

5 'Students' Abstracts

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1.1.A

The Struggle for data – A ghost goes through the world – a data ghost.

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During the last years the notion databased leadership or leadership informed by data has grown big. The expectations are that school leaders are going to use specific forms of data in the effort to develop the school.

The increasing focus on data is found in the number of books that have been published in Denmark the last years. It is also now possible to choose a subject such as Data in Leadership at the Diploma in Education of Leadership. Many research projects have been taking place, for example the A.P. Møller supported project on databased school-development (2015-2019) named Program for Leadership of Learning. The project includes ten percent of all Danish Schools. Data measurement is being used as a background for many school initiatives.

Some of the present central concepts of school leadership such as Student-centered Leadership are also using data as a central component in the recommendation for practicing leadership (Robinson, 2011).

At present, there is a widespread expectation that school leaders and teachers have developed data-literacy as a key competence.

To help school leaders and teachers with access to data, the Danish Ministry of Education has established a data-house. Here, school leaders and teachers can pick up many different forms of data which can be used for documentation, benchmarking and development.

The argument is that access to data gives school-leaders many new subject-oriented, pedagogical and strategical possibilities. It is now possible for school-leaders to act in a more systematic and knowledge-based way instead of primarily building on personal attitudes and experiences.

My view is that we are not able to work or lead without data, but we need to be more critical about the idea that specific data-forms are able to answer the questions and expectations school leaders

and educational institutions are facing. Sometimes it is better to use one's experiences, use observations and make a few interviews and meet with central actors instead of establishing a greater quantitative inquiry or rely on such an 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? And is it possible to navigate in the increasing amount of data we are surrounded by? And last but not least; what ethical and democratic challenges do the increasing use of data raise?

In the paper I will discuss some of consequences that the increasing use of specific forms of data has for school leadership.

The assumption is that a pragmatic position must be taking in the work with data. The literature which recommends the use for data is to a high extent lead by a normative reform-oriented position. Here, a narrow and quantitative data view is found. It has the perspective that specific assumptions about leadership, knowledge, school development and pedagogic dominates the school.

One of consequences is that many forms of data or knowledge not are classified as data, for instance implicit, personal, narrative and experience-oriented or qualitative knowledge. At present, knowledge which traditional have played an important role in school leadership is forgotten or plays a minor role. The tradition, which dominates the present work with data, does not see education and teaching as a social and cultural praxis (Biesta, 2011). The assumption is that it is possible to govern, control and monitor initiatives and effects according to education and teaching. In this perspective there is a close relation between input and output and the identification of the problem and the solution of the problem. In worst case quantitative knowledge or the databased leader becomes the ideal when it comes to school development.

In the paper, I will argue that dealing with education and teaching to a large extent calls for other competencies than data-literacy. Competencies, with deals with patterns and connections, close analyses and interpretations or thick description (Geertz, 1973). As Sahlberg (2018) precisely puts it: "At present, the development of school and education are much more in need for small than big data."

The aim of the paper is to point to some of the often forgotten or neglected perspectives that data-driven or data-informed leadership have for practicing and reflections about school leadership.

Empiric and method

As a background for the study I am focusing on some of the central publications which have been published the last years, for instance Sølund Klausen, (2018); Stockfleth Olsen et al. (2018); Datnow og Park (2014); Qvortrup, (2016 ab); Hornskov et al., (2016) and Nordahl (2015). The mentioned publications introduce to the work with data in school. Most of them to the notion data informed by leadership.

Seen from at methodological perspective, I try to identify the central ideas and assumptions which can be found in the literature concerning leadership informed by data. The mentioned publications are viewed as texts which consist of statements or regimes of knowledge, technologies and agents trying to naturalize and spread specific ideas of knowledge, education, leadership and school development. The discourses are framing us as subjects, for instance the question of my role as leader and the relations between leaders, teachers and pupils (Foucault, 1972; Foucault 2002; Hermann, 2006).

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1.1.B

Study environments - a neglected leadership concern

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Introduction and aims

Over the past decades there has been a global trend to focus on the outcome of schools, the students' results. Success has consequently been defined as measurable differences regarding students' performance, and the search has been for what works and why (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, Robinson et al., 2009, Pashiardis & Johansson, 2016, Day et al., 2016). In this the principals have been identified as key actors. The principal role has been adjusted and strengthened and is more clearly defined as a position responsible for the implementation of national policy (Gunter & Thomson 2009). Principals have become responsible for managing change and building organizations, while striving to improve their schools' effectiveness and enhanced students learning outcomes (Hallinger, 2003; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006, Day et al 2007, Leithwood et al, 2012, Nordin & Sundberg, 2014, Sivesind & Wahlström, 2016). For many years this meant that leadership research neglected the importance of context. Recently, however, Hallinger (2018), one of the main researchers within the field, was calling for context awareness.

In this paper we take this general call seriously while replying to the conference theme. The aim is to illuminate a previously neglected context related factor, *the study environment of schools*. These environments can be seen as the whole sphere of a school, including the teaching, the leisure time and the important middle space in between them.

We examine:

- What is the character of a study environment? And more specific what is the importance of the middle space?
- How are they constructed?
- Why is it important for leaders to know and act in awareness of these environments?

Theoretical framing

The theoretical frame is inspired by a Bourdieusian perspective. This includes the use of concepts such as assets (capitals), strategies and fields to investigate 'the rules' and 'stakes' of the 'game' (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992). That is to say the exploration of the social and symbolic hierarchies between schools and the dynamics within schools and how this affect what we call the study environment. More precisely, 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 part of what Bourdieu would call a schools' doxa, which will be developed further in the theoretical part.

Method

In the paper we examine these study environments, through the examples of three high performing upper secondary schools in the Stockholm city center. We have chosen high performing schools to go beyond the dominant focus on results. In two of these schools large proportion of the students have A:s in all subjects. The third is more mixed grade-wise, but still considered high-performing. This means that the schools have reached the aim of the successful principal. But what else has been constructed at these schools? The study draws on examples from two research projects and among other things includes a one-year ethnography in the above-mentioned upper-secondary schools. More precisely it combines data such as observations (classrooms, meetings, hallways) interviews with key actors (pupils, teachers, principals etc.), documents, pictures and secondary statistics. The ethnography has been guided by the theoretical framework and more over questions concerning socio-symbolic boundaries and recognition (Wacquant 2002).

Results

In the material we can identify that, although the academic focus is somewhat similar, the student-group composition and the core values of these schools create different study environments. This is not evident in the regular teaching situations which is normally the focus of the principals' pedagogical leadership. It is in the middle space, between formal and informal education, this becomes evident. The middle space is the area where students collect experience and social skills through discussion, debate and cooperation. This might be connected to the student union, work-groups or associations – but more generally in spaces where pupils interact with each other, and sometimes with teachers and principals without being graded. These middle spaces are mostly organized by pupils, but ultimately governed by the school. They are important dwellings where the life-styles and values of the pupils are debated and negotiated, but also critical identification markers for the schools to uphold – especially in the fierce in-between school competition. However, the middle space within high-performing schools are deeply connected to the student-group composition and therefore differ in character.

It is evident that the study environment differs whether the schools are dominated by student-groups endowed with larger economic or cultural assets or consists of a mixed composition of assets (comp. with Jarness, Pedersen & Paalgard Flemmen 2018; Pedersen, Jarness & Flemmen, forth.). This can be identified in the size, organization and content of the study environment and the middle space. In the paper we develop how important it is for principals to know these doxas character to be able to lead learning environments and not only teaching for democracy.

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1.1.C

Danish teachers want leaders who understands their problems

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Purpose

My Ph.D-project investigates how the implementation of a learning management system (LMS) affects teacher's wellbeing. An agreement between Danish municipalities and parliament meant that every public schools has to buy, a LMS (KL, 2015). The implementation of a LMS is in continuous to the 2014 school reform (Dorf, 2018). The political management of Danish public school is influenced by the principals in New Public Management (NPM)(Moos, 2017). (Røvik, 2007) demonstrate how NPM leads to need for professional leadership. However, that need for professional leadership is not professional seen as e.g. pedagogical knowledge. In this paper, with the implementation of the LMS as empirical object I want to investigate how New Public Management (NPM) initials leads to professional leadership in Danish public schools, when teachers truly wants leaders who deeply understands their pedagogical or didactic problems.

Preliminary findings

The data indicates two perspectives, which can explain why school leaders do not understand teacher's problems related to the LMS. First, the implementation was organized from the municipalities as top-down-strategy, and school leaders distributed the local implementation to selected teachers they trust. The result of those two strategies was that the school leaders do not feel ownership to the system. Secondly, the school leader's reports that they have many administrative assignments, and therefore do not have time deeply understanding want e.g. LMS means for teaching.

That leads to frustrations among the teachers, because when they come to the leader with a problem related to the LMS, they have a clear expectation that the leader can discuss their problem at the same pedagogical and didactic level.

Why leader's don't understand teacher's problem?

(Le Grand, 2003) argues that the introduction of New Public Management (NPM) as a management tool in the early 1980s has led to a numbers of changes in the public administration. Theoretically, NPM is based on the idea that employees is driven by a rational utility maxim. To assure that the employee complete its task, there are control mechanisms such as outcome measurement (Østergaard Møller, Iversen, & Normann Andersen, 2016). At the same time NPM supports autonomy to institutions, because citizens are seen as consumers and the idea is that institutions competing with each other for the consumer will improve public service. The paradox between regulation and freedom calls for professional leadership (Røvik, 2007) – leadership which can set a clear vision for the institution and ensure the institution reached the objected set (Bøgh Andersen, 2017).

Danish public schools policy is driven by NPM principals (Moos, 2014). An example could be the newest school reform in Denmark 2014, which has clear, operational and measurable goals – e.g. that 80% of the students has to perform over middle level in the National Test's (UVM, 2013). Furthermore, the reform was followed with new work rules legislation, which meant that the teachers had to teach more and it regulated teacher's flexibility (Beskæftigelsesministeriet, 2013; Moderniseringsstyrelsen, 2014). In a NPM perspective the work rules legislation clearly demonstrated that policymakers partly needed teachers to teach more for financing the school reform partly that policymakers understanding was that new work rules was necessary to secure *the efficient* teacher. In that context the Danish Parliament and the Danish associations of municipalities agreed that all primary schools should start implementing a LMS from the 2016/2017 school year. The municipalities and parliaments understanding was that an LMS will be an efficient tool for teaching and a tool which support teachers to set clear goals for student and the evaluation of the goals (KL). Additionally the agreement between the municipalities and parliament to implement an LMS can be seen as a system there will support both a teaching focused on outcome and an element to control the teacher (Dorf, 2018; Moos, 2019)

The school leaders like the idea of a tool, which can rationalize and support teaching. The leaders adopted the municipalities' top-down implementation strategy and therefore they did not adjusted the strategy to their local school context and came up with a pedagogical vision for the tool. Furthermore, they distributed the responsibility for the implementation to teachers they trusted. Some of the leaders, though, had great expectation to the use of the LMS – especially about student plans and evaluation. However, they still did not developed an ownership and understanding of the tool – mainly because they build their expectations on the municipality's vision for the LMS and because they see them self's as loyal civil servant (Weber, Andersen, Bruun, & Kaspersen, 2003) - in NPM the municipalities administrations extend arm. Therefore, the leaders has organized an implementation of a tool, which have the potential to change teaching radically, without real knowledge of the effects of the tool. So, when teachers came with pedagogical or didactic problems related to the LMS, they received ideological answers, which they could not use for something.

Method and Data

The findings in this paper is based on the qualitative part and is still a work in progress.

The empirical material consists of a critical hermeneutic interpretation (Winkle-Wagner, Lee-Johnson, & Gaskew, 2019) of the political documents related to the political agreement of implementing an LMS in Danish primary schools and of 31 in-depth semi-structured interviews (Kvale, 2007).

The material is collected in 3 different municipalities and at 4 Danish primary schools – two from a large municipality; one from a middle-sized and one from a small one.

The table shows characteristics strategically selected respondents.

Gender	Municipality Civil Servant	School Principal	Teacher's with IT- resources	Teacher, but also represent The union	Teachers	Total
Male	4	4	2	2	5	17
Female	0	1	2	2	9	14
Total	4	5	4	4	14	31

The respondents vary in teaching experience, gender, and age.

The interviews were on average about an hour, has been analyzed in Nvivo and coded in themes around implementation strategy, use of the LMS, communication and teachers wellbeing and job satisfaction. For the leaders and civil servants the last theme was their perception of management style.

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1.2.A

Horizontal structures – A fundamental and forgotten perspective in school governance?

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Previous research has focused on superintendents' role in the Nordic school systems (Moos, 2013) and the chain of command for school leadership (Moos, Nihlfors & Paulsen, 2016). The problem is that this chain of command is often characterized as being disconnected and because of this, important issues can fall between areas of responsibility and fundamental rights and regulations may be overlooked. The worst-case scenario would be that pupils suffer for this reason or that legal justice is being set aside. This chapter is based on Swedish school superintendents' reflections about their everyday problems at work. These reflections confirmed the problems that could arise in the vertical chain of command, from national governance to school organizations, which have been identified by earlier research (Moos et al. 2016). In addition, this study also identified tensions in the horizontal structure of the organization, ie. tensions between superintendents role and responsibility within the school system as well as between schools and other municipal units. This aspect is fundamental and has previously been forgotten.

Education organizations are complex organizations in themselves and in addition to this, school superintendents are expected to collaborate across professional and administrative borders. This requires collaborating with people that have a different professional and education background, as well as in some cases other legal frameworks to follow. In this paper, the purpose is to explore the horizontal aspects of organizational structures and social relations to understand schools as spheres of work and learning. The paper discusses the need for a fundamental change of orientation in school governance – from vertical to horizontal collaboration in the organizational structure of municipalities. To take a structural perspective, we apply Goffman's theoretical concept of frames as an analytical tool to address the horizontal structures and the 'in-betweens' of the municipal education organization. Statements from school superintendents in relation to organizational structure provide a basis for analysis. The empirical material was collected at a workshop where 52 school superintendents from Sweden participated. They worked in groups, discussing different theories and the material in this paper comes from the discussion on Tyrstrup (2007) *organizational in-betweens* (organisatoriska mellanrum). Examples of tensions that school superintendents must deal with are national versus local governance, organizational development versus pedagogical development, and line versus staff. The way that school superintendents encounter, recognize and deal with tensions is an important part of collaborative learning in the organization. To focus on learning, rather than on adaption to policy's and management trends, is important for school organizations to develop as active and reflective institutions in society.

Changes in management orientation gives a background to tensions that arise today. The Swedish formal education system has been radically and extensively transformed to imitate a market (eg. Lundahl, Erixon Arreman, Holm & Lundström, 2013). Concepts such as compliance rates, results, competition, growth, education system, legal security, and efficiency are nowadays preferred over

concepts such as welfare, equality, *bildung*, and citizen (Bergh, 2010). A consequence of this is that quality systems and evaluations have become a standard procedure in education management. The stronger emphasis on quality work in school organizations, have had impact on governance, structure and administration with the effect that superintendents must navigate through complex systems of national control and municipal support functions (Johansson & Nihlfors, 2014). The idea of being a professional learning facilitator with a focus on pupil orientation, positions superintendents' in-between conflicting stakeholder demands (Paulsen, Johansson, Moos, Nihlfors & Risku, 2014). Role intrusion or a lack of shared formal role understanding between politicians and superintendents may cause conflicts in overlapping zones of engagement (Skott, 2014). On an individual level, contextual factors are critical to understand how leadership supports learning (Wallo & Ellström, 2016). Ongoing changes may further affect the focus of superintendent leadership. These changes concern political ideology, responsibility for education, and the changing nature of superintendents' leadership (Björk, Johansson & Bredeson, 2014). Tensions and paradoxes surface, but coinciding and contradictory meanings can in fact be understood to constitute the nature of leadership in complex organizations (Bjursell, 2016). There is, however, a risk that paradoxes are treated as problems to be solved rather than a source for learning and development (Smith, 2014).

To take a closer look at tensions we will use the concept of frames and framework. Goffman (1986) describes framework as schemata of interpretation applicable to a recognized event. These frames function as guides to recognizing a situation, and they call for particular styles of decision or of behavioural response (Perri, 2005). The frameworks, or frames, of a particular social group constitute a central element of its culture, but frames vary in their degree of organization. While some are neatly organized as systems with postulates and rules, others are less organized and more of an approach than a system of explicit rules. Goffman's ideas about frames have led to a heated debate as to whether or not Goffman was a structuralist (e.g. Gonos, 1977; Denzin and Keller, 1981; Goffman, 1981; Johnson Williams, 1986). Sociologists wanted to position Goffman's ideas within the structuralist rather than interactionist school. But Czarniawska (2006) points to the revival of Goffman's work in recent studies and argues that, while the dramaturgical metaphor should be used less literally, the strength of Goffman's work is the focus on action. Czarniawska also comments on how concepts such as frame and framing have been adopted and developed in relation to ideas about the construction of meaning. The relationships between frames in terms of organizational structures and social relations will thus be explored as a process of meaningmaking and we will discuss how this may influence learning and development in horizontal structures. The tensions explored in this paper can provide key areas that need to be addressed to stimulate horizontal collaboration between municipal units.

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1.2.B

Relations in a Shared Responsibility – A Case Study of an improving Swedish LEA

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Introduction and aim

Research on quality and improvement in the Swedish school system is primarily research on either the state or the local school level (Nordholm, 2015). Consequently, what happens in between, at the local education authority (LEA), seems to be forgotten. In the decentralized Swedish school system LEAs and principals have, by law, a joint responsibility for ensuring quality and systematically improving the school. However, there are indications showing that Swedish LEAs have varying capacity to fulfil this assignment something that brings consequences for principals (Utbildningsdepartementet, 2017).

The more extensive international research of LEAs is to a large extent oriented towards policy implementation and show that an active LEA, providing resources, strategies for school improvement, as well as advice and support for principals, improves implementation (e.g. Campbell & Murillo, 2005; Coburn, 2005). Studies of school districts also show that LEAs can have a successful role in closing gaps in achievement of diverse groups of students (Leithwood & Azah, 2017). Consequently, school boards and superintendents are important for organizing quality and improvement work (Kowalski et. al., 2010; Moos, Nihlfors & Paulsen, 2016). The same goes for principals (e.g. Sun & Leithwood, 2015; Moos et. al., 2013). However, the relationship between LEAs and principals in improvement work is a forgotten perspective in the decentralized Swedish context.

The aim of this study is to contribute to the knowledge about the relationship between LEAs and principals in the Swedish school system by addressing the research question: How do LEAs handle their responsibility for quality and improvement work and how do principals respond to this?

Theoretical perspective

To study formal and informal organizational aspects in LEAs we take new institutionalism (Powell & DiMaggio, 1991; Meyer & Rowan, 1978; Scott, 2001) and sensemaking (Weick, 1995) as our points of departure. How LEAs (try to) take responsibility for their quality- and improvement work can within an institutional perspective be argued to depend on the formal and informal rules, norms and values and sensemaking processes that take place within the organisation. Weick (1995) argues that if common sensemaking can be fostered, people will be better prepared to deal with changes and new conditions. If it fails, people tend to rely on their own assumptions and adapt what is new to “how they use to do” in the organization.

Method and data

The paper presents a case study of a Swedish municipality. The municipality was selected as a successful case based on the Swedish Schools Inspectorate’s reports of regular supervision. According to the inspectorate, the LEA’s systematic quality work improved dramatically from 2014 to 2017.

Data consists of an initial document analysis of the LEA organization, the officials (e.g. functions, assignments, competence) and the characteristics of the quality and improvement work. Additionally, semi-structured individual interviews (n=11) were conducted with operational managers at the LEA and principals. Interview questions covered topics such as organizational issues, tools, relationships and mandate. Each interview lasted for 60-75 minutes and was audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Preliminary results

The preliminary results show that the LEA over time has improved its capacity for quality and improvement work by introducing new routines and actions. Initially, an expanded department for quality and improvement was launched which, in collaboration with principals and teachers, developed a visionary document for all educational units. The work with the document and its embedded ideas was embraced by the principals as it connected well with their improvement ideas.

Additionally, the department created a system of meetings and tools to expand quality work at local school level and stimulate forms of collaboration between the LEA and the principals. Notwithstanding its benefits, parts of the system were questioned by the principals. Issues concerning relevance and independence was brought forward in the interviews as the principals felt that expectations of uniformity limited their work. In addition, thoughts about relevance for the local school and in relation to personal workload was also identified. Finally, issues concerning trust and relationships with the LEA department were highlighted.

The study is significant as it gives an in-depth description of the relation between the LEA and local school principals. A fundamental and forgotten perspective in ensuring quality and improvement in a decentralized school system.

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1.2.C

The establishment of the Directorate of Education in Iceland: A discourse analysis on its role and purpose

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The purpose of the research presented is to shed light on fundamental but forgotten perspectives in educational policy in Iceland by revealing the discourse on the role of the Directorate of Education at the time it was established and the forces of educational policies that it endows considering neoliberalism and New Public Management apparent in Iceland and other Nordic countries.

Educational policy has been used to gain weight for the ideas of neoliberalism and New Public Management at modern times on a transnational scale, although the intensity of it varies between countries (Ball, 2017; Gunter, Grimaldi, Hall and Serpieri, 2016; Moos, Nihlfors and Paulsen, 2016). In the Nordic countries, this has opened the educational field for competition, led to more emphasis on national and international performance standards and increased accountability demands and steering (Dýrfjörð and Magnúsdóttir, 2016; Moos, 2013). Those perspectives have been active in Iceland the last thirty years but the main changes towards those technocratic policies have happened under right-winged Ministers of Education, Science and Culture (Jónsson, 2014). The neoliberal discourse has become so interwoven in the society that many of its views and discourses have become common language in educational policy, normalizing the technocratic and marketing views and allowing those changes to occur without much noticing (Dýrfjörð and Magnúsdóttir, 2016;

Jónsson, 2014). This development has perhaps gained its peak in the establishment of the Directorate of Education in 2015.

The directorate was founded out of the Education Testing Institute and the National Centre for Educational Materials as well as it received managerial tasks previously carried out at the Ministry of Science and Culture and new tasks initiated by the minister. It is an administration organization in the field of education that shall contribute to quality of schoolwork and educational improvements (Directorate of Education Act no. 91/2015). The establishment of the directorate was launched by a right-wing minister and obtained little discussion in parliament or the educational field. Therefore, it came as a surprise to many in the educational sector how much power it had in the arena. Although there have been national agencies in the field of education before the directorate has different and much wider power, and protentional power, than any former national agency. Its establishment is therefore a new step in educational policy at the state level in Iceland. The actions of the Directorate of Education have from the start caught conflicts, much obvious in the media, raising questions of its purpose and policies. In the light of the role of this new agency and creeping influence of neoliberalism on education it is important to gain understanding of what this institution is supposed to stand for and what its establishment could mean for education policy and education in Iceland.

Following research question is put forward: How does the discourse in policy documents on the establishment of the Directorate of Education reflect neoliberalism views such as marketing and standardization in education in Iceland and conflicts regarding the directorates role?

The research methodology draws from historical discourse analysis and uses six-step approach introduced by Jóhannesson (2010). The data is policy documents constructed around the establishment of the directorate; the parliamentary draft law on the establishment of the directorate, the 21 comments received on that draft, and the laws as they were passed in the parliament. This kind of data offers an opportunity to understand what rests behind social practices and institutional structures (Jóhannesson, 2010) such as where at hand at the establishment of the directorate and provides an opportunity to reveal fundamental but forgotten perspectives in the discourse.

At this point I have begun to see discursive themes in the data from the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, such as discourse on that *the establishment of the Directorate of Education is a progressive step, and brings standardization, increased efficiency, measurements and quality in education* that expose neoliberalism and technocratic policy approach. At the same time there is an *absent of a more wholistic approach* on the role of the directorate as an educational support service despite the claim of this role. This brings us to the discursive theme in the overall discourse on the *unsure role of the directorate* and the *struggle between parties* of what it should be. In that struggle the difference in ideology previously described can be recognized. Furthermore, *power in relation to the directorate* is an issue whereas the laws bring the directorate, its director and the minister much power over educational policy and practices while those who comment on the draft try to reduce that power. Further findings and conclusions must wait until October as they are not fully developed yet.

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1.3.A

Developing leadership by participating in a Principals Professional Learning Community, and the added value of international networking

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Objectives or purposes

This paper addresses the practice of professional development of school leaders and is based on a study which explores the importance of being part of a Principal professional learning community (PPLC) in order to develop own leadership for school development and teachers learning. We will argue that principal meetings is a neglected and often forgotten arena for learning, and that local authorities should restructure principal meetings so that they also focused on teaching, and gave the principals the opportunity to learn about, and discuss teaching with their peers. It is fundamental to succeed as a school leader to continuously develop leadership skills. It is further fundamental in the work with PPLC to lift the reflection from just building on own experience, to elucidate the experiences with theory of school management and use data on the students' learning actively in their own development as the principal. Previous research on PPLC is limited, so the topic is often forgotten in that context as well.

The participants in the study have been a part of HeadsUP, an Erasmus+ project aiming to achieve a more effective teachers' development in schools by having the principals (heads) develop their leading competencies within "professional learning communities" of principals (PPLC). Participation in a PPLC is intending to raise their leading skills by learning with other principals, they will know better how to arrange learning groups for their teachers and attend them when they develop the needed skills for inclusive education and the challenges of taking on education of refugee children in their classrooms. Twice a year during a period of three years the participant in the PPLC have the opportunity to participate in an international network, created in order to support the work in the PPLC.

Theoretical framework

Schein (1987) claims that the leader is the most important factor in incorporating and reinforcing a culture. Attention must be paid both to school leaders as leaders of the learning community, and the special responsibility of the principal is to facilitate good learning conditions (Leithwood & Louis, 2012). The reason for developing professional learning communities (PLC) in school is simply that

when teachers learn, their students also learn (Stoll et al., 2006a). A common definition of professional learning communities comes from Stoll et al. (2006b): An inclusive group of people motivated by a common vision aimed at learning, supporting and working together to investigate their practice and together learn new and better approaches to improve student learning. Professional learning communities are about establishing a culture of co-operation, so one can say that the organizational culture itself must be developed to succeed. The concept can be described as a culture that focuses on building capacity for continuous improvement, and that this is a way of working and learning. This means that one aims to promote and maintain learning for all professionals in the school, with the collective purpose of increasing the pupils' learning (Stoll et al., 2006a).

There are studies that have looked at the importance of participating in a principal professional learning community (PPLC), and it is a common finding that participation in an PPLC is important for the leader's understanding of what the PLC is, which in turn has significance for managers getting increased awareness of what is required to develop and maintain a PC (Crestone & Jerome, 2009). By participating in an PPLC on their own, school leaders can learn about and gain an understanding of building a learning culture, and the experience of this was of importance when the PLC was to be built in its own school. , reflective professional community by developing and participating in their own PPLC, where they are modeled how they can reflect on PLC's learning in their own school, assess their own management practice, develop their own practice, and both give and receive feedback and reflected on their own leadership role.

Methods

The paper is based on a study designed as intrinsic case study, which helps to develop insight and understanding by thoroughly studying all aspects of a specific situation or phenomenon (Stake, 1995). Data consist of;

1. Surveys, three surveys for a) authorities and university b) heads and c) teachers involved in the PLCs in the six countries. In depth interviews – principals participating in MEs (phone interviews)
2. Evaluations of each networkmeeting
3. Reflections notes from networkmeeting, audio recordings of workshops, world cafes, SWOT-analysis and group discussions

The analysis took place in two phases. First, all parts of the data were passed separately, to make an open coding. Open coding is an analysis method that is derived from grounded theory, where an analysis method called constant comparative analysis method (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) has been developed. In the next phase we performed a categorization of the codes, where we looked for what went on across the entire data material. Through open coding we came up with four main categories. These are: 1) Awareness and security in their own leadership role, 2) Management - own skills, 3) Organization and implementation of PLC and 4) Experience of the importance of PLC.

Scientific or scholarly significance of the study or work

The school leaders participating in the project experience a fundamental change in the way of understanding a PLC. Through the HeadsUP project they have developed themselves as leaders, and recognized the importance of PLC, and how the quality of the PLC may be essential for improved students' learning outcome. Another finding of the study is that working with school leaders from other contexts, increases self-awareness about leadership and their own role as a leader. The fact that HeadsUP is an international leadership network provides an additional dimension - the contrasts lead to better and different reflection for the participants.

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1.3.B

Strategies to Translate Fluffy Data Use Policies:

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Keywords: *Data use; management ideas; translation theory; double pressure; case study*

Increasingly both national and district policies include strategies concerning data use to direct attention towards the potential outcomes of data driven actions in educational contexts (Spillane, 2012). Such policies seek to increase the extent to which both educational managers and teachers are informed by data to qualify their practice, with increased student learning being the most oft-cited outcome (Coburn and Turner, 2011; Goren, 2012).

However because such policies are often vaguely formulated (Honig and Coburn, 2008), an implementation of such demands requires that an interpretation is made by local school leaders in the process of converting policy buzzwords into instruments that are useful in local practice (cf. Røvik, 2016). Translation is required as building the capacity to use data locally in schools is not a matter of implementing a ready-made best practice.

This paper reports on an embedded case study (Yin, 2009) that illustrates how different local translations of policy, results in different managerial strategies and different lines of local actions within one local government (Røvik, 2016). The study thus reports on the *fundamental perspective* that abstract policies are interpreted and translated differently depending on the local context in which these policies are implemented. In addition to this, a perhaps *forgotten or even unnoticed perspective* is that different translations also occur within a local government level even though the top leadership sets out general guidelines for implementation. Theoretically, it seems that the concept of 'policy implementation' represents a simplified view on school leaders' translation from policy to practice. To avoid the often static and mechanical viewpoint of traditional 'implementation theory' (Sahlin and Wedlin, 2008), it is argued that translation theory of 'management ideas' (Røvik 2016) could represent a beneficial avenue for research, since this theoretical position takes into account the agency of both school leaders, policy makers and teachers. Such a view could enable a forgotten but important theme: double pressure (Merton,

1940; Mortensen et al. forthcoming). In other words, there is hence the risk that school leaders need to navigate in contexts containing of contradicting demands from policy makers and educators.

Theoretical background

To extend the data analysis, I utilize translation theory as a theoretical move to reframe implementation efforts as acts of translation of 'management ideas' (Røvik, 2018). The argument is that the instrumental quality of a management idea such as the demand for datadriveness requires competent translators with adequate knowledge of the organizational context and strong translation competences, including the skill to choose appropriate strategies to fit the specific situations and account for employee reactions (Røvik, 2018). The implications being that the translation of policies of datadriveness must necessarily occur within the local school context – the context in which data is to be used to improve learning outcomes

The case study and empirical data

I present findings from an embedded case study of six primary schools in a Danish municipality, where the municipal leadership has a self-identified focus on implementing data use routines in their local schools. The empirical material consists of observations and audio recordings of two management workshops (14 hours), six dialogue meetings with the Head of School, council consultant, teachers, school management teams (27 participants, 7 hours recorded) and interviews with principals and the leading council consultant. These are all events specifically aimed at constructing onsite data use practices matching instructions from the municipal leadership level.

Results and discussion

The paper unfolds the strategies chosen by local school leaders when responding to a demand for datadriveness. To handle this translation of the abstract management idea, school managers in the six schools construct a continuous design process that 1) attempts to create a joint sensemaking of what data is and what data use should look like, and, 2) involves defining data in broad terms including both quantitative and qualitative data. The purpose of this design process is to be responsive to the local context in order to achieve a match between preexisting routines and the new demand for an increased and different use of data to navigate in and reduce double pressure (Mortensen et al. forthcoming).

The study reports that vaguely formulated demands for data use involve a risk of teachers decoupling from the agenda of using data. Decoupling is in an institutional theoretical perspective defined as a symbolic acceptance of popular management ideas, without making any real change to one's organizational practice (Røvik, 2007, Powell & DiMaggio, 1991). Theoretically spoken, this risk of decoupling leads managers to deliberately use translation strategies, which actively seek to create a joint sensemaking as an effort to negotiate meaning (Brix, 2017) and hence avoid negative staff reactions. The skepticism is predominantly identified as a strong professional identification, with educators reluctant to reduce problematics of e.g. student learning to a matter of specific data points.

The intent of the managers to create a shared sensemaking coexists with a rather clear cut understanding by managers of what constitutes as 'good data use practices'. These seemingly opposing efforts lead me to tentatively deduce the assumption that managers are highly strategic when choosing a translational strategy. A part of this strategy seems to be an attempt to neutralize critics of 'data use' and increase employee buy-in by advocating for a broad definition of data, including both qualitative and quantitative data sources. Managers use a rhetoric, which e.g. does not alienate the most persistent sceptics of quantitative data. Embedded in this rhetoric is a focus

on the analytical dimension of data use, where managers seek to create and maintain an 'ethos of continuous improvement' (Park and Datnow, 2009, p. 483).

The ambition of this paper is to evaluate whether this strategy of a joint sensemaking process and a broad data definition has the potential to qualify the implementation process and institutionalizing data use in the six schools studied. In this, the author presents reflections on educational leadership in the cross pressure between national and trans-national policy demands and local considerations. With this addressing the often forgotten, but yet fundamental reflectivity in school leadership towards the professional identity of educators.

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1.3.C

Professional identities of preschool principals related to vulnerability and leadership: A fundamental and often forgotten aspect

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to get knowledge and deepen understanding of preschool principals' professional identities, especially related to *vulnerability* and *leadership* and how it affects their work. The aspect „vulnerability“ has often been forgotten related to leadership of principals although it can have a great impact on their work. Very few research can be found related to principals' professional identity (Lumby, 2009) but many research has been done on teachers' professional identity and some of the findings can be related to principals as well. As these findings show, professional identities have a major impact on work, development and how teachers relate to changes and challenges in their profession (Day and Harrison, 2007). Kelchtermann (2009) argues that teaching, because of its relational and ethical nature, is characterised by *passivity*, teachers are exposed to others and thus being vulnerable. Vulnerability in that sense can be understood as a structural characteristic of the profession. According to principals Kelchtermann, Piot and Ballet (2011) found that they are facing similar vulnerability as teachers, always knowing that every decision is open to criticism and he or she runs the risk of seeing their personal and professional integrity put to question (Kelchtermann et. al., 2011). Kelchtermann (2009) avoids using the concept identity and uses instead *self-understanding*. He argues that the former concept is associated with static essence and implicitly ignoring its dynamic and biographical nature. Kelchtermann (2009) argues: "Who am I in how I teach is the message" (p. 263). Regarding the principals it could be: "Who am I in how I lead is the message". Gender is also seen as an important part of individual identity and of the professional identity of preschool teachers as a female profession (Drudy, 2008). Additionally, it can be argued, that the educational pedagogy embedded in the role, such as an emphasis on child-centeredness, seems to have been affecting the visibility and identity of the preschool teachers, as does their placement in a field of laypersons (Steinnes, 2007). Further, tension can arise from the dichotomy between a workforce that is construed as caring, maternal and gendered, as opposed to professional, degree educated and highly trained. Under these circumstances a profession can construct multiple identities or identities can be 'in flux' (Stronach, Corbin, McNamara, Stark and Warne, 2002). Although, preschool teachers and principals are the main actors in constructing their identities they are always under the influence of social, contextual factors which constrain their agency.

Jónsdóttir's findings (2012) showed that the Icelandic preschool teachers professional identities were both „positive“ and „negative“. The positive element was connected to the educational dimension of their work, while the negative was rather connected to „service to parents“ or the economic dimension. It is interesting to find out if the professional identities of preschool principals have similar trends.

Thus, it is important to do research on professional identities of preschool principals and how they act when they are vulnerable. Their vulnerability can be related to issues as educational changes, communication to stakeholders, professionalism, leypersons (as the preschool teachers is minority within Icelandic preschools), inclusion, children of foreign origin, sustainability, culture and other issues inside or outside the preschool.

Information are gathered with online questions where the preschool principals answer related to the aim of the research. They are asked to tell about *critical incidents* where they have felt that they have been vulnerable, and if they have been successful or not successful in their actions and decisions.

The *research questions* are:

1. How do Icelandic preschool principals express experiences of vulnerability and leadership in relation to their professional identities?
2. How does their professional identities, or self-understandings, affect how they implement their work?

The method, critical incidents, CIT (Cunningham, 2008; Flanagan, 1954; Johansson and Sandberg, 2012a, 2012b; Stier et al., 2012) will be used to understand preschool principals' professional identities, focusing on vulnerability and leadership. The method strives to contextualize critical incidents from activities and its importance, and it enables the development of praxis and is relatively flexible. CIT provides proven, clearly defined guidelines for data collection and analysis, focusing on real experience (Hughes, 2007). The planned critical incident questions contain the following steps: 1) The participants will be asked to observe their own pedagogical practice and identify critical incidents and present them in written form, including what and where the incident took place and who was involved, how the incident started, and how it ended. Each principal assesses and argues whether these incidents were successful or less successful.

The questions are now in a process within *The Icelandic Data Protection Authority* as a licence is needed because of the questions about the context of critical incidents. They will be sent to all preschools principal in the country, or about 250, when the licence is provided, which will be very soon. The questions will be explained and the principals will automatically give their informed consent when they begin to answer the question list. Preliminary findings will be introduced at the conference. Later, interviews will be conducted in focus groups to get a clear picture of professional identities of principals related to vulnerability.

An implication of the proposed research study might provide a more rigid basis for decisions concerning principal education and work conditions focusins on the sensitive situations that principals often experience. There, it is e.g. necessary to focus on educational leadership as municipalities and government have emphasized evidence-based methods in teaching and learning. Another implication might be that stakeholders within and outside preschools could benefit from the results by deepening their knowledge and developing the fundamental and often forgotten area of how it is to be stuck in situations that need reflection and mentoring. Further, it strengthens educational science research with a focus on praxis as the method of critical incidents has praxis as its mein focus. The conclusion is that the proposed research project could be of great significance for developing the research area of principals' professional identity and vulnerability.

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2.1.A

Principal mobility and turnover – when is it a problem and for whom?

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We know from previous research that the ability of a school to attract and retain a sufficient number of qualified teachers has a significant impact on its functioning over time (e.g., Ingersoll & May, 2102; Ronfeldt, Loeb & Wyckoff, 2013). Clearly, this applies to school leaders as well. Given the knowledge we have today about school leaders' impact on teachers, and indirectly on student performance (Wahlstrom, Seashore Louise, Leithwood & Andersen, 2010; Seashore Louis, 2015), it is no surprise that policymakers in Sweden, as in many other countries, are concerned about mobility and turnover among principals. Especially since there is already a lack of qualified candidates to fill the school principal positions (SOU 2015:22; SOU 2018:17). This concern is legitimate, considering the difficulties related to high level mobility and turnover. Not only because it denies schools the stability they need, but also because it generates a constant need to search for more individuals to assume leadership positions (Gates, Ringel, Santibanez, Guarino, Ghosh-Dastidar & Brown, 2005). Furthermore, new principals need education, and it might take years before they can be expected to have the experience required to effectively deal with their tasks.

In a report from the Swedish National Agency for Education (2015) the level of mobility and turnover was claimed to be high, since more than one out of four principals changed schools between the year 2013/2014 and 2014/2015. Half of the principals had been in their current school less than three years. In addition, every fifth principal was new within the profession. These numbers are often referred to and quoted in the media as evidence of the disturbing situation initially referred to in this paper. However, questions like *when* and for *whom* principal mobility and turnover is a problem, seem to remain unanswered.

This paper provides recent statistics received from Statistics Sweden (SCB). The analysis allows for an investigation of the level of mobility and turnover and to what extent particular municipalities or schools are facing substantially higher turnover than others. Preliminary results shows that the

average principal has worked in the same municipality approximately five years and changed school less than once. Yet there are big differences throughout the country, between municipalities, and particularly between schools. These differences cannot be explained by the data itself. In order to receive an accurate picture and to gain a deeper understanding of principal mobility and turnover it is necessary to search within local school context. The need for such research is substantial since, at least in Sweden, research on principal mobility and turnover is scarce. Therefore, in analysing principal mobility and turnover, national statistical data will be utilized further, together with various kinds of data received from one Swedish municipality which was selected to serve as a case for further investigation.

The aim for this research study is to better understand the reasons behind principal mobility and turnover and their impact on local school practices within the Swedish context; starting with fundamental but often forgotten, or overseen, questions like *What is a high level, and what can be considered an ordinary, accepted, or even ideal level of principal mobility and turnover? When is it a problem and for whom?* Attention is directed towards principal mobility and turnover as a phenomenon and as one of many conditions for sustainable leadership. More specifically, this study deals with principal practice and how it affects and is affected by other related practices with significance for schools' operation and development. Practice Architecture Theory (Kemmis, Wilkinson, Edwards-Groves, Hardy, Grootenboer & Bristol, 2014; Mahon, Kemmis, Francisco, & Lloyd, 2017) and Theory of Ecologies of Practices (Kemmis, Wilkinson, Edward-Growes, Hardy, Edwards-Groves & Bristol, 2014) will be adopted when constructing a theoretical framework. Different methods will be used to collect suitable data, for example surveys and interviews with different design. Since general concerns tend to obscure the local practice perspective in previous reporting on principal mobility and turnover, issue framing based on interviews with different stakeholders will be of particular importance. Increased knowledge of principal mobility and turnover will enhance the possibilities to act in ways that further sustainability in school leadership and school developmental processes on both local operational and national systemic levels.

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2.1.B

Educating school leaders, engaging in diverse orientations to leadership practice

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Introduction and aim

Comprehensive school leadership research demonstrates the importance of leadership for school development and student results (e.g. Leithwood & Reihl, 2005). Despite this, the general knowledge base for principal preparation programs is rather weak. How to design programs that prepare novice principals for their important role is a fundamental but nevertheless predominantly forgotten perspective in research. In addition, several researchers argue the need for research on how programs for principal training affects learning and activities in schools (Jacobson & Bezzina, 2008; Taylor, Corderio, & Chrispeels, 2009). This study intends to make a contribution by exploring the parallel process of participating in the Swedish National School Leadership Training Program and being a novice principal. Consequently, to explore the forgotten perspective of what sense novice principals make out from participating in training and what kind of school leadership that is being formed.

The aim of the study is to develop knowledge about the significance of principal training and the formation of professional identity. The research question guiding the study is: What do novice principals learn in education and how can participation be understood?

Theoretical framework

A social learning perspective in accordance with Wenger (1998) is applied to explore novice principals' learning; that is principals' handling of resources the training program provides, as well as their experience of meaning-making. Learning in a social learning perspective is about defining and negotiating competence. Central to the theory is the idea that negotiation of competence is made in practice, where structures are reproduced through practice. What policies, research, or institutions define as school leadership competence are thus simply reifications that principals may or not may respond to and negotiate within the context of their domain. The 'learning field' is seen as a landscape of practices produced and reproduced in specific social spaces for engaging in negotiations of competence (Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner, 2014).

Learning is deeply connected to the development of identity. Wenger distinguishes between three modes as different components of how we orient in the landscape of practice in terms of identity: imagination, alignment, and engagement (Wenger 1998). This study explores combinations of those components to recognize diverse orientations to leadership practice.

Methods and data

This qualitative study is part of a thesis project following three course-groups at three different universities throughout their last year of mandatory training as participants in the Swedi National School Leadership Training Program. Using semi-structured observation protocols, 21 days of field studies were conducted. In addition, semi-structured individual interviews with fourteen novice leaders in compulsory school were carried out at the sites of education. The individual interviews

were supplemented by three thematic focus-group interviews. Each interview lasted for 60-100 minutes and was audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. This paper is based on data from observations and interviews.

Preliminary results

Preliminary results indicate that the novice principals used titles of courses or course-contents to define expected competence. All together those constructs might be reified into mental maps, used by the principals to navigate from in relation to knowledgeability as a professional.

Preliminary findings show that the principals embrace different orientations to local practice; 1) organizational orientation, 2) task orientation, and 3) idea-based orientation. The orientations are interpreted from the modes of identification; imagination, alignment and engagement.

Principals with an organizational orientation seem to imagine themselves leading a professional organization, aligning to education as a resource for learning. They engage in developing reifications, working as catalysts for changing participation and thus changing social practice. Principals with a task-oriented orientation seem to imagine themselves as administrative managers, aligning to education as an authority, establishing legitimacy for their work. They do not engage in developing reifications, but view reifications as presentations of best practice. Principals with an idea-based orientation seem to have a hard time imagining themselves as principals, yet aligning to education as a necessity for gaining access to a position. They seem to engage in implementing specific ideas, processing reifications and pursuing trajectories of their own interest.

Program participation can be described as balancing participation and reification in negotiations of meaning through the on-going process of zooming in and zooming out on local practice. Important resources in this process seem to be how the three dimensions of identification are at play vis-a-vis their imagination and orientation on practice, alignment to the selection of reifications used in education, and the way those are put to work, engaging participants in negotiations of meaning.

Preliminary results make visible how diverse orientations to school leadership practice among novice principals in Sweden affect the socially constituted experience of meaning-making and modulation of identification as principal during a mandatory training program. Local forms of engagement in practice seem not always to work in line with policy demands to develop skills and tools and to obtain a deeper understanding of the role as a school leader through participation in

the state-regulated program. An important contribution to the fundamental and forgotten perspective of principal preparation programs.

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2.1.C

Mapping Local Practices of Data Use in Norwegian Municipalities and Schools

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Short abstract

In recent years, governing regimes in education that emphasize performance management and accountability have been introduced in several countries. Various types of assessment tools which produce ‘data’ on student performance provide a basis for generating information that are expected to be used for policy making and to motivate change in education. This policy of action represents a new knowledge field in education, also challenging others. Practices of data use are usually defined as what takes place when individuals interact by using test scores, grades, and other forms of assessment tools in their work (Little 2012, Coburn & Turner, 2011; Spillane, 2012). This paper aims to map local practices of data use by exploring the extent to which local educational authorities, school leaders and teachers in Norwegian municipalities use various data sources to inform practice with a particular focus on national standardized tests which measure students’ performance in literacy, numeracy and English in 5th, 8th and 9th grades. Moreover, it investigates what ways practices of data use are linked to control mechanisms, development efforts and accountability.

Long abstract

Objectives

The paper explores the extent to which local educational authorities, school leaders and teachers in Norwegian municipalities use various data sources to inform practice with a particular focus on national standardized tests, and in what ways practices of data use are linked to control mechanisms,

development efforts and accountability. Moreover, the paper aims possible limitations linked to the use of performance data to inform decision making.

Theoretical perspectives

Data in itself, is often considered to be efficient, standardized, uniform, and intuitive measures productive for usage in a range of processes for the development of education, teaching and learning (Porter, 1995). On the other hand, the very same attributes can lead to exaggerated expectations of what can be achieved on the basis of data and simplification of complex education processes - consequently what can be described as the alluring attributes of data and data use might mask important aspects, knowledge and nuances in education important for productive developments (Author, 2017).

Methods and data sources

The analysis is based on data from surveys conducted among superintendents on municipal level (response rate: 37%), school leaders (response rate: 49%) and teachers (response rate: 10%) during the school year 2016/17. Due to a dispersed population, the size of municipalities in terms of the number of inhabitants and geographical location were used as stratification variables. Various analytic techniques were applied to analyze the data, such as confirmatory analysis to create latent variables, then structure equation modeling (SEM) is used to examine the data structures. The second step of the analysis includes multilevel analysis which makes it possible to investigate the structural relations between variables both within and between groups of actors (Heck & Thomas, 2009).

Findings

Preliminary findings show that both superintendents and school leaders find national test data more useful to evaluate school quality compared to teachers. Most of the school leaders use national test data to monitor school quality over time, develop strategies for further development and to benchmark the school with other schools in the municipality. To inform instruction, teachers prefer other types of data (e.g. diagnostic tests or knowledge tests they produce themselves) which are closer related to their work with the students. While development is on the agenda on school level, control and performative accountability are more evident in data use practices on municipal level.

Scientific/scholarly contribution and implications for practice

Most of the research on data use has until now been conducted within an Anglo-American context. The data material used in this article is part of a larger research project on the use of data in Norwegian municipalities and schools. This paper contributes to generating knowledge on local practices of data use among key actors, such as superintendents, school leaders and teachers. Based on the findings we discuss possible limitations of using student performance data which is linked to design and function of the tests and core tasks of the different levels of the local school system.

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2.2.A

Identity, Abilities and Formal expectations on School Leadership Roles and Activities.

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Introduction

It is well known that leadership is contextual bound (Dimmock & Walker, 2004; Ärlestig et al., 2015) and that principals' prerequisites as well as mission are affecting how they act (Berg, 2018). Political decisions, the organizations' structure, culture and leadership become a base for daily work and academic outcomes (Höög & Johansson, 2015; Hoy & Miskel, 2007; Bolman & Deal, 2003). In conversation with practicing principals, they describe their prerequisites and room of maneuver with great variation. What they are expected to do and whom they collaborate with seems to vary even if they are in the same school district.

Across the years some leadership theories have been more widely recognized than others and some have also rendered to more criticism. We will in this study use two theories that during the last years have captured less attention. Theories that during the years have developed and can contribute to our understanding of today's school organization and its leadership. The two fundamental perspectives are systems thinking and trait theories.

Purpose

The local school organization on district and local school level and its leaders and how they think and work as a unit (system) are in focus in this study. By studying the governing chain through the various levels of leaders and their decisions we want to capture individual actors' abilities and room to maneuver in organizations that are constantly changing.

This study is based on a pre-study in a larger research project including two similar municipalities, that include schools that academically underachieve and schools that academically overachieve. The schools are situated within the same education system, seemingly having the same prerequisites including funding, local policies and strategies. The aim of this research project is to get a deeper understanding of what the actors at various decision-making levels do and the knowledge they have which forms their decision making and have an impact on results in schools within the same district. Addressing both similarities and differences gives a possibility to study leadership decision in a complex setting.

Method and theoretical underpinnings

In detail, this paper focuses on educational leadership, including perspectives from superintendent, assistant superintendents, principals and middle leading teachers (called first teachers in Sweden). The results build on 12 hours of transcribed interviews together with local documents and statistics.

The overarching perspective adheres to and is based on systems thinking perspective (cf. Senge, 1991; Fullan, 2005, Kordova et.al., 2018, Shaked & Schechter, 2017). We do this in order to detect interrelationships and repeated patterns in educational leadership that can explain an overarching picture rather than isolated snapshots of when leaders react on or take on challenges of new reforms and expectations related to new public management (NPM).

The other forgotten perspective can be connected to trait theory (Stogdill, 1948). The research field of educational administration has matured, and we do know what is important in school leadership. Instead we need more focus on how leaders act. A handful of traits explain to a large extent if school leaders are effective (Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2019). How school leaders act and their relation

can explain aspect that deepen our understanding on abilities, organization structure and organizational learning.

We will in this paper focus on the individual leaders' competence, their interaction and organizational structure and culture. A special interest is how different activities, and individual actors' statements are viewed in relation to a more holistic understanding.

The analysis will firstly be conducted in such way that core results from each distinct decision-making level in the local school system are articulated. In a second phase, systems-thinking perspective will be helpful in order to understand how leadership is focused, and it will show when it is clearly distributed or when and where it is not visible. By in-depth interviews we will be able to follow if there is systematic and coherent understanding or not in issues that are seen as important and individual leaders' ability and understanding of their work. Besides the empirical data we will have access to results, inspection protocols, local policy documents and other official data.

Importance for the field

A contribution of this study is explanations and interpretations of how seemingly the same conditions and prerequisites for principals, teachers and students end up in various academic results. In our analysis, individual competences and strategies will be related to a holistic view on organizations work and activities, a reminder that fundamental theoretical perspectives adopt new features and forms in relation to how values and language change. It is unique that the specific results from the various decision-making levels are related to each other, resulting in an overall and yet coherent description of core actions and knowledge that forms the best possible academic results of schools.

It is obvious from our study that roles and expectations are documented in local policies and that there are frequent meetings among leaders. The interviewed superintendents and principals talk at the same time about the importance to involve co-workers and to act as gatekeepers. We notice a large variation in how individual leaders act and what they think is important content verified by trendy leadership concepts and names as an alibi for the scientific ground in their work and processes. There is unclarity in how leaders combine activities that support everyday work with more sustainable improvement issues. Especially expectations on what role first teachers play in the governing chain is unclear. The first teachers are not comfortable in being viewed as leaders and both principals and superintendents have problems to identify what first teachers ought to contribute with in an organizational perspective. It seems overall to be more focus on how to succeed in the own leadership role and task than creating a strong governing chain for high academic results.

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2.2.B

Conflicting positions in educational research: A challenging condition for school leaders.

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One of the fundamental conditions for school leaders is a challenging and complex array of expectations they face from society, teachers and employees, local communities, parents, students, and research. An important aspect of this is the fact that in the educational debate and research there seems to be no consensus about the purpose of school, teaching and learning. The prevalent political focus on students' acquisition of basic skills, testing and data is challenged by another political focus on for example social skills and democracy and an opposition to testing.

Among researchers, a fierce debate is going on about the premises for educational research: What is the purpose of educational research, what is the role of researchers, what constitutes valid knowledge in the field, what role should evidence, testing and international comparison play, what kind of goals should be set for teaching and by whom, etc. (Nordahl 2019).

Because there is no consensus about the answers to these questions, teachers and school leaders find themselves with the difficult task of making sense of conflicting educational policies and conflicting messages from researchers. To mention an example: Is teaching based on data and evidence the way to go for teachers and leaders, or is it a mistake to believe that it is possible to determine best evidence in teaching because “what works won’t work”? (Biesta 2007).

In the article “Hvorfor er der så store slagsmål inden for pædagogikken – positioner i dansk pædagogisk forskning” (in press), Nanna Friche and Dorte Ågård offer an overview over three archetypal or exemplary positions in Danish educational research: The Evidence Position, The Bildung Position, and The Critical Position. We outline the historical epistemological paradigms that lie behind the three positions – rationalism, humanism and postmodernism, and describe their present manifestations in epistemology, methodology, international inspiration, stance in the present educational political situation, and apparent merits and weaknesses.

In the article, we discuss the damaging consequences of educational research being so polarized because the practitioners are caught in the middle. They have few common guidelines to follow; the research communities seldom offer possibilities for transfer between research and practice, and ultimately, we believe, a price is paid by underprivileged groups of students because teachers

either meet educational research that deliberately abstains from being prescriptive and helpful to practice, or they meet research from conflicting sides.

We therefore think an overview over fundamental positions is valuable for teachers and school leaders to understand what is going on and to distinguish between the contradictory voices from educational researchers and politicians. We consider this understanding crucial for professional reflection on and practice of educational leadership.

At the symposium, we wish to explore the consequences of the struggling scientific positions for educational leadership and leadership research in Scandinavia and internationally. As with the different views on education, educational leadership comes in many forms and is approached from many angles. In research, a number of names can be found, e.g. instructional leadership, student-centered leadership, learning-centered leadership, distributed leadership, potentiality leadership, noisy leadership, psy-leadership, and transformational leadership (Robinson 2011, Juelskjær et al. 2011, Leitwood & Louis 2012, Bjerg & Staunæs 2014, Hall 2016, Moos 2016, Ågård & Keller 2019).

As described in the symposium call, current educational policy demands represent a view on school leadership which regards the school as a “business”. This view is engaged with questions on using performance data, best practice, and ‘what-works’ models of corporate management. But this view on school leadership is only one perspective among other possible, and other perspectives focus on the foundations for professional reflection.

We will outline positions in contemporary international educational leadership research in order to clarify foundations, differences and similarities, by identifying epistemology, methodology, international inspiration, stances in the present educational political situation, and apparent merits and weaknesses. A perspective will be what seems to be the implications for practice: How do the different leadership approaches affect school leaders and teachers? At the end of the presentation, we will invite participants to discuss if they recognize this analysis of fundamental conditions for school leaders.

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2.2.C

Local evaluation practice as a mediating tool

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The paper is addressing the issue of the connection between school leadership, development work and school based evaluation, and as a general frame, I am referring to the context of the Finnish compulsory schools.

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.

At the same time the current evaluation research - including state of art evaluations (KARVI 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 2013) set out to criticise it at the same time.

The basic argumentation in this paper is based on 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, KARVI 2019). The local evaluation (municipality & school-based evaluation) is to be regarded as something disparate in aims and interests, from evaluation carried out at the national level. Where evaluation at the national level is 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 is more concerned with promoting the educational work in schools. 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, development work and the design of evaluation is at stake. It is a fact that if the relation between evaluation and leadership is notified in research, it is seldom analysed with references to pedagogical theories. The aim of the study is to discuss local evaluation as a leadership tool aiming at development, and consider the use of the anatomy and structure of activity systems and learning by expanding developed by Engeström (2015) to carry it out.

Analysing publications and practice in Finland, we find four types of self-evaluation carried out in schools when characterized by their basic logical structure. The first one is “evaluation based on the structure of intentional pedagogical action” with references to von Wrights practical syllogism (1971), further elaborated in Practical reason (1983). The Finnish educational philosopher Reijo Wilenius (1975) stated that the pedagogical intentional action is constructed by knowledge of aims, and the premises knowledge of methods and knowledge of situation. Thus, evaluation can be carried out as valuing the knowledge of aims, methods and situation by considering the relevance or practical fitness in between them. The second type “participatory evaluation” has developed as a parallel of action research. The basic idea is a design of evaluation where the actors in the schools are participants in developing the evaluation from beginning to the end. The actors influence the design, the process and interpret the results of the evaluation. A third type we find in the “best

practice” or quality criteria (ex CAF, EFQM). The logic of the evaluation is then based on monitoring the elements of the steering system, by comparing to descriptions based on assumedly well functioning schools. A fourth type is evaluating by comparing the accomplished work, with targets set. (Svedlin 2019)

In the categorization of four types of evaluation, a separating dimension is found in the question of using predetermined outcomes as the base for evaluation, and a second dimension in the question of the role of actors.

With the perspective of local educational leadership as a process of leading the realisation of curriculum making by mediating between different interests and epistemic practices, the local evaluation is obviously a part in this process (Uljen 2015). Thus, to lead evaluation practice will give rise to questions about the two previously mentioned dimensions.

Following the criticism of Engeström (2011) of the logic based on linear methodology, often used in design research, we will find observations that concerns evaluative practice as well. In logic based on linear methodology there is from the start underlying assumptions about accepted methods and decided objects, therefore the remaining part for the research (evaluation function) is to find out the degree of desired outcomes. On the other hand, with references to activity systems and formative interventions (Engeström 2011) we find new concepts and knowledge of procedures that enforces local evaluation as a mediating tool in the school community, where the actors have an active role.

The classical statements about Bildung as an open-ended and varied process, where the participation of the individual is essential (Siljander et al 2012) is further elaborated in Engeström (2011) pointing at the actors (teachers and students) as intentional and interactive beings learning in complex, continuously changing activity systems. Contemporary research on local evaluation practices is trapped in neo-liberal demagogy, and neglecting basic epistemological statements about premises for Bildung.

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2.3.A

Principals decision-making on organizing the schools' internal organization.

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Decision and decision-making is a fundamental part of the work of leading organizations (Eriksson-Zetterquist, Kalling & Styhre, 2017). Weick (1995) argued that it is important to understand *organizations* as ever changing and *organizing* as the process of creating organizations. According to Weick organizing becomes the process in which people together perform an activity. In organizing organizations, leadership is a central part and organizations are social systems that must be kept together over time. Regarding decision-making on organizing school's internal organization, principals need to handle a number of decisions and decision-making processes. This includes influences from school owners, parents, pupils and not least participation and influence from employees which are important aspects when it comes to making decisions in organizations. How principals interpret and make decisions about this assignment is an often forgotten perspective on school leadership. The decision-making is an often forgotten area, although it is a fundamental part of the principals' manager-ship and leadership.

Background:

The Swedish Parliament has through the Education Act (2010: 800), increased the legal regulation and clarification of the principals' responsibility in several areas, for example the responsibility for the school's development work and to decide on the school's internal organization. A fundamental idea is clarity regarding responsibility and decision making in the local school. The law doesn't give the possibility to have shared management responsibility, the principal is alone in charge for decision making but the principal has the power to delegate responsibility and certain tasks to others (School Inspectorate, 2012). Another purpose of Education Act is to provide increased opportunities for pupils' learning and performance development since adaptation of the internal organization takes place at the local level.

Organizations are discussed in this setting as an interpretation system where gathering of information is done followed by an interpretation process. This forms the basis for activities that leads to collecting new data. The decision-making is based on the fact that the organization collects data which is then interpreted and used in the motivation of different patterns of action (Daft & Weick, 1984). Decision-making is therefore not a strictly rational and objective process of negotiating or "co-operating" which reality design the foundation. Enactment is, according to this approach, a cognitive construction in which the decision-making is made on the basis of an intuitive action constructed on the decision-makers' common or individual experiences.

My objective is to gain knowledge about how principals understands their legal right to decide the school's internal organization and how this become visible at the local school level. The Education Act leaves a great scope for interpretation to the principal deciding on their unit's internal organization. Previous research show that the importance of the internal organization is ranked highest by the principals in their work to be able to successfully carry out the assignments in school law and curricula (Leo, 2013).

Preliminary research questions:

- How do principals interpret the legal right to organize the school's internal work?
- How do the principals approach the task to decide about the school's internal organization?
- What considerations do principals make before their decisions on the internal school organization?

Methods

The intended research design includes a case study in a municipality. The case study will include 35 elementary schools to be able to study similarities and differences. There municipality works with something that called results dialogue (Rd) which will be studied. This is a strategy part of the schoolboards systematic quality work, which screens the school units' overall results and goal fulfillment. The Rd is also meant to be a tool for the principals to gain more knowledge about the school units' prerequisites, work processes and challenges. Knowledge that is supposed to be relevant for the principals to be able to make well-balanced decisions. The Rd are a conversation between the superintendent and a principal, led by the superintendent. The Rd is likewise an

important part of the school board shared assignment to give children and pupils an equivalent education.

Several methods will be used; studies of text documents, observations of the RD, in-depth interviews with the principals about the decision-making processes before, during and after the results dialogue. This type of triangulation will hopefully give new knowledge about the decision-making processes when principals organize their internal organization in order to improve the students' results.

Research demonstrate that principals are a strong link in the chain between the state, local school authorities, politicians, and teachers. At the same time principals is experiencing lack of faith and low demands from the school owner. Principals is therefore caught between diverse expectations and strong pressure from altered directions (Nihlfors & Johansson, 2013). This study aims to understand how principals in a municipality in Sweden interpreters their legal right to decide about organizing the school's internal organization. Spillane & Coldrin (2011) concluded:

“While schools share many commonalities, every school also has some unique situations, with an organizational infrastructure comprised of the potential for a variety of formal positions and organizational routines, a staff with particular strengths and weaknesses, and of course a particular mix of students, families, community, and district-and state-level stakeholders (s.109).”

One starting point is the assumption that the principals' decision-making when it comes to the internal school organization takes altered forms because of the different local schools.

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2.3.B

Group coaching for school leadership development

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Over the past several years, coaching has been increasingly reported as the type of school leadership development intervention that is gaining momentum and popularity (Aas, 2016). Although we tend to forget, a fundamental point of departure for coaching stems from Carl Rogers (1942). He introduced the term counseling but he might equally well have used the term coaching, as in person-centred practice the terms are interchangeable (Joseph, 2010). In many countries, coaching is a part of national school leadership programmes (Aas & Törnsén, 2016; Hansford & Ehrich, 2006; Lumby, Crow & Pashiardis, 2008; Robertson & Earl, 2014). While most of the reports on coaching for school leadership development in such programmes concern individual coaching or peer coaching (Aas &

Vavik, 2015), Aas (2016; 2017) and colleagues (Aas & Flückiger, 2016; Aas & Vavik, 2015; Flückiger et al., 2016) argue for the power of group coaching for the purposes of development. With an increased interest towards the emergence and development of coaching integrated into school leadership programmes, further attention is warranted to the theorising and practice of coaching. Whilst there seems to be a consensus that coaching promotes professional development for leaders in several ways (Mavrogordato and Cannon 2009, Silver et al., 2009, Huff et al., 2013, Robertson and Earl, 2014 & Goff et al., 2014), little is known about what happens inside coaching sessions. This paper reports from a study of group coaching integrated into a National Principal Training Programme in Norway, which aims to promote reflections on personal agency (role clarity and self-efficacy) (Aas & Vavik, 2015). In this paper, we set out to investigate the first step of group coaching sessions and the topics for coaching. In particular, we explore evolving changes in the topics and discuss how the changes may become fundamental to leadership development and leadership practices.

The group coaching builds on principles for practical action research, and it may be called a practice-changing-practice and as such a mode of learning for school leadership development. Practices that shape other practices can be described as 'meta-practices', and group coaching might thus be thought of as a meta-practice. According to Kemmis (2009), a meta-practice can be a process that animates and urges changes in practice, understandings and the conditions of practices through individual and collective self-reflective transformation. In the current paper, we use Kemmis' (2009) concepts understandings, doings, and relatings to investigate the research question raised.

A nationwide education programme for newly appointed principals is offered by 7 providers (universities and colleges) with school leaders as the target group. In this paper we draw on data from the first of three group coaching sessions as a part of the programme offered by the Oslo Metropolitan University (OsloMet) in 2018/2019. The theme of the coaching session, which is linked to the structure and content in the leadership programme, was the clarification of expectations for the leadership role in development work to be carried out and led by the school leaders in their respective schools. The coaching session requires students to do preparatory work. By using 360-degree interviews and ask for feedback from superiors, other employees and, if possible, persons at the same level in their schools, the school leaders get a picture of how they are perceived as leaders and what expectations others have to their leadership role. Based on the interview the school leaders must write a report in which they summarize and interpret the interview data to identify the various expectations, the tensions among them and the emotions revealed in conduction the interviews as well as point out one to two challenges in their leadership role as topics for the coaching. The report must be brought to the coaching session and provided to the coach in advance. In the group coaching, the students meet for a whole day in groups of six, and an experienced and trained group coach leads the session. Every student is in focus at a time, and the other students serve as co-coaches.

A qualitative collective case study approach (Stake, 1995) is used to investigate the first step of the topics for coaching and evolving changes in the topics. The data consisted of documents from twelve school leaders' reports from the 360-degree interviews and observational data gathered from observations of the coaching of the twelve school leaders. The data are analysed using content analysis (Berg 2001, Neuendorf 2002).

Preliminary results show that the school leaders bring a great variety of topics for coaching. Several school leaders are preoccupied with their role and challenges related to how to manage to clearly communicate authority without destructing a good relationship with the staff. More specifically this comes to the surface when discussing how to approach "the difficult conversation". Overall, the school leaders seem to be highly aware of their crucial responsibility to be a driving force for developing their schools. They also display much attention to how they, through leadership style, a focus of priority, disposition of time, and communication, may affect the relationship with their co-leaders and staff. Moreover, the results show that transformational changes in the topics the school

leaders brought to bear as challenges evolved through the ways the school leaders framed and reframed the challenges with support from the coach and the co-coaches. The challenges became far more manageable and the school leaders' understandings of how to approach the challenges in practice through new modes of action evolved.

Since group coaching can lay the groundwork for transformational changes in the ways school leaders think, speak and act in relation to their interpretations of how they are perceived as leaders and what expectations others have to their role as leaders, more awareness of group coaching should be fostered when it comes to research and school leadership development. This research piece indicates the need for more research that can enhance our knowledge about what happens in group coaching sessions as a part of educational leadership programmes, especially regarding the critical moments of changes that may become influential to leadership development and leadership practices.

Key words: School leadership, group coaching, educational leadership programmes.

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2.3.C

Systemic Educational Improvements: An Intervention Study to Enhance Schools' Capacity for Continuous Improvements

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Educational changes are in the core of this project. The aims are to identify effective processes of change in compulsory schools in Iceland (6 – 16 years old) and develop a model for sustainable, systemic improvements. The focus is on five main themes at classroom, schools and municipality levels: creating coherence in policy; professional leadership; effective use of data; professional development; and the building of relationships within and between schools. These themes are considered to be linked with professional learning community (Dogan & Adams, 2018) which in this study is used as an indicator for schools' capacity for continuous development.

Literature on educational improvements emphasises the complexity of the educational system as well as interdependency of different components (Hopkins, et al, 2014). Capacity building, inquiry orientated practice, professional collaboration, and data driven decisions are considered as central themes in sustainable improvements (Blossing, et al, 2015; Fullan, 2016; Schildkamp, et al, 2012). This is reflected in theories about the school as a professional learning community (PLC) (Stoll & Louis, 2007) and as a way to enhance professional development (Muijs, et al, 2014). Furthermore, it has been positively linked with student outcomes (Dogan & Adams, 2018; Lomos, Hofman, & Bosker, 2011; Sigurðardóttir, 2010). The conceptual and analytical framework reflects these ideas, inspired by Cowan et al. (2012) model for systemic improvement, which is geared toward cultural context and the interdependence in the system.

This is a case study including two years intervention (2016-2018) in four schools in three municipalities, purposively selected. An electronic PLC survey was conducting in 13 schools (including the intervention schools) before and after the intervention period in order to compare the outcome of the intervention schools with the other schools. Approximately 670 teachers were asked to respond to the survey in the autumn 2016. The same survey will be conducted in the autumn 2018.

During the intervention the school staff was supposed to make an effort to enhance the five main themes. The research team worked closely with the leadership team in each school. The school leaders were interviewed at regular bases; all meetings with the leadership and teachers teams (24 meetings) were recorded and transcribed and the directors of schools were interviewed. The data is analysed and represented for each school as a case and across cases by themes.

In this paper preliminary results at school levels are presented with main focus on leadership activities and how the leaders managed to enhance the teachers' participation in the project. The model was supposed to be adaptive to school needs and cultural context. It, however, turned out that the existing structures context inside and outside of the school matter much more than expected before. By using Blossing et al (2015) classification for drivers for improvement, it turned out that *Team-driven school* were reasonably well prepared to function within the model of systemic improvement while *problem- and profession- driven* schools seem to require extensive preparation period before being able to function within the model.

The results will hopefully contribute extensively to the body of knowledge concerning school improvement at different levels, both nationally and internationally, and provide a practical and analytical framework.

The study links well with the conference theme as the importance of the context is fundamental but often forgotten issue in educational development and research. The discussions with the participants will focus in if and how suggested model is useful for future policy, practice and research on educational improvements.

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3.1.A

Dilemmas of leadership in the “quantified” school

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In his seminal paper “The ‘McDonaldization’ of Society”, Ritzer discusses characteristics of a rationalised society: “*efficiency, predictability, calculability, substitution of non-human for human technology and control over uncertainty*” (Ritzer, 1983, p. 100). In the strive for progress in late modernity, knowledge is seen as universal, structured and objective, available and applicable in all sectors of society, including education. For example, measurements of the achievement of competence goals allows for calculation of educational efficiency – often relabelled as quality. Through “best practice” or evidence based teaching approaches uncertainty may be controlled and future improvement predicted. However, several issues are left out of the equation. The legacy of Dewey, for example, reminds us that education is about “freeing the life-process for its own most adequate fulfillment” (Dewey, 1902, p. 17). Biesta (2009) calls attention to the need for critical questioning what education is for, and why, and argues that issues in education are always related to values and purposes. Thus, it is vital to inquire into current processes of modernisation and

rationalisation, lest we lose sight of the oppositional perspectives at work in education. In this paper I use the rapidly increasing introduction of digital technologies in a discussion of if and how technologies may entice a view of education as efficient, predictable and calculable while leaving the fundamental question of *why* and *for what* and *who* unaddressed, and what this might imply for leadership.

In spite of high expectations for digitalisation as a catalyst for efficiency and improvement, research indicates such transformations have not taken place (Bulman & Fairlie, 2016). It has proven difficult to ascertain that investments in technology yield learning gains for students (OECD, 2018). However, although effects of technologies for learning outcomes cannot be determined, it is unreasonable to assert that technology does not affect educational systems, practices and relationships. For example, institutional technologies such as learning platforms, digital management systems and communication applications may change the way things are done; however, we do not know if and how they change *what* is done. Selwyn (2011, p. 475) suggest that institutional technologies are more or less seamlessly assimilated and incorporated into existing practices and processes. But digital technologies imperceptibly change not only the work itself, but also the way we think about our work. Technologies may on the one hand offer opportunities to conduct work quicker and with less effort, on the other hand, by using such tools practitioners may sacrifice the space for reflection and professional discretion. There seems to be agreement within the field that digital technologies *may* have a potential to enhance students' learning, but on the other hand it is difficult to identify the effect of technology on learning (Selwyn, 2016). While institutional technologies may provide unprecedented transparency, visibility and insight into processes and outcomes, the price to pay may be risks connected to privacy and data protection. In this paper I argue that we need knowledge about how technologies "act" on practices and practitioners. We do not yet understand the piecemeal (and sometimes substantial) shifts in how practices are done when technologies gain entrée to classrooms and offices, or how digitalisation may affect the ways practitioners understand the purpose of schooling and themselves as teachers and leaders. We need to understand the role of large scale databases in policy making and governance of education and how data-based software platforms data about students' progression, outcomes and potentials may influence school leaders' and teachers' perceptions of a good school or a competent student. Recent publications have focussed on datafication, i.e., the "transformation of different aspects of education (such as test scores, school inspection reports, or clickstream data from an online course) into digital data" (Williamson, 2017, p. 5) and digital governance (Decuyper, 2016; Selwyn, 2015; Williamson, 2015). This paper builds on insights from these and similar publications in a critical discussion about the ways in which technological tools and infrastructures standardise and simplify educational processes, opens up for new kinds of expertise, enables large and small scale surveillance and changes the way the notion of quality is perceived by actors in the field.

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3.1.B

The director of education as a pedagogical leader - boundary spanning facilitating instructional leadership

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The local school authority has a fundamental role in students' learning outcomes. According to the Swedish Education Act, the director of education shall assist the local school board in this responsibility. However, the perspective of the director of education as a pedagogical professional leader is often overlooked in the public debate. In policy discussion regarding the improvement of students' learning outcomes, teachers and principals are instead in focus. Thus, it seems that in the Swedish educational context there are no explicit political expectations on the director of education as pedagogical leader. Nor is there extensive research on the relationship between the local political school board's expectations and the director of education as a pedagogical leader.

Based on a critically interpretive approach within curriculum theory, this study focuses its research interest on the director of education as a pedagogical leader (Uljen & Ylimäki, 2015). Crucial to the educational work and good governance of schools (Hardy and Salo, 2018), the director's position can be contextualised as a mediator between the local school board and the principals. The director of education is placed in the borderland between political and professional demands. As a mediator, a main function for the director is both filtering and buffering (Paulsen, 2014; Paulsen et al., 2014). In a loosely coupled system (Weick, 1976), the director of education is expected to mediate expectations from different parts of the steering chain (Paulsen et al., 2014). As a driver of change, the director interprets and transforms diverse and ever-changing policy contexts, in varying local environments and across multiple professional fields (Hardy & Salo, 2018). Different organisational structures provide the school system with a framework. Within these, certain educational activities are possible, while others are not. The steering of the school system can be illustrated as a steering chain, with different levels and arenas (Johansson, Nihlfors & Jervik Steen, 2014; Lindensjö & Lundgren, 2000). In this system, the position of the director of education can be regarded as an important link in an extensive network of different specialised stakeholders (Nihlfors & Johansson, 2013). The director is in the front line of the political system and their working conditions can thus be looked upon as politically created (Lundgren, 1986; Moos & Paulsen, 2014).

Instructional leadership plays a key role in school improvement, since it is directed by leadership to the improvement of teaching and learning (Coldren & Spillane, 2007; Hallinger, 2005; Seashore Louis & Robinson, 2012). With tight coupling and boundary spanning practices, instructional leadership can create a learning environment required for the kind of organisational changes that raise student achievement (Millward & Timperley, 2010). Directors of education can be perceived as having autonomy and discretion to realise the local schools' interests and needs. As a pedagogical leader, the director of education is exercising an indirect instructional leadership. By making people and organisations work together to manage and tackle common issues, the director of education is undertaking boundary-spanning activities and can work effectively in raising students learning

outcomes (Coldren & Spillane, 2007; Williams, 2011).

The director of education and the local school board must collaborate to improve schools and student academic performance (Fusarelli, 2006). The aim of this study is therefore to study Swedish local school boards' expectations on their directors of education as pedagogical leaders, and to understand and explain the consequences of these expectations. The research questions are as follows:

- What expectations do the chairmen of the local school boards have on their directors of education?
- What will be the consequences of these expectations for the director as pedagogical leader?

Data has been collected through a digital survey, where chairmen of local school boards in all 290 Swedish municipalities were asked about their expectations on the director of education. The response rate was 61 percent. The survey was divided into four parts with a total of 76 questions and the data was analysed in SPSS. In an open question, the chairmen were requested to enter the director's most important tasks. The answers were categorised and analysed.

The chairmen have great confidence in their directors and the directors of education have great opportunities to influence the political decisions. More than 98 percent of the chairmen stated that they got their primary information about the school activities from the director. According to the chairmen, the principals have the greatest responsibility for the students' learning outcomes. The second greatest responsibility have the teachers, and then the board and the director. The legal educational leadership assignment, for example leading the administration and leading the principals, was the director's most expected priority. The second was keeping budget and financial issues and the third was to prioritise the students' learning outcomes. The study also showed that poor student results were ranked by the chairmen as least risky for the director to get criticism for. Meanwhile, there is a higher risk to be criticised for unclear leadership, exceeding allocated budget or disloyalty.

The result indicates that the director of education has a boundary spanning role, as a *reticulist*, *entrepreneur*, *interpreter/communicator* and *organiser* (Williams, 2011). As reticulist, the director has considerable power through information advantage and opportunities to influence the political agenda. Almost all chairmen stated that they got their main information from the director, which is supported by Johansson and Nihlfors (2014). The results indicate further both agency and discretion, which leads to entrepreneurial opportunities. The great trust and high expectations on the director, at the hub, emphasise the role as interpreter and communicator, as well as organiser.

As boundary spanners, with their access to and control over the distribution of information, the directors occupy a unique position in their organisations (Bradshaw, 1999). They can choose among activities and their formal position and status, enables them to control the allocation of resources and policy decision-making within their own organisations (Williams, 2013). For directors of education to become more involved as pedagogical leaders, they first and foremost need to see themselves as professional instructional leaders in addition to their usual managerial responsibilities (Huber, 2011). They need to make use of their boundary spanning role, aiming at improving students learning outcomes. But the possibilities of boundary spanning actions are not immediately obvious and the directors must initiate and develop them further.

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3.1.C

New leadership roles in upper secondary schools: *When teachers are positioned as leaders*

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School leadership is a key issue regarding quality improvement in schools (Møller, 2014). In Norway, governance of schools emphasizes school leadership as fundamental for ensuring quality in teachers instructional practices (White paper 21, 2016-2017) and increased attention is directed to the importance of leadership as an instrument for school improvement (Hybertsen et al., 2018). An underlying assumption is that school leaders ensure development in their schools through teachers' professional learning (Abrahamsen, 2017; Abrahamsen & Aas, 2019). In this perspective school leaders are not leaders who passively implement policy, but important change agents facilitating professional learning and school development.

This paper explores the emergence of a new leadership role in upper secondary school in Norway; the 'subject leaders' (Helstad, Joleik & Klavenes, 2019). The subject leaders are teachers who are

responsible of leading processes of professional learning and development of instructional practices amongst the teachers in different subject departments within the school where they are expected to play an important role regarding school development. With special expertise within a subject-specific area, often in combination with reduced teaching time, new teacher roles represent a differentiation of teacher positions in the school organization and a knowledge specialization within the teacher profession. The present research project investigates how new subject leader roles are transformed into different models and practices from within the school. The research question is: How do subject leaders in a new role interpret and develop their leadership practices and how does the emergence of new leadership roles influence other roles and positions within the school?

A fundamental but often forgotten perspective in the processes of developing new roles is considering the traditions of the teacher profession and school leadership and the parallel process of shaping meaning between the new structural role and the process of shaping local practices from within the schools. In sensemaking processes the actors within a school notice and interpret information from the environment, and then enact (Weick, 1995). A consequence of this is that the actors contribute to shape and become shaped by their context, including norms and traditions in schools and in the profession, in this case amongst other subject leaders and the principal and the deputy heads, and in relation to the development of practices and teachers' professional learning.

The study which informs this paper is based on a qualitative research design with interviews with teachers and school leaders, both individually and in focus groups, in one upper secondary school in a central part of Norway which has about 1000 students and 130 employees. Focus group interviews may produce a concentrated amount of empirical data on a topic if the researchers create a situation based on trust and by letting the discussion unfold between the discussants (Morgan, 1997). The questions guiding the interviews were focused on investigating how subject leaders construct expectations towards themselves as new leaders in new roles, but also how subject leaders, deputy heads and the principal in the local school experience and develop their roles in the interactions between the actors. The analysis is focused on how teachers and school leaders make meaning, by coding and condensing interpretation of meaning (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Being an ongoing process, the interpretative analysis aims at developing knowledge about how subject leaders develop their understandings of their roles and their practices.

Preliminary findings reflect the complexity when new leadership roles are emerging from within the school. When teachers are positioned as leaders in the intersection between the teachers and the deputy heads and the principal both the roles and the relations between the professionals are influenced and power and trust are at play. The subject leaders are positioned as changing agents in their departments, but they strive to make meaning of the new role and their tasks and responsibilities. They are not comfortable about involving too much in their colleagues' work. At the same time the deputy heads express uncertainty about how to support the subject leaders. Both the subject leaders and the deputy heads struggle to define who has the responsibility to involve in and to follow up the work of the teachers. The emergence of new roles also challenges ways in which teachers and school leaders communicate. Even though a role description for subject leaders has been developed, expectations and norms from previous roles and traditions, where the subject leaders often acted as coordinators following up the budget in their departments influence their understandings. The emergence of new leadership roles in schools meet an organization characterized by strong traditions. Too many leadership roles within the school may run the risk in which responsibility and tasks are distributed among (too) many actors and where it becomes unclear who is responsible for what. Historically schools are characterized by egalitarian relations between teachers and school leaders have acted as "primus inter pares". When teachers are positioned as leaders the traditions that characterize the teacher profession are challenged. The emergence of new leadership roles thus affect fundamental and often forgotten dimensions as historical and social traditions that influence the relations between professionals and the conditions for school development within the local school. In order to cope with policy expectations schools are required to have the capacity for change. How professionals handle tasks and relational issues in their leadership practices in this context are thus important.

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3.2.A

External expectations, demands, resources and support as factors for school leaders' health and leadership

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Introduction

National policy and educational reforms often have a strong belief in the importance of educational leadership (Pont et al. 2008). In Sweden, a number of new policies have been introduced during the last decades, aiming at increasing students' results. One of the challenges for school leaders is to combine the strong expectations from national policies with the requirements from the local school organizer at their own school. At a local level teachers, students, parents, superintendents and other actors have different demands and expectations on school leaders (Leo 2015). This creates a kind of cross pressure on school leaders that might affect their health and their leadership. One point of departure in this paper is that wellbeing is a fundamental part of educational leadership, and we seek answers to what can strengthen principals' health and support educational leadership.

A number of researchers have stressed the role of school leaders in educational development and classroom learning (Leithwood and Day 2008, Pashiardis 2014) and it is expected that the school leader should work closely with teachers and students to discuss and evaluate teaching, and create a favorable climate for learning (Hallinger 2005). At the same time, according to a Talis report (2013), school principals in Sweden spend the largest part of their time on administration (51%), devoting only 19% of their time to curriculum and teaching tasks.

A hypothesis in this study is that these mismatches between external expectations for quick fix of complex problems, and the support school leaders have access to, leads to an increased risk of poor health. This in turn might lead to inability to prioritize, inability to capture signals from the surrounding, an increased number of unresolved decisions and reduced efficiency.

The purpose of this paper is to examine what role external expectations, demands, resources and support play in relation to school leaders' health and leadership. The research questions are as follows:

- What kind of internal and external demands and expectations are principals experiencing?
- How do principals manage internal and external demands and expectations?
- What different types of resources and support are available to the principals, and what do they need in order to strengthen their leadership?

This paper is a part of a research project, *School Leaders' Work Environment: A Project on Organizational Conditions, Stress-related Psychological Illness, Mobility and Potential for Improvement*. It is a three year project (2018 – 2020) funded by AFA Insurance, an organization owned by Sweden's labour market parties.

Methods

The study use a mixed methods approach (Johnson et al 2007). The study design entailed four steps (1) a web survey, (2) group interviews, (3) a second web survey, and (4) a series of workshops. This paper primarily draws on data obtained in step 2.

In step one, a total of 2317 school leaders in all levels of the educational system responded to a web survey. The survey had around 160 questions to get data on the school leaders' social situation, working conditions, health and well-being. There were also questions about job strain, resources and support linked with the leadership.

The second step consists of nine group interviews in three cities in different parts of the country. In each city there are three group interviews, one with pre-school principals, one with elementary school principals, and one with high school principals.

Results

One stepping stone is a result from the survey where 25 % of the school leaders (n=2317) show signs of incipient exhaustion.

The principals in the group interviews had a strong focus on expectations and demands at the local level. The most stressful expectations and demands derive from the superintendents and school boards in the municipality to deliver results in specified areas. These areas were not always in line with the planned quality improvement decided in the school based on the needs in that particular school. Most of the groups talk about a lack of participation with the levels above in important issues affecting their schools and their leadership. The principals give examples of lack of trust from the levels above, and they express frustration that is difficult to handle as leaders.

There are a lot of indications that an increasing number of parents claim their children's rights to special and individualized education. There have been an increasing number of complaints reported to the Swedish Schools Inspectorate during the last decade. As a result the principals spend a lot of time documenting student cases to be "safe" and meet complaints. The principals in elementary schools highlights the increasing number of threats from parents; if we don't get this for our child we will file a complaint to the Inspectorate, or we will start a thread in social media, or we will change school. The lack of mutual or collective trust is evident in many cases.

The expectations from the staff and the students were moderate, and normally not very stressful. Conflicts among staff, and not being able to fully support children with difficulties are considered stressful, but a normal part of school leadership.

The support and resources principals call for is:

- Shared leadership, most principals are very lonely in their positions
- Clarity in roles and assignment, the demands and expectations from national level often clash with demands and expectations from local level.
- Close administrative support, now principals have to manage a lot of HR- issues, financial follow-up, and technical issues linked with the school buildings.

Two fundamental concepts stand out from the interviews and need to be further analyzed, discussed and re-introduced; *collective trust* (Forsyth et al 2011, Tschannen-Moran 2014) and *sustainability* as fundamental parts in organizations (Docherty et al 2009). It seems like a lot of national and local politicians as well as educational leaders at all levels have forgotten that trust is a key, and change takes time. Vital parts of sustainable leadership as endurance, planning for succession, distribution of leadership, recognizing complexity taking the organization's history and legacy in mind (Hargreaves and Fink 2006) need to be reintroduced.

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3.2.B

Subject hierarchy and institutional control are a fundamental but often forgotten (and ignored) factor in constraining change in upper secondary education

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The aim of the paper is to understand how upper secondary school leaders in Iceland view themselves, and other educational actors in their schools, as they respond to ministerial demands to change school practices (Upper Secondary Education Act No. 92/2008; Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 2011) to address the fundamental, and often forgotten, factors impacting educational change.

Many scholars have indicated an absence of institutional analysis in education. Chen and Ke (2014) discuss how scholars in education neglect the impact of the macro level on schools. They also state that researchers ignore the complex interactions between the macro environment and what happens in the schools. These criticisms are worth exploring by using Coburn's (2004) five different

responses of schools to macro demand for change (see also Scott, 2014). In a similar vein, Burch (2007) indicates that educational researchers have not fully explored the interaction between the theories of institutions and organisations. Furthermore, Kraatz (2009), Raffaelli and Glynn (2015), and Washington, Boal, and Davis (2008) state that more recent studies have ignored the existence of institutional leadership by mainly emphasising organisational leadership. This paper intends to react to these observations using the suggested theoretical lenses.

Twenty-one school leaders in nine upper secondary schools in Iceland were interviewed (Óskarsdóttir, 2018). Both the schools and the school leaders were selected on the basis of stratified sampling with regard to school types on one hand, and hierarchical structure within the selected schools on the other. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013) was used to analyse how the schools enact policy. To understand the phenomenon in more depth Coburn's (2004) concept of five response mechanisms was used. The categories are: rejection, decoupling, parallel structures, assimilation, and accommodation. In parallel, theories of institutional and organisational leadership (Kraatz 2009, Raffaelli & Glynn, 2015; Washington et al., 2008) were used to analyse school leaders' actions towards the different responses of educators. Subject hierarchy was also found to be an important feature in resisting change. This is in line with several scholars who claim that curricular subjects and subject fields have different merit in schools (see e.g. Arnesen, Lahelma, Lundahl & Öhrn, 2014; Bleazby, 2015; Valero, 2015; Ward, 2012).

The findings show complex patterns of interactions between various actors and social structures that impact change across system boundaries of upper secondary education in Iceland. Seven of the nine schools fitted four out of the five categories identified by Coburn (2004). Most of the schools fitted the category of parallel structures, one matched the category of assimilation, another decoupling and still other rejection. As two of the schools did not fit the categorisations, the data suggested the addition of a sixth category labelled "pioneering". These schools were newly established with no history. They were designed with a specific vision and a particular pedagogy led by the school directors who were specifically hired to design the school pedagogy to reflect the new curricular ideas.

All the school leaders explained that working in such a complex setting, entailed responding to the various issues differently. They described more instrumental processes when leading the school towards new aims and challenges holistically, or in part. They also identified themselves as being more rationally when supporting teachers. Therefore, they were classified as organisational leaders (Kraatz, 2009; Raffaelli & Glynn, 2015; Washington et al., 2008). However, they were silent and even constrained when working with a group of teachers who resisted change or exhibited decoupling characteristics. In this context, they operated as institutional leaders (Kraatz, 2009; Raffaelli & Glynn, 2015; Washington et al., 2008), emphasising the process of trying to reconnect the somewhat conservative subject teachers with their original values.

As is evident in number of schools clustered as parallel structures (Coburn 2004; Scott, 2014), many self-sustained subunits were seen to be operating within the schools. Thus, both setups of organisations and institutions (Schott, 2014; Thornton et al., 2012) were found within the same school depending on the priorities and dynamics operating therein. At the same time the school leaders assumed double roles. In so doing, the leaders in the same school showed examples of both styles of institutional and organisational leadership (Kraatz 2009, Raffaelli & Glynn, 2015; Washington et al., 2008).

As previously implied most significant challenges faced by school leaders were related to the academic subjects, in particular mathematics and Icelandic. Nonetheless, the school leaders indicated that most subjects have a legacy that is very difficult or impossible to influence. Based on this, it is possible to argue that subjects are independent, powerful, institutionalised social structures that are a fundamental but often forgotten feature in constraining change. They are

governed by traditions and monitored and controlled by powerful actors across many levels. Therefore, school leaders only have partial agency and thus limited power to promote subject content change even when they strongly felt that change was needed.

As claimed above, this paper acknowledges the fact that several scholars have claimed, researchers, mainly in the field of education, neglect some of the fundamental theoretical lenses that are used in this paper. By using the lenses of both institutions and organisations, the paper concurs with Brunch's (2007) criticism that educational researchers have not fully explored these theories. While exploring actors across system boundaries in upper secondary education in Iceland, an attempt has been made to fill the gap identified by Chen and Ke (2014). Moreover, Kraatz (2009), Raffaelli and Glynn (2015), and Washington et al. (2008) claim that scholars neglect the theories of institutional and organisational leadership. These concepts became a crucial feature in the data analysis and harmonised well with Coburn's (2004) categorisation. Furthermore, the data suggests adding the concept of "pioneering" to the categorisation. The concept is a clearly fundamental but forgotten part of the already existing theoretical arsenal and therefore beneficial to global arenas. Finally, it is important to understand that both institutional characteristics of upper secondary education and subject hierarchy play a significant role in constraining educational change.

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3.2.C

Educational leadership as a governance phenomenon in high achieving schools: challenging the social epistemologies of the field

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Introduction

Globalization is the imitation and adaptation of global knowledge solutions as they are diffused from one country to another (Jarvis, 2007). This quotation based on theories of globalization and the life long learning society by Peter Jarvis exemplifies the processes of policy borrowing, that nations are taking part of in various degrees due to global competition and economic trends (OECD, 2010; Sivesind & Wahlström, 2017). In these processes, policy constructions in nations are ideas and discourses that are borrowings from de-territorialized and naturalized knowledge solutions (Steiner-Khamsi, 2014). The ideas and discourses that seem inspiring and promising attempts of effectiveness carry both programmatic and philosophical understandings that will affect the infected at more sociological levels.

In the Danish national policy constructions (Undervisningsministeriet, 2015), educational leadership is a universal and cultural free phenomenon based on understandings of the principal and his or hers causal influence on the academic achievements of the students. As we know from international, comparative educational leadership research, there are national and cultural differences in the constitution of school leadership within the national, educational governance system (Hall et al., 2015; Moos, 2016, 2017). Furthermore, there are also national and cultural differences in the traditions of power relations within the educational field (Dimmock, 2000; Storgaard, 2019). Understanding school leadership without connecting leadership to its institutional and cultural, historical settings I argue is a construction that only displays a small part of the picture. Furthermore, adapting knowledge solutions from different, cultural leadership and governance fields changes the national purposes and identities of the Danish school system in not yet known ways.

The purpose of this study is therefore to perform an international, comparative study of school leadership in high achieving schools, that takes an alternative and critical approach to the dominant displayed in a critical mapping of the research in the field (Gunter, 2003; Storgaard, Forthcoming). In this mapping of the field the construction of school leadership was predominantly approaching leadership within a normative prescriptive approach related to philosophical understandings from the scientific management and school effectiveness paradigm. Some studies embedded the principal in its cultural settings, but only a few studies approached school leadership as a phenomenon related to institutional, relational power taking a critical position. Furthermore, only one understood leadership in a follower centered perspective constitution teachers as co-constructors of leadership and power relations.

Methodological, the study is founded in post structural understandings of the reality as discursively constructed-, and embedded in historical discourses. It investigates the subject field as a governmental, governance phenomenon by taking a critical sensemaking approach (Helms Mills, Thurlow, & Mills, 2010), that combines a sensemaking-, and power perspective (Fairclough, 1992, 2015; Foucault, Burchell, Gordon, & Miller, 1991; Weick, 1995). This analytical understanding places school leadership as a coupling phenomenon, where the dialectical and intersubjective sensemaking-

and power processes enacts policy (Ball, 2012). The constructed meanings forms the rationales that governs the future fields, and thereby sensemaking becomes a theory of governance in school leadership.

Furthermore, the study embeds this analytical approach within an international and comparative empirical setting investigating school leadership in two high achieving schools in Denmark and in Ontario, Canada, as national policy webs (Winton & Pollock, 2016). The use of a critical, comparative case approach creates an opportunity to trace the phenomenon both horizontally, vertically and transversally across historic times, fields and spaces (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2014). The international study therefor allows for scientific understandings of school leadership as sensemaking-, and power processes related to both local, national and international policy fields and trends in global educational governance (Dean, 2010; Levinson, Sutton, & Winstead, 2009).

The analytical findings from the international, comparative study of school leadership in high achieving schools displays a tendency of school leadership as predominantly local enactments of governance. However, through the systematic analysis of similarities and differences following the tracing logic, common fields shared across the nations also emerges. First, school leadership as a governance phenomenon shows a tendency of being dialectic related to the national, institutional field and the dominant governance order in this. In Denmark as a policy web, the school leadership regimes are dialectic related to an order of competition, whereas in Ontario, the dominant order is improvement. The consequences of this positions school leadership in Denmark as a phenomena of local top-management, performance management and decoupling in the organization. In one governance regime this was enacted through processes of social hierarchy and strategic, economic commandship. In Ontario, the order of improvement were in relation to the school system as a centralized, bureaucratic system. This positions school leadership as phenomena of counselling, control and mediation of the bureaucratic power through seduction and the construction of a discursive order of love and friendship. Across the four cases a global discourse of academic achievements emerged, but in one of the high achieving, Danish schools, this was constructed in a different school leadership regime. This was a regime of democratic deliberation, flat hierarchy and a broad understanding of the democratic purpose of education.

The alternative constructions of school leadership as a governmental governance phenomenon in high achieving schools clarifies the universal knowledge claims within the educational leadership and effectiveness research and national policy fields as historical constructions. Furthermore, it gives empirical insights into the governmental governance mechanisms that are enacted in power mediation processes in school leadership internationally. Taking a different approach understanding the lead of education beyond the 'what works' approach (Moller, 2017) creates a scientific opportunity to see, what we do not expect to see. Engaging with the social epistemologies of the field and applying fundamental but forgotten perspectives therefor has the potential to enable development in the field and inform national policy with empirical insights that hopefully will support the democratic development of the public school system.

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3.3.A

Teaching Educational Leadership- Practices and Rationales

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Historically, by contrast to for example the U.S., school leadership has not required a specific education in Scandinavia. For years, school leaders were recruited among the 'first among equals'

(Møller, 2009), i.e. among teachers who had some administrative experience. In Norway, for example, there are no formal education requirements beyond pedagogical competence and necessary leadership skills (Ottesen, 2016). The need for a specific education in school leadership is now recognized internationally (Crow, Lumby & Pashiradis, 2008), but there are variations with regard to the extent to which formal education is a requirement for appointment to leadership positions (Ottesen, 2016).

There is an on-going discussion, nationally and internationally, of what is, or what should be the content of school leadership programs (Bush, 2008; Huber, 2010; Ottesen, 2016). Although many studies have touched upon this issue by researching the pedagogy and curriculum in programs (Osterman & Hafner, 2009; Rush, 2008; Taylor et al., 2009; Ylimaki & Henderson, 2017), few researchers have examined 1) how teaching is played out in activities, and 2) how teaching activities are legitimized by faculty members in the education for school leaders in Norway and California. Programs in Norway and California are interesting to compare and to discuss because the origins and the policy contexts of the programs are different. What is similar is that the concrete programs under study have been offered since the beginning of the 2000s.

The education of school leaders as field of research is criticized for being a-theoretical and dominated by self-reports and a lack of empirical studies. In this paper we adopt a practice-based approach (Nicolini, 2012). Practice theory is sometimes described as a family of theories that (to some extent) share certain sets of assumptions. For this study we assume that practices are contingent, mediated and situated and that they are social accomplishments that are

brought into being through the emergent relationships between subjects, tools and objects. In our socio-material approach we investigate empirically how materials, people and infrastructures are interwoven in the make-up of specific practices (Shove, 2017), which entails that the basic units of analysis are the unfolding practices, within which a number of different entities work with and on each other (e.g. tools, physical environments, people, and discourses). Although a socio-material approach is not new in educational research, few scholars have approached classroom-practices in the education of school leaders with such approach.

For the purpose of this paper we zoom in exclusively on the practices that unfold in two classrooms, the “real-time doing and saying of something in a specific time and place”. The data consists of artefacts from program activities (such as presentations, articles, hand-outs, assignments), 17h of video data from each of the two cases, and contextual interviews with the faculty members we have observed. The departure point of the interviews has been the video-observations. We have presented specific situations from observations to the faculty members in interviews in order to gain substantial insight into underlying institutional and epistemic infrastructures and discourses that may be consequential for the design of teaching and instruction in the programs, which we argue have been forgotten perspectives in the research literature.

The interview data indicates faculty members in the two cases drew on different resources and discourses when they legitimized their teaching activities, which partly reflect the different national policy and historical contexts, and partly the international contexts. We argue understanding how teaching is played out empirically, and how faculty members legitimize teaching activities in different contexts is fundamental and forgotten approach which may serve as an important backdrop for discussing the didactic discourse of existing and future programs, as well as the role, the nature and the relevance of school leadership programs in leadership practices.

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3.3.B

Reflexive dialogues for learning about school management

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The purpose of the paper

These years we notice an increasing amount of top-down implementation of standardized concepts for school administration and most often reflexive dialogue is displaced due to the daily running of the school and the fulfillment of bureaucratic procedures and demands. This can lead to automatized ways of acting, rather than thoughtful and engaged leadership. As an alternative to this trend I present and discuss a *dialogically based approach* for the creation of reflexivity and learning among school principals in their leading teams.

Without doubt, managing schools today is a complex task characterized by multiple external and internal requests, which can be even ambiguous and antagonistic. The working day of the school principal and the school managers is often loaded by a series of administrative tasks and meetings with many different stakeholders, but usually, very little time is left for reflexive dialogues for learning concerning the challenges and dilemmas related to the practice of leading. I argue that school management today requires dialogic, relational and reflexive capabilities apart from

administrative skills and an economical overview. Furthermore, it requires capabilities of navigating in shifting contexts, among different interests and different needs. Unfortunately, during a busy working week, very little time is left for reflexive dialogues for learning about school management.

This paper presents and discusses a dialogically based practice informed by action research for the enhancement of reflexivity, knowledge making and learning among school principals.

Action research for leadership development

The paper is based on an action research project involving ten public schools in a municipality of the Northern region of Denmark. The aim of the action research project was management learning through dialogic and reflexive practice. It took place during a period of two years. The intention was to help school principals and school managers in becoming more thoughtful and reflexive concerning their ways of practicing leadership.

Rather than implementing a general and standardized training program for all the school managers in the municipality, the main idea behind the initiative was to create a space for reflexivity, knowledge sharing and learning through *dialogue* and *from within* (Shotter 1993) the individual school's current challenges and special conditions.

The ten schools involved in the project each have their own history, background, demographics and socioeconomic foundation. Not surprisingly, each of these schools was characterized by having its own leadership style, school culture and identity.

The project was based on action research and the ideas about relational leading and dialogically based collaboration (Cunliffe and Eriksen 2011; Hersted and Gergen 2013). The learning took place in reflexive dialogues in dynamically developing processes in reflecting teams (Tom Andersen 1991). In this approach, the researcher is seen as an agent for change, as exploration, learning and knowledge making take place simultaneously (McNamee & Hosking 2012). The reflexive processes (Cunliffe 2002) with the school managers in minor groups were facilitated by the author of this paper and the findings have been read and validated by a representative selection of the participants. The research inquiry as such will be unfolded in the paper.

General research question

The general research question was the following: How, in a *semiformal learning space*, can we work with management learning, which can create a positive impact at ten schools, each with very different histories, backgrounds, and socioeconomic foundations, based on action research and the ideas about relational leading and dialogically based collaboration?

Main findings and contributions

It is noteworthy that the main themes, which the managers had chosen to work with, over time shifted from the simple and operational to the more complex, visionary and long-term based. The managers themselves expressed that the dialogues and reflections in the groups have led to significant changes in their way of acting in their daily work in the organization.

Based on the experience from the project, the statements in interviews and in the evaluations from the participants, it was clear that we succeeded in creating a semi-formal learning space,

which has contributed to high levels of reflexivity. In relation to this, the project led to *changes* of first and second order, which be explained and discussed further in the paper. The project addresses concrete issues, dilemmas and paradoxes, which have been analyzed from different perspectives, and alternative potential actions have been discussed and tried out in practice. A special characteristic of this semiformal approach to learning is that it is *flexible*. In this approach the participating managers identified and worked with themes, which were relevant to them, emerging in the here-and-now situation. In the project, we practiced a dialogical approach to learning and knowledge making based on Shotter's notion of "*withness*"-thinking (Shotter, 1993), which will be unfolded more in the paper. The paper concludes that this dialogically based approach makes particularly good sense while it contributes to higher levels of reflexivity concerning complex organizational challenges. Moreover, the project has created an impact in the local school district and has contributed to a more generative dialogue between the schools and the municipality.

The continuation of this paper

The full paper will explain and discuss the following issues:

- The theoretical background and key concepts
- The action research approach
- Examples of first and second order change within the schools
- Summary and conclusion.

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