Chapter 8
Sustaining Leadership Through Self-renewing Communication

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In the Swedish case of revisiting two schools 5 years after the first visits, we read:

> "What was most interesting at both schools was that the principals succeeding the first very proficient principal were not fully accepted. In both cases the first principal had created a culture of very strong collaboration between the principal and different teacher teams. This was based on trust, dialogue and knowledge, but also a great deal of social competence. The new principals could not live up to the demands from the teacher teams and was not sensitive enough to understand how to approach the existing structures when changes were needed. It might always be a problem to replace a popular leader and then live up to high expectations and perhaps also handle the sorrow people can feel losing a leader meaning more to them than just an administrator". (Höög et al. 2009, p. 751)

8.1 Introduction

This extract from the Swedish case is an illustration of core elements about how successful principals in the case schools are shaping their leadership and thus the relations to other agents inside and outside school, in order to sustain the development and success of their schools. The principals demonstrate that sustaining success in a changing world means to be aware of changes in political and educational expectations and at the same time remembering the basic purpose of schooling, the comprehensive education for social justice – in some places labeled: the "Democratic Bildung."

Sustaining successful functions and culture in schools is first and foremost done through involving and empowering teachers to be learning professionals and by restructuring and reculturing organization to be learning organizations – here

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called: "self-renewing organizations" – by shifting the focus from leaders to leadership and diverse forms of distributed leadership with more focus on communities than on individuals.

Distribution and empowerment in case schools take place through deliberations and negotiations where teachers are given voice, and teachers and leadership enter into 'semi-permanent consensus' on reaching a "sufficiently shared" and "good enough understanding" of the current situations, the intended aims, and external expectations. In most cases, we see two interconnected forms of distribution, two social technologies: Firstly, there is much productive collaboration and sharing of leadership in communities like teams of leaders and teams of teachers. Secondly, there is a renewed focus on sensemaking in the person-to-person everyday interactions and communication in the educational and organizational practice: Values and direction for school development (Starrat 2003) are being shaped and negotiated between teachers and leaders when they build on ethics. A basic assumption for this chapter is here: "the power of the better argument" (Habiermas 1984) – on diverse forms of trust.

The analyses will draw on the analyses in the case stories from all countries in the study and will include illustrative extracts from them.

8.2 Sustainability

Sustainability can be understood with reference to the United Nation's Brundtland Commission (Nations 1987): "Meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Taking this understanding as our point of departure, we can see that sustainability in schools is not an environmental question about the survival of the human species and the Globe, but a matter of long-term thinking of educational purpose and organizing in organizations. Sustainability then refers to the school's ability to respond in proactive ways to the external and internal expectations (Hargreaves and Fink 2006).

An interesting interpretation of sustainability in schools and school leadership was made in (Jacobson et al. 2009), when they referred to a statement from one of the US Principals, who talked about his quest for sustainability in forming his school into a *self-renewing* organization.

The external, political, and cultural expectations are the basis of schooling. Schools are institutions of society. But very often we find – from a professional point of view – that the present administration and political management are focusing on less important issues and disregarding long-term cultural and educational aims and values. Organizational self-renewing needs to be oriented toward the building of reflection, deliberation, critique, and social capital rather than simply accomplishing externally mandated and fast changing tasks. This means that schools need to be learning organizations that are not responding automatically to external expectations

and demands, like single-loop learners, but are reflecting on the expectations and the current practice in order to adjust to new circumstances like double-loop learners (Argyris 1977) and it means that most agents in schools must take responsibility and are given room to do so, for the general leadership in schools.

This means that we have to shift the understanding of school development – and thus of successful school principals – from the work of individuals toward a more organizational, collaborative understanding – from leader toward leadership. This is not news to the principals in our case schools, and it has been underscored in most schools over the past 5 years.

They have focused on the interdependencies within school and between schools and their present and future contexts. The principals in our cases know that their schools are placed in and are part of local communities in every respect: Culture, social circumstances, economical, history, caring for past and future generations, etc.

All schools can tell how they work on distributing leadership and on developing the learning at all levels. The first level is leadership teams. Those are widely used because no one person can reach the whole school and all the actors in it. Principals also experience that sharing knowledge, observations, and thoughts with peers and teachers are important features in leading a school because no one person can observe everything, nor can they know everything, nor develop thinking on her/his own.

Many case schools are developing their organizations into being team-based networks, or webs. Leadership is parallel to being distributed from the principal to leadership team and also being distributed to teacher teams. On one hand, this trend seems to leave more room for maneuver to teachers and focusing on colleague-based capacity building in teams, while at the same time principals develop new ways of influencing teachers. Sensemaking is done in many forms – like setting the scene, producing narratives of the school's future, focusing on important differences in the everyday life of schools – or through the use of new social technologies like annual plans, team meetings with the leadership, and other regular meetings (Coburn 2004; Coburn and Stein 2006; Spillane et al. 2002; Weick 2001).

There are clear indications that many principals are turning their attention toward more direct interactions and communications with teachers on a practical day-to-day level: observing classroom teaching, consulting teachers individually and in team meetings, and not relying too much on strategic plans and formal visions.

Leaving more room for teachers does not mean that principals abstain from leading teachers, but they develop new forms of influences (Moos 2009). Generally there seems to be a trend toward recognizing that teachers need to be self-leading (Foucault 2001), meaning they are given room for maneuver followed by tighter standards and more detailed demands for accountability. When some couplings are loosened, others are tightened (Weick 1976). Principals are also aware that teachers need to be given support and care so that they can manage the choices and room for maneuver, they are given, and thus creating a safe and secure working environment for them.

In the first case from Australia (Drysdale et al. 2009), we see how this female principal, Jan, focuses on the core purpose of schooling and on community support. She is, in and with the leadership team, open and invitational and emphasizes

collaboration and consultation, before decisions are made. She has built a school with much teacher-involvement, teacher-leadership, and teacher-teamwork and with close connections between teachers and leaders in the day-to-day interactions and communication:

8.3 Murray South Primary School

> She had a long and enduring commitment to all children receiving the best possible range of educational experiences, opportunities to succeed and to reaching their full potential.
>
> (Principal, 2004).

She had introduced the notion of the school moving from a "rules-based" approach to a "values-based" approach. Building positive relationships was a cornerstone of her approach to improving teacher morale and commitment, and establishing community support. Her personal characteristics included integrity, high energy, sensitivity, enthusiasm, and persistence.

> It is a good, successful school, which aims to consistently provide high quality education and continuously improve.

… She was observed to be influential and purposeful. Her style was open and invitational rather than confrontational. As one experienced teacher remarked:

> Even if you have done the wrong thing you feel like you are being congratulated. (Experienced Teacher)

Her approach to decision-making was described as "collaborative," "democratic," and "consultative.". Key decisions were discussed in forums where issues could be openly raised by staff. Jan and her assistant principal Julie worked as a team. Julie had been selected to the position because she was perceived to have complementary skills. Jan was the communicator who was able to articulate the vision and build relationships. Julie was the curriculum leader whose expertise was in teaching and learning. Indeed, the revisit confirmed that the success of the school relied on both Jan and Julie, and increasingly on teachers involved in leadership teams.

Jan had developed a structure that promoted professional learning teams at each level, and she had empowered the teams to set their own goals and try new approaches … . Teachers were encouraged to be leaders at every level and both individuals and teams were expected to be accountable for their performance. Interestingly, while she empowered staff she was also a "hands on" leader. She frequently visited classrooms and provided support where possible… The school was able to maintain its overall performance and the principal's leadership continued to be a major driving force. The impact of her contribution has to do with who she was – her personal characteristics, her leadership style, and her personal philosophy and values that helped shape the culture of the school. Most particularly she had the ability to build strong and sound relationships with a wide audience.

She was effective because she was able to model behavior and act with integrity … . But it was not only who she was, but what she did and how she did it. Her interventions included those identified in the literature (e.g., (Leithwood and Day 2007)) such as building trust, making it a safe and secure place to work, building a positive school culture, and providing opportunities for quality professional learning. She built appropriate structures that encouraged learning teams and built important connections and alliances within the community that helped provide support and resources for the school. Jan's leadership was identified as helping the school sustain its current level of performance and promote continuous improvement. (Drysdale et al. 2009).

In order to get closer to understanding what leaders actually do, I need to introduce and discuss concepts like leadership, influence, and communication.

8.4 Understanding Leadership, Understanding Influence

One commonly used understanding of leadership in schools is distributed leadership: Distribution of some decisions to teachers in classrooms and teacher-teams or working in leadership teams are widely used because no one person can reach the whole school and all actors in it.

However, as Spillane and Woods et.al. (Woods 2004; Spillane and Orlina 2005; Woods et al. 2004) argue, distributed leadership can take many forms. At the core of their concept of leadership is the notion that leadership is not the actions of the leaders per se, but the interactions between leaders and other agents. Leadership is therefore "an influencing relation" between leaders and followers that takes place in situations (that can be described by their tools, routines and structures). Leadership is performed in interactions and communication that influence, and that are understood to influence other persons. This "influence through communication" concept is parallel to Spillane et al.'s understanding of interaction-concept because both focus on the relations between leaders and teachers. The actions of the leader are only interesting if they are understood as leadership actions by the followers or co-leaders.

Leadership influence is thus communication that in principle can be understood as a three phase process: There is *production of premises* for decision-making (sense making or setting the scene). It is *decision-making* itself, and it is the *connections* to decisions that are being made by followers (Moos 2009).

In the first phase of decision-making: Construction of Premises, influence is present because of how premises are defined or produced, and by whom: Who (individuals, groups, institutions) defines the situation or the problem at hand? How is the dominant discourse on which decisions and actions are based created, or how is "the definition of reality" constructed? (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; March and Olsen 1976; Meyer and Scott 1983; Røvik 2007; Torfing 2004).

It is important to distinguish between agent driven and structural influences. There are a number of ways that individual agents or groups of agents can influence the minds and interpretations of other agents. They can set an agenda (Barach and Baratz 1962); influence sense making and set the stage (Stacey 2001; Weick 2001); and enter into educational activities, negotiations, or other interactions (Spillane and Orlina 2005).

Secondly, decision-making is a complicated procedure involving the selection of accepted and sufficiently important premises that are influential enough to be taken into account. Decisions can be made by individual or collectives of agents. Decisions can also result in a new agenda for discussing or making decisions about the field, or for the description and regulation of new behaviors.

Decisions are often built into structures: Legislation, societal, social, and financial frames. Institutions are constructed because of political processes and power struggles that have sanctions attached to them. The agents' forms of direct power also have the possibility of sanctions being attached to them. However, none of these forms can guarantee results unless they are viewed – or even identified – as legitimate forms by the people and groups affected by them. On the other hand, decisions construct the premises for new decisions. This construction is the case with leadership decisions that form the premises for employer decisions.

The third major phase of influence is the connection phase. Inspired by communication theories (Thyssen 1997), a communication is only viewed as an effective communication if it "irritates" the other people to such a degree that it chooses to connect, to stop and reflect on, and possibly alter, their reflection process and practice. Whether or not the other agent is connecting can be difficult to detect, since some reactions might occur long after the "irritation" has taken place. On the other hand, there is no point in talking about influence without effects. If the act of law does not change anything concerning citizen behavior or if army privates do not follow a colonel's orders, then we will not talk about a real influence. The ways in which connections are made become an important feature of the construction of premises for future decisions.

An area of connections is constituted by evaluations and assessments. The broad field of evaluation and assessment is currently undergoing basic transformations. National as well as local systems and organizations need documentation for the use of resources in the organizations in their jurisdiction. An important aspect of the hunt for transparency involves finding out to whom agents and organizations should be accountable, and which values they should be accountable for. Schools must answer to a range of different accountabilities, i.e., a marketplace accountability that focuses on efficiency and competition, a bureaucratic accountability that focuses on outcomes and indicators, a political accountability that focuses on citizen satisfaction and negotiations, a professional accountability that focuses on professional expertise, and an ethical accountability that focuses on social justice (Firestone and Shipps 2005; Moos 2008). Schools must simultaneously answer to all of these accountabilities, consequently creating numerous dilemmas for schools and school leaders.

The principals are struggling with the first and third phase: How can they describe the frames and the aims of the self-governing teams and the autonomous teachers, sufficiently precise and not too tight? And they are struggling to evaluate whether the decisions have made connections: Have teachers done, what was agreed on, or what they were expected to do? This seems to be a new and advanced phase in reflecting on and developing principal influences in schools that can have great influence not only on the relations between teachers and leaders, but also on the relations between teachers and students in class as well.

I find it interesting to look at the deliberative and participative possibilities for teachers first and foremost, because I find that there are clear links and connections between the conditions that teachers have and the conditions and frames that schools and teachers give students so they can develop a "Democratic Bildung." This kind

of Bildung is not only at matter of knowing about democracy, it is more a matter of acquiring democratic patterns of interpretation and democratic ways of life (Dewey 1916; Beane and Apple 1999). A "Democratic Bildung" must therefore include the possibilities to test those interpretations and ways of living in real life.

The discussion of "producing results" and pursuing the comprehensive vision of "Democratic Bildung" is a good illustration of one of the dilemmas principals have to act on and often find day-to-day solutions and semi-final decisions to.

The principals demonstrate in the talks with us that they are very much aware of the fact that what they do is only indirectly of importance for student learning. They talk about relations, communication, interaction, and forms of influence that involve many stakeholders in and out of school.

But secondly, I find it interesting to look at teachers' room for maneuver because this is the foundation for them acting as responsible leaders.

8.5 Three Forms of Influence

We can distinguish three general forms of influence: direct influence, strategic influence, and reciprocal influence. The *reciprocal influence* has many forms: setting the agenda, sensemaking, as will be described later on, and constructing the premises for decision-making, as described above. In the core of those forms is the deliberations, the reciprocity of relations, and the acceptance that agents are dependent on each other. They have more often than not diverse perspectives on education and professional work and diverse interests and values, but they need to find an appropriate and pragmatic level of consensus in order to proceed from one situation to the other, from 1 day in the schools life to the next. This kind of influence is working in the everyday life and in the interactions and communications between agents. We heard principals talk about it and focus on it more frequently when we revisited the schools than when first we visited them. This is a sign that school leaders are getting more out of their offices and into staff rooms, classrooms and corridors.

The second form of influence is named *strategic influence*: Leaders of organizations have to produce strategic plans for 1, 2, or 3 years. Here they evaluate the status and describe the goals, initiatives, and direction for the period to come. In many places, much work is being invested in this kind of paper only to see that the administrative and political premises for the plans are being changed every so often. The detailed aims and actions laid out in strategic plans are not met, but on the other hand, they can serve important purposes by indicating a direction that everybody can use as a map that can help them make sense of their situation (Weick 2001). So the impact of the plan is more in the field of sensemaking than in the field of strict plans for the future.

Thirdly we can describe the *direct influence* (Barach and Baratz 1962). Here an agent makes the decision and communicates it to the followers to obey by. Principals in our study, of course, also make use of this kind of influence, but there is a clear tendency that they are trying to use the other kinds of influence more than the direct

influence. Often they emphasize the first phase, the construction of premises, by involving teachers in making sense of the situations and the demands before decisions are made. In some cases when schools are in challenging circumstances and firm actions are needed very fast, principals take the lead and make decisions. In other cases where principals are new to the school and a shared sense of the culture and the values has not been established yet, principals also take the lead. When there are big disagreements between individuals or groups in the staff, or if the external expectations collide with teachers' professional identities or opinions, principals have to make decisions. There is a clear tendency that when the external standards, aims, or demands for accountability are very tight – like in high-stake testing systems, then principals are using more direct power than in other systems, as shown in the analysis of the initial case stories (Moos et al. 2008).

In the next section, we follow the distribution of leadership of teams in Danish case schools:

8.6 Distribution of Leadership to Teacher Teams

After the first visits to Danish schools, we could describe how the process of modernization is working in the interplay between decentralization and the loosening of organizational couplings (Weick 2001) between central agencies and local agents, which produces less prescriptions from the central government for the municipal level and the school level (e.g., with regard to finance and administration).

We also could observe similar processes within schools as leadership was decentralized from the principal to teacher teams and to individual teachers. It was new that teacher teams were being inserted as a permanent link between the leadership and individual teachers. New tasks and duties were being distributed, thereby loosening the organizational couplings (e.g., practical annual and weekly planning of lessons, parts of finance management), while other tasks were being re-centralized (e.g., target setting and evaluation of instruction and learning), thereby tightening the organizational couplings.

There was, in the second round of visits, a growing focus on networks like teacher teams. Teachers worked in teams within the frames and directions given by – and often negotiated with – the leadership. Leadership was performed at a distance from the self-governing teachers. At the same time, we saw the unfolding of different social technologies. Many of those were in the forms of meetings: Educational Council Meetings (all teacher staff and leadership meet regularly according to the acts of the school), all staff meetings (teachers and other staff and leadership meet once or twice a year, according to regulations), team interviews (teacher teams meet with the principal), and "employee development interviews" (individual teachers meet with the principal once a year). There were also annual plans (teachers plan the instruction for a grade for a year and hand it in to the principal), and student plans (plans for individual students' progress in all subjects).

That meant that leadership influence was less direct and more in the form of sense making, setting the agenda, and institutionalized influence. Within the teams, teachers had to collaborate very closely and therefore had to invest their personality in this part of work as well as in the relations to students and classes. It was not enough that they invested their time and presence; they had to be motivated and engaged.

The principals seem to be more focused on their roles as what could be called meta-governors, i.e., to control and support the conduct of involved parties conducts (Sørensen and Tofting 2005). In this way, it is important to influence the teachers in indirect ways to

do what – in the principal's opinion – is necessary to be done, without having to tell so directly. It is about influencing through setting an agenda and through this, showing a direction for the school (Moos et al. 2007; Moos and Kofod 2009), and this pertains not only to the teachers and the students but also in relations to the parents.

At the West School, the principal considers herself as part of a leadership team, and as she says, "we are at hand when needed," and she mentions that the leadership team are needed and used primarily as conflict mediators. Otherwise she considers the leadership team as a service body to the teachers and she believes that the leadership team should "keep their fingers to themselves" if not called upon by the teachers. It may be considered as a rather passive and weak attitude toward the teachers. It may on the other hand also be interpreted as a consequence of the beginning of the distribution of leadership tasks to the teachers in a distributed leadership (Spillane 2006).

The principal in our three cases are very much aware that they have to translate external demands and expectations to internal direction for the school development. They take new expectations to teachers and discuss with them how to transform old practices into new practices that are compliant with the demands. An example is that the demands for testing are being transformed into summative evaluation of use for planning and teaching. They are also using external demands to legitimize their own ideas in translating new external demands into their own visions. The basis for the translations and transformation is trust in teachers: Principals believe that teachers basically are in authority and that they are doing their outmost to assist student learning.

One of the more important forums for exercising principal influence is the annual team meeting when she sets the agenda and negotiates meaning. For example, we observed in one meeting that she insisted that teachers should maintain and develop their authority in relation to students.

Over the past years, some teachers have made more claims on leaders to be present in the daily life and education in school. Therefore, leaders are participating in teacher team meetings and are very active in showing their appreciation in teachers' practice. It has become more important that leaders assist teachers in drawing lines between their work and the responsibilities of other stakeholders. The relatively new demands from teachers seem to place principals in a "pastoral leadership" position (Foucault 2001). At the same time, principals lead through social technologies like contracts and self-steering teacher-teams (Moos 2009a) and most importantly through setting the scene for discussions and decisions and making sense of the external and internal life of school for and with teachers.

In relation to parents, the principals are now clearer than ever before in demanding that their experiences and expertise be respected.

The collaboration in the leadership teams has been strengthened in order to sustain the progress of the school and thus the continuity of school practice. This means that the principals and deputies underline that school leadership is basically a function carried out by persons.

We see that the three Danish principals are struggling with sustaining their own and teachers' commitment to school, teaching, and learning in the deliberations on how relations and communication in school should be. They should support the work on living up to external expectations and at the same time respect and care for staff and students. This has become a more challenging task than before because teachers often find that the external demands and expectations are too high and not to the point of what schooling is for, because some of the political and public expectations are changing so rapidly and so profoundly these years. (Moos and Kofod 2009)

Short quotes from the Swedish case can illustrate the same tendency toward team working: "The principal argues, even if he did not like the effect on staffing costs, that the teachers' team organization has been given great opportunities for creating

and maintaining collaboration between all actors in the school. Values supporting solidarity dominates the teachers' and students' relations. … The teachers describe an open culture with a far-reaching responsibility and opportunities for the teachers in their work. Collaboration is a key-concept for the daily life in the school. They relate the positive social climate to the village and the forms of collaborations in the local society. But one teacher says: "I am missing the way she – the first principal – communicated with us and her leadership that were based on trust, dialogue, and collaboration". (Höög et al. 2009)

A summary of key observations in all of the case stories can also serve as an illustration of this trend: *Designing and managing communities, leadership, organization and relations, communication.*

Five years ago principals were encouraging collaborative decision-making, teamwork, and distributed leadership in a collective culture and in structures that support collaboration. Participation in decision-making, premise production, and connections were part of a safe and secure environment for teachers. At the latest visits to the case schools, we found:

Australia: Relations between principal and teachers are collaborative, democratic, and consultative. A leadership team has been established on the basis of complementarity: The principal is curriculum leader, and the deputy carries vision and is a relations-builder and communicator. Teachers are being involved and the teacher teams act as learning teams. The school community is turned around to being a friendly atmosphere with trust. Classes and students are given responsibilities (e.g., by making their own code of conduct). There are many extracurricular activities. So one gets a "'Country club feel."

Denmark: Leadership teams as well as teacher teams are pivotal features of schools. Principal's relations to individual teachers, teams, and the whole staff are multilayered and often take place in an intricate mix of meetings. Contracts between principal and teacher teams and individual teachers are important tools for leading.

Norway: There is a growing involvement in student council and student participation in one school. Respect is a key descriptor for relations. In all schools, more teacher teams are being established. Members of the leadership team are responsible for specific parts of the school. The culture of one school is based on hard work.

Sweden: The teacher teams are central to the schools. They focus on creating a good but not an excellent school. The principals' role is to work with the organization of the school and discuss quality questions with the teachers.

England: There are strong indications of the school's work on improving student's personal and social well-being and competencies. The school is open for students from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. and with many extracurricular activities. The principal is collaborating and distributing leadership tasks and consulting with staff and at the same time, models teaching in workplace learning. Organizational trust is pivotal; social cohesion is an indicator of trust.

USA: The school has been restructured to fit learning needs. Leadership teams have been established with teacher-representatives from each grade level. There is a self-renewal culture with careful selection of staff, supportive socialization of teachers, and on-going professional development with internal veterans and external consultants.

Many case schools are developing their organizations into being team-based networks, or webs. Leadership is being distributed from the principal to leadership teams and further on the teacher teams. The trend is different from case to case with the Nordic cases being more similar to each other than to the (AU-UK-US); however, there seems to be a general trend to distribute influences from principal to staff.

On the one hand, this trend seems to leave more room for maneuver to teachers, individually and in teams, while at the same time principals develop new ways of making their influence noticeable through sensemaking in many forms and through the use of new social technologies like annual plans, team meetings with the leadership, and other regular meetings. In many cases, middle leaders, specialists are brought in to give support to teachers.

Generally there seems to be, with different speed and depths, a trend toward recognizing that teachers need to be self-leading (Foucault 1991), meaning they are given room for maneuver followed by tight standards and demands for accountability. Principals are aware that teachers need to be given support and care in order that they can manage the choices and room for maneuver, they are given, and thus creating a safe and secure working environment for them. This is often in a form of "pastoral leadership" (Foucault 2001, 1978); Moos and Johansson 2009).

8.7 Understanding Team Work

Distribution from leaders to teacher teams and individual teachers take in a general way the same directions as decentralization and recentralization take in the relations between the state and municipal authorities to schools – The contract. This means that the state and municipal authorities have decentralized parts of the governance to schools: The management of finances within the budget and the day-to-day management of schools. On the other hand, we have witnessed that the authorities have tightened the couplings with schools when it comes to curriculum and outcome accountability.

In schools, we see that part of leadership is being distributed to teacher teams, e.g., managing the weekly plan, the special needs resources, the substitute teachers, and the purchase of learning materials. On the other hand, there are being made stricter contracts between school leadership and teams when it comes to the outcomes of teaching.

The parallel between the macro-level (state and municipality in relation to schools) and the micro-level (school leadership and teams) goes further: In both

cases, there are rooms for maneuver for schools and for teams: At the macro-level, schools have to and can translate the external expectations into internal directions, and this process leaves room for interpretations and negotiations. This is also the case at the micro-level: Teachers can, in the teams, negotiate and interpret the contract with the leadership after having reached an internal consensus in the team. It is fair to conclude that the interpretations, deliberations, and negotiations within teams and between team and leadership are important foundations for teachers' empowerment. In fact, they can rehearse leadership functions and roles in teams. The processes challenge the overview of the whole school and the relations at this level and thus empower teachers' leadership competences (Gronn 1998). At the same time, teachers are more involved in the construction of premises phase of decision-making, as they enter into deliberations and negotiations with leaders giving them more influence on the practices in school.

Teachers find in many cases that their situation is changing fast: Student attitudes are changing and so are parents' expectations due to changes in society and culture. Authorities' expectations and modes of governance are changing and so are relations within school – only to mention a few of the new challenges. In many cases, we see that this has made teachers more inclined to collaborate and to consult leaders. In many of the cases in the study, we see that teachers demand principals and other leaders to come closer to the everyday life in classrooms. They want principals to visit classrooms and observe education in order that they can consult them and use the deliberations to reflect on their practices.

8.8 Communication and Interaction

In the Swedish case story, we read the report from the revisits to schools where the dialogue and communications between school leaders and teachers and students is being underscored:

> The teachers compare the resigning principal with the former one. They say: "She was a better leader, she discussed with the teachers before she took decisions. Further, she was a visible leader actively involved in the work with the students and teachers in the classroom". It still happens that the teachers take direct contact with their former principal when they want to discuss important topics instead of talking to the new principal. …The students express the same opinions as their teachers. They appreciated her spontaneous contacts with them and she knew the individual students name. They also praised her ability to create and explain visions for the students. One student said to us about their old principal: "she stopped and talked to us in the corridor about different things but the new one only sometimes says hallo" (Höög et al. 2009).

The US case story reports on a very interesting feature in one of the schools: The introduction and induction of new teachers that was being done in ways that empowered veteran teachers as well: "Each year we have to hire staff. That forced us to set up a system in which we immediately immerse them in our programs, our reading and writing programs so that they can learn it, and we pair them with a master teacher and a mentor and just do whatever is necessary to get them up to speed right away." *(Principal).* A veteran teacher describes the situation in this way: "There was no time

for new teachers to hang back and watch. We needed the new staff members to get on board quickly, which meant we needed to work together and do peer coaching in classrooms." The reading specialist described professional development efforts as "scaffolding and supporting teachers in their classrooms, helping them get the program in place and figuring out where to target their efforts." Grade level teams began meeting regularly, at which, "Someone models a literacy lesson and then the grade level team talks about what we saw, what worked, and what needed to improve." While veteran teachers acknowledged the pressure of sustaining the success of the program, they also felt empowered by their leadership roles, "By allowing me to share strategies that worked, I felt empowered that I could be a leader … it gave me a glimpse of what I could become." Another noted, "It was hard in some ways, but I have to say I felt really good about taking a leadership role in keeping the program moving forward in spite of all the staff changes." (Jacobson et al. 2009)

The summary of all case stories can give another description of the tendencies in most schools to focus more on the micro-level, direct, face-to-face interactions and communications between leaders and teachers as ways of influencing both leaders and teachers, and understanding and developing people.

"Five years ago we found that principals were engaged in stimulating teachers intellectually, promoting reflection, and modeling desired commitment, values, norms, and practices. There was a continuous work on building capacities that could fit the new demands and expectations of policy makers, parents, and students, and there was in many places a constant struggle to build persistence for challenging circumstances. Five years later we found:

Australia: Teachers form professional learning teams that set their own goals and try new approaches with support from the principal who is also "hands on" visiting classrooms. This encourages teachers to be "accountable" leaders in their own right, while giving support and building trust in teachers.

Denmark: Principals often lead in indirect ways by setting the agenda or the scene. Most teachers are working in self-steering teacher teams with a high degree of responsibility and autonomy but also with new forms of internal accountability. Principals and leadership teams try to strike a balance between "leading at a distance" and being "at hand" and supportive to teachers.

Norway: One principal says that he makes observations in classrooms to show his interest. Teachers in another school must deserve principal's trust by working hard. The principal names it "a gentleman agreement." New projects are started only after involving all involved.

Sweden: The old successful principals that left focused a lot on pedagogical leadership through collaboration with, and trust in, teacher and teacher teams. The two intermediate principals did neglect the close collaboration with the staff. The third group of principals say they will focus on quality in teaching and – perhaps – collaboration.

England: There are high levels of interpersonal relationships between principal and teachers. Capacity building is based on data and is formed to fit individual needs. There is an increase in leadership distribution.

USA: The principal scaffolds and supports teachers in classrooms and makes use of teaching specialists, subject teams, and peer mentors. Leadership teams are formed with teachers from all grade levels. A good tool has been to make curriculum maps at all grades.(Moos and Johansson 2009)

In some cases, it has become more visible, that there is a focus on building and sustaining trust between teachers and principals. In some instances, the basis for trust is being spelled out clearer than before: Principals can trust teachers who are accountable and hard working.

There is more work on building teacher teams; in most cases, distributing parts of leadership from principals and middle leaders to teacher teams and individual teachers. At the same time, there is a growing closeness between principals and teachers in professional and personal relations of trust, support, care, and, may be most of all, clear direction and expectations.

8.9 Sensemaking

In order to get even closer to the actual relations in the communication and interaction between principals and teachers, I observed among other interactions a meeting in the educational committee of one of the Danish case schools (Moos 2007). The communication in this meeting proved to be exemplary to much of the communication I witnessed in many interactions over several days of observation. This was in our first visits to the school, in 2005.

Participants at this meeting were the principal, the deputy principal, a school district consultant, and three teachers. The reason why the consultant was present was that the committee should discuss a self-evaluation of teacher's and leader's activities in a school development project, led by the consultant. All participants had made marks of the items in the questionnaire with colors: red is 'not good'; yellow is 'moving'; and green is 'OK.' This was done in preparation for the evaluation the committee was to write.

The first theme is teacher teams:

Theme	Teacher teams
Principal	*We shall work through the evaluation in three areas. It builds on an evaluation from 2001 and then: Have we progressed?; What do we write now, in 2005?*
Teacher 1	*I find only a few red (no development)*
Principal	*How do you understand "basis for collaboration"?*
Teacher 1	*We may sit with the team and try to figure it out with the other teachers*
Teacher 2	*Nothing has been written*
Consultant	*I see the same in other schools. It is difficult to be concrete*
Teacher 2	*We were very ambitious when we formed teams but did not write down our expectations. That would have been good.*
Principal	*I think the teachers are right. They need support and the leadership could have been more explicit in our expectations on the teamwork. We ask questions in the team-meetings, but we could help more here.*

Teamwork has proven difficult to most teachers. It is a relatively new feature that the principal has worked hard to develop. In this short conversation, we can see that the principal is acknowledging the teachers' difficulties and transforming them into a shared challenge: Teachers need to collaborate and leaders must find ways to give them support by being more explicit. The communication can be interpreted as a negotiation of the ways teachers see the challenge. The principal points to a weak point she can see in the questionnaire, a red item – collaboration in teams – and by introducing the term "basis for collaboration" she is influencing the ways teachers perceive the situation. The challenge is not collaboration in a broad sense, but it is now being narrowed down to having explicit expectations toward collaboration and here she can help.

The second theme is documentation. The local authorities have demanded stricter forms of documentations of outcomes of education:

Theme	Documentation
Principal	*What is your attitude toward these descriptions?*
Teacher 3	*They are annoying words on paper; the evaluation talk*
Teacher 2	*We often take stuff we would have made anyhow. Maybe we should look at a short project and describe it in details*
Consultant	*The authority is producing systems for that*
Teachers 3	*What does "signs" mean? We are drowning in paper work*
Teacher 1	*We cannot do this all of the time, but we need to show the environment what we are doing*
Principal	*I would like to say, that we need to be able to answer to these questions. We cannot show what we have chosen and we need to test diverse methods. It is clearly a demand from the top that we need to document. The demands are intended to give teachers tools to improve teaching. Leadership will describe frames.*

The school authorities have set the evaluation and documentation agenda, but teachers feel it is a waste of their time. The principal needs to be loyal to the demands and so she stresses the positive aspects of this work: The need to legitimize the work to the local community and getting more visible. She indicates a compromise between the authority and teachers in pointing to the need for testing out diverse methods. A testing phase in school development is normally seen as a soft way to produce changes: By testing, you are in command of development and you can roll it back if you want to, is the general feeling. On the other hand, she is also loyal to teachers in stressing that this is a top down initiative. The principal is creating a space for negotiations with teachers and indicating that they will be heard. They will be involved in producing the premises for decisions on which methods will eventually be chosen.

Danish schools can, as a result of negotiations between the National Association Of municipalities (the "school owners") and the Teacher Union, from 1999, choose to organize work in self-steering teams. This is a formal construct where schools can choose to delegate/distribute a number of management/coordination tasks from school leadership to teacher teams: Planning the week schedule in classes, managing special needs resources, managing substitute teachers, and managing purchase of learning material. This is at this point, in 2005, very new to this school.

Theme	Self-steering teams
Principal	*I have marked the work on self-steering teams with red because I was deeply disappointed last year over the fact that you would not take responsibility for the division of labor between teachers.*
Teacher 2	*It is a big workload so one retracts a bit to thinking on oneself. We were responsible for the work in team one, but not for other teams*
Principal	*Many participated, but they did not take responsibility*
Teacher 1	*Yes, we participated*
Principal	*You have no expectations that it could work differently?*
Teacher 2	*It is not going to change, I think*
Consultant	*Self-steering teams would start this development. Is it still very much "privately practitioners" (in isolated classrooms)*
Principal	*This is not a work that teams take responsibility for. The leader needs to do that*
Teacher 3	*What do you mean? If we cannot reach a consensus by negotiations, it must surely be the leader that makes decisions*
Principal	*You could make use of objective facts like the need for having both female and male teachers in all classes*
Teacher 1	*We may not have the overview that you in leadership have and therefore we do not want to spend time on it*
Principal	*Last year nobody wanted to say what would be a good solution*
Deputy princ.	*You did not involve yourself at all*
Principal	*It would be good for us if the teams too are responsible*

It is obvious that the principal sees the idea of self-steering teams as a means to support teachers' authority and participating in decision-making. Teachers do not see it this way. To them, these are tasks that belong to the leadership and to negotiations between individual teachers and the principal, because this is the way it always worked.

Theme	Self-steering teams Cont.
Teacher 2	*We do not have the overview so we do not want to spoil things for anybody*
Principal	*But if you have trust in the things we produce, then it may be fine*
Teacher 1	*We are not unwilling to collaborate*
Principal	*This is accepting leadership in a way that I would like not to have. But it is ok, if you have trust in it*
Teacher 2	*I have never heard complaints over your suggestions as you are listening*
Principal	*Some teachers do grouse. Let's go on to the next theme*
Teacher 2	*We have progressed. People are getting aware of their influence. It is getting better and better*
Deputy princ	*Maybe self-steering teams would be of significance here*
Teacher 1	*We have more strings than that of committees, etc.*

The principal seems to accept that there is, at this point in time, in 2005, a rather massive teacher resistance to self-steering teams. It has been discussed for more than a year at a number of meetings, but teachers have found several ways of prolonging the process and to objecting to making final decisions on the subject. Nevertheless, she and the deputy principal mentioned the option every time there is an opportunity.

In the period between visit one and revisiting the schools, the local authorities declared that all schools should establish self-steering teams. This made the task much easier for the principal.

8.10 Understanding Sensemaking

The analyses build on this concept "An organization is 'a network of intersubjectively shared meanings' that are sustained through the development and use of a common language and everyday interactions" (Walsh and Ungson (1991) cited in (Weick 1995), p. 38). This means that organization is communication. Agents affiliate to the community as they share the meanings of relations and tasks. The affiliation emerges in the day-to-day interactions and communication as we saw an illustration of in the Danish case.

Leading schools entails at the end of the day being observant and attentive to the purpose of schooling, the education – the "Democratic Bildung" – of children and youth. This task can be interpreted as the pursuit of giving support to and provoking students' effort to find the meaning of self (identity), of relations to the other, and the community (sociality) and the world (knowledge and insight). As most of students' relations are with peers and teachers, the principal must try and demonstrate the end purpose in her/his relations to teachers.

The sensemaking processes between principal and teachers are pivotal because they can and should serve as models for the sensemaking processes that teachers enter into with students. Sensemaking takes place in many forms of communication, written as well as spoken. Here, I shall concentrate the analyses on the ongoing spoken communication.

According to Weick et al. (2005) we can see sensemaking as a communication that builds on the interactions that principals and teachers have experienced and gone through. When "the flow of action has become unintelligible" (2005, p. 409), it needs explanations and defense: What happened? What did I/we do? How can it be interpreted and understood? Like in the case, where the principal refers to the practice of evaluation, documentation, and collaboration. Those reflections are being mixed with contemporary expectations – e.g., new external demands – into a story of how things are right now in the perspective of how it might or should be: We used to …, we are expected to …, we should ….

Weick et al. (2005) defines sensemaking in this way:

> Sensemaking involves the ongoing retrospective development of plausible images that rationalize what people are doing. Viewed as a significant process of organizing, sensemaking unfolds as a sequence in which people concerned with identity in the social context of other actors engage ongoing circumstances from which they extract cues and make plausible sense retrospectively, while enacting more or less order into those ongoing circumstances. (p. 409)

The stories told of the past are then being used as aspects of building premises for decisions on the future. The sense that principals and teachers make in these situations, in the interactions and communications, are made in social settings, in communities and are therefore outcomes of shared, social activities of communication (Wenger 1999).

> 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, ibid)

Both teachers and leaders contribute to and are part of this interaction and can thus influence the communication and the outcomes of it: the sense – or the shared understanding, meaning – that participants make of the situation, the practice, or the expectations.

The starting point for sensemaking processes are often situations of surprise or astonishment where the reality does not match the expectations; so, there is a need of explanation. The astonishments can – when first noticed, bracketed and labeled – act as irritations, provocations to the common sense, understanding, and thus activate sensemaking processes. Most often, however, they do not because we have developed defenses in our consciousness that guide irritations into not being noticed (Leithäuser 1979). In some cases, we see that the irritations are big enough and many members of the situation are provoked. But it is also a commonly used leadership strategy to point at aspects or features of practice or the life of schools in order to irritate other members' awareness and in this way start sensemaking processes. When actors highlight situations or actions, it is often because they find them to be problematic and while starting to put the phenomenon into language, they also indicate a hunch as to the solution, and thus to new actions. This is what happened, when the principal in the beginning of the meeting asked what the teacher understood by "basis for collaboration."

Weick summarizes (ibid, p. 413):

> Answers to the question "what's the story?" emerge from retrospect, connections with past experiences, and dialogue among people who act on behalf of larger social units. Answers to the question "now what?" emerge form presumptions about the future, articulation concurrent with action, and projects that become increasingly clear as they unfold. (Weick et al. 2005)

The analyses and discussion of sensmaking are micro-sociological, communications analyses of relations and interactions between individuals in organizations.

8.11 Sensemaking and Deliberation

If we change the perspective from a micro- to a macro-sociological and policy perspective on societies and states – a discussion of democracies – we can, maybe, shed new light to the micro-sociological analyses. The intention of doing so is to try and develop links between the trends and intentions in democracies at a societal level and the discussion of how leaders and teachers, the professionals, in schools can build the practices in schools in ways that are supportive of a student's "Democratic Bildung."

Bridges from society to school can be established with (Biesta 2003) theories of the need for schools to "create opportunities for action"; Bernstein's (Bernstein 2000) theories of students' democratic rights in schools that shall be enacted through enhancement, inclusion, and participation in decision-making; and with (Beane and Apple 1999) theories of democratic schools that point to a number of key issues like the open flow of ideas, the use of critical reflection, and the concern for the common good and the dignity and rights of individuals and minorities.

It seems to me that the underlying demand is for giving students voice and that is the opportunity for deliberations in schools. This builds on a notion of a deliberative

democracy that is an attempt to build a connection between liberal and communitarian democracy (Louis 2003).

The basis for *liberal democracy* is described as a special form where the free individual is capable of making his/her own choices and pursue own interests and so take care of his/her own life. Another dimension of this kind of democracy is the protection of the free individual in that it is given certain rights or is making social contracts. In other words, individuals are seen as autonomous even if they are part of a community and they have formed their opinions before entering into the community. They are not bonded together by shared values, but majority votes are the preferred way of mediating opinions and reaching decisions.

In the *communitarian democracy* individuals are seen as partners in social communities, bond together by a set of shared moral and social values. Values are generated within the community and can change over time. Members of a community are orientated toward a set of shared goals and are conscious of the social bonds. These communities can be the state or smaller parts of states.

The connection between those two forms is the *deliberative* democracy. Both liberal and communitarian democracy concepts see the state as a central arena for all kinds of communities. The liberal concepts see politics to be formed through complex interplays between agents in different arenas and networks both within and outside the state. The society is seen as decentered, and political processes can take place in many arenas, within and outside elected bodies, like parliaments and city councils. Deliberative democracies are seen as associations whose affairs are governed by public deliberation of its members (Englund 2006). A number of conditions must be met in this kind of democracy: The individual's rights that can be met in that the democracy is representative; the other is that the deliberations demand that individuals are able to a high degree of reflexivity and responsiveness toward other members of the community. A basic understanding in this concept is the concept of social identity.

I find that the position Karen Seashore Louis takes is productive in this argument:

> Many contemporary democratic theorists argue that the most essential element of democratic communities today is their ability to engage in civilized but semi-permanent disagreement. Articulating a humanist voice that calls for respecting and listening to all positions – but then being able to move forward in the absence of consensus – will be the critical skill that school leaders need to develop when the environment makes consensus impossible. (Louis 2003, p. 105)

8.12 Trust

One immensely important precondition for building relations, be that in collaborations like teams or in the face-to-face interactions between individuals in schools, is trust. This is demonstrated clearly in the UK case story (Day 2009). Here data are analyzed and theories are developed.

In this part, I shall build on this understanding and other sources as well in making my point that there is a need for trust and not only that, but that in schools there is a need for trust that is based on cognitive sources like rational communication.

Social relations are one basic aspect of society. According to (Warren 1999), democracy is about political relations. These are social relations characterized by fights and conflicts over goods. Thus power is a fundamental aspect of social relations. As a result, the social conditions for trust seem to be weak in political contexts because: "Trust … involves a judgment, however tacit or habitual, to accept vulnerability to the potential ill will of others by granting them discretionary power over some good. When one trusts, one accepts some amount of risk for potential harm in exchange for the benefits of cooperation …" (Warren 1999, p. 311).

Traditional and inherited social relations are being contested and are therefore being transferred into a political field that is characterized by challenges and conflict, but at the same time by new developments and change. Politics is oriented toward the future. Challenges can bring about changes, but at the same time they bring uncertainty and risk. Trust is necessary because politics is oriented toward the future. Stable and predictable situations on the other hand, which secure the conditions for trust, would render trust superfluous.

Warren discriminates between two forms of trust: *Particular* trust – confidence that emerges in face-to-face situations between people who have common interests, who depend on the same things or are bound by culture. So confidence builds on *affective* sources (love, friendship, child-parent relations). The second form is *generalized* trust, which is developed when a society depersonalizes functions. Generalized trust must build on cognitive sources: institutions, strangers, business connections, and political representatives. An example would be the trust in abstract systems (Giddens 1991). So, one can distinguish between *confidence* that is based on experience and, as such, on the past, and *trust* that is not based on experience but rather on the belief that the other person is not going to disappoint expectations.

Trust is a modern phenomenon, according to Seligman (in Warren, p. 323), because with modernity came individuality as the element in human activities that is not totally congruent with the role one plays. An element of choice, discretion, and freedom has been injected into social relations. Here, morality and thus trust enter into the picture.

Today, confidence must be supplemented with trust. Luhmann (in Warren, p. 323) writes that the complexity of the social order creates a need for more coordination and therefore the need for determining the future; this in turn creates a need for trust because the need for future coordination is seldom met with confidence. Thus, there is a need for new forms of trust that no longer emerge from an immediately experienced world and are no longer secured by tradition: "In democratic relations, trust ought to have cognitive origins because individuals ought to be able to assess their vulnerabilities as one dimension of self-government" (Warren, p. 331). The truster needs to be able to judge the *interests* of the trustee without losing the advantages of trust: "The benefits of cooperation, the possibilities for new kinds of collective action, the securities of reduced complexity for the individual, and the advantages of increased complexity for society as a whole." (Warren, p. 332).

There are, writes Warren, important and clear connections between democratic institutions and trust. Institutions rely on trust and in communication with their environment they can strengthen and give support to the development of trust by

negotiating with individuals and by being transparent and legitimate in their decisions. At the same time, trust can lend support to deliberations as a way of solving political conflicts, and political discussions can generate trust (Ibid, p. 337).

8.13 Summary

The theoretical or philosophical background for this chapter is a basic understanding of communication, the communicative rationality developed by the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas (Habermas 1987). A communication is, in his theory on universal pragmatism, seen as being legitimized, if it strives toward "the strange unconstrained force of better argument." This means that the relations in communication are aiming at mutual understanding with a minimum of domination in what will always be asymmetric relations in bureaucratic organizations.

The potential for rationality in communication is inherent in communication itself. Communicative rationality thus refers primarily to the use of knowledge in language and action, rather than to a property of knowledge.

This means on the one hand that the person, who produces the "better argument," is the de facto leader in the situation. On the other hand, leadership in schools is also formal management delegated to formal positions in bureaucratic organizations: Teachers over students, principals over teachers, and so on.

The principal is of course the formal leader in schools as teachers are in classrooms. They are designated to a position with the power to make decisions. According to the thinking presented here, everybody in the communication can influence the decision-making if they give the "better argument." That means the argument that is being accepted as the better argument by persons who are involved in the communication and who are affected by the decisions.

This kind of influence is most often positioned in the "construction of premises" phase or in the "connecting phase" and the forms can be seen as deliberations or negotiations.

This ideal is often contested in real life, but this is, according to Habermas, still inherent in communication itself. Therefore, there is a better chance to have it prevailing if relations in schools are being communication at short range, where all participants can have a chance of being heard, listened to, and eventually given influence. Deliberation is, therefore, the foundation for schools to sustain their leadership, success, and development and thus for schools to become and stay "self-renewing."

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