels somewhat tricky when a colleague does not participate in development work and they cannot intervene. They must contact the deputy head, who has the staff responsibility to 'step in'. They call for more involvement and support from the deputy heads and the principal concerning these issues. Considering the hybrid nature of the new role in the intersection of teacher work and school leadership, their role seems unclear. This is reflected in the ambivalence expressed through, for example the relationship between management tasks, which one of the teacher leaders refers to as meaningful, and development work, which they are expected to lead in their departments and for which they currently seem to lack strategies.

Another part of the search for the new role is connected to different expectations from the deputy heads and the principal, from experiencing being controlled to experiencing full confidence. 'I feel I have complete confidence and can do just about anything I want', one teacher leader says. When asked how they perceive the role of the principal, one expresses that she is 'a motivator'; another says that the principal is 'not visible', while a third calls for the principal to be 'able to interfere more'. Another points out that the principal makes decisions anyway. These statements testify to diverse role understandings and various expectations and perceptions of their roles and tasks. The fact that the old role of the coordinator is still in

play may have its origin in tradition. The role of the teacher leader may not be a brand-new role, but more adjustments to the old one. Expectations from the deputy heads that teacher leaders should take on leadership responsibilities are to a less extent integrated into their understandings.

7.2 Deputy Heads Strive to Get Involved

The group interview with the deputy heads revealed various experiences. One expresses that, where she earlier had a central role with the teachers, the teacher leader has taken over much of the responsibilities; 'there is leadership going on', she reflects. Others say that there have been no major changes in their respective departments due to the short time since the role of the teacher leader was established. On a longer term, the deputy heads would like for the teacher leaders to act as change agents who 'sow seeds'. They express the belief that teachers, with teacher leaders at the forefront, should initiate development work themselves. 'I have a lot of faith in the bottom-up strategy', one deputy head remarks. The idea is that the teacher leaders, who also are teachers on the same terms as their colleagues, will have greater legitimacy to conduct development work and monitor teachers in their classroom practices.

However, the deputy heads are still uncertain about how to follow up on the work going on. Although several have experienced a need to get more involved, they have awaited the right time and situation to get involved. 'We are uncertain about what kind of legitimacy we have when it comes to adjusting to practice', one remarks. Another says that, as formal leaders, they must think carefully about and be aware of what they are doing and how they are doing it. It is clearly difficult for the deputy heads to know how to involve themselves in how the teacher leaders work. 'Correcting is not easy', one sighs. Another deputy head believes that the teacher leaders' motivation might easily be weakened if they intervene too much and comments that she is anxious not to suppress the teacher's initiatives. Another puts it this way: 'We're unsure of how we're going to go, and we're putting our heads in the sand hoping that things will get better soon'. The deputy heads also problematise how the teachers leaders will manage to lead colleagues. 'It requires them to lead peers in a democratic school. There are other teachers there who are on the same level as those to whom we entrust responsibility', one points out. Furthermore, they describe the possible dilemmas faced when they talk about how initiatives from within the organisation may encounter—and conflict with—initiatives from above. 'The risk is that we start projects from within the departments that are not in line with the school's aims and what we believe the teachers need to do; We said we would approve a project they would start, but it was a bit of a game for the gallery', one explains; "The thing for us is to maintain the fine balance between control and trust".

The deputy heads are concerned that an indistinct division of responsibilities creates challenges. 'When teaching practices need to be corrected or someone needs to

be guided, it's difficult', one of them notes. In different ways, all the deputy heads express that they must be careful 'to step into each other's bed'. Apart from monthly meetings, thus far, there are few formalised routines for information and following up on what is happening. Meanwhile, both deputy heads and the principal agree that this first year of testing the new role is a 'try out and make mistakes year' where the most important task is to test how the new role works in practice. The teacher leader role in the present case is an example of a bottom-up strategy, where the need for changing roles and functions related to leadership has arisen from within the school. However, the new role contributes to changing other roles and positions, such as the role of the deputy head, where it is unclear who is responsible for which tasks and how interventions in each other's practice should take place. The deputy heads express both uncertainty and ambivalence related to what is happening. Although they have been responsible for designing the role, it is not evident how they may have prepared for the challenges following this change and what this means for their own roles and responsibilities.

7.3 Principal's Desire for Teachers to Assume Leadership Responsibilities

The principal says that she believes in openness and expresses the belief that leadership should be exercised by several actors. When asked how she assesses the new role of the teacher leader, she says that the role is still in the mould and that she does not quite know which direction to go further. She expresses that it is an exciting role, and she hopes that the school may develop similar roles. 'Not everyone needs to be a formal leader, but every teacher has to be responsible for something', she says. She emphasises that the key to school development lies in that several teachers take on leadership responsibilities: 'If teachers join in and take responsibility for the work in our school, then I think it's a success that helps us move forward together'.

Simultaneously, the principal is fully aware of her own overall responsibility as a top leader in the organisation. She says she is quite good as a 'spy': 'I capture both what works and what doesn't go so well. Everything is pretty transparent here', she says. The principal shares the following example: 'Last week, we did a lesson study, and all the teachers in one of the departments observed a teaching session. I was there, too. It gave me a good opportunity to know what's going on, to ask some questions and to learn from the development work that is actually taking place in our school'. The principal has clear goals for the school; she expresses a strong belief that teachers are involved in each other's work, as in the example of the lesson study. 'Then they will experience ownership to the overall aims and purpose of our school and education more broadly', she says. The principal expresses a view of distributed leadership where both teachers and leaders are active participants in the school's practices and co-responsible for development work. The principal's view is based on shared responsibility where school leaders and teachers develop the

internal work in the school. 'The more I distribute leadership, the greater the chance is to be a learning organisation', she says.

School development is often implemented at the national level for the purpose of school improvement. Simultaneously, development work is initiated from within the school on the initiative of school leaders and teachers, as is the case at Viewpoint upper secondary school. The emergence of the teacher leader role in our example is a case of initiatives from within, where the need for change arose internally. New models of leadership were tested over time in line with increasing expectations for school leadership to 'get closer to the core work in schools' (Robinson et al. 2008). The need for a new leadership role arose from formal school leaders' ideas to gather more knowledge on what is happening in the classrooms. The idea was to get closer to teachers' practices and gain more knowledge about work in different departments. In the role description, the teacher leaders were positioned as co-responsible for development work, where in the initial testing phase they were largely given the opportunity to define the content and design of the work themselves. In the following discussion, we define some features of the emergence of the new role, and we look more closely at the challenges school leaders and teachers meet when teachers are positioned as leaders at the intersection of leadership and teachers' work.

8 New Roles Challenging Traditions

The analysis of our data shows a multifaceted picture as a new role emerges in a local school. After seven months of testing, the teacher leaders state that they strive to grasp what the role actually means and what its difference is from old coordinator roles. The informants' statements trace uncertainty, where it is unclear how the teacher leaders and the deputy heads should relate to each other and what leadership means in practice. The teacher leaders are expected to act as supporters of school development and as a liaison between school leaders and teachers. Both the principal and the department leaders thus expect the teacher leaders to make meaning (Weick 1995) with leadership responsibility within a frame of distributing leadership (Spillane 2006). However, the transition from being a 'regular' teacher to taking on a differentiated teacher leader role represents tensions. Previous expectations and norms from when teachers acted as coordinators who primarily followed up budgets and procured equipment in their departments are still present, while new expectations affect both teachers and school leaders' understandings.

Some teacher leaders comment that they feel comfortable with the new expectations of leading developmental work; however, all our informants feel less comfortable involved in their colleagues' practices. In school, school leaders and teachers have a weak tradition of discussing teaching practices (Ärlestig 2008). The intersection between leading the collective improvement work within their own departments and following up the individual colleague's work creates tensions the new teacher leaders need to address, individually or with the other teacher leaders. The new role and the expectations following the role thus challenges traditional ways in

which teachers and leaders communicate and what they talk about. The analysis shows that the school leaders have few strategies for how the teacher leaders' work should be followed up and how to get involved in the teachers' practice. Both the principal, the deputy heads and the teacher leaders are concerned about these issues, and they strive to deal with them.

The ambivalence expressed by our informants has historical and cultural explanations (Lillejord and Børte 2018) and may be seen as a forgotten but fundamental perspective when a new teacher leader role is about to develop. Teacher leaders responsible for leading school development challenges the teaching profession's egalitarian ideals and long traditions of teachers' autonomy. Thus, whether the teacher leaders want or can take leadership responsibility is related to long traditions about not interfering in each other's work and the rhetoric of collegiality (Bennett et al. 2007). Questions may be asked whether the teachers as leaders have the requirements to lead the work when they have not been given the legal assignment as formal leaders. However, if they have legitimacy from their teacher colleagues and if they have trust from their leaders, they may have the conditions to take on leadership responsibilities (Helstad and Møller 2013). The legitimacy from the teacher colleagues' may represent a sensemaking process where both the teacher leaders and the teachers experience that they become stronger as a profession because the new role includes an element of leadership within the organization (Alvehus et al. 2019). An interesting question is if the teacher leaders would have had the legitimacy from the teachers if they did interfere in the teachers work and autonomy.

8.1 Roles and Responsibilities Shift

Although created by the leadership team, the new teacher leader role can challenge the principal and principal's leadership team, who are positioned as responsible for school improvement and development work (Abrahamsen and Aas 2019). The deputy heads are particularly affected; they are uncertain about how they will proceed to assist the teachers' leaders and support them in their work. The change in roles redefines power relations; it challenges who is responsible for the work and who is responsible for guiding and following up with teachers. The teacher leader role can be characterised as a hybrid role with an unclear affiliation. In this way, it is similar to the middle leaders' role (Lillejord and Børte 2018).

Teacher leaders with a strong sense of collegiality and affiliation with the subject department (Bennett et al. 2007) may experience tensions about being expected to be involved in the wider whole-school context. These different expectations about affiliation can lead to tensions for the teacher leader, which the deputy heads and the principal should be aware of. When school leaders and teachers engage in each other's practices in new ways, it can create disturbances in the relationships between colleagues (Mausethagen et al. 2018). The introduction of the teacher leader role, therefore, challenges both the leadership dimension and the relational dimension in

work with school development (Helstad and Mausethagen 2019). In these tensions, hybrid traits are reinforced and should not be forgotten.

8.2 From Managing Resources to Developing Schools

Being a school leader is about handling dilemmas (Møller 2011) and tensions of different kinds (Irgens 2013). As the head of the school, the principal has a central function, both in practice and symbolically (Helstad and Møller 2013). The principals' significance for the development taking place should not be underestimated. As a role model in words and actions, the principal reveals her own values when exercising leadership. While some principals are school developers and consider leadership distributed practices in the school, encouraging middle leaders and teachers to take on educational leadership, other principals are traditional bearers and practice leadership primarily as governance and administration (Lillejord and Børte 2018). Historically, middle managers often strive to find their place, and the possibility of influencing the school's development often depends on the principal (Abrahamsen and Aas 2019). In our case, it is evident that the principal is a school developer. She is clear about her aims and goals, as well as the fact that all employees must be included. She gives deputy heads the option to try out new models, as is the case when establishing the teacher leader role. The new role is still in an early phase, and the principal does not know which direction to go next. Hence, she expresses uncertainty and the riskiness of developing practices that she does not yet know.

9 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, we have explored what happens when a new leadership role emerges in the intersection of teachers and school leaders in an upper secondary school and how this new role affects other roles and functions. We have highlighted the challenges teacher leaders and school leaders face when playing out their new roles in practice. Findings from this study reflect the complexity when new leadership roles are emerging from within the school. The teacher leader role is positioned as change agents in their departments, but the teacher leaders strive to make meaning of the new role and their tasks and responsibilities. They are not comfortable about getting too involved in their colleagues' professional work. Both the deputy heads and the principal express uncertainty about how to support the teacher leaders, and they struggle to define how to get involved with and to follow up the work of the teachers. As such, both the teachers and the school leaders work in a blurred landscape of roles and responsibilities that are constantly changing. Yet they have tools to cope with the situation: a leadership team that is 'alpha and omega', a principal basing leadership on trust and involvement and teachers who want to take on

responsibilities in a changing situation. Nevertheless, the transition from being a 'regular' teacher to taking on a differentiated teacher role with leadership tasks creates tensions. The emergence of new leadership roles thus affects fundamental and often forgotten dimensions as historical and social traditions related to the teacher profession and school leadership. In turn, this tradition influences the relationships between professionals and the conditions for school development within the local school. Based on our study, it seems that developing new leadership roles that involve a distributed perspective might, despite the tensions it entails, become a fundamental change for future leadership in upper secondary schools.

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The Impact of the University on Upper Secondary Education through Academic Subjects According to School Leaders' Perceptions

Guðrún Ragnarsdóttir and Jón Torfi Jónasson

1 Introduction

It has been argued a neglect of an institutional perspective, when engaging in organizational analysis of schools reduces notably the ensuing understanding of the dynamics of educational change and in particular the inertia to any change. Burch (2007) argues that educational researchers have not fully explored the interaction between the theories of institutions and organisations. Furthermore, Chen and Ke (2014) discuss how scholars in education neglect the impact of the macro level on schools and the complex interactions between the macro environment and what happens at the school level. Ragnarsdóttir (2018a,b) discusses the interaction between organizational and institutional perspectives when analysing the potential for change in upper secondary education. She argues that there is even more than one institutional framework operating that needs to be noted in the analysis. The most visible ones are those defined by governmental laws and regulations and by the collective agreements with the teacher unions. There are at least two other institutions that are less visible but very influential. One is the traditions and operational modes within education more generally, moulded by historical conventions, somewhat related to the "grammar of schooling" discussed by Tyack and Cuban (1995). The other is the institution defined by the content and traditions of academic subjects as largely defined by university traditions and rhetoric. The influences of this latter institution are explored in this paper.

The focus of this paper is to explore the impact of the university system on upper secondary education in Iceland in the light of institutional theories by using data from interviews with school leaders. The interviews were conducted somewhat after

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the passing of the Upper Secondary Education Act No. 92 in 2008 and during the implementation of the national curriculum guide, which was published in 2011 (English translation published in 2012) (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture 2012). The act and the curriculum guide promote more freedom for upper secondary schools through the creation and implementation of a decentralised school curriculum. The implementation was promoted without affecting traditional university education.

2 The Icelandic Context: Upper Secondary Education in Connection to the University Level

Upper secondary education in Iceland connects in several ways to the university level. The interaction between the school levels are both complex and substantial, not the least because upper secondary education directly proceeds university education, and among its other roles, it prepares students for further education (Upper Secondary Education Act No. 92/2008). Secondly, universities educate upper secondary school teachers in both the subject taught and in pedagogy (Act on the Education and Recruitment of Teachers and Administrators of Preschools, Compulsory Schools and Upper Secondary Schools No. 87/2008).

For some time, the matriculation examination from upper secondary education has been an entrance ticket to the university level (University Act No. 62/2006). The scope of different study tracks was limited before 2008. The range was based on four centrally organised conventional study tracks: Matriculation examinations in Natural sciences, Social Sciences, Humanities, and Businesses, all centrally organised around academic subjects. The difference between the schools was also little as all programmes where organised in the same way by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (1999). There has never been a standardised university entrance examination (for the University of Iceland), except perhaps when there was only one track at the only gymnasium in Iceland (until 1916).

In 2008, a reform was launched in upper secondary education. In the reform, power was systematically transferred to upper secondary schools. The schools where given the freedom to design their own school curriculum based on the relatively weak framework stipulated in the national curriculum guide from 2011 (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture 2012; Upper Secondary Education Act No. 92/2008). The stability of the traditional academic study programmes leading to the matriculation examination was threatened.

As before, matriculation examinations in academic programmes aim to prepare students for university education and the national curriculum guide from 2011 sets the line for a minimum of 200 credit as compared to the approximately 240 from before. Hence, the reform opened the possibility for a shorter study time in academic programmes leading to matriculation examinations. Some of the upper secondary schools took initiative to reduce the study time, but other schools kept the

same number of credits as before (Ragnarsdóttir 2018b). In 2014, the minister of education announced that all academic programmes leading to matriculation examinations in upper secondary schools in Iceland must reduce the study time from 4 to 3 years by the autumn of 2015. The justification was to counteract the high dropout rate in upper secondary education, increase the international comparability of Icelandic students, and deliver students earlier into the labour market (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture 2014; Parliamentary document no. 815/2014–2015).

The status and scope of subjects and subject fields varies in the National Curriculum Guide of 2011 when it comes to matriculation examination in academia. Only three subjects, all academic, have the status as core subjects in the guide across all programmes, Icelandic, mathematics, and English. The core subjects need to count for a minimum 45 credits and a certain proportion must reach the third competence level out of the four levels organised for upper secondary education. Other subjects and subject fields discussed in the chapter on matriculation examinations are Nordic languages; a third language, traditionally German, Spanish, or French; and subjects in social and natural sciences, but the number of credits is not specified. As has been demonstrated, the matriculation examination is centrally organised around academic subjects and subject fields (Upper Secondary Education Act No. 92/2008; Ministry of Education, Science and Culture 2012). Other subjects are no longer mentioned in the curriculum. Therefore, there is a gap between subjects in the curriculum. The gap is not only between academic subjects but also between academia, the arts, and vocational subjects. The latter two are not specified in the guide and are thus given lower status (Eiríksdóttir et al. 2018). In that way, some upper secondary school leaders in Iceland claim that the national curriculum guide impacts the self-esteem of upper secondary teachers teaching the lower-status subjects (Ragnarsdóttir 2018a). The same high-status academic subjects are a large part of the university life. Therefore, they hold more power than all the subjects that are left undiscussed in the guide.

In general, everyone who passes the school based (non-standardized) matriculation examinations has the right to study at the university level (University Act No. 62/2006). However, the universities state what they consider is important to study in upper secondary schools in order to do well. In that way, universities aim to control, or at least to guide, the upper secondary schools. Most schools in the University of Iceland ask for a matriculation examination as preparation for their programmes. But, there are schools, within the university that have more narrow measures and thus control the flow of students with admission requirements. These schools request a certain number of credits in specific high-status academic subjects. Usually, these are the same subjects that dominate the national curriculum guide for upper secondary education in natural sciences (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture 2012). Some schools administer competitive entrance examinations to control the flow of students. Entrance examinations were only administered in medicine and law at the University of Iceland in 2017 (University of Iceland 2015, 2016a, b). More restrictive admission requirements are set by the School of Engineering and Natural Sciences and the School of Health. By setting these entrance barriers, these programmes position themselves as having higher status than the rest.

The impact from the university level is also found within the formal education of teachers and school leaders. Since 2008, teachers of academic subjects in upper secondary education need to have at least a bachelor's degree in the subject they teach as well as a two-year master's degree in teacher education. However, if a person holds a master's degree in another field than teacher education, then that person only needs a one-year diploma in teacher education to obtain a license to teach. Therefore, all academic teachers have a diploma or a master's in teaching at the graduate level. For vocational subjects, upper secondary school teachers need to be qualified master craftsmen, a qualification based upon work experience and a study programme at the upper secondary school level, and complete at least a one-year diploma in teacher education at the university undergraduate level to obtain a teaching licence (Act on the Education and Recruitment of Teachers and Administrators of Preschools, Compulsory Schools and Upper Secondary Schools No. 87/2008). This shows a gap between groups of teachers in upper secondary schools regarding their formal education, particularly when it comes to the length and level of studies. Before 2008, the teacher's licence for upper secondary teachers of academic subjects was a diploma in teacher education, but the system was the same as it is today for master craftsmen.

Research shows that universities not only control upper secondary schools with flow of students but also when providing formal education (Jónasson 2016). Jónasson (2016) expresses his concerns about the power and the control held by universities globally. He believes that this reinforces inertia where higher education acts as a gatekeeper to lower school levels through entrance tests and admission requirements. He further problematises teachers' formal education by criticising how teacher training is organised around academic subjects.

3 The Role of the Academic Subjects

The academic disciplines have a major impact on all social structures designed around upper secondary education in Iceland. Deng (2013) argues that academic disciplines from the university level are either continuous, discontinuous, or different, but always relate to school subjects. The academic disciplines at the university level are the most relevant here along with how they define and outline subjects at the lower school levels. The knowledge incorporated in an academic discipline is transmitted in order to develop the intellectual capacity of the learner and to maintain and reproduce the academic culture. The main purpose, according to Deng (2013), is to attract learners into the academic community by studying the same methods as the academic experts. While doing so, other important aspects of schooling are left out, such as practical, technical, tacit, local, and community competences. Furthermore, the learners' attitudes, interests, and emotions, as well as economic, social, and political needs and development are generally neglected.

Similarly, Lambert (2014) describes the relationship with university disciplines where the subject knowledge is usually produced. He notes how subjects deliver

boundaries and identities to teachers and give them a collective resource, i.e., through subject associations. Therefore, the universities play an important role in constructing knowledge. The relationship of academic subjects to practice within upper secondary schools is relevant for understanding how subjects develop or can be changed.

Deng (2013) states that subjects are humanly constructed and have different connections to academic disciplines and applied fields. He notes that curricular subjects establish "an institutionally defined field of knowledge and practice for teaching and learning" (p. 40). Similarly, Bleazby (2015) points out how some curricular subjects are thought to be more valuable than others. Subjects like mathematics and physics are highly valued as being both abstract and theoretical. Low-status subjects with a physical and practical orientation, such as sports or auto mechanics, are judged to be less valuable in the community. She refers to this as "the traditional curriculum hierarchy" (p. 671). This is evident in the national curriculum guide in Iceland, particularly when some subjects are marked as core subjects. These are the same subjects that dominate the entrance criteria in most schools within the University of Iceland. Bleazby (2015) further points out that it is problematic when subjects, such as physics and mathematics, are perceived to be more valuable than other subjects and indicates that this is echoed in both social and economic values.

As noted, Deng (2013) and Bleazby (2015) claim that school levels prior to university education are under institutional control by the university level and society in general. This particularly applies to upper secondary education in Iceland as it is the school level that directly prepare students for university.

4 Institutional Control

Scott (2014) describes institutions as representing stability, where social structures created by actors with vested interests monitor and resist intended change. Within institutions, as Scott (2014) sees it, similar ideas, habits, norms, purposes, and frameworks guide human behaviour and mechanisms. Further, he claims that institutions are complex, long-lasting, and socially constructed. There are three elements that form the pillars of institutions, regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive.

The regulative pillar, according to Scott (2014), represents the legislative framework and the systems of rules and regulations controlling the organisations like upper secondary schools. The normative pillar refers to "normative rules that introduce perspective, evaluative, and obligatory dimensions of social life" (p. 64). Professional roles, values, and norms fall, for example, under the normative pillar. The normative pillar can apply to the values held by the teaching profession at both the upper secondary and university levels. Finally, the cultural-cognitive pillar consists of "shared conceptions that constitute the nature of social reality and the frames through which meaning is made" (p. 67).

Scott (2014) and Thornton et al. (2012) indicate that different actors and social structures can either facilitate or constrain change in the setting in which they

operate and even across system boundaries. They can be grouped based on their different identities, capacities, rights, and responsibilities (Scott 2014), i.e., in relation to the upper secondary and university levels in Iceland. Some of the actors have formal legal status. Some actors, such as school leaders and teachers, are given considerable space in the upper secondary education Act no. 92/2008 in Iceland while others are not even mentioned i.e. school councillors, psychologists and other professionals supporting students (Ragnarsdóttir 2018a). This gives school leaders and teachers more power than others. Several scholars focus on the impact of higher education on schools (Deng 2013; Jónasson 2016), and based on the theories noted above, it is possible to assume that higher education holds more power than other actors through social structures created by university actors, social structure like formal education and the academic disciplines.

Therefore, this paper explores the impact of the university system on upper secondary education in Iceland in the light of institutional theories and using data from interviews with school leaders. The study is conducted when the Upper Secondary Education Act No. 92 passed in 2008 is starting to have its effects and when a new National Curriculum Guide of 2011 (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture 2012) is starting to be implemented and understood. Even though there were organizational changes to the universities being implemented, these did not affect the structure or status of academic disciplines or departments.

In order to gauge specifically the perceived influence of the university, as an institution receiving the largest proportion of students matriculating from the upper secondary schools. We ask:

1. What institutional forces promoted by the university level do upper secondary school leaders in Iceland experience when leading change in upper secondary education?

We noted that the different schools, within the University of Iceland, have different entrance criteria and that the university sets its guidelines, couched in terms of important subjects. Therefore, we also ask:

2. In what way does the subject hierarchy interact with change in upper secondary education and how is it promoted by the university level?

5 Method

The findings are based on interviews from a comprehensive study conducted from October 2013 to November 2014 in nine upper secondary schools in Iceland (Óskarsdóttir 2018). This paper relies on semi-structured interviews with 21 school leader.

The schools were selected from a stratified population based on school type, location, size, and educational practises. Once the schools had been selected, the school leaders were selected also using a stratified sample related to the school

hierarchy. The school director was always part of the sample, and one or two leaders were randomly selected from the middle management layer. The number of interviewees from the management layer depended on the school size.

The interviews where supported by an interview framework. The framework covered features such as curricular reform and influences from internal and external actors. Most of the interviews took place in participants' offices or in meeting rooms. The interviews lasted from 48 to 118 min.

School types and locations are not given in this paper to ensure anonymity (McMillan 2012). For the same reason, the schools where given pseudonyms based on mountains in Iceland and the school leaders where all given female pseudonyms regardless of their actual gender. Furthermore, the middle managers' roles are not specified. The pseudonyms of school leaders includes the same letter as the first letter of the school pseudonyms. When the excerpts were thought to be traceable or sensitive, the pseudonyms were left out. Those who are not school directors are referred to as middle managers in this paper. School leaders is used when addressing the administrators as a group.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. We used thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2013) when examining how school leaders describe the impact from the university level. The analysis was guided by the research questions and the conceptual framework, particularly the concepts around institutions and the subject hierarchy. In that process, we started to get an overview of the data by carefully reading the transcriptions to become familiar with the content. Then, we systematically coded for direct and indirect influences from the university level. In parallel with the coding, we collected excerpts from the transcripts and generated themes by grouping the excerpts into categories. At the same time, we inductively added to the conceptual framework. In the end of the process, we once again reviewed the transcribed data and listened to the interviews. We did this in order to double-check and fill in gaps in the analysis.

Two main themes where generated in the data analysis under the headings of regulative and normative pillars of institutions.

6 Regulative Pillar of Institutions: Paradoxical Messages Given by the University Level

In the processes of implementing change in upper secondary education through decentralised curriculum creation, the school leaders sought out information from the universities when designing their matriculation examinations. Through that process, they got mixed and fluctuating messages from the university level, particularly the University of Iceland, on the necessary preparation for university. Then, the expectations were bound by university rules from different university programmes as entrance requirements, thereby supporting the regulative pillar of institutions.

Many of the participating school leaders noted how some university programmes wanted a broad base as preparation, while others sought fixed learning outcomes. Hanna was one of the school leaders discussing the mixed messages given by the University of Iceland. She noted that some programmes wanted students with "a general base … to know the right working methods and be good at … Icelandic, English, and mathematics". Further, she reported that other "faculties at the university impose quite stiff restrictions", such as the "natural sciences". Similarly, Jódís talked about different message from the University of Iceland.

> The first ideas of the University [of Iceland] on what kind of students they want … then they came up with a different idea from that they had in mind in the beginning. They just wanted general broad matriculation exams … that impacted here, into our discussion, then … it turned out that the university took a U-turn. I think that it just came with the natural sciences faculty [School of Engineering and Natural Sciences] when they requested so and so many credits in mathematics … something undefined (Jódís, school leader).

Here, Jódís was not only looking at the time factor but also referring to different areas of emphasis depending on programmes. Hanna had similar concerns that the School of Engineering and Natural Sciences placed more intense and fixed restrictions as preparation for university than did other schools, which wanted a general base. This promoted a high degree of institutionalisation through top-down directives. Nonetheless, the University of Iceland only counted the number of credits instead of the content and learning outcomes, as is evident in Jódís quote here above.

The directives originating from the University of Iceland were considered to hinder any kind of creative and innovative actions in academic studies in upper secondary education, according to most of the interviewees. Jóna reflected on the domineering influence of the universities in that "the university sets the lines on what level they require in each subject". Jódís noted that "these requirements, or entrance examinations … that shape and steer … they are at a dead end and are based on misunderstanding". Jódís was describing how some programmes within the universities plan to establish entrance examinations to ensure homogeneous knowledge among students and reinforce existing norms and values, a high degree of control and institutionalisation. When it comes to the discussion of preparation for university, Aðalbjörg reflected on the fact that the universities entertained doubts as to "whether they can trust the programmes" of the upper secondary schools.

The school leaders did not agree on how much the university level should steer upper secondary education. Elsa, for example, did not want "too much steering", while Jóna called for more interactive conversations between the school levels instead of top-down directives. "Is this fitting? … the thread is missing", she noted.

More strict and diverse demands and requirement came from so-called high-status university programmes that are organised around by subject, like mathematics and natural sciences. The school leaders saw mathematics as clearly sitting on the top of the subject hierarchy.

7 Normative Pillar of Institutions: Indirect Influences Through the Mindset of Specialisation

The university level's control was not only directly through the regulative pillar of institutions, as previously shown, but also indirect, mostly through formal basic education in certain academic subjects and teacher education. Therefore, this control was reinforced through the mindset of specialisation and consequently led to strengthening of the normative pillar of institutions.

Teacher education was not often mentioned directly in the interviews. Gríma was, however, one of the few discussing it. She described how a group of vocational teachers who were adding to their formal basic education while obtaining a teaching licence became inspired about learner-centred ideas in the spirit of Dewey and individualisation. The group implemented the ideas into their own practices 10 years later when they had the opportunity to change due to amendments in legislation that gave more freedom to the schools to develop. Previously, they did not have the opportunity to make the change because of the centralised curriculum. This shows how formal basic education can have a long-lasting impact on schools and how the right environment can facilitate change.

When analysing what the schools where implementing, the school leaders mainly discussed teaching and assessment methods, making it clear that formal pedagogical education of teachers impacts what happens in schools. Gyða described the "large pedagogical steps" that had been taken in her school. Similarly, Friðmey pointed out how willing teachers were to "develop professionally, change teaching methods". Anna agreed, as did many other school leaders, and added the importance of "diverse teaching methods".

Assessment methods were also intensively discussed by the interviewees as being one of the core areas of emphasis in the national curriculum guide. Fríða noted how they have been discussing the definitions of:

> continuous assessment, what is a final test … how much weight it should have … and all the fences that teachers create. The assessment here in the school is in fact very diverse (Fríða, school leader).

These, themes about assessment were important concerns among many of the participants, and they described them as being in constant development in their schools. Anna reflected on connection between:

> diverse teaching methods … formative assessment … and then, of course, this completely harmonises with what the students want … this is something that is just very important, but it cannot all be achieved during one school year (Anna, school leader).

Finally, Jóna described how, "in a majority of cases", ideas come from teachers "since we are involved in pedagogy, teaching methods, and assessments". As shown here, the school leaders have mainly been focusing on changing the teaching and assessment methods in their schools.

The indirect influences of the formal undergraduate education of academic teachers were considerable in the data. The findings indicate how the mindset of

specialisation in academia generally hinders change. This was, for example, evident in the school Jörundur. When the teachers in the school were asked to design new study programmes for matriculation examination, Jódís said that:

> When we ask people in natural sciences to create natural science programmes, when we ask people in social science to create social science programmes, and when people in languages to create language programmes … [then we see] small BSc programmes [emerging] (Jódís, school leader).

This shows that academic programmes in upper secondary education are feeders for the academic disciplines at the university level. Teachers based their work around the subject content of their basic formal education. The values of subject disciplines are reinforced at the university level mainly in the field of undergraduate education and clearly impact the development of the upper secondary school level. This helps explains how institutionalised subjects are reinforcing the normative pillar of institution though the mindset of specialisation.

There turned out to be a difference between subject fields in these manoeuvres. The school leaders described intensive struggles and resistance within academic programmes and that the resistance was more as compared to the other disciplines in the schools. The interviewees experienced the natural sciences being more marked by tradition as compared to social sciences and languages. Dís spoke in depth about the reasons for these difference within the academic courses. According to her, the roots lie in a different vision and history:

> The older section of the maths faculty is the most conservative … maintaining that innovation is a certain threat to the faithful devotion required in maths and physics … the conflict lies in this theoretical part … how much should be seen as preparation for life and work in a democratic society and how far we can go [in that direction] at the expense of theory, or the academic part, [the roots lie in] the working methods … people's experience of what it is … to be a teacher … and linked to seeing themselves as persons within the subject (Dís, school leader).

The roots, according to Dís, lie in different working methods and how the teachers see themselves as part of the subject and the continuation of the academic discipline at the university level. She highlighted the theoretical part as the operating force in physics and mathematics. Thus, the school leaders seemed to have quite strong views on the subjects but felt, perhaps unexpectedly, powerless to stimulate what they saw as necessary changes.

Some of the school leaders also discussed a crisis in Icelandic language teaching by questioning the content taught in the subject, as is evident here: "There are very different opinions about the value of teaching phonetics in Icelandic". Jóna agreed with there being a crisis in Icelandic:

> Teachers of Icelandic in upper secondary schools would probably be reluctant to agree not to teach at least one of the sagas … We have not yet broken down these walls (Jóna, school leader).

The school leaders also explained the resistance in terms of the long history of the language and the culture of the nation, thereby reinforcing the normative pillar of institution.

Similarly, some of the school leaders had difficulties when implementing the six fundamental pillars stipulated by the new curriculum guide as cross-curricular themes. The school leaders reported, for example, more difficulties when implementing the six fundamental pillars in mathematics than in social science, and their argument was that the social sciences are more interdisciplinary than mathematics. Hence, some subject teachers resisted this aspect more than others.

The same difference between disciplines is also reflected in society in general, thereby reinforcing the cultural-cognitive pillar of institutions. Hildur described a difference "in-between disciplines" when she discussed societal request. Students studying natural sciences "are thought to have all paths open". This means that students graduating from natural sciences programmes at the upper secondary school level can enter any university discipline they want. While students learning "languages and social science" are expected to be engaged in studies characterised by "broad [knowledge] and … more freedom of choice" and do not have the same opportunities as students graduating from the natural science programmes since they are lacking mathematics and other important natural sciences.

Jóna, however, looked at this from a wider perspective than most of the school leaders. According to her, it is possible:

> to enter every subject, both in academic and vocational courses, and find such [views] and note the people who hold them, the teachers I would say … This was taught like this when I was in this … This is … classical in my subject. This is the base … classic that every teacher and … each subject … sees as a base in my subject (Jóna, school leader).

Here, Jóna is referring to the institutional walls within each subject in all programmes in upper secondary education.

Despite the strong opinions of school leadership on old-fashioned content, they claimed that they lacked the authority and agency to promote change. Elsa remarked that she did not have the "authority" to interfere with the content of the subjects. "I can only motivate teachers to come up with ideas, and we have been pushing it. This needs to be teacher driven". Friðmey agreed that the team of leaders "do not tell teachers how to do things … I feel that I cannot say whether things may be this way or another". Teacher autonomy and expertise in a subject mould the actions of the school leadership at the school level. The school leaders conveyed how sensitive it was to attempt to interfere with the content of subjects, or even express their views on the matter and therefore, they avoided to discuss it with teachers.

Still another manifestation of subject fields was incorporated in the buildings and the physical spaces available. For instance, Elsa described that, when designing a new building for Esja, she organised the school in cooperation with the teachers "with reference to subject fields … We want to create communities … and dialogue between teachers and students". Here she is, like all the other school leaders, reinforcing the institutional values operating in the school incorporated in the subject fields.

The institutional characteristics of subjects seemed to be most explicit in physics, mathematics, and Icelandic. It seems clear from the comments of the school leaders that the stance of the universities had much influence on how they thought

about the development of their curriculum. The control is stronger from programmes of natural sciences and health than from other programmes at the university level.

8 Discussion

The findings show complex patterns of interactions between the university and upper secondary levels in Iceland. The university level directly and indirectly controls what takes place in upper secondary schools. The school leaders claimed that the university level, chiefly the University of Iceland, was one of the most important macro-level actors influencing change in upper secondary education. Moreover, they explained how the university levels gives contradictory signals to upper secondary schools about implementing reform in the schools.

School leaders saw the university level as a centre of power applying institutionalised control over upper secondary education. The control is reinforced through the regulative and normative pillars of institutions (Scott 2014). The regulative pillar of institutions is strengthened by the university level by setting rules on accepting all students who pass the matriculation examination (University Act No. 62/2006). Despite of the general statement on accepting all students who pass the matriculation examination, the University of Iceland's allows for an independent set of entrance criteria depending on the academic emphasis of individual programmes. Through these entrance barriers, universities indicate what is important to study in upper secondary school in order to do well when attending university education. The school leaders heavily criticised the system and claimed that, through these barriers, the universities directly control the upper secondary schools. As shown, the paradoxes concerning the university level were explicit. Thus, they were constraining the change taking place in the matriculation examination in upper secondary education by creating entrance barriers and emphasising a few, high-status traditional subjects while neglecting other important subjects that the upper secondary schools are developing.

Thus, the entrance criteria made by the university level strengthen the existing subject hierarchy (Bleazby 2015) and foster the *status quo* in upper secondary education. The main focus is on mathematics sitting on the top, thereafter are subjects related to natural sciences, Icelandic, and English in this order. These social structures of academic subjects are seen to be bound to the programme's rules at university levels, therefore, enlarging the regulative pillar of institutions (Scott 2014). As noted in the background section, more restrictive admission requirements are set by programmes at the University of Iceland with high-status academic subjects within School of Engineering and Natural Sciences and the School of Health compared to other subjects teaching lower-status academic subjects such as School of Education, School of Humanities, and School of Social Sciences. Most of the school leaders taking part in this study criticised the system. Some school leaders found the directives from the University of Iceland to be extremely constraining, conservative, and unidirectional. They also explained that these directives constrain creative and

innovative actions in academic programmes leading to matriculation examination in upper secondary education. Jónasson (2016) shares the same concerns as school leaders regarding the entrance examinations and admission requirements. He states that the universities act as gatekeepers for lower school levels.

The long-term expansion of a unified university system signals a propensity to serve a widening spectrum of students by accepting all students who pass the matriculation examination from the upper secondary school level. However, that is not echoed in the message's universities send the schools, which narrowly focus on academic standards and on certain high-status subjects. This has the consequence that other important subjects that support the democratic environment in schools and student diversity are not valued. Low-status subjects may possibly therefore never enhance their status in upper secondary education due to the vested interests of university and upper secondary actors. This clearly counteracts the strive upper secondary education claims to have towards inclusion and leads to homogeneity in the student group accessing university education. The tight hold to the subjects that have stipulated the matriculation examination programmes in upper secondary education for decades is therefore problematic.

The university level also indirectly endorses the normative pillar of institutions (Scott 2014) through formal education of upper secondary school teachers and the mindset of specialisation. The formal education of upper secondary school teachers is again mainly built around academic subjects, as is evident in the data.

Similarly, Deng (2013) indicates that subject teachers tend to safeguard the subjects they teach and maintain their existent by multiplying the ideas learned at the university level. This is also visible in Levin's (2013) conclusions on barriers to change in secondary education and the fact that university education shapes both programmes and structures in secondary education. Jónasson (2016) takes the concerns of Levin and Deng further and states that subject teachers have vested interests when it comes to change. Their interests are linked to their ideas of being subject experts who are "culturally and intellectually" (p. 8) connected to the field in which they have been taught throughout their formal education. School leaders in this study gave several examples of the vested interests held by upper secondary school teachers. They explained how teachers tended to safeguard their subjects and echoed the academic university culture in their own upper secondary practices. At the same time, and due to that hold, school leaders claimed to lack authority and agency to promote change in content, and thus they felt powerless to stimulate necessary changes.

Jónasson (2016) indicates how problematic this is when making change and how it causes teacher education, in particular, to be mainly organised around the same traditional subjects as have always claimed the centre stage. His concerns apply both to upper secondary school teachers and school leaders in Iceland who receive a teaching licence after a bachelor's degree and another degree in education. Therefore, actors may be ambivalent towards new ideas for content and interdisciplinary work.

Even if we attribute this institutional hold to the academic subjects as fostered and promoted by the university this inertia to change is also reinforced by the

regulatory environment, such as teaching licences issued by the Ministry of Education Science and Culture. In addition, the same subject fields are protected and accepted in the regulations on the licensure of educators (Rules on Evaluation Committee for Pre-Schools, Compulsory Schools and Upper Secondary Schools No. 241/2009). As clearly stated in the Rules on Evaluation Committee for Pre-Schools, Compulsory Schools and Upper Secondary Schools No. 241/2009, it is not possible to become an upper secondary school teacher if the subject is not recognised as a field in upper secondary education. Individual subjects need, therefore, to be part of the already existing subject range. The current academic values and norms are maintained and idolized by formal teacher education and disseminated through later teaching. In that way, the existing subject hierarchy (Bleazby 2015) is also upheld by the three responsible gatekeepers noted in the rules: The Teachers Union, universities and the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. The regulative (Scott 2014), institutionalised force of the rule hinders, or at least hampers, new subjects from entering the field and protects the older, existing traditional subjects in upper secondary education. This may possibly hinder the growth of new subjects in upper secondary schools. It is clear that there is a vested interest in control when looking through the theoretical lenses of Thornton et al. (2012). They claim that actors' self-interests, proclivities, and power govern most social structures as the actors, in this case the rules on teachers license, use their power systematically to express their interests when designing the structures and determining which social structures should endure.

School leaders gave several examples of the vested interests held by upper secondary school teachers. They explained that teachers tended to safeguard their subjects and echo the academic university culture in their own upper secondary practices. At the same time, school leaders claimed to lack authority and agency to promote change in content, and they felt powerless to stimulate what they saw as necessary changes. School leaders acknowledged, however, that they had recently assumed some pedagogical agency. It was now considered acceptable for them to promote change in teaching methods and assessment practices, which is a topic that is becoming increasingly prevalent within the school discourse.

9 Conclusion

The conclusion of this study on the normative and regulative pillars of institutions (Scott 2014) shows the control held by the university level over upper secondary curriculum through powerful academic subjects. The study provides robust evidence of how the university level, in particular the University of Iceland, reinforces these institutional aspects of upper secondary education in the guise of high-status subjects. We see signs of it losing some of its institutional hold with respect to certain operational modes, such as the use of new teaching methods and modes of assessment. It should be noted, however, that the university level does promote some change in schools through professional development and continuing

education (Ragnarsdóttir 2018a) even though this influence is apparently much weaker than what we have focussed on. Thus, the study provides valuable information on the largely controlling inertial influence of the university level but also of its much more limited empowering role. The results clearly demonstrate the very substantial interaction between institutional and organizational frameworks in upper secondary education as reflected in the views of the school leaders.

The findings clearly show a perspective that is very important, in fact fundamental, and should not be neglected or forgotten. The perspective revolves around the formal role and authority of school leaders and their organizational independence in that role. Thus even though school leaders are seen from the outside as being placed with an organisational control in schools, with responsibility for quality of education, inclusion and social justice more generally, is of paramount importance to fully take into account all of the regulative and normative institutional constraints operating.

School leaders in upper secondary education lack authority and agency to promote change in the content of powerful high-status academic subjects and feel powerless to stimulate necessary changes within the framework these define. The institutional hold by high-status academic subjects is problematic, and it is essential to bring this issue to the fore and discuss in detail. It may call for framework that gives the upper secondary school leadership the opportunity to fully take on the power and freedom given to the schools to make changes based on the diversity of the student group and their needs. However, it is not easy to see how this could materialise.

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External Expectations and Well-Being, Fundamental and Forgotten Perspectives in School Leadership: A Study on New Leadership Roles, Trust and Accountability

Ulf Leo, Roger Persson, Inger Arvidsson, and Carita Håkansson

1 Introduction

Expectations, i.e., the ability to envision and anticipate future scenarios or situations, is a fundamental human function that has served humans well during the evolutionary history of the species and continues to do so. By their very nature, expectations are ever-present and serve to guide thinking, feelings and behaviours, and people are constantly evaluating their relationships with their environment with respect to the implications for their well-being (Lazarus 1999). As thinking, feelings and behaviours are shaped by the back-and-forth exchange between the individual and the social and physical environment (Buss 1991), expectations are also subject to change and development. In this regard, people within the educational system, for

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example, superintendents, principals, teachers, other staff, students, parents, and politicians all possess and develop expectations that shape both their individual and collective thinking as well as their associated actions.

While some expectations are explicit and articulated, many expectations operate outside awareness. As such, both explicit and tacit expectations may be persuasive drivers for our thinking and behaviour and be mirrored in, for example, articulated or unarticulated norms, rules and regulations. Early sociological research on social pressure is just one example of the academic interest in how expectations may influence human behaviour and socialising (Durkheim 1895; Rommetveit 1955). Another example is the research showing school principals to be subject to many different kinds of external expectations that originate from various agents, such as superintendents, teachers, colleagues, other staff, parents and students (Leo 2015).

In Sweden, when it comes to building social relationships and the associated expectations in the educational environment, a complicating factor is that the job turnover among principals is high. The median time for Swedish principals in their profession is 2 years for grades one through six, and 3 years for grades seven through nine and upper secondary school (Skolverket 2019). Obviously, this makes it more difficult to maintain continuity in the local schools and may negatively influence school development, educational leadership and risk neutralizing other efforts aimed at enhancing the quality of education.

In any event, expectations are fundamental psychological mechanisms that serve to modulate the physiological stress response. As such they serve to maintain physiological balance, and thus our survival, health and well-being (Chrousos 2009; McEwen 2012; Ursin and Eriksen 2004). In particular, negative or unclear expectations about potential outcomes increase the physiological stress response and associated feelings of discomfort, which typically motivate the individual to engage in stress and tension reducing behaviours. In contrast, positive outcome expectancies (i.e., feelings of hope, meaning, a belief that things will work out well, etc.) ascertain that the physiological stress response will be the most suitable given the demands of the situation and is more likely to be perceived as a stimulating. While the physiological stress response is essential for our survival, a too long or too frequent activation without possibilities for restitution will affect learning, health and performance negatively (Ursin and Eriksen 2004). Thus, school principals that are frequently stressed or experience chronic stress are at risk of developing poor health and are unlikely to perform at their best. From this perspective, health and well-being can be considered a fundamental requirement for a school leader to lead. In addition, as expectations also fundament for the social interactions that take place between actors in the educational system (e.g., principals, teachers, students, parents, politicians, etc.) and mirror aspects of trust and accountability, the link between expectations, health and well-being is a fundamental and often forgotten perspective in school leadership that deserves further scrutiny.

1.1 New Leadership Roles, Expectations, Health and Well-Being

Present-day knowledge is lacking in regard to Swedish school leaders' health status and well-being. However, data from the Swedish Working Environment Authority and AFA Insurances, a Swedish Insurance company that is owned by the labour market parties, suggest that school principals are at risk for overwork and chronic stress (AFA Försäkring 2016; Arbetsmiljöverket 2011). Furthermore, in a recent cross-sectional study on school principals' subjective health, work engagement and workability, approximately 20–25% of the 2224 participants showed signs of being in a situation of distress that could tax their health if sustained. The authors also observed that reports of exhaustion were strongly associated with reduced work engagement and workability (Persson et al. 2020). These observations suggest that some school principals might not be performing their job as efficiently as they could due to reduced health. This is a reminder that school principals, as with any other employee, need proper organisational preconditions, motivation and good health in order to perform (Blumberg and Pringle 1982; Nilsson 2016).

In consideration of this, and when understanding the broader perspective on the educational system that has recently undergone quite dramatic changes, it seems that excessive external expectations on school principals may be a contributing factor to the school leader's health and performance. It is evident that during the last two decades, several circumstances have changed that have altered the procedural and social relationships between school principals and their superiors and subordinates. For example, the declining rank scores of Swedish students in the 2013 version of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) raised expectations from national bodies, agencies and actors on the municipal level regarding increased accountability for principals and local schools (Ärlestig et al. 2016; Nihlfors and Johansson 2013). As a result, accountability for learning outcomes and leadership at the school level seems nowadays to be more important than ever. In addition, ideas on decentralisation, management by objectives and results, and marketization, have also forced school principals in Sweden to adopt a work role that has become increasingly similar to private-sector-style managers (Jarl et al. 2012).

Data from the National Agency for Education (2015) indicate that principals use 51% of their work time doing administrative tasks and only 18.5% to pedagogical tasks. This suggests that principals are not sufficiently engaging with their core tasks. According to a governmental investigation (SOU 2015:22), many principals' current challenges can be linked to weaknesses in the local governance chain. For example, school principals may receive insufficient support and guidance from the municipal board or the owner responsible for the school or the managers of school principals. Insufficient support is often reflected as a lack of trust between school principals and the actors in the local governance chain. Another factor contributing to a weakening of the school principal's work role is a battle of minds regarding the interpretation and meaning of the principal's pedagogical leadership (SOU 2015:22). Also the recent Teaching and Learning International Survey report (OECD 2019)

points to several difficulties, in particular those regarding the renewal of pedagogical competence and the conditions for the principals to exercise educational leadership. Noticeably, a consensus has grown around the notion that the school principal's responsibilities and power do not always align.

Observably, recent, nationwide educational reforms, general labor market decisions and other changes described above have created new leadership roles and a new backdrop for discussions and negotiations regarding school leadership. However, this new backdrop is not something that is unique to Sweden. International research has similarly highlighted the importance of school leadership for the development of schools and for student outcomes (Leithwood et al. 2019). In addition, many countries seem to experience great problems with school leadership (Pont et al. 2008). Reports of principals with heavy workloads, long work hours and high job turnover are common. In fact, a worldwide outlook reveals that many countries have moved towards ideals that strive for increased decentralisation, making schools more autonomous in their decision-making and holding the schools and principals more accountable for both students results and the school's legal and economic standing. In doing so, these countries are following the flow and adapting their education systems to better fit the needs of the current society as perceived by politicians and other decisions makers. Because of these changes, the expectations on school principals and schools are changing on a broad scale, both locally and internationally.

1.2 Accountability and Expectations

During the last decades, the need for control and monitoring has increased and become manifest by central regulation via the Swedish Education Act (Swedish Code of Statutes 2010:800), and the introduction of the Swedish Schools Inspectorate in 2008. This development has been described as having led to a "juridification" of the education system and the local schools (Jakhelln and Møller 2016; Leo 2016) and has put the concept of accountability at the forefront.

Accountability is a multi-layered concept that applies to one's ability to be accountable for one's own actions and, particularly, the results of those actions (Elmore 2005; Møller 2009). According to research (Moos et al. 2011; Skedsmo 2009), the recent development in the Scandinavian countries is characterized by an increased focus on student achievement and performance measurement as a key part of evaluation processes. This implies a changed concept of educational quality that is defined by striving to achieve specific outcomes at a school level. Because the schools are the primary unit of measurement, and principals govern the schools, there is also a systemic logic that serves to make principals accountable for specific outcomes. Obviously, the strong focus on accountability in the educational system is bound to make principals develop a set of expectations that focus on the results of the school.

According to Moos et al. (2011), older typologies of accountability seem to focus on institutionalized accountability, which is related to different spheres and roles in a hierarchy. In contrast, newer versions are directed towards individuals and express how forms of accountability are included in what is referred to as "performance management" (Moos et al. 2011). According to Møller (2009), it is possible to discern three different forms of accountability. First, managerial accountability refers to a person's position in a hierarchy and responsibility towards superiors concerning tasks that are delegated, focusing mainly on monitoring inputs and outputs. Second, professional accountability refers to a person's commitment to a community of professionals and makes him or her perceive a duty to follow the standards of the profession. Third, personal accountability refers to a person's core values. This kind of accountability is regarded as particularly powerful and binding. It is likely to expect that emotional labour will be stressful if personal values are in conflict with other kinds of accountability. Finally, it should be emphasised that accountability defines a relationship of control between different parties, and it has a connection to trust, which is considered a keystone of leadership in order to establish successful interpersonal relations and successful organisations (Møller 2009).

1.3 Trust and Expectations

While meaning of trust is intuitive to most people, this meaning, as scientific concept, is a bit more elusive and used slightly differently by scholars within fields such as psychology, sociology and political science, to mention a few. However, Tschannen-Moran (2014) adopted a definition of trust that entails five facets and associated expectations. Accordingly, trust may be defined as the willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the expectations that the other party is benevolent, honest, open, reliable, and competent (Tschannen-Moran 2014).

An interesting development is that Forsyth et al. (2011) elaborated on the collective faculty trust. They did so by examining how school success was associated with three referents, or objects of trust, that is, (a) *trust in the principal* (i.e., the faculty has confidence that the principal will keep his or her word and act in the best interests of the teachers), (b) *trust in colleagues* (i.e., the faculty believes teachers can depend on each other in difficult situations and rely on the integrity of their colleagues), and (c) *trust in the organization* (i.e., the faculty can rely on the school district to act in its best interest and be fair to teachers). Each of the three referents or objects has a collective property; the party doing the trusting is the faculty as a whole; hence, trust is considered as a collective variable (Forsyth et al. 2011; Hoy 2012).

In Sweden, a Delegation for Trust-Based Public Management started their work in 2016 based on a decision by the government. The delegation had the mandate to conduct an analysis and propose how the management of welfare services in the public sector could utilise the competence and experience of employees within the extant regulatory frameworks. The basic idea of, so-called trust-based governance

and management is to increase the quality of publicly funded services by increasing the decision and action latitude in the meeting between citizens and employees. According to the members of the delegation, too much focus on formal management does not produce the desired result and it is argued that culture, values, leadership and co-leadership should be given a much more prominent role. At the same time, management via finances and results-based management should be made less detailed and therefore more enabling. Thus, the delegation argues for the need of a holistic perspective and a systems perspective in order to avoid contradictory or overly detailed management (Bringselius 2017).

1.4 Problem Statement and Aims

The point of departure in this paper is that expectations are fundaments for the social interactions that takes place between school principals and stakeholders, and that individual and collective trust and accountability are special realms of expectations. Being a principal today is often a balancing act of handling different challenges, in relation to the personal and organisational resources. Kloep et al. (2009) state that the system of challenges and resources comes into a state of imbalance each time an individual meets a challenge. On this note, we aim to explore how and when principals experience external expectations and how they perceive that these expectations are orchestrated to affect their work situation, leadership and well-being. The specific research questions were:

– What type of external expectations are principals experiencing in their work and who formulates them?
– To what extent are the principals reports of external expectations related to reports that reflect accountability and trust?
– What types of resources and support do principals perceive as necessary in order to improve their own leadership role, health and well-being?

2 Method

This study is part of a three-year research project (2018–2020) titled, “School Leaders’ Work Environment: A Project on Organisational Prerequisites, Stress-Related Poor Mental Health, Turn-Over and Possibilities for Improvement”, which is funded by AFA Insurances. The project entails two nationwide longitudinal surveys, group interviews and workshops. A qualitative approach was used in this paper, and data was collected with nine group interviews (Bryman 2012).

The participants in this study were invited after taking part in the nationwide survey in 2018. To maintain the nationwide perspective, and to be able to highlight

shared issues in the principals daily work, we recruited principals from three different municipalities located in the north, in the center and in the south of Sweden.

All principals in the three selected municipalities, who in the survey had marked interest for taking part in an interview, were contacted by email. In total, 48 were invited to partake in the interviews. In total, 39 principals participated in the interviews. Thirty-four accepted via the survey, and another five were recruited through snowball sampling to get at least four principals in each group. In each municipality, there were three group interviews, one with preschool principals, one with compulsory school principals, and one with upper secondary school principals.

In the present study, 25 (74%) of the school leaders, who answered the survey (n = 34), were women. They were between 35 and 63 years old and the mean age was 50 years. The majority (94%) of them worked 90–100% full-time and most of them (68%) had worked overtime 2 days a week during the last 12 months. Four worked as school principals less than 3 years, six up to 5 years, 18 up to 10 years and six more than 10 years. Twenty-five completed the national principal training programme and nine have ongoing studies in this program. A majority (56%) also have other management training. In average these principals were directly responsible for 31 employees, which is the same as the national average.

The group interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed with content analysis (Creswell 2007). A qualitative analysis program, NVivo 12, was used. In the first step, expressions for external expectations from different stakeholders were identified and coded into categories depending on the party that formulates them (see research question 1) as expectations from the state, the teachers and so on. In the second step, the relations between external expectations, accountability and trust were analysed (see research question 2). In the third step, the principals' expressions on resources and support were linked with statements about their leadership role and their well-being (see research question 3).

3 Results and Analysis

In this section, we present the principals' experience of the expectations, starting with expectations that are perceived to originate from the national level, we then turn to expectations from the superintendent and the school management at municipal level, local politicians in the educational board, teachers, parents and children in preschools and students in schools.

3.1 Expectations from the National Level

The informants stated that they met strong expectations from the national policy level that the principals should be pedagogical leaders. However, since these expectations were well in alignment with the principals' own expectations about their

work role, they did not seem to evoke stress and negative emotions. The informants also talked about the support they had from the Education Act, in which the principal is given the mandate to lead, coordinate the pedagogical work and develop the education. In addition, the Education Act gives principals a mandate to decide on the internal organisation of the unit and makes them responsible for distributing resources within the unit according to the different conditions and needs of the children and students.

The principals also referred to the curricula of their respective school type (i.e., preschool, compulsory school and upper secondary school) as important policy documents, which they can consult and base their leadership on.

The informants reported that the most stressful expectations from the national level came from the Swedish Schools Inspectorate. The stressful expectations did not concern the regular supervision or quality audits, which the informants could understand and welcome. Instead, the principals perceived that the stressful expectations were related to the Swedish Schools Inspectorate's work with the handling of complaints from parents. The majority of complaints that were described had to do with mistreatment, and children and students who do not receive the support they needed according to the parents. Complaints have become much more frequent during the last decade, and the principals in all groups mention the answering of complaints as a stressful and time-consuming task. The task is combined with reports of negative feelings from parents, students and teachers. Some of the principals' expectancies in relation to the Swedish School Inspectorate's work are visible in the beliefs expressed in the following quote:

> I think that is because we have introduced systems, such as the School Inspectorate, which created a distrust of the school. That the requirements increases on what the school should do. We are a client, and when you find deficiencies, the school should correct those deficiencies. The role of the school has become unclear. (Principal in the South)

Following the many complaints from parents to the Swedish Schools Inspectorate, one increased requirement was created on documentation in the schools. There is also a quest for managerial accountability, to which principals are responding by an increased documentation, perhaps an "over documentation" that they see as time consuming, stressful and keeping them from being the pedagogical leaders they want to be. The increased number of complaints could be seen as an indicator of a lack of trust between parents, principals and teachers.

3.2 Expectations from the Municipal Level, from the Superintendent, the School Management, and the Local Politicians in the Educational Board

The principals in all three municipalities, uniformly described that they work within a system in which they have several layers of leaders above them. They also described that different middle managers within the organisation may have different

expectations and that this sometimes creates problems for principals, as the understanding of tasks are filtered differently in neighbouring areas from the educational board, via the superintendent and through the middle management, before it reaches the principal. In addition, the informants raise the problem of double governance, from the state and from the local district level. That this problem may be dealt with differentially is shown in the following excerpt from an exchange between two principals:

> A: We have to balance between what the Education Act says and what the administration at local district level tells us to do. The Education Act gives us a mandate for decisions in our school, but it is difficult to do so when local guidelines and documents guide us. That balance is complex.
> B: I brought it up with my closest boss, if I have a mandate to say no. It was a non-issue because it would lead to a collision course with the superintendent.
> A: So either deliver upwards or you obstruct and become uncomfortable.
> B: And that will not be good.
> A: Thank you and goodbye. (Principal in the South)

This dialogue also revealed how the principals understand their mission in the double governance system, and it indicates that they see themselves more as "state agents" with a national mission than as civil servants in the municipality in which the national and local come together. There are similar statements in a majority of the groups, but not in all, and the collective trust in the organisation seems to be somewhat damaged.

Dualistic, and sometimes opposite, expectations from the superintendent and local school management cause principals to feel that the, figuratively, the gas and brake often exist at the same time. The conflict between allocated resources and students' needs is a common topic in all group interviews. Principals refer to the Education Act, which states that special support shall be given to students in compulsory and upper secondary school who have difficulties in completing their education successfully. This can be seen in the following quote:

> The thing that gets tough is trying to keep the budget in balance and at the same time meeting the special needs for support that exist, it's a conflict all the time. (Principal in the North)

The principals are responsible for the budget as a part of their managerial accountability and sometimes there is a conflict with the personal accountability based on their core values, such as when the principals are not able to meet the needs of a student. The principals are worry about keeping to the budget, and one way to do this is to attract more children to the preschools and students to the schools. Preschools and schools are funded based on a child or student voucher, which is decided by the municipality. It means that the preschools and schools depend on having enough students to be able to organize for a qualitative education. When a student leaves a school, the school voucher adds to the budget of the new school they take the money to the next school, and this has created a competition, not only between the public and independent/private schools, but also between the schools within a municipality. As a result, the principals spend time on marketing and branding, and most of them are not comfortable with using words from the industry or seeing children, students and parents as customers or measuring customer satisfaction.

The principals do not experience very strong expectations from local politicians, with some exceptions. They explain that the distance is too far and that the superintendent is the link between the school board and the principals. Sometimes politicians visit schools but not often. The strongest expectation from the local politicians and the school board is to improve students' results. The principals in the compulsory schools are very focused on getting all students up to approved grades in order for them to be qualified for upper secondary school. Some principals in the group interview had a high number of students who were first or second generation immigrants, with parents of low socio-economic background. Around 35% of their students qualified for a vocational programme in upper secondary school, and these principals expressed a very strong pressure for immediate change to improve the results of the students.

In one of the municipalities, the principals claimed that the politicians wanted to control in too much detail. The politicians wanted to have a say in organising the school and decide what sort of computers all the schools should buy. A disturbance in the mutual trust became visible as the principals questioned the competence of the politicians, which is an indicator for one of the facets of trust.

Another issue, according to the principals, was a lack of participation in decisions. The principals have sometimes become too far from where the decisions are taken in the chain from local politicians, to superintendents, to managers for each school type, to managers for a cluster of schools and then the principal. It is clear that flat organisations have been replaced by multiple layers of leadership in a hierarchical system.

All three municipalities have central support resources, such as departments for quality, human resources, finance and organisations for central student health. One concern from the principals is that it also generates more work, as stated in this quote:

> We have a large administration with a lot of power, which also means that there is a lot of pressure on the individual school to deliver data to all the different parts of our administration that are supposed to be supportive, but sometimes it becomes more like there is too much of a superstructure. (Principal in the South)

The principals talked further about receiving demands rather than support from the municipal level. One example is a human resources department that required data on staff absences. When the principal asked for support with the analysis she only received instructions on how she could do it herself. The central support resources could support principals in their managerial accountability, but the overall picture from the interviews was that the request to deliver data does not pay back, which is more stressful than helpful. There are several ways of handling the expectations when they become stressful and principals talk about "cutting corners" or even "cheating", which is illustrated in the following quote:

> It's frustration, a feeling that I can't do what I think is important in my school because I'm being governed in a certain direction. You have to do some things a little sloppy because you can't keep up. You have to play it cool and dare to cut corners and choose for yourself what is important for my school and my students and my staff, and try to duck. (Principal in the South)

One example of unwanted control is from a local department for quality issues in one of the municipalities. Staff from the quality department had an assignment to go to the schools and provide support to improve the quality of teaching. Some schools perceived this effort as control, and one principal claimed that some of the leading teachers at the school, key people who were part of the focus group at the school, thought it resembled an examination or audit.

There is sometimes a clash between expectations from the superintendent on fast change when the principals want more time to be able to initiate processes in a democratic way with the staff, and the balance between trust and control is revealed.

3.3 Expectations from the Staff

Most teachers are very supportive, and one principal talked about a major change in the relationship between the teachers and the principal that has happened during recent years. Nowadays, teachers, in general, do not want to become principals, and the principal claimed that this has resulted in a new approach, in which the teachers and the principal work closer together.

One's work environment is a major issue, as principals experience strong expectations from the staff that they should adapt, organize and provide support to pressed and stressed staff. The well-being of the staff is clearly a part of the mission, but some principals talked about a lack of responsibility from the staff:

> It's just like having a class of students really. You have to make extra adjustments for some, […], and have open doors for some, and others you always meet. That's the way it is. (Principal in the Centre)

A combination of demands for quick solutions and being the manager of a large number of employees makes the principals feel inadequate and stressed. A large number of stressful expectations seems to be related to issues with the staff as "fuss", in which principals mediate conflicts, which takes time and energy. It is common that principals mediate between people or teams in conflict in which they listen and propose strategies. One reflection was that it is not common to be both a leader and a manager and say "enough is enough".

The principals also experience stress when working with rehabilitation for teachers and recruiting new staff. Even though all three municipalities have human resources departments to support the principals in these issues, some of the principals say it is not enough and that they would need more support on the ground as they are involved in all stages of the rehabilitation and employment processes.

Most principals hire teachers, and they are responsible for the recruitment process and salary setting. The lack of qualified teachers at all levels in the school system has created new demands and expectations on principals, and they spend a lot of time with recruitment processes. Some teachers use the teacher shortage as an argument in various negotiations. One example is teachers who do not get the schedule or salary they want and then threaten to change schools. According to the

principals, a new type of leadership is required in which you have to be even more democratic as a leader, be a good listen and negotiator and work with the whole staff for their well-being.

3.4 Expectations from Parents

According to the principals, most parents are supportive, and meeting parents is an important and inspiring part of being a principal. One example of stressful expectations was “the lack of boundaries of many guardians”. There has been a change in how parents contact the school in recent years with a bypass of the hierarchical management structure. Now more parents go straight to the principal without contacting the teachers first. Some parents expect principals to be available and preferably to reply within 1 h via phone or e-mail, or parents come directly to the school to talk to the principal. This concern is illustrated in the following quote:

> Everything from mistreatment cases to dissatisfaction with teachers, or because it is dirty on the toilets or that the school food is not always good because it is fish on Wednesdays. It doesn’t matter but it should be resolved and you are responsible and it should go fast. (Principal in the Centre)

According to the principals there is a big difference between schools with high socio-economic background among the parents and schools in areas with a majority parents of low socio-economic background, and a high number of immigrants. Both groups contact the principal when they feel their children are treated badly, but only parents from the schools with high socio-economic background group together, calling for meetings or starting discussion groups on social media. This is discussed in the following quote:

> I think expectations on parents’ are unclear. What the school or society expects from parents, some parents in socioeconomically strong areas they come to school to tell us what to do and more. Parents in socio-economic weak areas do not know what is expected of them and maybe they leave everything to the school. It’s the opposite poles. (Principal in the South)

As a result, the principals working in areas that have a high amount of parents with a low socio-economic background and high number are immigrants must work harder to establish arenas for communication with parents. In some schools, documents describing how responsibility should be shared between school, teachers, students and parents are produced and translated into several languages.

The most common expectations from parents in preschool was that the group of children should not be too large, and that there has to be a continuity among the staff. This is sometimes hard to meet for the principals, and they talk about strong negative stress in relation to large groups of children due to a high demand for places with a growing number of children in an area, a lack of qualified staff and a high amount of sick leave among the staff. Constant under-staffing leads to stressed teachers which leads to stressed principals.

Principals talk about the problem of parents seeing themselves and their children as customers and a shift in the balance between individual rights contra collective rights. Sometimes there is a problem when parents, according to the principals, have too high of demands on what is best for their child. The principals in the schools talk about threats; if a child does not get the right support in the school, they will file a complaint to the Swedish School Inspectorate, contact the superintendent, start a group discussion on social media or they will change schools. One principal speaks of this in the following quote:

> The first two [complaints] will affect the reputation of the school and if a child change school the funding for the student will follow to the new school. But it would be nice to be able to say; Well, this is as far as we will go. Here we draw the line. You [the parent] threaten to change school [and take the school voucher to another school]. Well, do it. (Principal in the Centre)

3.5 Expectations from Children and Students

Expectations from children and students was only mentioned in four of the nine groups by principals in the upper secondary schools and in one group with principals in compulsory school. The principals stated that the students gave them energy to work and that they wanted more communication and exchange with students. One principal in a compulsory school with low socio-economic background among parents called for stronger expectations from her students as they were living in alienation, and she wanted them to be more involved in the school. Students go to the principal when there is a conflict with a teacher, and when they feel that the quality of teaching is too low, and when teachers doesn't care for them.

3.6 Own Expectations and the Role of Leaders

Some of the principals claim that the strongest expectations, sometimes with unrealistic demands, come from themselves. They want to be present for all stakeholders, and balance this with external expectations to ensure that students in need of support also receive it, as well as to maintain the budget. The principals strive to identify what is good enough, and to put health-promoting boundaries for themselves, such as keeping working hours within reasonable limits.

3.7 Existing Support and Wanted Support

The three municipalities included here had quite large organisations constructed to support the schools. However, the principals vary in regard to their views on the quality of the support depending on which municipality they are from and whether

they are working in preschools, compulsory schools or upper secondary schools. Some principals have support in specific areas while others thought it was lacking and vice versa. One common area in which principals wanted support was working in functioning leadership teams. They explained that the strongest support in stressful situations comes from colleagues, and many of the principals wanted some kind of shared leadership. Some of the principals have individual or group coaching, and they think this is an important way to reflect on current dilemmas. The principals wanted an adequate number of employees to be able to balance the expectations to be pedagogical leaders with a focus on developing the quality of education. They also express a need for extended close local support in issues linked with human resources when dealing with recruitment and rehabilitation, financial planning and follow up, and wanted others available to take care of issues connected to the school buildings and physical work environment.

4 Discussion and Conclusions

In this paper, we have accounted for nine group interviews with principals from the North, Centre and South of Sweden. The aim has been to explore how and when principals experience external expectations and how they perceive that these expectations are orchestrated to affect their leadership role, health and well-being. In this process, we raised three specific questions: (a) What type of external expectations are principals experiencing in their work and who formulates them, (b) to what extent are the principals reports of external expectations related to reports that reflects accountability and trust, and (c) what types of resources and support do the principals perceive as necessary in order to improve their own leadership role and well-being? In the following discussion, we will first address the research questions focusing the origins of the expectations in the realm of trust and accountability and then discuss what types of resources and support the principals perceive as necessary in order to improve their own leadership role and well-being. Before we reach the conclusions, we will also address the strengths and weaknesses with the present study.

4.1 External Expectations and Their Origins in the Realms of Trust and Accountability

It is clear that the principals experience external expectations from many different sources as shown in Fig. 1.

Most of the time in the interviews was allotted to discussing the local governance chain with dilemmas linked to demands for quick solutions to raise students' results, often with a cut-back in the budget and problems recruiting and keeping competent

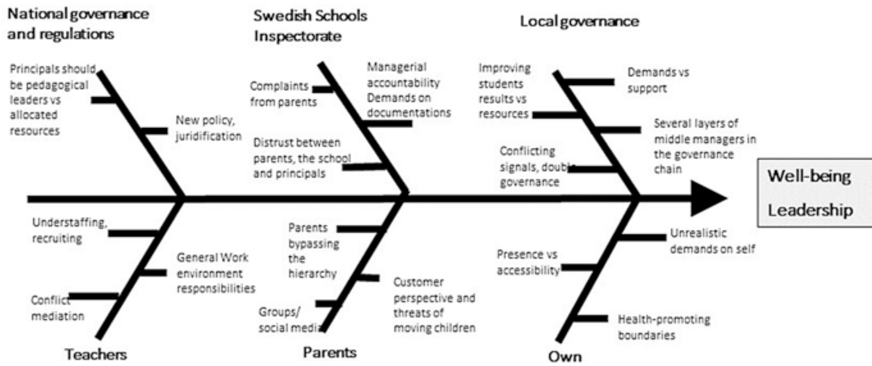

Fig. 1 Stated origins of expectations that in theory may negatively impact on the principals' well-being and leadership

teachers. Arguably, this is a reflection of the demands of an increased managerial accountability for principals and local schools and is in line with current research (Ärlestig et al. 2016). However, there are several clashes between different forms of accountability and, in particular, a tension between managerial and personal accountability (Møller 2009). When the core values of the principals are challenged or violated, the result is negative expectancies and feelings of stress.

The principals found it especially stressful when the task of leading the school within the allocated budget was not in line with their own interpretation of the national assignment that all students should have the support they are entitled to. The principals are struggle to be the pedagogical leaders they want to be, which is expected in national and local policy. The problem, according to the principals, was that they spent too much time with administrative issues linked to managerial accountability, time they would rather spend on developing the quality of education and other issues linked to their professional accountability.

When the Swedish school system was decentralised in the nineties, most municipalities created flat organisations with more power to the principals. Since then, in these three municipalities, several layers of middle managers have been added to the local governance chain. Seemingly, the introduction of more layers have not clarified the delegation of work and responsibilities sufficiently. Drawing on the accounts of principals, there is still uncertainty in regards to what mandate they have and what they are responsible and accountable for. In addition, there are several indications of miscommunication between the different layers of the system, and, thus, trust in the organisation (Forsyth et al. 2011) is challenged even damaged. One such indication is the lack of trust principals express towards local politicians, which is grounded in a disbelief about the politician's knowledge and expertise. These negative expectations that the principals impute on the politicians and their actions also underlines what role competence plays in trust relations. With this in mind, it may be noted that the interview data did not contain any clear signs that the three municipalities studied here should be moving towards a more trust-based public management.

The results indicate that most parents are supportive, but some show a distrust against the school when their children are mistreated or not getting the expected support. There seems to be a need for clarification and a balancing of expectations regarding what support the parents can expect from the school and vice versa, especially because collective trust in the parents is important to the outcomes of the students according to Hoy (2012). One problem revealing the lack of trust is the threats from parents to file a complaint to the Swedish Schools Inspectorate. There has been an increasing number of complaints each year for the last decade, and the principals and other staff spend a lot of time on documentation to be prepared for coming complaints. Again, problematic aspects of managerial accountability is in focus for the principals.

4.2 The Perceived Need of Resources and Support for Health and Well-Being

A compelling question is why anyone wants to become a principal. Based on the interviews, it is clear that the principals get a lot of energy from the children, students, engaged teachers, supervisors and parents. In addition, it is clear that they have become principals because they want to develop their school and work as pedagogical leaders. They are "burning" for the job even though it is sometimes tough. They like to set goals and achieve them, and they are eager to find answers to challenges.

The focus of this paper is mainly on stressful expectations, and it is clear that the system of challenges and resources in line with Kloep et al. (2009) often come into a state of imbalance, as there are constant challenges in a principal's daily work. Clearly, the principals' work situation creates plentiful possibilities to evoking unclear or negative outcome expectations, which may, to varying degrees, trigger the physiological stress response and associated feelings of stress and discomfort. The results of this study also point to the risk that some school principals might not be performing their job as efficiently as they could due to stressful external expectations, which is in accordance with the recent cross-sectional study on school principals' subjective health, work engagement and workability in which approximately 20–25% of the 2224 participants showed signs of being in a situation of distress that could tax their health if sustained (Persson et al. 2020).

One example of a dilemma faced by principals during recent years is the lack of qualified teachers, and this has led to more administrative work with recruitment and concerns about not having teachers that can meet the needs of the students. The principals are also stressed because they feel a demand for constant availability at their preschools and schools by phone and email. There is a need to further discuss what boundaries principals must put up for themselves in order to be truly present when meeting people and to organize becoming the strategic, pedagogical leaders they want to be.

To summarise, the principals perceived a need for resources and support for their well-being and to be able to balance external expectations. These are some suggested, general measures, based on the analysis of the results, to improve the work situation for principals:

Working in leadership teams and sharing leadership is a suggested way to create opportunities for principals to support each other, not only in developing their schools, but also in creating opportunities to discuss dilemmas that often are stressful.

- Regular coaching, or mentoring for new principals, are another suggested, health-promoting method.
- Double governance and long governance chains have been identified as problematic in this study as well as a number of other studies and reports. According to this, a principal's task, their mandate and corresponding responsibility and accountability, ought to be scrutinized based on the local situation.
- The expectations for principals to be pedagogical leaders need to be aligned with the responsibility, and the number of employees is one factor. Having close support with functions within human resources, the economy and student health are important.
- There is a need to discuss and document what expectations different actors can have on each other, not only in the local governance chain, but also in relation to teachers and parents.
- At a national level, more professional training programmes directed also to experienced principals could start, and the school inspectorates procedure for reporting needs to be adjusted according to the principals in the study.
- The principals themselves could be better at taking responsibility for their time, setting limits to their accessibility and distributing tasks. A start could be to find out what mutual expectations the closest supervisor and the superintendent have for each other and start a discussion to improve well-being and leadership based on this.

4.3 Strengths and Limitations

A strength of this study is that we were able to recruit informants strategically from three municipalities located in different parts of Sweden to ensure a national geographical spread and that the principals were strategically selected to represent preschools, compulsory schools and upper secondary schools from the same municipalities. This selection strategy allowed us to gain different perspectives from principals working in different parts of the same overarching educational organisation, thus allowing for a systems comprehension. Other strengths are the distribution of male and female informants and their age and experience, which is similar to the survey examinations from which they were invited (Persson et al. 2020). The composition of informant demographics in terms of gender, age,

experience and numer of employees suggest that we have been able to identify a cluster of "main stream" school principals.

There are also important limitations that influences transferability. One limitation is the fact that the informants were recruited from only three of the 290 municipalities in Sweden. This resulted from one criterion, which was that municipalities must have at least 50,000 inhabitants, which was necessary in order to get enough informants in each group. Finally, and because the present interview study is part of a large scale study that has a strong emphasis on understanding and mapping school principals health problems, it cannot be excluded that the overall context, to some extent, is biased as to the answers in the group interviews. It is conceivable that the context implicitly encouraged some of the informants to produce responses entailing connotations that are a bit more negative than usual.

4.4 Conclusion

In this paper, the authors argue that the link between expectations, health and well-being is a fundamental and often forgotten perspective in school leadership. The principals' work situations contain many possibilities that may evoke unclear, or negative outcome expectations, which may trigger the physiological stress response and associated feelings of stress and discomfort. These expectations are companioned with signs of an imbalance between personal resources and the challenges faced, preventing the principals from achieving their full potential for both their own benefit and that of the organisation.

A contributing factor to the orchestration of the principals' stressful expectations is the introduction of more layers of leadership. This has led to a clash between different forms of accountability; distrust and uncertainty about what mandate, responsibility and accountability the principals have in their schools and, in the process, created a feeling of inadequacy among the principals. In addition, the principals underlined that trust arises as a result of good communication and listening skills. Being able to talk about professional, as well as personal, matters is a strategy to establish trust, both with teachers and parents, as are transparency and welcoming parents to the school. Principals' presence and not being available at all times seem to be key factors in building trust in the organisation. Starting from a work-environmental perspective, a risk analysis for school leaders could be a first step to identify specific problems at individual, group and local organisational levels.

It seems like a healthy and well-functioning balance between different external expectations, challenges, resources, trust, control and different forms of accountability are health-promoting factors. Well-being will certainly be an important factor in recruiting new principals in the near future.

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Part VI
Discussion

Re-centring Critical Potentials of Nordic Leadership Research

Lejf Moos, Elisabet Nihlfors, and Jan Merok Paulsen

The volume is, as was mentioned in the introduction, the product of a symposium, with keynotes and Masterclasses on the basis of individual abstracts brought together under the same theme: '*Fundamental but often forgotten perspectives on/in school and leadership*'. In our title we claim that we are recentring critical potentials in Nordic Leadership research. Now is the time for us to pull things together and reflect on the following: What did we find? Do we reveal critical perspectives in the research?

To begin, we elaborate on the founding concepts in our subtitle:

Fundamental means that the basis for school leadership are the purposes of education (Moos and Wubbels 2018). School leadership should focus on the very reason why schools are constructed: for educating children and young people so they can develop their Democratic Bildung. This means, in short, that children need to find their place in the world and to understand the world, other human beings, communities and societies better so that they can become creative and critical. The purpose of schooling often competes against other interests, as mentioned in the text on discourses in the introduction.

Forgotten is a concept we use to comprise or embrace concepts such as neglected, ignored, disregarded, lost, not seen or acknowledged, or even omitted. Thus, forgotten is a metaphor for aspects of theory and analyses that we find missing.

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Both concepts are, of course, normatively charged: our fundamental interpretation is basically humanistic and educational, while the forgotten is deeply dependent on our choice of educational and humanistic, analytical and theoretical approaches or perspectives.

When reviewing the chapters, we drew out themes intended to loosely signify the categories in which we arranged them: Challenges in policy context and reality; Perspectives on research; Dilemmas in school leadership; Data-informed decision-making in school leadership; and, Impact on school leadership. We did this because we are convinced that shifting the focus, and using multiple foci, helps us to gain a deeper and perhaps clearer view of the field. It can be likened to spotlights in a theatre or a video, which focus our attention on some things while obscuring others. Below, we have applied another filter, namely the 'overarching perspectives' or main points of observations and analyses that we see in the chapters:

Points of Observations

1. **P**olicy—governance in policy networks in its diverse forms, i.e. hard and soft social technologies and discourses.
2. **P**ractice—micro-analyses of organisations, actions, relations, situations and tasks
3. **P**rofessions—the reflections of professionals on leadership, education and policies.

Most of the chapters cover themes from all three categories, interlinked in complex discussions. Thus, we find analyses and theories of governance/policy in respect of national, transnational and local relations and issues; of policies in education practice, be they in school leadership or in teaching and learning; and of discussions of teacher- or leader-professions and relations. But, most often, we observe that individual authors have chosen a single point-of-observation, a main perspective.[1]

1 Policy

In order to discuss politics and leadership in Nordic societies—and also therefore in transnational associations—we will use theories of governance and social technologies, and later on, theories of discourse.

Governments are elected in order to govern and regulate their populations and institutions through biopolitics. Biopolitics influences the ways in which institutions and individuals perceive, interpret, understand and act in interplay with other interested parties in policy networks. The actions themselves are preferably influenced through direct, 'hard governance'; the values and norms behind them are more important from a governmental point of view because they are influenced by

[1] In the text: a family name presented in italics and without an accompanying year in brackets refers to the author of a chapter in this volume.

indirect, 'soft governance' forms and social technologies (Dean 1999; Foucault 1976/1994).

Policymakers at local, national and transnational levels are supposed to see themselves as 'leaders of leaders' or 'conductors of conduct' through indirect forms of power. The discourses, frames and values of institutions thus play a role in socialising their clients, costumers, students in planned and desired ways, in accordance with the prevailing politics, culture and required competences. A political system will strive to dictate the effects of its institutions and initiatives.

Comparisons, guidelines, norms, etc. are institutionalised influences, some of which are called *social technologies*. Routines, methods, work forms and tools can be used as social technologies, i.e. technologies with a purpose or a meaning (Foucault 1991). They are used to influence people's behavior and their cognitive and cultural processes (Scott 2014). They incorporate covert decisions and influences, taken from other places or other times, to form the current premises for institutional and individual decision-making. Some of these technologies evolve from daily practices, while others are imposed or applied by policymakers. Such methods may change over time, but at any given moment they are seen as 'the natural way' of working. They are rarely discussed, so the power invested in them is concealed. Other social technologies are being brought into the field of practice from the field of business or the field of education policy and are often described as 'natural' or 'neutral' tools for practitioners to use. Here again, the power invested in them is concealed and therefore not discussed. Social technologies are therefore, in any circumstance, powerful but silenced forms of power (Moos 2009).

There are visible intersections between the concepts of social technologies and the concept of organisational scripts, which work as carriers of cultural-cognitive prescriptions in Scott's terminology (Scott 2001, p. 77). Generally, a script is a schematic knowledge structure, i.e. of a cultural-cognitive nature, that guides people in how to understand events and indicates the behaviours or priorities considered appropriate in certain situations (Gioia and Poole 1984). Scripts also works as prototypes, influencing how actors try to reduce complexity and make sense in complex decision-making matters. As with social technologies, organisational scripts guide actors' behaviours through a knowledge structure that works as a prototype. Many contemporary school governance tools in use today, e.g. state supervision and national testing, can be understood as powerful scripts that influence actors in the school governance chain.

1.1 Leadership Education

The short Danish, Norwegian and Swedish accounts of national school leadership education programmes in the Introduction go as follows:

Moos argues that the way in which the education or training of school leaders is institutionalised as social technologies in our systems makes sense when looking through this kind of governance lens. That is, the Danish authorities have decided,

inspired by transnational agencies such as the OECD, to offer school leaders a generic, public, middle-management education. They further decided to focus big parts of that education on personalised leadership. The reason for this is that policy-makers in the Danish government and Local Government Denmark (the association of municipalities) have found that people socialised in an environment alongside municipal middle-managers from other kind of institutions will be more disposed to be loyal to municipal authorities. It is also because the perspectives of school middle-managers on schools and personalised school leadership may make them more inclined to believe in their own, very individual, leadership role. Hence, they may forget to focus on their institution as an institution for education and Bildung; in turn, they may lose focus on their relations with staff, the environment and students, and the interplay and power-relations therein.

Under this theory, we can point to one more reason for government and authorities to want school leaders to favour an individualistic leadership function and style: authorities need to have their representative on site. Schools are, in one way or another, often governed through contracts (Moos 2020), meaning that authorities write and prescribe their aims, outcomes and frames. The institution's leader signs the contract and is then held accountable for delivering results within the specified frames. Moreover, for juridical purposes these leaders must be solely accountable.

Paulsen in Norway writes that school leaders are seen as agents in a national discourse of schooling dominated by the outcomes of national tests and indicators in the Norwegian Quality Assurance System (NQAS), combined with public attention to Norway's position in the OECD rankings. Here, the formation of national, school leader training programmes was influenced by the OECD and its 'Improving School Leadership' programme in 2008. At that time, school leaders were expected to give feedback to teachers on their teaching, as well as supervision, guidance and day-to-day support in pedagogical matters; therefore, the training programme was expected to educate school leaders in those aspects of the curriculum. However, the focus of attention then switched, from teachers' interest in teaching to the system's interest in student learning, in line with the outcomes discourse: i.e. national objectives and measurements, and a focus on results and data. What remains overlooked in the Norwegian governance discourse is dilemma management. A recurring feature in the professional life of school leaders is that of being 'trapped' in a network of conflicting demands and expectations from the teaching profession, the state (through national curriculum and legislation) and local authorities.

Nihlfors explains that upon appointment, Swedish principals are obliged to attend an education programme that is run over 3 years. The programme is a national one, conducted by the National Agency for Education. Its content covers the law and the regulations to be managed and implemented by principals. These school leaders work in an organisation that combines a hierarchical model (where the state makes some basic decisions about the school) with a bureaucratic model (national authorities and local administration), and must at the same time ensure the participation of a large number of people (employees, children/pupils) in different types of local communities. The proportion of centralised, hard governance is higher in Sweden than it is in other Nordic systems. Despite this, there is very little research

that critically examines the impact of the education of school leaders on teaching practice or student outcomes.

1.2 Leadership Theories

Gunter revives the discussion of T. B. Greenfield, who claimed that the 'Theory Movement' of organisational theory, which was very influential in the USA in the 1950s, was technocratic because it was based on systems theory and the identification and measurement of leadership behaviours. A second theory is managerial: the globalised *Corporatisation Movement* of the 1980s. This theory was based not only on 'systems' and 'behaviours' but also on militant, pro-private ideology and thus favoured the replacement of public services by private providers led by an entrepreneurial leader who may or may not be an educational professional, and where leading and leadership was leader-centric. As Greenfield argued,

> …logical positivism offers us a shrunken view of the world. It offers a methodology for manipulating reality so as to control it, a methodology that promises more than it actually delivers. It ends up hiding more than it reveals (Greenfield in Gunter, here).

The dominant focus is on technical delivery training and accreditation, meaning that professionals are denied access to their own professional and intellectual inheritance in ways that allow them to know differently. Corporate identity and management work when an organisation frame a compelling vision and mission that raises autonomy above the individual and shared interpretations of what it means. Under this perspective, organisations can make use of more technologies: *categorising,* where identity is causally determined by market consumerism; *performing*, where competence is causally determined by data and the professional is only as good as the latest set of numbers, and so the focus is on performance-related pay calculations and/or contract renewal/termination; and, *developing*, where capability is causally determined by those who know better and who give approval to particular forms of experience.

Greenfield argued that professional organisations exist in the perceptions and practices of those who form them, because the focus on decision-making and the interplay with activity in contextual settings is so important. The most valuable form of training for principals begins in a practice setting, where one has to balance values against constraints, and in which one has to take action within a political context. Only someone who has acted in this way is ready for true training in leadership.

This 'Theory Movement' focus on the leader often signals a shift in legislation from a Democratic Bildungs discourse to an outcomes discourse in contract governance, as mentioned above. That is, authorities need someone who can sign the contract, who can be held accountable for the institution's outcomes and to whom a bonus payback can be transferred. Juridically, this can only be one person.

In accordance with Gunter, but coming from another theoretical background, is the view of leadership as influence or power over other people. Power is relational, says Foucault (Foucault 1976/1994). Power is the energy, the glue that sticks relationships together and defines the poles, the positions. A person is only a leader if he/she reaches colleagues and followers, if that person's actions reach and include other actors—and first and foremost, teachers. School leaders are members of a group of professionals who communicate and interact with each other and their environment to make teaching and all their other actions work.

Karl Weick argues that our perspective of organisations needs to change to that of organising: it is not the fixed structures and bricks that are important; what is important is to remember that organising is about communication:

> An organization is "a network of intersubjectively shared meanings that are sustained through the development and use of common language and everyday social interaction (Weick 1995), quoting (Walsh and Ungson 1991).

Ten years later, Weick put it in his own words:

> When we say that meanings materialize, we mean that sensemaking is, importantly, an issue of language, talk, and communication. Situations, organizations, and environments are talked into existence.' (Weick et al. 2005, p. 409)

Organisations and positions should be replaced with organising and communication because they are not permanent features but are constantly being recreated through sense-making processes in which participants work to make sense of their situation, relations and practices.

Weick points to insights that are also pivotal to education generally. For example, students need to participate in sense-making communication with each other and their teachers in order to gain deeper knowledge. Learning is social and, thus, is communication (Dewey 1937; Moos and Wubbels 2018).

The perspectives of Greenfield and Gunter offer analyses that are similar to the two discourses presented in the Introduction.

1.3 Privatisation

Gunter reminds us of an emerging aspect of contemporary governance—privatisation—that is rarely discussed in Nordic systems. As Gunter works in England, the Avant-gard of neo-liberalism (Moos 2017), she knows in detail how it is unfolding. The chapter relates to a study of democratic retreat through the dismantling of public systems and cultures. Modernisation through the privatised provision of school places, the idea of parental choice for accessing these places and a responsive profession delivering an approved curriculum has meant that the ideology of the personal-contract (commercial, faith, philanthropic) has trumped that of the social-contract (citizenship) through a 'there is no alternative' logic. (Ball and Junemann 2012; Ball and Youdell 2007; Cone and Brøgger 2020; Verger et al. 2016). European

education is moving from being a driver for economic growth to becoming an economy in itself, in line with European Union public education governance.

1.4 The University in School Governance

Ragnarsdóttir & Jónasson argue that the university, as the institution educating the teachers in upper-secondary schools in Iceland, has a direct but informal influence on upper-secondary education. Interviews with upper-secondary-school leaders indicate that the university controls what are to be considered the high-status academic subjects in upper-secondary schools, through both the normative and the regulatory pillars of these schools.

The interaction between school and university levels is both complex and substantial, not least because upper-secondary education directly precedes the university education of teachers and school principals and prepares students for further education. Academic disciplines at university level are always related to school subjects. Disciplines are seen as institutionally defined fields of knowledge and practice for teaching and learning. They therefore have a major impact on all social structures designed around upper-secondary education in Iceland. Such influence is also exercised through certain social technologies, such as formative assessments and teaching methods.

This strong relationship is illustrated by this quote from a school principal in the study: *'Teachers of Icelandic in upper-secondary schools would probably be reluctant to agree not to teach at least one of the sagas … We have not yet broken down these walls.'*

The chapter analyses governance relationships between universities to schools, and from curricula and teaching to assessment, in great detail. It illuminates strikingly how universities exert normative, indirect control over teachers by strengthening teachers' collective mindset on which subjects are to be given preference. In that respect, the chapter contributes to our understanding of how the normative forces—or pillars—of the school institution play out in practice. In this way it provides a more complex and full case for these influences.

1.5 Superintendents in Governance and Education

Bjursell's & Engström's studies reveal that in the national education system, superintendents are engaged in the vertical dimension of school governance. However, they ask whether these vertical structures have been given too much attention to the detriment of horizontal organisational structures. In their everyday work, school superintendents are faced by tensions in both vertical and horizontal organisational structures, over questions of administration, student experience and organisational units.

The concept of ‘unmanaged spaces’ speaks to the parts of a school system’s operations where tension exists because a focus online-management and governance has resulted in superintendents who are unable to properly manage direct governance in complex situations where horizontal and vertical structures cross over each other. Thus, where the need for co-operation exists, ‘in-betweens’ emerge; however, the governance of an agency is focused on the division of work. The mainstream superintendent is a member of an administrative governance network rather than a network concerned with student experience or organisational units. The chapter points to three accounts of in-between or unmanaged spaces that are important but overlooked areas of local superintendents‘ work realities because these spaces call for superintendents to engage in a multitude of interactions with different stakeholders outside of the governance chain. Thus, the chapter sheds light on the governance situation at the local, municipal level; superintendents’ accounts of their struggles with the main dilemmas of their position; and how to serve two masters—national management and education.

1.6 The Evaluation of Municipalities

Svedlin reports that recent studies on the discourse in Nordic countries shows trends in evaluation to be mainly heading in the same direction, Finland being the only divergent case. Contemporary research shows that local, school-based evaluation does not align with the practice and policy of national evaluation. It also shows the need for a perspective that connects local school leadership with improvements in working practices, with evaluation as the element in between. The concept of a mediating tool, from activity theory and learning theory, also suggests that local evaluation does not align with national evaluation practice and policy and should therefore be supplemented by a mediating tool. A mediating tool is something that from Vygotsky’s interpretation enlarges our capacity to interfere with the environment, to transform, and influences our understanding and our capabilities. To regard evaluation as a mediating tool raises the question of what this tool makes us conscious of, and in what direction it extends our cognition.

The author of this chapter connects this discussion to the values-based issue of the development of democracy, to the interpretation of ‘Bildung’ in a modern world and to the reflection that basic insights about education appear to be neglected and forgotten in ongoing, often globally initiated, change. This is a timely analysis of the struggles between centralised, national policy and a municipal one, and gives good insight into some of the mechanisms involved.

2 Practice

The chapters in this category focus on micro-policies and power relations at the practical level. The data used in these analyses have been gathered in different, qualitative ways, such as through observation in classrooms, offices and organisations, sometimes combined with individual or group interviews of education and education leadership actors.

Theorising on school life and leadership practice is rich and multifarious. Furthermore, it naturally overlaps with theories and insights concerning professions. Thus, the analyses discussed in this section could be seen to fall into our last category, that of Professions, as well. The main distinction here is the forms of data they build on: observations of phenomena or materiality, and interviews eliciting reflections or opinions.

Practice includes cognitive, cultural, normative and regulatory (Scott 2008) aspects of teaching, learning and social life, at multiple levels and networks. It takes place in classrooms, leadership and administrative offices, and the spaces in between. Education and leadership practice are much more complex and detailed than curricula, guidelines and regulations at national and municipal levels—than even those at principal level within the school itself. Policy and governance studies are compressed and simplified representations of realities and reflections.

Analyses of practice tend to offer representations and interpretations of school and leadership, and the relationship between the two, that are fundamentally different from those for policies; that is, very often the perspective, and thus the loyalties, of the analyses' authors switches from top-down (policy) to bottom-up (practice). Thus, the focus tends to be on nearby and familiar aspects of education and leadership.

2.1 Leadership, Relations and Power

Storgaard discusses two different knowledge constructions on the basis of theories that are functional and prescriptive vs relational, discursive, sensemaking and power. The effectiveness tradition within functional leadership focuses primarily on constructing claims of universal knowledge. Understanding leadership by studying the best practices of individual, heroic principals does not present the opportunity to understand leadership as a phenomenon in democratic and modern societies. In democratic institutions, leadership decisions are co-constructions of legitimacy; thus, school leadership presupposes that an individual leader has the *power to* influence as opposed to *power over* other professionals. Hence, functionalistic theories should be replaced by theories of relational and discursive power. Storgaard sees leadership as social and relational governance processes, combining a sensemaking and discursive power perspective and a governmentality perspective. This analytical

approach sees educational leadership as a combined phenomenon, where both intersubjective sensemaking processes and power processes mediate policy.

By building on these theories and bringing micro-organisational concepts into the field, both conceptually and methodologically, Storgaard deconstructs the dominant universal knowledge claims specifically by highlighting how school leadership is a local and a global phenomenon dialectically related to the institutional context and enacted in relations between leader and followers. Getting close to actual leadership relations and practices in the research process has enabled Storgaard to observe clashes between policy and institutional influences as well as internal power plays in the governance translation process.

2.2 The Middle Sphere

Larsson & Skott argue that school principals are identified as key actors in contemporary performance/outcomes discourse. Their role has been adjusted, strengthened and more clearly defined as being responsible for implementing national policy, managing change and developing organisations while striving to improve their school's effectiveness and enhance students' learning outcomes. How leaders can affect classroom activities has developed into a field of research. However, schools do not consist solely of classroom activities. They are places where students, teachers and other professional adults spend whole days. The middle spheres not only serve as important areas of student interaction; they are also embedded in asymmetric power relations, as students with larger cultural assets are better positioned than their counterparts to gain social recognition as well as having access to important discussions.

Schools are spaces for knowledge production aimed at academic achievement and environments consisting of multiple spheres of activities and learning. The authors use analytical concepts such as physical space, relational space, social space and symbolic space to organise their analysis where they can identify inner spheres for formal education, outer spheres for informal activities and the middle sphere: here, awareness and interest is raised, interactions and skills development take place, qualifications are gained, and action and competition are enacted. Thus, micro-organisational studies reveal pivotally important processes, interactions and relations that are indispensable features of school life. The awareness of the middle-spaces is important in the education of principals.

2.3 Decision-Making and Values

Bröms claims that over the past several years demand for principals to be accountable for the education they provide has increased. So too, the idea that professional practices that are part of education should be founded on evidence in data-driven

decisions. One criticism of data-driven decisions is that they are just one solution to what is a multifaceted reality as a result of schools' complexity and contingency. Other researchers underscore the importance of *values-driven* decision-making, believing that if a decision does not have a values-driven goal it has no meaning. Decision-making often takes place in a context in which several different aspects must be handled and weighed against each other; it is the decision-makers' task to find possible solutions rather than to identify ultimate decisions. According to this perspective, decision-making should therefore be *data informed*. This is because, as we cannot predict the future, almost every decision is made in the context of the unknown.

Through direct observation of the context in which the principals in this study were supposed to make decisions—discussion meetings about students' learning results—this study was uniquely placed to explore how the process plays out. It also opened up the possibility of pinpointing the data forming the analytical basis of local schools' decision-making. The discussion about results is intended to form the basis on which principals make well-balanced decisions about how to improve their schools' performance. The outcomes-based discussion meetings rest on hard and strong assumptions of rationality in actual decision-making processes, where the consequences of the decision-making are core metrics. This logic encourages a normative pattern of making the 'right' decisions based on data; it also presents an image of the type of successful schools it is appropriate to imitate. Values-based performance is more difficult to measure, but because it better approximates the actual practice of schools it provides more relevant information.

3 Professions

The connection between authorities and education is most often achieved through a school's leaders, the principals. Their position gives them the responsibility and ability to lead and manage schools in line with instruction and advice in the form of hard or soft governance and social technologies.

Frames and technologies have been sharpened and hardened over the past decades. Even so, principals need to interpret influences from outside in order for them to make sense inside. They also have to manage dilemmas in their work situation and balance the quest for legitimacy from above and from the side, from other professionals and civil society, and not least they need to protect their staff.

Of course, leaders' sense-making and enactment of sense takes place in practice situations. But principals often need to reflect and make decisions on their own; reflections that may not be visible to others, be they outsiders or insiders. We often want to ask them to explain, to tell us their thoughts, because they are in this central position.

3.1 The Well-Being of Professionals

Leo, Persson, Arvidsson & Håkansson write that accountability for learning outcomes and leadership at school level is politically more important than ever. In Sweden it is often named the juridification of education. This interferes with social interactions between school leaders and stakeholders and reflects aspects of trust and accountability that have an impact on the former's well-being. Lack of trust can induce stress and negative emotions. Well-being, as a result of collective trust and maintaining a balance between managerial, professional and personal accountability, is a fundamental aspect of school leadership. Trust can be defined as willingness to be vulnerable to another party, based on expectations that the other party is benevolent, honest, open, reliable and competent.

By interviewing groups of principals, Leo et al. were able to describe how challenging it often is for this group to feel trusted and to establish well-being in the rush for accountability. This phenomenon appears to be more important in the life of principals than ever before. In the study, the lack of alignment between school principals' responsibilities and authority was also highlighted, as was how this lack of correspondence leads to tensions and stress in the role that are embedded in different forms of accountability, distrust and uncertainty about the mandate, responsibility and accountability of principalship.

3.2 Data Leadership

Wiedemann argues that practices in data-driven or data-informed school leadership are often neglected, because many forms of data or knowledge in this field—including implicit, personal, narrative or qualitative knowledge—are not classified as such. Nevertheless, these forms of knowledge are important for professional reflection as well as for developing education leadership. Education leadership is not a technical discipline; it is a social and cultural praxis based on values. School leaders are expected to regularly use specific forms of data to improve schools' performance and to be data literate, i.e. able and willing to use specific, big forms of data. We need to be more critical of the idea that data can answer every question and meet every expectation that school leaders and education institutions face. Sometimes, it is better to use one's experience, observe, conduct interviews or speak to the central actors, instead of relying on quantitative inquiry or small data.

A sensible and pragmatic compromise perspective requires that teachers and leaders are data literate, but that to a greater extent they continually involve themselves in inquiry, analysis and experiment around their experience of teaching and education.

3.3 Dilemmas Between Logic and Values

Spillane & Sun show how one set of logics in US education—rationalisation efforts through policies of standardisation, test-based accountability and marketisation, along with evidence- and research-based approaches to decision-making in schools and school systems—was layered onto and into an educational sector in which other logics, such as professional, educational and democratic ones, were already in play. This generated many dilemmas in principals' practices. Dilemmas cannot simply be resolved because they involve roughly equally desirable (or undesirable) alternatives, thereby making one rational choice over another difficult, if not impossible. Instead, they must be managed, as many dilemmas in classroom teaching practices have been.

For that reason, sense-making theory should be applied. Rather than assume that people are attending to particular cues (e.g. regulations, events, professional training) in their environment, a sense-making frame takes a step back and begins by examining what people notice in their environment and what kind of values they refer to when managing dilemmas involving competing values.

Clashes between authority-determined rationales and local, institutional or the professional's chosen values need to be legal and open.

3.4 Decision-Making

Adopting a communication perspective (Weick 2001) makes it possible to produce a comprehensive overview—a model—of contemporary forms of power and influences used by international and national agencies as well as agents in institutions. Diverse concepts are put into the same model because a very high level of isomorphism in the use of forms of power and influence is apparent at many levels.

Based on Foucault's post-structural perspective ([1976] 1994), influence and power are described as a network of relationships where the poles (the agents) are defined by the relationships of which they are a part (Heiskala 2001 p. 245). The relationship, not the poles, defines the aspects of power and influence. Power is therefore productive and relational. Influence is the communication between a minimum of two poles/agents.

3.5 From Teacher to Leader

Helstad & Abrahamsen argue that the government-initiated emergence of new leadership roles in Norway ignores the traditions of the teaching profession, even if many or most middle leaders are recruited from amongst teachers. Historically, teachers have worked autonomously and independently; there has been very little

discussion between them and school principals about teaching and student learning, even though school leadership is regarded as being fundamental to ensuring quality in teachers' instructional practices.

Whether teacher leaders want to or can take leadership responsibility relates to longstanding traditions about not interfering in each other's work. Being a school leader is about handling dilemmas and tensions of various kinds. Thus, these new leaders are facing demands for a whole-school focus to be developed and for traditional teacher collegiality be replaced with a new leadership hierarchy. Teacher-leaders report struggling to make sense of these new dilemmas and their new relations with their former teacher colleagues. Distributive forms of school leadership, despite being regarded as fundamental and preferred when it comes to improving school performance, also inhibit tensions rooted in different and partly conflicting expectations within the school. The study discussed in this chapter also throws up ambiguities and uncertainties associated with changed leadership roles and discusses how they can be dealt with proactively.

3.6 Summing Up

From all the chapters in this volume we have drawn out a number of fundamental perspectives and discussed how and why they have been forgotten. The influence of national and transnational agencies is apparent in all the Nordic systems and their policy networks. It is also apparent that the governments in all five countries interpret and make use of global advice in different ways, while remaining to some degree 'Nordic' at their core.

The discussions in the chapters, perhaps especially in the Practice and Professions categories but also in the Policy category, reveal new links, combinations or interpretations of relationships between agencies and authorities and schools when they enact policy, or when they 'do policy' (Ball et al. 2012). Leaders in Nordic schools seem to be less assenting or subservient than is often assumed. In addition, these school principals appear to be more interested in the micro-processes in schools than has been assumed. Moreover, that principals appear to benefit more from small data in their work calls into question the focus on big data of governing bodies.

The analyses in this volume offer excellent insights on which to build in terms of finding and developing new links between practice and policy.

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