



Vetenskapsrådet

## REKTOR – EN FORSKNINGSÖVERSIKT 2000–2010



# **REKTOR – EN FORSKNINGSÖVERSIKT 2000–2010**

**DEL I FORSKNING OM REKTOR**  
En översikt av Svensk forskning 2000-2010

**DEL II RESEARCH ON SCHOOL LEADERS**  
with Nordic and European reviews 2000-2010

Olof Johansson (red./ed.)

**REKTOR – EN FORSKNINGÖVERSIKT 2000–2010**

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# FÖRORD

## Rektor – en forskningsöversikt 2000–2010

Utbildningsvetenskaplig forskning rymmer en mångfald av forskning om lärande och kunskapsbildning inom utbildning och undervisning. Vetenskapsrådets utbildningsvetenskapliga kommitté arbetar på flera sätt för att sprida kunskap om aktuella forskningsresultat. Ett exempel är den årliga konferensen Resultatdialog, ett annat exempel är genom att sammanställa forskningsresultat inom ett avgränsat område i form av forskningsöversikter.

Den föreliggande forskningsöversikten är en av de rapporter inom Vetenskapsrådets rapportserie som tagits fram i samarbete med Skolverket. Skolverket ska stödja skolhuvudmän, rektorer och lärare i deras utbildningsverksamhet och bidra till att förbättra deras förutsättningar att arbeta med utveckling av verksamheterna för ökad måluppfyllelse. I detta arbete sprider Skolverket kunskap om forskningsresultat som är av särskilt intresse för utbildning och undervisning. Skolverket har finansierat framtagandet av denna rapport. Det övergripande målet för översikten är att presentera och diskutera aktuell svensk och europeisk forskning om rektor.

De slutsatser och reflektioner som presenteras är författarnas egna. Forskningsöversikten har tagits fram av ett antal internationella forskare, under ledning av professor Olof Johansson vid Umeå universitet. Granskningen av rapporten är genomförd genom peer-review.

Stockholm i augusti 2011

Sigbrit Franke  
*Ordförande*

Elisabet Nihlfors  
*Huvudsekreterare*

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# SAMMANFATTNING

I den här forskningsöversikten är studier om rektors roll, arbete och ledarskap i fokus. Syftet är att kartlägga svensk forskning om rektor efter 2000 men också att redovisa vilken forskning som bedrivs i Norden och några europeiska länder. Översikten avslutas med ett kapitel som sammanfattar forskningsläget och pekar på kunskapsluckor som det skulle vara värdefullt att få fram nya forskningsresultat inom. Grundtanken är att varje kapitel ska innehålla forskning från det aktuella landet.

Urvalet av avhandlingar utgår ifrån de ämnesord som varje författare lämnar till sitt universitetsbibliotek och som också anges i avhandlingen. De så kallade key words eller ämnesord som har styrat sökningen i den svenska delen har varit: rektor, skolledare samt principal, head-master, school-leader, educational administration och educational leadership. Vi har begränsat urvalet till publicerat material som är sökbart.

Forskningsöversikten är indelad i två delar, en svenskspråkig och en engelskspråkig. I kapitel 1 ges förutom en introduktion och en disposition av boken också en tillbakablick på svensk forskning om rektor före 2000. Kapitel 2 behandlar Svenska avhandlingar om rektor mellan 2000 och 2010 i Sverige och kapitel 3 är en översikt av den publicerade forskning som finns av svenska forskare om rektor och rektors ledarskap. Kapitel 4 som avslutar den svenska delen behandlar Forskningstrender och viktiga framtida forskningsområden.

Del II är skriven på engelska och inleds med att kapitel 2 och 3 från den svenska delen sammanfattas på engelska. Sedan följer forskningssammansättningar från fyra nordiska länderna; Norge, Danmark, Finland samt Island.

Därefter följer kapitel där några av våra närmaste europeiska grannar beskriver forskningsläget i sina länder. Först ut är England, några tysktalande länderna, Polen samt slutligen Lettland. Forskningsöversikten avslutas med en översiktlig sammanfattning och en diskussion om forskningstrender samt angelägen framtida forskning.



# SUMMARY

In this research review are studies on the principals' role, work and leadership in focus. The purpose is to map Swedish research of school principals after 2000 but also present the research that is carried out in the Nordic countries and some northern European countries close to Sweden. In the last chapter in the research overview a summary is provided that describes the research in the countries in the volume and also identify different knowledge areas in which it should be most valuable to have more research for our understanding of the research field. The basic idea is that each chapter only shall be based on research from the country presented.

The sample of dissertations is created based on the key words that the authors have decided to use to describe their thesis with in relation to university library search engines. Those so called key words or subject words have been central for us in the search process. In the Swedish search those words have been: rektor, skolledare samt principal, head-master, school-leader, educational administration and educational leadership. We have limited the search to only cover published material that is reported by different search engines.

This research overview is divided into two parts, one in Swedish and one in English. In chapter one an introduction and the books disposition is presented besides a short overview of Swedish research about principals before year 2000. Chapter two summarize Swedish dissertations on principals between 2000 and 2010 and chapter three gives an overview of published research written by Swedish authors on principal and principal leadership. Chapter four that ends the Swedish part treats research trends and future important research areas.

Part two is written in English and starts with a chapter on Sweden based on the Swedish chapter two and three from the first part. Followed by research reviews from the four Nordic countries; Norway, Denmark, Finland and Iceland.

Next we find chapters from our closest European neighbors describing the research in their countries. First out is England, followed by four German speaking countries, Poland and Latvia. The research review ends with a summary and a discussion about research trends and desired future research.



# FÖRFATTARPRESENTATIONER

**Dainuvite Blūma**, Dr. Paed., Professor in the Faculty of Education, Psychology and Arts at the University of Latvia. She has led and participated as researcher, consultant and expert on a wide range of international and national educational change projects in education in general and also in teacher initial and in-service education. She is an expert of education research and teacher education curricula in Latvia and several other European countries and for Grundtvig and Erasmus projects in Brussels. Her main publications are on various aspects of the shift of paradigms in education and teacher education in post-soviet countries, as well as on university staff professional development. **Contact:** blumad@lanet.lv

**Paul V. Bredeson**, Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at the University of Wisconsin-Madison where he teaches courses in Professional Development and Organizational Learning, Instructional Leadership and School Improvement, and Research Methods. Prior to his appointment on the faculty in 1991, Professor Bredeson was a Professor at Pennsylvania State University and served as the Executive Director of the Pennsylvania School Study Council from 1985–1991. Professor Bredeson served three years as a Professor of Educational Leadership at Ohio University. Prior to entering higher education, Dr. Bredeson was a high school principal and high school Spanish teacher in Wisconsin and Connecticut respectively. Over the past 30 years, Professor Bredeson's research has centered on alternative conceptions of leadership, especially in regard to school principals. Grounded in his professional work experiences as a Spanish teacher, high school principal, project director for bilingual administrator training, and Executive Director of a research consortium for public schools in Pennsylvania, his scholarship is located at the critical nexus of organizational leadership, capacity building, and professional learning. **Contact:** bredeson@education.wisc.edu

**Christopher Day**, Professor emeritus of Education and Senior Fellow at the School of Education, University of Nottingham. He has worked, as a school-teacher, teacher educator and local authority adviser. He has extensive research and consultancy experience in England, Europe, Australia, South East Asia and North America and with the OECD in the fields of teachers' continuing professional development, school leadership and change. He is the Editor of 'Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice', co-editor of 'Educational Action Research'; and Founding Director of the 16 country



longitudinal research project, *International Successful School Principals Project* (<http://www.ils.uio.no/english/research/project/isspp/>). Professor Day has recently received the Michael Huberman award for his distinguished contribution to research on teachers work and lives from the American Educational Research Association. Two of his most recent publications are *The New Lives of Teachers* (2010) Routledge and *The Impact Successful Principals have on Pupil Learning and Achievement* (2011) Open University Press. **Contact:** Christopher.Day@Nottingham.ac.uk

**Ineta Daiktere**, Dr. Paed, University of Latvia. She works as a lecturer (since 2000) and researcher with a general interest in school leadership and a particular focus on the development of school culture. She was actively taking part in various in-service training programs for school leaders (2004–2007) covering topics related to human resource management, school culture and public relations for comprehensive schools. Like her colleague, prof. Dainuvite Blūma, Dr. Daiktere was a local coordinator from Latvia for EUco-financed project *European Leaders' Training in Education*, ELTE in 2008–2010. **Contact:** ineta.daiktere@lu.lv

**Börkur Hansen**, Professor of Educational Administration at the University of Iceland, School of Education. He has a B. A. in Education and Psychology from the University of Iceland from 1982, a M.Ed. from 1984 and a Ph.D. from 1987 from the University of Alberta, Canada. His major research interests are in the area of educational leadership, school management, school development and governance. He has written and edited books on school management and school development for the Icelandic context, and published in Icelandic and international journals. He has been actively involved in administration at the School of Education and its predecessor, the Iceland University of Education, as well as in running their program for school leaders. **Contact:** borkur@hi.is

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**Olof Johansson**, Professor of political science at Umeå University and director of the Centre for Principal Development. The Centre is since 1993 running the National Principal Training Program. During the last 20 years the focus of his research interest has been school leadership, principal training, values and ethics in relation to schools and their leadership, school governance, school development, and evaluation. Most of his research has been comparative. He is now working with two large research projects *The Successful School Leadership Project in Sweden - Structure, Culture, Leadership: Prerequisites for Successful Schools?* The project was one of the founding projects for the *International Successful School Principal Project (ISSPP)* with 16 participating countries. The project has been running for 10 years. The second project is *National Policy meets Local Implementation Structures*. The project is a part of the International Superintendents Research Network (ISRN)  
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**Pekka Kanervio**, PhD, Researcher at the Institute of Educational Leadership in the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. At the moment he is conducting a national four-year research project on educational leadership in the municipal provisions of general education for the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture. He has worked as a principal in general education for seven years and as a teacher for fifteen years. He has been involved with the Institute of Educational Leadership since 1998. He got his PhD in 2007. His PhD dissertation is titled *Crisis and Renewal in one Finnish Private School*. He has participated in several international conferences and projects. **Contact:** pekka.kanervio@jyu.fi

**Joanna Michalak**, Professor of Humanities (2008–) at the Faculty of Educational Studies, University of Lodz, Poland; Head of the School Pedagogy Section at the Faculty of Educational Studies, University of Lodz, Poland. Professor Michalak has been working at the University of Lodz since 1996. Since 1998 she has been involved in several international projects. As well as the EUDORA (European Doctorate in Teaching and Teacher Education) project, she has performed the role of a local project coordinator of such European ventures as DIDDISS (Didaktik, Lehren und Lernen in der Lehrerbildung), EPAC (Education Policy Analysis in a Comparative Perspective) and ELHE (@-learning in Higher Education) projects. The latest European projects which she has participated in are focused on successful school leadership and school management (*Leading Schools Successfully in Challenging Urban Contexts: Strategies for Improvement: Erasmus/Comenius 2.1. project*). Currently she is developing her research interests in the area of the quality

of teacher education, the quality of the relationships in educational settings, school development, school leadership and management and school-university partnership. **Contact:** joanna.michalak@onet.pl

**Lejf Moos**, DPU, Aarhus University in Copenhagen, Professor II at the Norwegian University on Technology and Science, NTNU. He has for many years done research in Danish, Nordic and international school leadership projects and thus published a number of books and articles. He has also coordinated a Nordic Research Network on trans-national influences on Nordic school leadership. He is a member of several editorial boards of international, peer reviewed journals and is editing, together with John MacBeath the journal *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability*. He is at present President of the European Educational Research Association (EERA). **Contact:** moos@dpu.dk

**Jorunn Møller** Professor at University of Oslo, the Department of Teacher Education and School Development, and Vice Dean for Research at the Faculty of Educational Sciences. Her professional interests are in the areas of educational leadership and governance, reform policies and school accountability. She has been involved in a range of research projects on educational leadership and policy change, and is also participating in international research networks in the field of school leadership. At present she is engaged in a five years' project, which aims at analyzing the role of administration and institutions in the implementation of the current educational reform in Norway. She is also involved in the *International Successful School Principal Project*, ISSPP. **Contact:** jorunn.moller@ils.uio.no

**Mika Risku**, MA, is a project researcher and the assistant director at the Institute of Educational Leadership in the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. He has been involved with the Institute in various roles through its whole history, since 1995. At the moment he is conducting a national four-year research project on educational leadership in the municipal provisions of general education for the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture. He has worked as a principal in secondary general education for fifteen years and as a subject teacher for nine years. Concerning comprehensive education in Finland, he has participated in the building of the 1994 national core curriculum and the 1999 national guidelines for student assessment. He has participated in several international conferences and projects, like the 2005 OECD/CERI project *What Works in Innovation in Education on Improving Learning Through Formative Assessment*. **Contact:** mika.risku@jyu.fi

**Helene Ärlestig** PhD. Dr. Ärlestig's dissertation is about principals and

teachers communication in successful schools. Besides communication in organization and trust and relations impact on leadership processes her research interest is primarily principals' work with the schools internal processes like pedagogical leadership and schools work with assessment and evaluations. She is also involved in several international comparative studies about principals' leadership. One of them is the *International Successful School Principal Project*, ISSPP. Dr. Årlestig works as a researcher, teacher and holds a position as director of studies for the National principal training program at the Centre for Principal Development, Umeå University. She teaches at the national principal program as well as in courses about systematic quality work. Her background is that she has been a principal. **Contact:** Helene.Arlestig@pol.umu.se

# DEL I

## FORSKNING OM REKTOR EN ÖVERSIKT AV SVENSK FORSKNING 2000–2010





# KAPITEL 1: FORSKNING OM REKTORS LEDARSKAP – MED NORDISKA OCH EUROPEISKA UTBLICKAR

Olof Johansson, redaktör för denna forskningsöversikt

## En forskningsöversikt om rektor

I den här forskningsöversikten är studier om rektors roll, arbete och ledarskap i fokus. Syftet är att kartlägga svensk forskning om rektor efter 2000 men också att redovisa vilken forskning som bedrivs i Norden och några europeiska länder. Översikten avslutas med ett kapitel som sammanfattar forskningsläget och pekar på kunskapsluckor som det skulle vara värdefullt att få fram forskningsresultat kring. Framtagandet av forskningsöversikten inleddes i augusti 2010. Förfrågningar ställdes då till ett antal forskare med stor kunskap om forskning om rektor i Sverige och andra länder. Därefter definierades den struktur som det var önskvärt att författarna skulle hålla sig till. Grundtanken var att varje kapitel endast skulle innehålla forskning från det land som avsågs. Motivet till detta var att de flesta forskningssammanställningar som finns gjorda i olika avhandlingar och svenska forskningspublikationer är baserade på resultat från forskning gjord av forskare från främst Nordamerika och England samt andra engelskspråkiga länder. Dessutom finns redan bra sammanställningar av den internationella litteraturen som flitigt används och citeras (t.ex. Day, C. et al (2011); Robnsson, V. (2008); Leithwood, K. et al (2005); Mulford, W. et al (2004); Leithwood, K. et al (Eds.). (1998).

Ett genomgående tema i kapitlen skulle vara att de avhandlingar som skrivits inom området skulle uppmärksammas. Urvalet av avhandlingar bestämdes utifrån de ämnesord som varje författare lämnar till sitt universitetsbibliotek och som också anges i avhandlingen. De så kallade key words eller ämnesord som har styrts sökningen i den svenska delen har varit: rektor, skolledare samt principal, head-master, school-leader, educational administration och educational leadership. De svenska databaser som använts är Libris, Avhandlingar.se, Artikelsök och Swepub. Libris är en nationell söktjänst med information från svenska bibliotek och är mer utbredd och utvecklad jämfört med databasen Swepub som innehåller publicering av vetenskap inom svenska lärosäten. Vi har dessutom använt de internatio-

nella databaserna Eric, Academic Search Elite och SocINDEX. Databaserna har kompletterat varandra och säkerställt att inget material missats. Det är viktigt att komma ihåg att en enda referensdatabas oftast inte är heltäckande och dessutom kan det dröja ett tag innan litteraturen finns publicerad i databaserna.

Vi har begränsat urvalet till publicerat material som är sökbart. Vi har även gjort en begränsning i vad som kan bedömas som forskning, t.ex. har C- och D-uppsatser och mastersuppsatser tagits bort. Det finns också andra grupper av publikationer som uteslutits. Det innebär att FOU-rapporter som ingår i olika högskolors egen publicering, myndighetsutvärderingar och böcker av utländska författare som är översatta till svenska inte finns med. Vi har inte heller tagit med så kallade referee granskade konferensuppsatser eftersom dessa i normalfallet inte kommer med i olika sökmotorer. En diskussion om problemen med sk referee granskade konferensuppsatser återfinns i kapitel tre.

## Forskningsöversiktens disposition

Forskningsöversikten är indelad i två delar, en svenskspråkig och en engelskspråkig. Kapitel 2 behandlar Svenska avhandlingar om rektor mellan 2000 och 2010 i Sverige. Helene Årlestig och Olof Johansson svarar för sammanställningen. De svarar även för kapitel 3 som är en översikt av den publicerade forskning som finns av svenska forskare om rektor och rektors ledarskap. Kapitel 4 som avslutar den svenska delen är skriven av Olof Johansson och Paul V. Bredeson och behandlar Forskningstrender och viktiga framtida forskningsområden.

Del II inleds med att kapitel 2 och 3 från den svenska delen sammanfattas av Helene Årlestig och Olof Johansson på engelska. Härigenom blir det möjligt för icke svensktalande att läsa del II av forskningsöversikten och även få information om forskningsläget i Sverige. Sedan följer följande forskningssammanställningar från fyra nordiska länder; Norge sammanställt av professor Jorunn Møller, Danmark av professor Lejf Moos, Finland av forskarna Mika Risku och Pekka Kanervio samt Island av professor Börkur Hansen.

Därefter följer kapitel där några av våra närmaste europeiska grannar beskriver forskningsläget i sina länder. Först ut är England skrivet av professor Christopher Day, Tysktalande länder av professor Stephan Huber, Polen av professor Joanna Michalak samt slutligen Lettland av professor Dainuvite Blūma & doktoranden Ineta Daiktere.

Forskningsöversikten avslutas med ett kapitel som innehåller en översiktlig sammanfattning och en diskussion om framtida forskning. Kapitlet är skrivet av professorerna Olof Johansson och Paul V. Bredeson och heter *Research on Principals: Future Perspectives and What's Missing?*

## Svensk forskning om rektor före 2000

Nordiska Ministerrådet publicerade 2000 skriften *Skoleledelse i Norden – en kortlægning af skoleledernes arbejdsvilkår, rammebetingelser og opgaver* och undertecknad var en av redaktörerna (Moos, Carney, Johansson & Mehlbye, 2000). I boken gjordes en forskningsöversikt från 1945 till slutet av 1990-talet för Sverige, Norge, Danmark, Finland och Island. Boken har haft stor spridning i de fem nordiska länderna och översatts till Finska och Grönländska. Boken användes så länge som den fanns tillgänglig i tryck inom rektorsutbildningen. Genomgången av den svenska forskningen som skrevs av Anna-Maria Nygren och Olof Johansson heter *Den svenske rektorn efter 1945 – kvalifikationer, arbetsoppgifter og utmaningar*.

Samtidigt med den nordiska forskningsöversikten kom år 2000 en av Skolverket beställd forskningsöversikt som skrevs av Mats Ekholm och några av hans kollegor vid Karlstads universitet (Ekholm, Blossing, Kåräng, Lindvall, & Scherp, 2000). *Forskning om rektor* som skriften heter har haft ett stort genomslag och den har använts i rektorsutbildningen och används fortfarande som referensmaterial. Skillnaden mellan de två samtidiga forskningsöversikterna är att Ekholms m.fl. forskningsöversikt berör både svensk och internationell forskning och detta märks i referenslistan som innehåller mer än 200 titlar varav ca 100 är svenska. Nygren och Johanssons kapitel baseras mer på en genomgång av rektorsrollens utveckling, nationella reformer och organisatoriska förutsättningar. Båda böckerna refererar till både nationell och internationell forskning, policydokument, utvärderingsrapporter och material från media. Det är med andra ord svårt att klart avskilja den svenska forskningen.

För den här bakgrundsbeskrivningen har jag intresserat mig för den svenska forskningen före 2000 och därför har den svenska forskningen lyfts ut ur både Ekholms forskningsöversikt och skriften 'Skoleledelse i Norden' (Ekholm, et al., 2000, Moos, et.al., 2000)<sup>1</sup>.

Nygren och Johansson lyfter fram de stora förändringarna i form av förändrad statlig styrning och många reformer från mitten av 1980-talet fram till år 2000. De påpekar att svensk forskning om rektor länge var en bristvara men att från 1985 och framåt ökade forskningen. Det första större forskningsprojektet som hade till avsikt att studera skolledarna och deras arbetssituation initierades 1982 och avrapporterades fyra år senare. Där konstaterade professor Ulf P. Lundgren (1986) att det var viktigt att skolledarna byggde upp en egen professionell kunskapsbas.

<sup>1</sup> Jag vill i detta sammanhang tacka FM Torbjörn Lindahl som under en period arbetade som forskningsassistent inom projektet med att ta fram grundmaterial.



Det finns även utvärderingar och analyser från Skolverket och dess föregångare som beskriver skolans utveckling. Även offentliga utredningar har haft fokus på skolans ledning och styrning t.ex. utredningen om Skolans inre arbete (SOU 1974:53). Fram till 1980-talet betonades rektor som ett instrument för statens intentioner men utredningen kom att förändra synen på skolan och rektorsrollen. De nya signalerna bestod i att staten önskade överge det gamla regelstyrda systemet för att istället satsa på ett decentraliserat och målstyrt system. Det framfördes bl.a. att skolläroverksamheten borde ligga på ett eget utvecklingsinstitut där fokus skulle vara forskning, utveckling samt utbildning. Utredningen hävdar också att rektorsrollen är otidsenligt eftersom ledarskapets betoning var auktoritet och kontroll. Under 1980-talet fokuseras debatten om decentralisering av skolan och rektorerna görs till föremål för forskning angående utbildning och ledarskap. Nygren och Johansson konstaterar att rektorerna saknar ett gemensamt språk för att beskriva utbildningen och dess utmaningar. Frånvaron av ett gemensamt språk leder till att det blir svårare att beskriva vad rektorerna är satta att leda och tydliggöra de problem som finns inom skolan. Författarna redovisar även rekryteringsannonser från 1989 och 1998 som stöd för sitt resonemang. Jämförelsen mellan de två årens annonser visar att den rektorsprofil som eftersöks 1989 förändrats till 1998, vilket tolkas som att rollen är i ständig förändring (Nygren & Johansson, 2000).

Bland de frågor som lyfts i idédebatten mycket tidigt finns balansen mellan rektors pedagogiska och administrativa arbete vilket ofta beskrivs som ett problem. Förändringarna inom skolans värld har, enligt Tidning för Sveriges läroverk (1948 och 1957), till viss del förändrat rektorernas arbetsuppgifter. Pappersarbete och inte pedagogiskt arbete präglade, enligt tidningen, rektors arbete. Tidning drar slutsatsen att många rektorer därför tvingas sluta i förtid beroende på en orimlig arbetsbörda. En problematik som fortfarande var aktuell i slutet av 1900-talet.

När decentraliseringen av skolsektorn genomfördes byttes det detaljerade regelverket ut mot ett mål och resultatstyrt system där kommunen blev ansvarig för skolan och personalen. Rektors arbetsuppgifter förändrades och förenklat kan sägas att rektor förutom att vara chef, också förväntades anta rollen som ledare. Detta innebär att rektor ska leda skolans utveckling, den pedagogiska verksamheten, men även vara chef över den administrativa och ekonomiska basen i skolan. Nygren och Johansson lyfter fram att forskningen om rektorer har konstaterat att påfallande många rektorer snarare arbetar med stabilitetsskapande åtgärder, administrativa och ekonomiska frågor och många uttrycker ett vacklande förhållande till skolutveckling efter de förändringar och besparingar som skedde under 1990-talet. Den nya

rollen för rektor handlar mycket om att utveckla strategier, kunna, reducera och tolka politiska mål till konkreta målsättningar för verksamheten inom skolenheten. Johansson och Kallós (1994) skriver:

Reduktionsprocessens syfte är att skapa legitimitet för de politiska målen. Denna process måste för att undvika misslyckanden sannolikt bygga på ett rationalistiskt synsätt med betoning av kostnadseffektivitet samtidigt som verksamheten skall framstå som bra i konsumenternas ögon. Risken är att mål uppställda på skolnivå av rektor (och lärare) i en sådan process kommer att främst vara av administrativa och ekonomisk natur varvid m.a.o. de pedagogiska målen ej kommer att konkretiseras eller endast uttryckas i ekonomisk/administrativa termer (Ibid, 1994).

Den förändring under 1990-talet av skolans styrning som diskuteras i de båda forskningsöversikterna handlar framförallt om decentraliseringen och effekterna av övergången till ett mål- och resultatstyrt system. Styrningen av det svenska skolväsendet förändrades i grunden, tidigare styrdes skolan av förordningar och regler, men under 1990-talet förändrades detta och idag har skolan ett styrsystem för mål och resultatstyrning. Idag är det kommuner och skolor som ska försöka lösa problem och implementera de lagar och den policy som beslutas via den nationella skolpolitiken, vilken sätter upp mål för verksamheten medan utmaningar och eventuella problem i huvudsak blir den lokala nivåns uppgift att lösa.

Decentraliseringen under 1990-talet fick konsekvenser för skolans ledarskap. Tidigare var det vanligt att man hade chefer som ansvarade för flera skolverksamheter men när decentraliseringen genomfördes från mitten av 1980-talet så var det många kommuner som placerade en ledare i varje skola. Resultatet blev många små enheter där ledare och lärare arbetar tillsammans i en form av projektorganisation. Förväntningarna på skolledarna har förändrats och det blir tydligt om man följer utvecklingen av yrket över tid. Ett exempel är kommunreformen 1951 som minskade antalet skoldistrikt från 2460 till 1035. Skolledaren i skoldistriktet hade nedsatt undervisnings-skyldighet i sin lärartjänst och var oftast folkskollärare. Inom kommunerna förekommer mer generella beteckningar på kommunernas chefer, framförallt mellan 1988–1992 då förändringarna var som störst kom rektorstiteln att förlora mark och titlar som enhetschef eller platschef användes. Ledaren inom skolan kom från 1994 åter att betecknas rektor efter ett ingripande från regeringen.

Forskning och utredningar visar att skolledarnas tid alltmer handlar om att sköta den dagliga administrationen istället för att fokusera på den långsiktiga planeringen och det pedagogiska ledarskapet. I Forskning om rektor

refereras en studie benämnd *Skolledarskap och skolledarroll - En enkätundersökning* och där framkommer att skolledarrollen till stor del formas av den sociala omgivningen och de arbetsförhållanden som omger yrkesrollen (Ekholm & Sandström, 1982). Många skolledare har också fått ett ökat ekonomiskt ansvar och fler uppgifter, vilka har förts över från kommunen till de enskilda skolorna. De tankeströmningar som går under beteckningen New Public management förklarar till stor del denna utveckling under 1990-talet.

Om vi studerar styrningen av den svenska skolan så finns det en rad olika svenska undersökningar inom området. Rektorer upplevde under 1990-talet ökande krav från både stat och kommun visar Falk och Sandströms (1995) undersökning *Rektors upplevelse av ett nationellt och kommunalt uppdrag*. Undersökningen baseras på en enkätundersökning som har som syfte att belysa vilka förväntningar rektorer upplever från stat och kommun. Enligt forskarna upplever rektorerna att förväntningarna skiljer sig åt. Det är framförallt arbetsuppgifter såsom uppföljning och utvärdering och de nationella målen som upplevs som krävande från statens sida. Förväntningarna från kommunen handlar framförallt om arbetsgivaransvar, ekonomi och andra administrativa arbetsuppgifter. Enligt författarna finns det inte någon samvariation mellan hur man agerar i vardagsarbetet och kommunens och statens förväntningar på ledningen. Det finns dock en samvariation mellan personalens förväntningar och rektorernas arbetsinsatser. Slutsatsen är att den lokala lärarkulturens förväntningar påverkar rektorers arbetsinsatser starkare jämfört med de statliga och kommunala förväntningarna.

I undersökningen *School climate and educational change* har Ekholm och Kull (1996) studera hur lärare använder sig av laborativa arbetssätt i skolan. Studien baseras på enkäter i nio svenska högstadieskolor och genomförts vid tre tillfällen, 1969, 1979, 1994. Elever och lärare har bland annat besvarat frågor om vilka arbetssätt som förekommer i den dagliga rutinen på skolan. Resultatet visar att det finns en stor stabilitet mellan hur både lärare och elever bedömt vardagsarbetet mellan de olika undersökningsomgångarna.

Förutom de fasta svarsalternativ har rektorerna själva beskrivit hur man informerar sig om olika skeenden och händelser på skolan. För att hålla sig informerade och uppdaterade använde sig hälften av rektorerna på grund och gymnasieskolan av utvecklingssamtal. En annan informationskälla var informella möten. Däremot var det mindre än en av fem rektorer som gjorde klassrumsbesök. Inte heller att genomföra utvärderingar eller uppföljningsstudier var informationskanaler som angavs av rektorerna. Mönstren var de samma såväl 1994 som 1991. Vissa frågor i undersökningen handlade om för-

hållandet mellan skolledning och lärare och var gemensamma för både rektorer och lärare. När det gäller att uppmuntra personal så ansåg mellan 80 och 90 procent av rektorerna att de vid de flesta situationerna uppmuntrade personal som hade det besvärligt på jobbet. Lärarnas bild var dock en helt annan. En tredjedel av gymnasielärarna uppgav att skolledningen saknade den förmågan. En majoritet av lärarna, 90 %, upplevde att de sällan eller aldrig fick kritik eller återkoppling för något som inträffat i arbetet. När Ekholm reflekterar över resultatet i undersökningarna så konstaterar han att möjligheterna för skolledarna att leva upp till de nya kraven till stor del beror på ledningsorganisationen och egenskaperna hos den enskilde skolledaren. Ledningsorganisationen måste anpassas till såväl skolans utvecklingsfas som den pedagogiska inriktningen på varje enskild skola. Om detta inte sker finns en risk att ledningsorganisationen utgör ett hinder för den pedagogiska utvecklingen på skolan.

Effektivitet blir ett allt vanligare begrepp inom skolan och skolverket har bland annat gjort studier av effektiviteten i olika skolor (Skolverket, 1999). Resultatet visar att skolornas resurstilldelning har betydelse för effektiviteten. Förhållandet gäller särskilt skolor som rekryterar elever från hem som saknar studietraditioner och skolor som rekryterar många invandrarelever. Generellt sett är det väldigt svårt att bedöma en skolas effektivitet eftersom flera komponenter påverkar effektiviteten. Då rektorer arbetar under skilda förutsättningar och det finns flera olika kriterier för att bedöma skolors resultat är det svårt att bedöma rektorers arbete och insats.

I forskningsrapporten *Tillsättning av skolledare – rörelser i tiden* har Ekholm och Lindvall (1997) analyserat tillsättningen av skolledare inom skolan under 1980 och 1990-talen. Då var det nästan nio av tio skolledare som kom från den egna kommunen när de tillsattes. Undersökningen visar även att antalet skolledare som är kvinnor har ökat med åren. Antalet nytillsatta skolledare som var kvinnor var 65 procent 1994 jämfört med 33 procent på åttioalet. Om trenden med färre rektorer som är män fortsätter kan det bli nödvändigt att uppmuntra fler män att söka sig till skolledarbefattningar inom skolan var en slutsats som drogs i slutet av 1990-talet.

Ekholms forskningsöversikt visar på att kvinnor och mäns olikheter som ledare nu börjat få allt större utrymme. Solberg (1997) har i sin bok *Att vara kvinna och chef* kommit fram till en rad intressanta slutsatser när det gäller kvinnor och mäns ledarskap. Hon visar att kvinnorna i större utsträckning fokuserar på relationer och kontakt medan männen fokuserar på ansvarsfördelning och kontroll. Studierna visar också att kvinnorna upplever att det saknas respekt för deras arbete och att männen tas på större allvar i sitt arbete. I en annan studie pekar Drake och Solberg (1996) på att männen vill

fatta många beslut på egen hand medan kvinnorna i större utsträckning vill diskutera besluten. Olofsson (1998) har i sin avhandling *Kvinnliga rektors ledarstil i svensk grundskola* tittat på genus och skolledning. Olofssons resultat visar att genusmönstren begränsar kvinnor att göra karriär som skolledare. Anledningen är bland annat få förebilder samt att kvinnor oftast har dubbla rollkrav med ansvar för både yrket och hemmet. Franzén (1999) har i undersökningen *Manligt och kvinnligt skolledarskap* tittat på synen på ledarskap hos män och kvinnor bland skolledare och lärare inom gymnasieskolan. Resultatet visar att de skolledare som är män i lägre utsträckning ansåg att lärarna skulle få undervisa på sitt eget sätt enligt den existerande traditionen. De skolledare som är kvinnor ansåg i större utsträckning att lärarna själva kunde hitta lämpliga metoder för sin undervisning. Lärarnas syn på skolledarna var att de rektorer som är män i större utsträckning tog initiativ till måldiskussioner, vilket uppfattades som krävande av lärarna. Ulf P. Lundgren (1986) har i sin bok *Att organisera skolan: Om grundskolans organisation och ledning* studerat skolledning och könsskillnader. Studierna visar att de skolledare som är män i större omfattning ägnar sig åt budget och administration medan kvinnor fokuserar på personalfrågor och elevvård.

Arfwedson och Lundman (1984) har i forskningsprojektet *Skolpersonal och skolkoder* undersökt lärares arbetsförhållanden, i nio skolor vid fyra rektorsområden. Forskarna utgick ifrån att skolans inre liv och skolkod såsom handlingsmönster, tolkning och tankemönster styr skolans resultat. De visar att skolan ständigt utsätts för anpassningskrav och förändringar jämfört med många andra arbetsplatser. Kraven kommer från både stat och kommun. Elevernas olika syn på utbildning och lärande kräver anpassning till det lokala samhällets värderingar. Till det kommer den lokala skolans traditioner och historia. Forskarna visar att lärarna är beroende av varandra för att relationen med eleverna skall fungera så bra som möjligt. Skolkoden och de lokala tanke- och handlingsmönstren hjälpte lärarna att förstå vad som förväntades av dem. Skolledares uppdrag är i denna kontext komplicerat då man dels måste anpassa verksamheten till rådande skolkod, dels som man måste försöka nå utanför skolkoden med hjälp av olika strategier. Blossing (1998) har i ett forskningsprojekt *Skolan som en lokal organisation* kartlagt utvecklingsorganisationen och det osynliga kontraktet för åtta skolor. Resultatet visar att elevernas bedömningssystem ställde krav på lärarnas undervisning för att inte det osynliga kontraktet med eleverna skulle brytas. Vidare framkommer att lärarna inte strävar efter en utveckling utan övergår till en undervisningsform som eleverna förväntar sig och som sedan leder till en bedömning i enlighet med det osynliga kontraktet.

Kåräng (1997) har undersökt hur elevernas studieresultat och skolans inre arbete påverkats av det pedagogiska ledarskapet. Resultatet visar att elev- och lärarinflytandet var större i de skolor där rektorerna var aktiva som pedagogiska ledare. Elevernas arbete följdes också upp i större utsträckning samt att elevernas basfärdigheter tryggades. Skolorna var organiserade i arbetsenheter och de elevaktiva arbetssätten var också fler. Ur ett skolkulturperspektiv behöver rektor uppmärksamma vad det finns för arbetsmönster som är framträdande. Har skolan t.ex. en självförnyande och problemlösande karaktär? Forskning pekar på att skolorna sällan börjar med att kartlägga den egna kulturen inför ett utvecklingsarbete och detta leder ibland till dålig precision i utvecklingsarbetet (Lander & Ekholm, 1998).

Berg förklarar stabiliteten i skolkulturen genom att föreslå att en osynlig överenskommelse mellan lärare och rektor styr arbetsfördelningen mellan dem. Lärarna ger rektorerna legitimitet att sköta administrationen medan lärarna tar hand om undervisningen. En uppdelning som inte stämmer med de politiska styrdokumenterna (Berg 1990, 1995). Scherps (1998) studie Utmanande eller utmanat ledarskap visar att i de skolor där lärarna utmanas av rektorerna i lärande och undervisning är förändringarna större. Studien visar också att dessa rektorer uppfattar sig själva som mer utmanade och mindre serviceinriktade jämfört med ämnesföreträdarnas bedömningar. Ämnesföreträdarna anser att rektor initierar förändringar men sedan förliktar sig rektor på att lärarna genomför förändringen. Ledarskapet är mindre utmanande när rektor är rekryterad från den egna skolan. Rektor är då redan införlivad i skolans lärarkultur och blir mer serviceinriktad. I Scherps studie var det endast 3 av 140 gymnasieskolor som hade en organisation som underlättade elevaktiva undervisningsformer. Slutsatsen kan vara att förändringar av undervisningsmönstren inte betraktades som viktiga för 1990-talets skolläda.

Både i Ekholms och den Nordiska forskningsöversikten är en slutsats att vetenskaplig kunskap behövs som hjälp i det lokala förbättringsarbetet. Den rektors roll som framtonat under perioden före sekelskiftet och som kommer att få betydelse under 2000-talet är en rektor med kunskaper inom området som är bärare av de grundläggande idéerna och samtidigt är bekväm i teorier och forskning samt själv är lärare och har god kompetens och kan leda verksamheten mot uppsatta mål. I de följande kapitlen redovisas forskning om rektor under perioden 2000–2010.

Det bör uppmärksammas att en del av den svenska forskningen om rektor som finns i de två genomgångna forskningsöversikterna inte skulle ha kommit med i vår översikt. Eftersom de publiceringskrav som vi ställt i kapitel 2 och 3 inte är uppfyllt för all redovisad forskning ovan.

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# KAPITEL 2 SVENSKA AVHANDLINGAR OM REKTOR 2000–2010

Helene Ärlestig & Olof Johansson

## Vad skrivs i avhandlingar om svenska rektorer?

Rektor är den som har det formella ansvaret för verksamheten i den lokala skolan. Det innebär att en rektor måste vara insatt i en mängd olika frågor för att kunna bidra till organisationen och dess utveckling. Rektor behöver bl.a. kunskap om styrning och ledning, organisationers funktioner, struktur och kultur, kvalitetsarbete och samhällsförändringar. I olika utvärderingar lyfts rektor fram som en självklar aktör och goda resultat likväl som mindre goda resultat förklaras till en viss del med hur ledarskapet har fungerat. Det bör betyda att skolans ledarskap och organisation även är synlig i svensk forskning om skolan. Frågan är vad som finns där rektor och skolans ledarskap utgör huvudintresset. Då en väsentlig del av grundforskning om skolan görs i avhandlingar har vi valt att speciellt fokusera de avhandlingar som handlar om rektors ledarskap.

I flera avhandlingar om skolan är rektor respondent eller finns med som en faktor bland andra. Det innebär att vi valt att göra en avgränsning i vår sammanställning. Vi begränsade sökorden till rektor, skolledare, school-leader, principal, headmaster, educational administration och educational leadership. Sökningen har gjorts via Libris som är de svenska universitets och forskningsbiblioteks söktjänst och avhandlingar. Se. Vi har då hittat 23 avhandlingar som handlar om rektor. Det innebär att avhandlingar om skolutveckling, policy och politisk styrning hamnar utanför vår sökning om inte rektor finns med bland nyckelord/ämnesord eller i rubriken. Exempel på avhandlingar som inte kom med är Ola Holmströms (2007) avhandling i sociologi vid Lunds universitet, *Skolpolitik, skolutvecklingsarena och social processer: en studie av en gymnasieskola i kris*. Holmström följer en nystartad gymnasieskola och hur rektor driver utvecklingen på skolan. När motsättningarna tillslut blir för stora så avgår rektor. Holmström har valt att använda skolutveckling, gymnasieskolan, utbildningspolitik och education som nyckelord/ämnesord. Björn Alströms (2009) avhandling i sociologi vid Umeå universitet, *Bullying and Social Objectives: a Study of Prerequisites for Success in Swedish Schools* handlar om rektorers roll i arbetet mot mobbning och med elevinflytande i framgångsrika och mindre framgångsrika skolor. Ahlström har

mobbing och skolor som nyckelord/ämnesord. Dessa exempel visar att det finns fler avhandlingar än de 23 vi kommer att skriva om här som berör och behandlar rektors ledarskap i svensk skola. Det gemensamma för de avhandlingar vi valt är att de alla har rektor och rektors ledarskap som en viktig aspekt i avhandlingen och att författaren har angett rektors som ämnesord.

De flesta avhandlingar är skrivna i slutet av den här 10-årsperioden och är avhandlingar i pedagogik. De övriga är skrivna i sociologi, rättssociologi och företagsekonomi. Totalt finns nio lärosäten representerade där Umeå, Linköping och Lunds universitet dominerar. Endast fyra avhandlingar är skrivna på engelska och två av dessa är monografier (Björkman, 2008, Söderqvist, 2007) och två är sammanläggningsavhandlingar (Törnsén, 2009, Ärlestig, 2008). De avhandlingar som är skrivna på svenska är samtliga monografier.

Så gott som alla avhandlingar handlar om grundskolan. Det finns en avhandling med respondenter från gymnasiet och en från en specialskola. Det finns inga avhandlingar med material från förskolor eller från friskolor. De flesta avhandlingarna bygger på mindre case-studier där författaren har följt en skola eller en rektor över tid. Intervjuer, enkäter, dokumentstudier och observationer är vanliga metoder. Många har rektorers och lärares egna föreställningar och utsagor som utgångspunkt. Flera ger även en historisk överblick i sina avhandlingar. Det är bara en avhandling som är komparativ såtillvida att den jämför Sverige med England (Söderqvist, 2007). Förutom en enkätstudie till samtliga skolchefer saknas större nationella kvantitativa studier (Nihlfors, 2003).

## Avhandlingar 2000–2010

Under de två första åren 2000–2001 kom det två avhandlingar som fokuserade på rektor. Lars Svedbergs (2000) avhandling i pedagogik vid Uppsala universitet, *Om skolledarskapets gestaltning* behandlar rektors roll och meningsskapande i en socialpsykologisk referensram. Svedberg har i en fallstudie intervjuat en skolchef och fyra grundskolerektorer i en mindre kommun i Sverige under ett år. Svedberg menar att det finns motsättningar i tolkningar och förståelse av rektors roll vilket visar sig i olika diskurser.

Målstyrningsdiskursen svarar mot en politisk önskan om förändring, kommundiskursen uttrycker ett tekniskt rationellt och ekonomiskt tänkande och den professionella diskursen svarar mot behovet av vardaglig stabilitet vilket sammantaget skapar en balans – och kompromissituation där ställföreträdande förändringar blir en "lösning" (Ibid. sid 202)

Det innebär enligt Svedberg att systemets makt ökar men att makten över systemet verkar minska. Det är därför viktigt att den emotionella och relationella aspekten av rektorsrollen lyfts fram.

Stephan Rapps (2001) avhandling i pedagogik från Örebro universitet *Rektor – garant för elevers rättsäkerhet* har fokus på hur rektor arbetar med juridiska frågor som säkrar elevers rättigheter. I sin studie har Rapp använt sig av både enkäter och intervjuer. Förutom att studera rektorerna i en kommun har Rapp gjort intervjuer med några centrala myndighetspersoner och studerat innehållet i det nationella rektorsprogrammet. Avhandlingen visar att det inte finns någon historisk tradition kring att rektorer aktivt arbetar med en juridisk utgångspunkt. Rektors kunskaper och utbildning om styrdokumentet och juridik var vid sekelskiftet små. Flera av rektorerna saknade så mycket kunskap att de inte kan ses som en "garant" för elevers rättsäkerhet. Dessutom saknade Skolverket, som då var den myndighet som granskade skolan, sanktions möjligheter. Elever och vårdnadshavare hade små möjligheter att överklaga eller att driva frågor ur ett juridiskt perspektiv.

*Skolledare i grundskolan. En fallstudie av biträdande rektorers möte med skolledningen* är titeln på Ingvar Perssons (2002) avhandling i pedagogik från Lunds universitet. Fallstudien genomförs på en skola som nyligen hade inrättat en ny ledningsorganisation. Studien följer de sex nyutträdade biträdande rektorerna som i 50 % av sin tjänst hade rektors uppgifter med pedagogiskt ansvar och 50 % egen undervisning. Det empiriska materialet består av dagboksanteckningar samt intervjuer med de biträdande rektorerna. Resultaten visar att de nyutträdade biträdande rektorerna upplevde en osäkerhet under första terminen och tyckte att det var svårt att gå från lärarrollen till en rektorsroll utan någon längre utbildning. En av Perssons slutsatser är att rektorerna behöver en grundläggande utbildning innan de tillträder en skolledartjänst och sedan kontinuerlig fortbildning. En annan slutsats är att det är svårt att kombinera en ledningstjänst med arbetet som lärare. De nya uppgifterna innebar många avbrott och förmågan att agera med kort varsel vilket innebar att undervisningen blev lidande. De biträdande rektorernas syn på pedagogiskt ledarskap går att dela in i fyra olika inriktningar: en administrativ, en stabiliserande, en stödjande och en utvecklande. Persson skriver om de olika kompetenser som han anser att rektor behöver och som de biträdande rektorerna i olika grad ger uttryck för. Dessutom menar Persson att den verklighet som de biträdande rektorerna möter är en annan än den som beskrevs när de anställdes.

En avhandling som kom samma år och som ligger nära rektor och rektors arbete är Ninni Wahlströms (2002) avhandling i pedagogik *Om det förändrade ansvaret för skolan: vägen till mål- och resultatstyrning och några av*

*dess konsekvenser* från universitet i Örebro. Wahlström har bl.a. ledarskap och målstyrning som ämnesord. Avhandlingen är en dokumentstudie av policytexter, främst statliga utredningar, under senare delen av 1900-talet. Syftet är att studera ansvarsfördelningen utifrån tre sökord; decentralisering, kommunalisering och målstyrning. Hon har också studerat konsekvenserna av målstyrningen genom en fallstudie i en kommun. Wahlström visar att det har skett en förskjutning i styrningen som går från kommunal verkställighet, centrala regler och regelstyrning till kommunalt ansvar, lokalt ansvar och mål och resultatstyrning. Hon menar att detta får effekter på skolorna och rektorernas roll. Det finns oklarheter om målens karaktär och funktion, hur utvärderingar skulle användas för att möjliggöra målen, målens funktion som styrinstrument och möjligheten att tolka och konkretisera mål som var formulerade på en annan nivå. Rektor blev ansvarig för fler verksamheter och får ett tydligare ansvar för den pedagogiska verksamheten och skolans resultat vilket ökar kraven på rektors roll.

Ulrika Tillbergs (2003) avhandling från handelshögskolan i Stockholm, *Ledarskap och samarbete – en jämförande fallstudie i tre skolor* genomfördes i tre grundskolor som representerar olika skolyper. Tillbergs avhandling är den enda av de 23 avhandlingarna som är en avhandling i företagsekonomi. Syftet med studien är att utveckla en enkel teoretisk modell för att kunna beskriva hur skolor organiseras och leds samt att studera sambandet mellan ledarskap och samarbete. Modellen har sex centrala begrepp; Skolans historiska och samhällliga kontext, metaidéer, skolans organisatoriska förutsättningar, identitet och struktur, skolans vardagsarbete, ledarskap och samarbete. Tillberg har studerat arbetslag som en ideal modell för samarbete och är intresserad av hur en skolledning kan driva skolutveckling via samarbete. Studiens huvudresultat visar på att det finns en mångfald bland sätten att arbeta med samarbete och ledarskap för skolutveckling. Skolledningens möjligheter bestäms av positionering, relationer och handlingar som i sin tur baseras på organisationsidentitet och organisationsstruktur. Samarbete i sig ses inte som en modell utan som ett komplext organisatoriskt fenomen.

En avhandling behandlar skolchefer och har titeln *Skolchefen i skolans styrning och ledning*. Elisabet Nihlfors (2003) har i sin avhandling i pedagogik vid Uppsala universitet via dokumentstudier, en totalundersökning (enkätstudie) av alla skolchefer som tjänstgjorde under hela 1990-talet samt intervjuer av 'stakeholders' studerat hur statens styrning av skolan kan förstås genom att fokusera på hur relationen mellan stat och kommun framträder i skolchefstjänsten. Hon närmar sig frågan via en historisk beskrivning av hur skolchefstjänsten har uppstått och förändrats. Sett ur ett skolchefsperspektiv kan relationen mellan stat och kommun beskrivas som en balans mellan

statliga och kommunala intressen samt mellan det politiska och det professionella ansvaret. Styrsystemet beskrivs som fyra delsystem som har olika tyngdpunkt över tid. Dessa fyra system benämns som är det ekonomiska, juridiska, ideologiska samt ett utvärdering och uppföljningssystem. Resultaten visar att skolcheferna själva har fått tolka och precisera sitt uppdrag. Den begräsning som de anser finns är den kommunala ekonomin. Hur rollen formas och vad den innehåller skiljer sig mellan olika kommuner. Även om det officiellt sägs att beslut och befogenhet är decentraliserad så finns en dold styrning via ideologi samt uppföljning och utvärdering. Nihlfors olika exempel beskriver bl.a. ett undertryck d.v.s. att styrdokument är skrivna på ett sådant sätt att kraven på kommunerna även kommer underifrån, från de professionella i form av rektorer och lärare samt från elever och föräldrar. Den lokala nivån måste via kommunen ta ansvar och lösa ett stort antal frågor utan att egentligen ha fått utökade befogenheter.

Den enda avhandlingen som berör en specialskola är Filippa Säwes (2004) avhandling i sociologi från Lunds universitet *Att tala med, mot och förbi varandra: samtal mellan föräldrar och skolläda på en dövskola*. Hon har studerat föräldrasamverkan på en dövskola genom att följa 17 möten mellan föräldrar och skolans representanter. Hon har dessutom gjort nio intervjuer främst med föräldrar. Syftet bakom mötena var att starta en dialog. Hennes ansats är att via ett konstruktivistiskt synsätt studera talakter och samspel för att få syn på vilka problem som skapas i kommunikationen mellan hörande och döva. Säwe menar att samtal kan förstås på många olika sätt. Att via samtal överföra mening, kunskap och förståelse är en komplicerad process där social ordning både skapas och påverkas av kommunikationen. Samtal innehåller olika strategier och perspektiv. Avhandlingen bygger på ett antal delstudier där fokus mer är riktat på hur man samtalar än innehållet i sig. I ett av kapitlen har Säwe identifierat fyra moment som hon kallar grundsatsen, orsaksförslaget, åtgärdsförslaget och karaktärsdraget. Beroende på hur dessa kombinerat och fokuseras framstår olika perspektiv. Resultaten visar att skolläda ofta väljer ett lösnings-inriktat perspektiv medan föräldrarna väljer ett legitimerande perspektiv. Det kan få till följd att man hänvisar till övergripande problematik och undviker att prata om olika bakom liggande orsaker. Avhandlingen visar även att det finns ett samförståndsideal där ibland vaghet i vad som menas i samtalen accepteras då det är den enda möjligheten att bli enade.

Även Pär Engströms (2005) avhandling är en avhandling i sociologi om kommunikation och samtal, denna gång från Göteborgs universitet, *Samtal och ledarskap: En studie av medarbetarsamtal i grundskolan*. Engström har studerat medarbetarsamtal genom att lyssna på och spela in 12 medarbetar-

samtal. Varje samtal följdes av intervjuer med såväl rektorer som lärare. Totalt deltog 12 lärare och sju rektorer. Analysen utgår från en kvantitativ del som belyser relationen i samtalet och en kvalitativ del som fokuserar meningsskapande och innehåll. Resultaten visar på en variation i relation som till stor del förklaras av deltagarna med hur länge de har haft en gemensam yrkesrelation. Är relationen ny dominerar rektorerna genom att hålla i dialogen medan villkoren och samspelet är mer egalitär om relationen har pågått under en längre tid. Rektorerna uppfattar medarbetarsamtalen som en möjlighet att bygga tillit och få mer information om läraren och skolan. Det finns även en kontrollfunktion där rektor kontrollerar att läraren sköter sitt uppdrag på ett tillfredställande sätt. Lärarna upplever att de får stöd genom rektors uppmärksamhet på de områden som de initierar och väljer att tala om.

Mellan 2006 till 2008 producerades nio avhandlingar om rektor, dvs en ökning gentemot tidigare år. Vad det finns för outtalade regler i form av normer som styr rektor är huvudfokus i Helena Hallerströms (2006) avhandling i rättssociologi, Lunds universitet, *Rektors normer i ledarskap för skolutveckling*. I och med decentraliseringen och kommunalisering så förändrades både innehållet och betydelsen i rektors ledningsfunktion. Det finns ett särskilt fokus i avhandlingen på rektors syn på den utvecklingsinriktade delen av ledarskapet. Eftersom lagen är skriven så att den är öppen för tolkningar påverkar frågan, rektors person och normer i den rådande kontexten rektors agerande. Resultaten bygger på grupp- och enskilda intervjuer och observationer med alla rektorer i en kommun där Hallerström själv arbetade deltid som utvecklingsledare. Avhandlingen visar bl.a. att om rektorer vill påverka lärares intresse för skolutveckling så underbygger de lärarnas förslag och idéer så att lärarna uppfattar att förslagen kommer från dem själva snarare än att det kopplas till genomförande av innehållet i de nationella styrdokumenterna. Hallerström beskriver rektor som styrd från flera håll och att rektor är lyhörd för personalens förväntningar och önskemål. Skolutveckling ska helst drivas i en nära samverkan med personalen. Det får till konsekvens att rektor leder utan att styra. Rektorer var överlag återhållsam med sina egna åsikter och vilja. Det finns en risk att rektorer är så förtrogna med lärares arbete och inställning att de inte frigör sig tillräckligt från lärarnas perspektiv för att kunna styra verksamheten.

*Is i magen och ett varmt hjärta: konstruktion av skolledarskap i ett könsperspektiv* är titeln på Karin Franzéns (2006) avhandling i pedagogik vid Umeå universitet. Hon har studerat lärare och rektors tal om skolledare via intervjuer med rektorer och lärare. Hon identifierar tre arenor där rektor agerar; supportern, chefen och den pedagogisk ledaren. Oavsett om rektor-

rerna var kvinnor eller män hade de samma syn på hur skolledare positionerade sig på de tre arenorna. Däremot var lärarnas syn och förväntningar på skolledare mer könstypiska. Rektorer som var män, som uppfattades av personalen som lyhörda, ansågs vara otydliga och lärare som var kvinnor identifierade i större utsträckning rektor som var kvinnor som stödjande.

Hur inställningen är till de estetiska ämnena bland lärare och rektorer är utgångspunkten i Monica Lindgrens (2006) avhandling i musikpedagogik från Göteborgs universitet, *Att skapa ordning för det estetiska i skolan – diskursiva positioneringar av samtal mellan lärare och skolledare*. Lindgren uppmärksammar att det i början av 2000-talet sker en förändring i retoriken kring den estetiska verksamheten i t.ex. policydokument. Genom gruppintervjuer med lärare och rektorer har Lindgren synliggjort diskurser om den estetiska verksamheten. Lindgren är intresserad av hur språklig interaktion och utsagor relaterar till makt och styrning. Resultaten visar att de estetiska ämnena jämfört med andra ämnen beskrivs som unika. Man betonar det lustfyllda och att verksamheten är fri och individualiserad. Det finns en tilltro till att den estetiska verksamheten har en inneboende kraft som kan bidra till elevernas utveckling till fria och harmoniska samhällsmedborgare. Lärarna beskrivs mer som fria och förebildliga än som yrkeskompetenta människor.

Anita Nordzell (2007) avhandling i pedagogik vid Linköpings universitet har titeln *Samtalat ledarskap. Kategoriserings och identitetsarbete i interaktion*. Hon har analyserat inspelade ledningsgruppsmöten från grundskola och gymnasieskolan samt gjort intervjuer med tre skolledare. Avhandlingen består av fyra delstudier som alla belyser språkets betydelse i kategoriserande och identitetsskapande. På vilket sätt man framställer sig har betydelse för interaktion och är en viktig del av mötessamtalen. Ledningsgruppsmötena bidrar till att formulera och omformulera skolledarskapet och dess identitet. Begrepp och kategorier bidrar till att beskriva personer och processer. Några exempel på kategorier som rektorerna identifierade sig själva som är problemlösare, förändrare och nytänkare. Skolledarskap blir således något som skapas gemensamt istället för att framställas som ett heroiskt ensamarbete.

*En riktig rektor. Om ledarskap, genus och skolkulturer*. är titeln på Josefin Brüde Sundins (2007) avhandling i pedagogik vid Linköpings universitet. Brüde Sundin har valt en etnografisk ansats och följt en rektor i hennes vardagsarbete under ett och ett halvt år samt följt två andra rektorer i två mindre studier. Studien vill skildra komplexiteten i rektors vardag. Ambitionen är att beskriva vad rektor faktiskt gör snarare än vad rektor bör göra. De många små arbetsuppgifterna kan en och en verka triviala men bildar

tillsammans en betydelsefull helhet. Huvudresultatet visar att skolledarskapet företrädesvis sker i interaktioner med andra. Relationer och möten är en avgörande del av rektors vardag. Då skolan består av ett antal delkulturer som rektor ska leda så blir den emotionella dimensionen en betydelsefull aspekt som påverkar hur rektor agerar. Vardagen är full av mikropolitiska handlingar där mycket av rektors makt är beroende av tillit och förtroende. Dessutom visar studien att rektorsyrket är manligt genuskodat även om de flesta rektorer idag är kvinnor.

Det finns en komparativ avhandling om rektorer under det här decenniet, *School leaders' view on market forces and decentralization: Case studies in a Swedish municipality and an English county*. Den är skriven av Björn Söderqvist (2007) vid pedagogiska institutionen på Stockholms universitet. Söderqvist har studerat hur marknadskrafter och decentralisering har påverkat skolor i Sverige och i England. Han har intervjuat tjugo skolledare i en Svensk kommun och tjugo skolledare i en Engelsk community. Han har även gjort fallstudier i sju svenska skolor och tio engelska skolor. Skolsystemen i Sverige och England skiljer sig åt på flera sätt även om båda kan beskrivas som decentraliserade. Sverige har gått ett steg längre i decentraliseringen och rektorerna har en högre grad av självständighet medan Engelska rektorer fortfarande inte kan ta vissa beslut själva utan är centralt styrda. I England finns även begränsningar kring föräldrar och elevers möjligheter att fritt välja skola. När rektorerna fick lista vad som de trodde var avgörande för vilken skola föräldrarna väljer angav rektorerna från båda länderna närhet på första plats. Svenska rektorer angav rykte på andra plats medan de engelska angav resultat. För de svenska rektorerna kom resultat först på sjunde plats. Rektorerna ser en högre kvalitet och bättre verkningsgrad som positiva effekter av ökad konkurrens och fria skolval medan den negativa aspekten är en risk för ökad segregation. De svenska rektorerna uppfattas överlag som mer nöjda och en trolig förklaring enligt Söderqvist är den långtgående decentraliseringen.

Therese Vincenti Malmgren (2008) har studerat vilka faktorer och begrepp som är viktiga för att nå läroplanens målsättningar i en avhandling i pedagogik från Lunds universitet med titeln *Motiverande grundskolemiljö med fokus på klassrummet*. Hennes studie innehåller en kvantitativ del som bygger på enkäter till elever i grundskolans senare år och en kvalitativ del som bygger på intervjuer med rektorer och analyser av textmaterial. Hon drar slutsatsen att lärarrelationer, medinflytande/påverkan och lärarkompetens är variabler som är extra betydelsefulla. För att nå måluppfyllelse behövs en motiverande skolmiljö där attityder, ansvar och självförtroende påverkar resultaten.



De tre följande avhandlingarna har alla ingått i projekt 'Struktur, kultur ledarskap; förutsättningar för framgångsrika skolor'. Projektet har samlat material från 24 högstadieskolor i 12 olika kommuner. Det empiriska materialet består av dokument, enkäter, intervjuer och observationer med elever, lärare, rektorer, skolchefer och politiker. Conny Björkman (2008) har i sin avhandling i pedagogik vid Umeå universitet *Internal Capacities for School Improvement: Principals' views in Swedish Secondary Schools* fokuserat på interna skolförbättringskapaciteter. Genom att analysera rektorers utsagor om samarbetsformer, kompetensutveckling och ledarskap diskuterar han kvalitativa skillnader i rektorernas föreställningar. Rektorernas föreställningar kan enligt Björkman ge en indikation på hur rektorerna agerar och interagerar med andra aktörer i den lokala skolan. Rektorernas föreställningar tolkas sedan utifrån begreppet struktur som kan förstås som beslut och kultur som innebär hur besluten realiserades i form av arbetsfördelning. Utifrån den tolkningen framkommer tre olika föreställningskategorier. Den första som var vanligast bland de framgångsrika skolorna innebär att rektor tar beslut ensam eller med sin ledningsgrupp om samarbetsformer, kompetensutveckling och ledarskap. Dessa beslut realiserar sedan i lärararbetslag som utgör kärnan för verksamheten. I den andra kategorin fattar rektor fortfarande besluten men de realiserar av enskilda lärare. Den tredje kategorin omfattade endast beslut om kompetensutveckling där nivån ovanför rektor fattade besluten och rektor var den som realiserade besluten. Sammantaget framgår det av resultaten att rektorernas föreställningar i de framgångsrika skolorna är mer arbetslagsbaserade och involverande än föreställningarna hos rektorerna på de mindre framgångsrika skolorna. Enligt rektorerna användes kompetensutveckling i de mer framgångsrika skolorna som en hävstång i förbättringsarbetet medan kompetensutvecklingen i de mindre framgångsrika skolorna var mer tillfällig och individuell. Föreställningarna om de externa samarbetsformerna visar att de bygger på enstaka ellsjälares insatser snarare än ett gemensamt förhållningssätt där alla arbetar för att inkludera den lokala skolan i det som sker utanför skolan.

Helene Årlestigs avhandling (2008) *Communication between Principals and Teachers in Successful Schools* i pedagogik vid Umeå universitet behandlar vardagskommunikationens betydelse för skolans resultat. Hon har i fyra olika publicerade artiklar belyst var och hur rektorer och lärare kommunicerar med varandra. Den första artikeln behandlar vad rektorer och lärare anser vara viktiga delar i en skolans kommunikation. Den andra artikeln beskriver en teoretisk modell som kan fungera som analysinstrument för skolors kommunikation. De tre delarna i modellen är information, bekräftelse och feedback samt tolkning. Den tredje artikeln behandlar skolorna

kommunikationsstrukturer i form av kvantitativa analyser av möten och mötesinnehåll. Den fjärde artikeln fokuserar på fem framgångsrika skolor och deras kommunikationskultur. Avhandlingens slutsatser visar att vardagskommunikationen till huvudsak består av information som i stor utsträckning rör enskilda elever och vardagsfrågor. Även om lärarna ansåg det enkelt att prata med sin rektor så handlade frågorna sällan om lärande och undervisning. Kommunikationen var dessutom ojämnt fördelad mellan lärarna. Lärarna upplevde att de fick lite professionell återkoppling och många påtalade att rektor inte gjorde klassrumsbesök. Det saknades även möten där rektorer och lärare tillsammans tolkade och analyserat uppdrag och resultat. Trots att kommunikation beskrivs som viktigt fanns det en omedvetenhet och en kunskapsbrist i hur man organiserade, använde och arbetade med att utveckla sin interna kommunikation. I de framgångsrika skolorna var olika åsikter i högre grad en tillgång och rektor kommunicerade oftare om frågor som rörde lärande och undervisning. Rektor gav i dessa skolor lärarna mer individuell återkoppling och gjorde fler klassrumsbesök.

Den tredje avhandlingen i projektet *Successful Principal Leadership. Prerequisites, Processes and Outcomes* är även den en avhandling i pedagogik vid Umeå universitet skriven av Monika Törnsén (2009). Hennes huvudsyfte är som titeln antyder att undersöka hur förutsättningar, processer och resultat påverkar framgångsrikt ledarskap. Avhandling bygger på fyra publicerade artiklar. Den andra artikeln handlar om vilka förutsättningar som behövs för att möjliggöra ett framgångsrikt ledarskap. Artikel ett, tre och fyra beskriver och synliggör framgångsrika rektors ledarskapsprocesser. Hon konstaterar att det som bidrar till rektors framgång är kunskap, att rektor har lärarnas tillit samt att samspelet med och mellan lärarna fungerar. Andra viktiga förutsättningar är ett avgränsat ansvarsområde, tillgång till administrativt stöd och stödfunktioner på den kommunala nivån. I ledarskapsprocesserna utgår Törnsén från läroplanens avsnitt 2.8 som föreskriver rektors uppdrag. Enligt lärarna tar rektorerna på de framgångsrika skolorna i högre grad ansvar för läroplansuppdraget. De är mer aktiva som pedagogiska ledare genom att lyfta fram de nationella målen och engagera sig i skolans inre arbete. Hon konstaterar också att även i de skolor som var framgångsrika i arbetet med de sociala målen men inte med kunskapsmålen så upplevs rektorerna ta ett större ansvar för läroplansuppdraget än rektorer som arbetade på skolor som var framgångsrika i att nå kunskapsmålen men inte de sociala målen. Törnsén menar att resultaten ställer frågor om vad det här får för konsekvenser för utbildningens likvärdighet.

Under perioden 2009 och 2010 kom sex avhandlingar. *Samproducerat ledarskap: Hur rektorer och lärare formar ledarskap i skolans vardagsarbete* är

en avhandling i pedagogik skriven vid högskolan i Jönköping. Ann Ludvigssons (2009) har studerat hur ledarskapet formas i samspelet mellan rektorer och lärare i deras vardagsarbete. Det empiriska materialet består av intervjuer och observationer på tre F-6 skolor. Ludvigsson menar att skolor inte kan betraktas som enhetliga utan bör beskrivas som flerkulturella med många synsätt. Den sociala dimensionen av arbetet är central och det är viktigt att skapa en förståelse för varandras perspektiv och utgångspunkter för förhandlingar. Lärares olika utbildningar och erfarenhet medför att det kan finnas kulturella och politiska spänningar. Hon menar att resultaten ger anledning att fråga vem som leder vem. Även om rektor ibland leder så leder även lärarna på olika sätt. Bilden av den starke ledaren bör enligt Ludvigsson ifrågasättas då den snarare bidrar till problem än hjälper rektor. Istället är det mer realistiskt att beskriva ledarskapet som samproducerat.

*Slaget om femininiteten: Skolledarskap som könsskapande praktik* är titeln på Monika Söderberg Forslunds (2009) avhandling i pedagogik från Stockholms universitet. Avhandlingens syfte är att synliggöra hur föreställningar om kön och könsdiskurser påverkat förutsättningar för rektors ledarskap i olika tidsepoker. Genom att studera olika dokument och intervjuva 18 rektorer täcker materialet en tidsperiod från 1830–2006. Från 1800-talets början till långt in på 1900-talet utgick man från biologiska förklaringar. Under 1970-talet byggde föreställningarna på psykologiska modeller för att sedan på 1980-talet gå över till att förstå kön via kulturella och sociokulturella konstruktioner. De biologiska föreställningarna har över tid försvagats men inte upphört. Avhandlingen synliggör fyra olika könsdiskurser; särartsdiskursen, likhetsdiskursen, skillnadsdiskursen och en gränsöverskridande diskurs. Avhandlingen visar att skolan fortfarande styrs av särartsdiskursen med begränsande könsföreställningar. Samtidigt visar skolledarskapet som bedrivs en bit in på 2000-talet en könsöverskridande diskurs där det inte verkar ha någon större betydelse om ledaren är kvinna eller man.

Även i Tina Forsberg Kankkunens (2009) avhandling i sociologi från Stockholms universitet, *Två kommunala rum: Ledningsarbete i genusmärkta tekniska respektive omsorgs och utbildningsverksamhet* är genus i fokus. Forsberg Kankkunen visar att ledaruppgifterna i omsorgs- och utbildningsverksamheter där de anställda i huvudsak utgörs av kvinnor skiljer sig från uppgifterna i de tekniska förvaltningarna som främst har män anställda. Hon har studerat genusmärkning på organisationsnivå och inte skillnader mellan enskilda individer. Cheferna på utbildnings och omsorgsförvaltningarna har sämre organisatoriska förutsättningar för social interaktion med de underställda nivåerna. Exempel på detta är att i omsorg och utbildningsförvaltningarna har cheferna i snitt 55 underställda medan de inom de tekniska

förvaltningarna i snitt har 18 anställda. Dessutom har ledarna inom omsorg och utbildning ett sämre administrativt stöd. Cheferna inom omsorg och utbildning har också svårare att påverka beslutsprocesser som relaterar till politiker och nivåerna ovanför deras egna än ledarna i de tekniska förvaltningarna. Att inte chefer från omsorg och utbildning får synliggöra behoven och den verksamhet som pågår och dessutom avstås från strategiska beslut kan få till följd att traditionella könsmonster upprepas utan att det blir synligt. Hon betonar att skillnaden inte ligger i mäns och kvinnors olika sätt att leda utan i hur organisationen är uppbyggd.

Under 2009 kom ytterligare en avhandling i pedagogik om skolledare, *Skolledares perspektiv på grupphandledning* från högskolan i Jönköping. Karin Åberg (2009) har via en web enkät till drygt 400 personer och intervjuer med 12 rektorer med positiva erfarenheter av handledning studerat rektorers förståelse av handledning samt dess tillkomst och utveckling. Resultaten visar att rektorernas förståelse skapar olika förutsättningar för handledning inom skolan. Tre huvudinriktningar av handledning går att urskilja; den verksamhetsinriktade, den professionsutvecklande och den personalstödande. Åberg visar på att det finns ett behov av olika sorters handledning för lärare. Rektorer upplever ett eget behov av grupphandledning då de ofta känner sig ensamma i sitt arbete. Av flera rektorer ses handledning som den viktigaste formen av kompetensutveckling och kompetensutnyttjande.

Den sista avhandlingen om rektor under det här decenniet kom 2010. Ulf Leo (2010) har skrivit en avhandling i rättssociologi vid Lunds universitet med titeln *Rektor bör och rektor gör*. Hans intresse är att undersöka om det finns särskilda professionella normer för rektorers ledning av skolans demokratiuppdrag. Han har dessutom som ambition att utveckla metoder för att identifiera och analysera professionella normer. Datainsamlingen har skett via enskilda intervjuer och intervjuer i fokusgrupper. Fokus ligger på handlingar snarare än egenskaper. Leo jämför var rektorer bör enligt styrdokumentet med vad de säger att de gör. Rektorerna beskriver demokratiuppdraget som ett förhållningssätt där de ska agera förebildligt. En stor del av uppdraget handlar om samspel och samverkan där fysisk närvaro och olika former av samtal är centrala.

## Reflektioner och summering

Skolan är ett komplext forskningsområde med många aktörer inblandade. Rektor innehar en central roll för vad som händer på den lokala skolan. Ibland påtalas det att det finns för lite forskning om skolan och dess verk-

samhet. Avhandlingar utgör en viktig del av svensk grundforskning om skolan. I Mats Ekholms m.fl. forskningsöversikt från 2000 *Forskning om rektor* finns det endast fem avhandlingar nämnda. Utifrån det perspektivet ökar antalet avhandlingar om rektor under 2000-talet. Det kunde ha varit fler om avhandlingsförfattarna valt ämnesorden med större omsorg men vi får utgå ifrån att de inte sett rektor som central i sina avhandlingar eftersom rektor inte används som ämnesord. Utgår man istället från den forskning som finns om skolan totalt är studier med fokus på rektor och rektors ledarskap relativt få. I det här kapitlet redovisar vi totalt tjugotre avhandlingar. Sedan 2006 har cirka 600 doktorsavhandlingar om utbildningsområdet skrivits och femton av dessa behandlar rektor enligt avhandlingsförfattarna dvs. cirka 2,5 %.

Innehållsmässigt finns det en spridning i vad avhandlingarna tar upp. Det finns några områden som har dragit till sig ett större intresse. Ett sådant område är rektors roll. Både den första avhandling år 2000 och den sista avhandlingen 2010 handlar om rektors roll och vad rektor gör (Leo, 2010, Svedberg, 2000). Även om det går att påvisa förskjutningar i uppdraget betonas mål och resultatstyrningen och det komplexa i rollen redan i början av decenniet. Det är fler som har studerat vad rektor gör och de normer som styr (Brüde Sundin, 2007, Hallerström, 2006, Ludvigsson 2009). Alla lyftar vikten av samspel och relationer. Speciellt de två sista författarna har studerat rektors vardagsarbete. Även Nihlfors (2003) som studerat skolchefer och Perssons avhandling (2002) om att vara ny i en skolledarfattning behandlar vad skolledare gör och bör göra.

Ett annat område som är i fokus i flera avhandlingar är kommunikation (Engström 2005, Nordzell, 2007, Säwe 2004, Ärlestig, 2008). Avhandlingarna fokuserar olika typer av kommunikation och alla berör såväl form som innehåll i kommunikationen.

Ett tredje område som flera skriver om är genus och genusdiskurser (Brüde Sundin, 2006, Forsberg Kankkunen, 2009, Franzén, 2006, Söderberg Forslund, 2009). Under decenniet har de flesta rektorer varit kvinnor. Trots det konstaterar samtliga författare att ledarskapet påverkas av en traditionell manlig genusdiskurs.

Ett fjärde område som återkommer i avhandlingarna handlar om styrning, mål, målpuppfyllelse och skolutveckling (Björkman, 2008, Hallerström, 2006, Nihlfors, 2003, Rapp, 2001, Söderqvist 2007, Tillberg 2003, Törnsén, 2009, Ärlestig, 2008). Författarna har närmat sig området från olika perspektiv. I många av avhandlingarna berörs pedagogiskt ledarskap. Även om betoningen ligger på ett nära ledarskap är det svårt att generalisera eller att konkret definiera vad ett pedagogiskt ledarskap innehåller och vilka effekter ett sådant ledarskap leder till.

Två avhandlingar är svåra att kategorisera, Monika Lindgren (2006) som skriver om synen på de estetiska ämnen och Karin Åbergs (2009) avhandling om skolledare och grupphandledning.

Även om relationer och samtal dominerar är betoningen mindre på kultur än vad den var i Ekholms m.fl. genomgång av *Forskning om rektor* (2000). Vår genomgång visar att intresset för områden som framgångsrika skolor, kön och genus fortfarande är centrala. Andra områden som är viktiga i skolans vardag som ledarskap i mångkulturella miljöer och ledarskap för att bemästra kränkande behandling i skolans vardag saknas helt. Intressant är också att även om skolutveckling är ett tydligt nationellt uppdrag för rektor så finns det ingen avhandling vars primära fokus är rektors roll i skolutvecklingsprocesser. Vi nämnde i inledningen Ola Holmströms avhandling som berör rektor men Holmström väljer att inte använda rektor som ämnesord.

Under de senaste åren har vikten av att skolans verksamhet ska bygga på vetenskaplighet och beprövad erfarenhet betonats och finns också inskrivet i den skollag som gäller från den 1 juli, 2011 (SFS 2010:800). Här finns ett jungfruligt forskningsområde; Hur tar rektor ansvar för att vetenskaplighet kännetecknar den utbildning som ges? Vetenskapligheten kan också kopplas till skolans ledning med frågor kring i vilken grad rektor använder sig av olika teorier i sitt ledarskap och hur inläst rektor är på olika modeller för t. ex. systematiskt kvalitetsarbete. Frågan är dock var rektor finner den vetenskapliga litteraturen inom dessa områden? Tyvärr översätts nästan inget av den internationella forskningen av skolans ledarskap till svenska. Detta är ett besvärande faktum eftersom vi som forskare vet att få svenska rektorer läser engelska facktexter. Vi går härigenom miste om mycket värdefull kunskap. Detta är speciellt intressant eftersom flera av de svenska forskare som behandlas i kapitel 3 presenterar sin forskning på engelska i olika journaler som aldrig kommer svenska skolpraktiker till del. Det är samtidigt lätt att förstå att forskarna väljer att presentera sina forskningsresultat i engelska böcker och journaler för att härigenom få en vidare spridning av resultaten. Svenska är ett litet språkområde och det saknas en bra tidskrift om skolans ledarskap.

Det saknas även svenska avhandlingar och forskning kring ledarskap i flera av våra skolformer. Nästan all forskning behandlar den obligatoriska skolan. Forskningen är också som visats ovan ofta relativt avgränsade studier. Undantaget ovan är Struktur, Kultur, Ledarskapsprojektet som studerat 24 olika skolor och utifrån det materialet producerat fyra avhandlingar, ett antal artiklar och en bok. Fler studier av den omfattningen med ett speciellt fokus i t.ex. gymnasieskolan eller på friskolor skulle kunna ge flera intressanta avhandlingar och kunskapsbidrag.

Till sist, saknas det avhandlingar och forskning om vem som blir skolledare och varför samt effekterna av rektorsutbildning på lärarnas undervisning och framförallt på elevernas måluppfyllelse. Frågor som är obesvarade gäller vad rektor gör före och efter genomgången statligt rektorsprogram och vilken effekt alla de kurser och konferenser som rektor deltar i har på skolans verksamhet och dess utveckling. Här borde ett stort forskningsprojekt initieras för att finna former för att mäta effekterna av den satsning som staten gjort sedan mitten av 1970-talet.

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# KAPITEL 3 PUBLICERAD FORSKNING OM REKTOR I SVERIGE

Helene Årlestig & Olof Johansson

## Introduktion

Förutom doktors avhandlingar har det under 2000-talets första tio år även publicerats ett antal böcker och artiklar om rektor och skolans ledarskap. Även här har vi begränsat vår sökning till att handla om rektor. Det innebär att delar av det som skrivits om policy, politisk styrning och implementering inte finns med om inte rektor finns angivet som ämnesord av författaren. Vi har i vår sökning sökt på följande ämnesord och titlar: Sweden; Principal, school leader, educational administration, school administration, rektorer, skolledare, skolledning. Dessutom har vi avgränsat det till svenska författare. Vi har sökt via Libris samt databaserna Eric, Academic Search Elite och SocINDEX. Vi har endast tagit med artiklar som är publicerade i vetenskapliga peer reviewed journaler. Då databaserna inte innehåller alla journaler innebär det att artiklar som är publicerade i lägre rankade vetenskapliga journaler eventuellt inte finns med. Det innebär också att fou-rapporter som ingår i olika högskolors egen publicering, myndighetsutvärderingar och böcker av utländska författare som är översatta till svenska inte finns med. Vi har inte heller tagit med s.k. referee granskade konferensbidrag då dessa inte alltid kommer med i olika sökmotorer. Här finns ett problem då formuleringen 'referee granskade artiklar/ uppsatser' används av VR vid ansökningar samt av universiteten själva när forskarna ska redovisa sina publikationer men merparten av dessa uppsatser blir aldrig publicerade artiklar utan endast konferensuppsatser. Detta innebär att författarna ytterst sällan fått sina uppsatser referee bedömda utan kvalitetsstämpeln bygger på ett utlåtande på kortare eller längre abstrakt vilket har vid en positiv bedömning möjliggjort för författaren att presentera sin uppsats vid en speciell konferens. De olika författarna har sedan antingen ansett att uppsatsen inte var av den kvaliteten, d.v.s. klar för publicering för en internationell journal eller bara av för oss okända skäl avstått från publicering. Vid en sakkunniggranskning för en förste amanuensis anställning vid Oslo universitet tillmätte de sakkunniga – professorerna Mats Ekholm och Olof Johansson – stort värde på den ena sökandes sätt att hantera sin referee bedömda konferensbidrag. De var nämligen i mycket

stor utsträckning publicerade i internationella tidskrifter inom ett år efter konferensen.

Hur avgränsningen ska göras har varit ett återkommande ämne för diskussion. Några artiklar och böcker ligger i gränslandet och det har därför varit svårt att avgöra vart gränsen ska gå. Exempel på böcker som inte är med är Jon Pierres antologi som sammanfattar ett projekt om skolans styrning och ledning gjord vid Göteborgs universitet (Pierre, 2007). Boken har skola, administration och förvaltning som ämnesord. Jarl och Rönnerbergs (2010) bok Skolpolitik som har utbildningspolitik finns inte heller med. Skoljuridik är en bok som främst vänder sig till rektorer men inte har använt rektor eller skolledare som ämnesord (Boström & Lundmark, 2011). Det finns ett antal institutionsrapporter samt böcker som handlar om rektorer och dess ledarskap som inte heller är nämnda i kapitlet. I vissa antologier förekommer kapitel om rektor och rektors ledarskap. Kapitel kommer ibland upp via sökmotorerna ibland inte. Det innebär att vi inte täcker alla kapitel som finns skrivna om rektor.

I det här kapitlet finns inte de avhandlingar med som vi har beskrivit i kapitel 2 om de inte är baserade på artiklar i journaler. Vi gjorde en extra sökning via universitetens hemsidor, Libris och databaser med journaler för att se vilka av författarna – de nydisputerade doktorerna – som har fortsatt att skriva om rektorer och rektors ledarskap. Av författarna har några skrivit om sina avhandlingar till populärvetenskapliga böcker (Brüde Sundin, 2007; Persson, 2002). Sex av tjugotre författare har publicerat böcker eller artiklar efter avhandlingen. De som har publicerat mest är Lars Svedberg och Elisabet Nihlfors. De hör också till de som disputerade i början av tio årsperioden. Stephan Rapp har skrivit en artikel och två böcker medan Helene Årlestig, förutom de fyra refererade artiklarna i avhandlingen skrivit en artikel och sex kapitel, Monika Törnsén har förutom de fyra refererade artiklarna i avhandlingen skrivit tre kapitel och Conny Björkman har en artikel och ett kapitel.

Forskare med anknytning till Karlstad dominerade Ekholms m. fl. forskningsöversikt (Ekholm, Blossing, Kåräng, Lindvall, & Scherp, 2000). Endast ett fåtal av de författare som förekom i Ekholms bok finns med i vår sökning. Dit hör Ekholm, Scherp, Blossing, Hultman, Berg och Johansson. Idag är forskning om rektor spridd på många lärosäten. Den person som dominerar publiceringen är Olof Johansson vid Umeå universitet. Förutom egna artiklar har han publicerat ett antal artiklar och böcker med både nationella och internationella forskare. Det är få av de övriga författarna som var med i den förra forskningsöversikten som har skrivit mer än en artikel som anknyter till rektor. Idag finns rektorsprogrammet på sex orter i Sverige. Det är vid två av centrumerna som forskning pågår och publiceras. Umeå är

den ort som har flest aktiva forskare verksamma medan vid centrat i Uppsala har endast Lars Svedberg kommit med i vår förteckning över publiceringar.

Det finns en stor variation i vilken typ av journal artiklarna publiceras. De flesta är ledarskapsjournaler. Journalerna är Europeiska journaler eller journaler med en internationell inriktning. Det finns få läroböcker som inriktar sig på rektors ledarskap. Även om vi inte har redovisat översättningen av utländsk litteratur så har det i våra sökningar framgått att den inte är omfattande. Under senare år har Skolverket och Skolinspektionen gjort ett par kunskapsöversikter. De innehåller en blandning mellan olika kunskapskällor såsom forskning, utvärderingar och populärvetenskap.

I vår genomgång hittade vi cirka 80 vetenskapliga artiklar och böcker som behandlar rektors och rektors ledarskap. Några områden har varit mer frekventa. I redovisningen nedan har vi delat in publikationerna i fem områden.

## Publicerad forskning om rektor av svenska forskare

### Styrning, kvalitet, inspektion och granskning

Mycket av forskningen inom området behandlar styrning och policy mer generellt än att direkt knyta den till rektor. Förutom Ekholms (2002) artikel *Management models in schools in Europe* är alla artiklar författade 2006 eller senare. Intresset kan förklaras med en ny myndighetsstruktur där uppdraget att granska skolan har förstärks. Artiklarna har olika infallsvinklar. Wickström (2006) har en historisk genomgång av de förändringar som skett i styrning av svensk skola i relation till decentralisering och bedömning och betygssättning. Hon summerar med att säga att skolsystemet har genomgått en turbulent period med ekonomiska nedskärningar och ett centralt styrsystem som till hög grad idag är centraliserad. De nya politiska reformerna som träder i kraft under 2011 gör att utvecklingen blir fortsatt intressant att följa. Berg beskriver samhällsförändringar i relation till politisk styrning och vilket frirum det skapar för rektor att arbeta i (Berg, 2007, 2011). Den kravprofil som samhället och staten har beskrivs utifrån fyra olika styrningsmodeller regelstyrning, resultatstyrning, ramstyrning och målstyrning. Beroende på den institutionella strukturen tar sig skolans strukturer olika form. Berg identifierar tre former som han kallar "slipsen", "molnet" och "elipsen". "Slipsen" dominerades av regelstyrning och förekom främst innan 1990. Den efterträddes av "molnet" som var vanligast förekommande på 1990 talet och dominerades av målstyrning. Idag dominerar "elipsen" som

har sitt centrum i resultatstyrning, Detta leder enligt Berg till tre olika roller för rektor. I "slipsen" agerar rektor främst som första handläggare medan man under 1990 talet såg rektor som verksamhetsansvarig. Det har i och med resultatstyrningen övergått till att rektor nu ses som resultat och verksamhetsansvarig. De olika styrningsformerna skapar olika grader av frirum där molnet erbjöd det mest vidsträckta frirummet. Frirumsstrategin bygger på skolkultur och innebär att för att frirum ska vara verkningsfullt i skolutveckling måste den enskilda skolan upptäcka sitt frirum, d.v.s. vara medvetna om yttre och inre gränser och krav (Berg, 2011).

Under början av decenniet drevs ett försöksprojekt där några skolor fick möjlighet att göra avsteg från den nationella timplanen. I flera av studierna konstateras att även om skolorna upplevde att de gjorde förändringar så var dessa i praktiken inte så omfattande (Nyroos, 2008; Rönnberg, 2007; Westlund, 2007). En av de få longitudinella studierna som omfattar rektorer i Sverige, har följt skolor och dess aktörer via intervjuer vid fyra tillfällen 1980, 1982, 1985 och 2001. Studien synliggör de reformer som har genomförts och argumenterar för en fortsatt decentralisering (Ekholm & Blossing, 2008). Blossing har den studien som en av sina utgångspunkter i sina böcker om skolutveckling (Blossing, 2003, 2008). Bl.a. menar han att skolorna idag jämfört med 1980 har en kollektiv arbetsorganisation med en tydligare struktur och en effektivare informationsspridning har fått ett starkare fäste. Två av artiklarna som behandlar styrning är komparativa. Båda gör en jämförelse med andra europeiska länder för att beskriva decentralisering och marknadiserings effekter (Daun & Siminou, 2005; Ringarp & Rothland, 2010). Den senare av artiklarna fokuserar på hur man söker sig till andra länder för att utveckla sin policy. Ringarp och Rothland har studerat effekterna av Pisaresultaten och sett hur Tyskland vänt sig till Sverige och Finland för att lära av deras utbildningssystem. Samtidigt har Sveriges egna problem som debatteras på olika nivåer. Författarna menar att policy inte lånas eller kopieras fullt ut utan snarare ska ses som en utgångspunkt i en förändringsdebatt.

Bunar (2010) diskuterar hur fria val av skola påverkar skolorna. Han gör det ur ett etnicitetsperspektiv. Han identifierar tre typer av skolor, "vita skolor", vanliga och religiösa/etniska friskolor samt näralliggande storstads-skolor. Han menar att fria val skapar nya möjligheter och problem. Törnsén har i sina avhandlingsartiklar studerat rektorer i framgångsrika skolor och deras förutsättningar för att bli framgångsrika (Törnsén, 2008, 2009, 2010). I en av artiklarna studeras två skolor med liknande yttre förutsättningar, höga betygsresultat och rektorer som anses vara framgångsrika. Studien visar att ledarstilar och kulturer skiljer sig åt vilket får författaren

att fråga sig hur olika processerna kan vara och ändå anses likvärdiga (Törnsén, 2008).

Löfhdal och Perez Prieto (2009) har sitt fokus på förskolan och dess arbete med kvalitet och att dokumentera kvalitet för utomstående. De diskuterar sina resultat utifrån begreppet ”preformativity” som ser utförande som kontroll och förändring samt utifrån ”institutional narratives” som ur ett lokalt perspektiv beskriver hur aktiviteterna utförs. De menar att systemet omöjliggör att rapportera misslyckanden. Även Svensson och Klevsjö (2006) har studerat kvalitetsarbete genom att studera arbetet med TQM i en gymnasieskola. Deras slutsats är att organisationer för ofta börjar arbeta med modeller utan att ha tagit ställning till varför och hur man ska genomföra projektet. Om skolan inte är mogen för projektet så är det slöseri med resurser att arbeta med den här typen av självvärderingsprojekt. I många av artiklarna så är utgångspunkten skolförbättring. Jämfört med Ekholm m.fl. översikt från 2000 har forskningsfokus förflyttats till extern styrning och påverkan av skolan snarare än att studera den interna skolkulturen.

### Framgångsrika skolor

Ett närliggande område som fått mer och mer uppmärksamhet är studier om framgångsrika och effektiva skolor. Grosin (2002) är en av forskarna som har intresserat sig för rektorer i framgångsrika skolor. Han menar att rektors pedagogiska ledarskap har betydelse för skolans effektivitet. Skolans sociala och pedagogiska klimat (Pesok) påverkas av rektorer och lärares förväntningar samt normer och uppfattningar om skolans syfte, möjligheter och restriktioner. Klimatet påverkar i sin tur skolornas effektivitet i att hjälpa eleverna oavsett deras socio-ekonomiska bakgrund. En studie av tjugofyra skolor i tolv kommuner som bedömdes ha olika grad av framgång har beskrivits i ett flertal artiklar och i en antologi (Ahlström & Höög, 2008, Björkman & Olofsson, 2009, Höög & Johansson, 2011, Törnsén, 2008, 2009, 2010, Årlestig, 2007a, 2007b, 2008). De skolor som är med i undersökningen är ordinära skolor där skillnaderna i betygsresultat inte är så stora. Trots detta går det att urskilja olika grader av framgång. Definitionen av framgång är beroende på hur skolorna når kunskapsmål likväl som sociala mål. Kunskapsmålen mäts i form av meritvärde och antal godkända elever i åk nio under en period av tre år. För de sociala målen har en enkät SCOS (Social and Civic Objective Scale) konstruerats. Den bygger på Skolverkets BRUK material som i grunden är ett självvärderingsinstrument för att hjälpa skolorna i deras kvalitetsarbete. Enkäten lämnades till elever i åk nio och innehåller frågor om deras, deras kamraters och lärares inställning och arbete med de sociala målen. I analysen framkom fyra olika typer av skolor.

		Fokus på kunskaps mål	
		Ja	Nej
Fokus på sociala mål	Ja	5	8
	Nej	7	4

Fem av de tjugofyra skolorna ansågs som framgångsrika. De hade höga värden både i relation till kunskapsmål och sociala mål. Sju skolor hade höga värden i relation till kunskapsmålen men enkäten om de sociala målen visade t.ex. att eleverna inte trivdes, att skolorna hade en högre grad av mobbning och en lägre grad av elevinflytande. I åtta av skolorna trivdes eleverna bra. Enkäten visade även att de hade en högre grad av inflytande och samarbete däremot lyckades de inte i kunskapsuppdraget. Fyra av skolorna hade låga värden i relation till kunskapsmålen och de sociala målen. Även om alla forskare har valt att fokusera olika områden har de alla gemensamt att de behandlar området i relation till organisationens struktur, kultur och ledarskap. Jonas Höög (2011) har problematiserat olika sätt att mäta kunskapsmålen i relation till elevers socio-ekonomiska bakgrund. Han fortsätter med att synliggöra problemen och möjligheterna att mäta de sociala målen som finns i läroplanen. För att kunna jämföra skolor och avgöra vilken skillnad lärare och rektorers arbete medför i den enskilda skolan krävs en medvetenhet kring vad som mäts och hur olika instrument och tekniker används. Leif Lindberg (2011) har arbetat med att empiriskt belägga skolornas ethos och sedan kopplat det mot hur framgångsrika skolorna är. I ethosbegreppet ingår hur kunniga rektorerna uppfattas, deras omtanke samt förutsägbarhet. Av de fem framgångsrika skolorna i projektet bedöms fyra ha ett starkt ethos (Lindberg, 2011). Monika Törnsén har analyserat de fem framgångsrika skolorna utifrån en vedertagen teoretisk modell av organisationer och dess ledarskap. Genom att studera skolorna från ett strukturellt, ett HR, ett politiskt och ett symboliskt perspektiv kommer hon fram till att tre av de fem rektorerna är framgångsrika på alla områden medan de andra två rektorerna inte beskrivs som lika framgångsrika. Hon avslutar med att konstatera att rektors självbild och medvetenhet om egna styrkor och svagheter har betydelse för hur ledarskapet uppfattas och genomförs (Törnsén, 2011). Anders Olofsson (2011) har utgått från lärarnas syn på rektors ledning. Han menar att inställningen varierar. En öppen involverande och demokratisk inställning efterfrågas av många lärare. Det finns även en grupp som tycker att rektor i huvudsak ska ägna sig åt skolans administration. Synen på skolutveckling påverkas också i hög grad av lärarnas inställning och möjlighet att arbeta i arbetslag. I Helene Ärlestigs (2011a) skriver om vardagskom-

munikation och pedagogiskt ledarskap. Hon har analyserat skolorna utifrån hur lärare och rektorer uppfattar att information, bekräftelse och feedback och tolkning fungerar på de olika skolorna. I så gott som alla skolor är lärare och rektorer nöjda med informationen som de får och den sociala bekräftelsen och interaktionen. Däremot är en del skolor inte överens om vilken information som är viktig och prioriterad. Övervägande del av skolorna anser att den professionella återkopplingen fungerar dåligt samt att det finns för få samtal där lärare och rektorer tolkar såväl framtid i form av mål och visioner och det vardagliga arbetet på ett djupare sätt. I de framgångsrika skolorna var lärare och rektorer i högre grad både överens och mer nöjda med hur möten och samtal genomförs (Ibid) Helene Ärlestig (2011b) har även ett kapitel om kvalitetsredovisningar och dess betydelse för skolans interna utveckling. Kvalitetsredovisningen har flera syften och målgrupper vilket kan medföra att skolorna i högre grad ser kvalitetsredovisningarna som något de gör på uppdrag av huvudmännen än som ett instrument som gynnar deras eget pedagogiska utvecklingsarbete. Även om lärarna på olika sätt bidrar till arbetet känner de sig inte delaktiga. Kvalitetsredovisningarna blir ett summariskt administrationsdokument istället för ett verktyg och en handlingsplan som påverkar pedagogik och metodik (Ibid, 2011b). Conny Björkman (2011) har skrivit om rektors ledarskap i relation till skolan förbättringskapacitet. Genom att utgå från rektorernas föreställningar har han jämfört de mer framgångsrika skolorna med de mindre framgångsrika skolorna. Han synliggör två olika föreställningar där det första benämns som ett involverande ledarskap. Besluten fattas på rektorsnivå och realiseras på arbetslagsnivå. Arbetet eftersträvar delaktighet och gemensamma visioner där arbetslaget utgör en central del. Denna föreställning förekommer främst bland de framgångsrika skolorna. Den andra föreställningen benämns som ett separerande ledarskap. Där fattas också besluten på rektorsnivå men genomförs av den individuella läraren. Rektor kommunicerar mest genom att informera och eftersom rektor tycker att verksamheten fungerar bra så lämnas en stor del av arbetet och ansvaret till den enskilda läraren och dess ämneskompetens (Ibid). Björn Ahlström (2011) behandlar mobbning och skolans sociala mål i form av elevinflytande Han har jämfört fyra skolor och visar att det finns en samvariation där det är mindre mobbning i de skolor som har mer elevinflytande. Även ledarskapet skiljer sig åt. Aspekter som etik, delaktighet och förändring kännetecknar ledarskapet i de skolor som har mer elevinflytande och mindre mobbning (Ibid, 2011) Håkan Myrlund (2011) har skrivit om skolnämnder och dess arbete. Han konstaterar att det är stora skillnader i hur kommunerna organiserar sina nämnder och därmed också vilka ärenden som hamnar på deras bord. Protokollen visar en varia-

tion i arbetssätt och uppgifter. Dessutom verkar många ärenden avgöras i arbetsutskott eller på förvaltningsnivå. Många ärenden kan betecknas som administrativa medan det är få ärenden som behandlar utvärdering, styrdokument och principiella frågor. Det är även få exempel på ärenden där företrädare för verksamheten kommer till tals. Myrlund konstaterar också att politikerna ofta är nöjda med sitt arbete samtidigt som lärarna har lågt förtroende för nämnderna (Ibid, 2011). Olof Johansson (2011) har studerat skolchefens roll och funktion. Skolchefen är följare och ska implementera och genomföra de beslut som fattas av kommunchef och politiker. I den andra rollen har skolchefen en chefsposition som ledare av kommunens utbildningsverksamhet. Johansson konstaterar att den administrativa rollen är viktig samtidigt som skolchefens arbete med planering och förändringsarbete är minst lika viktig för att de ska anses vara framgångsrika i relation till skolornas resultat. Drygt 50 % av skolcheferna angav att de var mycket intresserade av skolans förbättringsarbete. Övriga skolchefer uttryckte ett lägre intresse för denna typ av frågor. Samtaget så visar resultaten att hur och med vad skolcheferna arbetar varierar kraftigt i de olika kommunerna och detta påverkar givetvis måluppfyllelsen i det kommunala skolsystemet (Ibid, 2011).

### Värderingar, etik och likvärdighet

Ett annat område som har samlat ett flertal forskare handlar om värderingar, etik och likvärdighet. Ofta är utgångspunkten ett demokratiskt synsätt och att alla ska behandlas likvärdigt. Francia (2011) har i sin artikel synliggjort dilemman i relation till barns rättigheter och decentraliseringen. Genom att beskriva de reformer som har genomförts under de senaste decennierna i form av decentralisering och centralisering, ändrade styrdokument och friskolereformen studerar Francia hur det påverkar ansvarsfördelningen mellan olika aktörer. Hon diskuterar även hur fria val och mångfald kan skapa nya dilemman. Kan ytterligare centralisering av bedömning och nya kriterier i alla ämnen missgynna vissa grupper? Går det å andra sidan att garantera att elever från underprivilegierade grupper inte möts av för låga förväntningar om det inte är en stark central styrning? Kan vi tillåta etniska och religiösa grupper att göra fria val utan att inskränka individens rätt till utbildning är frågor som ställs i slutet av artikeln.

Norberg och Johansson (2007) har också studerat olika dilemman i beslutsprocesser. De har genom att jämföra ledares syn på sina etiska dilemman visat att det som är ett etiskt dilemma på en nivå i systemet inte är det på andra. De ser också att det finns en risk att en konflikt mellan professionella och personliga värderingar kan påverka elevers rättighet. De finner att



etiska dilemman på en lägre ansvarsnivå blir rationella beslutsärenden på en högre ansvarsnivå i systemet. På den högre nivån dominerar ett professionellt beslutsfattande enligt gällande lagstiftning, vilket i de flesta fallen löser det etiska dilemman som ofta bygger på en personlig förståelse eller relation. Tre av publikationerna jämför Svenska och Canadensiska förhållanden. Begley & Johansson (2003, 2008) drar slutsatsen att rektors personliga värderingar påverkar deras sätt att lösa problem. Ofta eftersträvas konsensus och förmodade konsekvenser påverkar vilken ställning rektor tar. I en annan artikel studeras inkludering av elever i socialt utsatta områden. En av slutsatserna är att rektorerna medvetet osynliggör olikheter. Istället är de pragmatiska i sitt handlande och försöker minimera de skillnaderna som finns (Goddard, Johansson & Norberg, 2010). Ett flertal författare skriver om inkludering och lika möjligheter för alla (Bordin & Lindstrand, 2007; Johansson, Davis, & Geijer, 2007; Westling Allodi, 2007). Två artiklar berör mer specifikt barn i behov av stöd och hur rektorer ser på speciallärare och specialpedagogers betydelse för att skapa ett inkluderande arbetssätt (Giota & Emanuelsson, 2011; Mattson & Hansen, 2009). De visar bl.a. att även om inkluderande specialundervisning dominerar påverkar den traditionella synen på specialundervisning skolornas arbetssätt. Problemen knyts oftare till elevernas bakgrund och motivation än lärares undervisning och arbetssätt. Lahdenperä (2008) diskuterar i sin bok *Interkulturellt ledarskap förändring i mångfald* ledarskap ur ett etnicitet och mångfaldsperspektiv. Hon bygger boken på en praxisnära forskning där hon har gjort intervjuer med rektorer som arbetar i multietniska områden. Vidare har hon studerat rektorers arbetat i minoritetskolor i Sverige, Spanien och Finland samt ledare som förebilder. Boken är strukturerad efter en modell med tre komponenter 1. Förståelse av mångkulturalism/ interkulturalitet 2. Ledarens kvaliteter och kompetenser 3. Ledarens intentioner, åtgärder och handlingar.

Anders Persson och hans kollegor har studerat skolkultur utifrån vilka allianser en rektor har. I ett tvärvetenskapligt projekt har de bl.a. studerat allianser för att hantera skolvardagen, skolans arbete med etik, skolans försök att framställa önskvärda elever samt elevernas skolupplevelser. De menar att rektor har gått från att vara den förste bland likar till att bli den siste bland överordnade (A. Persson, 2003; A. Persson, Andersson, & Nilsson Lindström, 2005).

## Komparativa studier

Flera av artiklarna är komparativa studier där svenska förhållanden jämförs med andra länder. En av studierna har ett Skandinaviskt perspektiv (Moos, Møller, & Johansson, 2004). I artikeln diskuterar författarna den påverkan

som teorier om New Public Management kan ha och har på rektorers ledarskap. De visar att rektor ofta blir den som hamnar i korselden mellan förändrad nationell eller lokal policy och den lokala kulturen i skolan och dess närområde. De lyfter fram den gemensamma skandinaviska visionen att rollen bör kännetecknas ett demokratiskt, reflekterande och lärande ledarskap. Rapps komparativa studie jämför rektorer och deras förutsättningar i England och Sverige. Genom att intervjua fem rektorer i varje land har Rapp valt att studera hur rektorerna arbetar med pedagogiskt ledarskap i en decentraliserad organisation. Hans slutsats är att de engelska rektorerna har ett större personligt ansvar för sin skolas resultat och att de utövar ett tydligare ledarskap i relation till lärande och undervisning. I de svenska skolorna verkar fokus i högre grad vara på processen än på resultatet. De svenska rektorerna skiljer i högre grad på rollen som administratör och pedagogisk ledare. De ägnar sig i huvudsak åt administration och lämnar ansvaret för undervisningen till lärarna (Rapp, 2010).

Några av artiklarna är knutna till en internationell studie om framgångsrika rektorer, International Successful School Principal Project (ISSPP). ISSPP är ett betydelsefullt projekt via flera böcker, enskilda artiklar och temanummer i journaler som beskriver rektorsrollen i olika miljöer. Forskarna i projektet har samarbetat under 10 år och projektet fortsätter med nya studier. Syftet med studierna är att de skall vara användbara både för att informera rektorer, administratörer samt kunna utgöra vägledning för politiska beslut om skolans ledarskap. Studierna har genomförts genom ett samarbete som startade med åtta länder som idag har utökats till sexton länder. Det empiriska materialet bygger på fallstudier i de olika länderna som sedan har följts upp fem år senare (Höög, Johansson, & Olofsson, 2005, 2009; Moos & Johansson, 2009). Som nämnts tidigare har etik och värderingar varit utgångspunkten för jämförande studier mellan Canada och Sverige (Begley & Johansson, 2003, 2008; Goddard, et al., 2010). En av studierna fokuserar på skolchefer i Sverige och USA (Klar, Bredeson & Johansson, 2011). Två av studierna fokuserar på rektors utbildning. Den första är en jämförelse mellan Sverige och Australien. Resultaten visar att det finns mer likheter än skillnader mellan de två länderna och att ledarnas egna åsikter i hög grad påverkar hur utbildningen utvecklas och förändras (Gamage & Hanson, 2006). Den andra artikeln bygger på en EU finansierad studie där Cypern, England, Grekland och Sverige deltog. I de länder som har ett mer centraliserat system (Cypern och Grekland) anordnade i mindre omfattning rektorsutbildning än i de mer decentraliserade länderna Sverige och England. Studien visar att även om utbildning alltid bidrar är rekrytering av rätt personer på rektorstjänsterna avgörande för resultatet på den lokala skolan (Thody, Papa-

naoum, Johansson, & Pashiardis, 2007). Att läsa om och jämföra förutsättningar och verksamhet i olika länder verkar inte vara något som rektor lägger mycket tid på. Höög, Bredeson & Johansson (2006) har studerat ett omfattande intervju material med 32 rektorer. De studerade speciellt rektorernas uppfattningar om vad som kännetecknar en framgångsrik respektive en effektiv skola. Rektorerna relaterade begreppen till sin egen praktik och gjorde inga kopplingar till den diskussion som pågick om en nyligen presenterad PISA studie. I svaren fanns inga hänvisningar hos rektorer till internationellt samarbete eller ett intresse att jämföra sin egen skolas eller landets resultat globalt.

## Kommunikation

Ett annat område som flera författare berör är språk och kommunikation och hur det relaterar till ledarskap och makt. Sundberg har i sin antologi samlat flera forskare som är intresserad av ledarskap och olika språkliga uttryck (Sundberg, 2006). De har alla gemensamt att de ser språk och kommunikation som något som konstruerar ledning och styrning. "Skolan och dess ledning är inte objektiva fakta, existerande i sig, utan subjektiva, språkliga och socialt burna konstruktioner" (Ibid. sid 14). Det får till följd att de ser skolledarskap som något betingat och beroende som måste få ett vidare perspektiv än egenskaper och individuell kompetens. Timmy Larsson (2006 b) har analyserat rektors tal på fyra informationsmöten. Föräldrarna var inbjudna inför att deras barn skulle välja skola. Rektorerna hade alla olika legitimeringsstrategier. Den första rektorn valde begrepp som anknöt till det traditionella och välkända. Den andra betonade den effektiva skolan där fokus ligger på lärande. Den tredje skolledaren betonar styrdokument som skollag och läroplan. Den fjärde betonar istället det nya och annorlunda dvs. framtidens skola. I det andra kapitlet har Gunnar Börjesson och Anita Nordzell (2006) följt samtalen kring en utvärdering och om den ska vara anonym eller inte. Materialet bygger på den språkliga interaktionen under sju arbetslagsmöten. Analysen problematiserar hur ledning och styrning konstrueras och omkonstrueras bl.a. genom att studera hur principer och förhandling används. Anita Nordzell (2006) har i tredje kapitlet analyserat intervjuer med tre gymnasiektorer. Intervjuerna behandlar hur de ser på sitt skolledarskap. Hon har studerat hur tid används för att kategorisera och synliggöra beskrivningen av ledarskapet. Berättelserna framställer rektorernas syn på sitt arbete som något nytt och annorlunda och ett förändrat ledarskap i kontrast med ett gammalt invariant ledarskap. Lars Svedberg (2006) har studerat skolcheferna i de tre kommuner som hamnade främst i Lärarförbundet utmärkelse *Sveriges bästa skolkommun* 2002. Svedberg är intres-

serad av hur narrativ bidrar till den verklighet som konstrueras och skapas i olika sociala och kulturella sammanhang. Han menar att framgångsberättelsen som skapas retroaktivt utelämnar eller förminska perspektiv som inte passar in samt att aspekter som demokrati, kritisk granskning och solidaritet inte uppmärksammas. Bo Nestor (2006) har följt tre möten i en kommun. Det första mellan en kommunchef och förvaltningschefer däribland en skolchef och två möten mellan skolchefen och rektorer. Nestor har främst studerat hur området "barn i behov" behandlas under sammankomsterna. Vid de tre mötena fanns inte området på agendan utan kom på tal i relation till ekonomi. Samtalen beskrivs som förhandlingar som bidrog till vissa administrativa beslut. Nestor visar på att vissa frågor, trots att de är viktiga och återkommer, aldrig blir föremål för förhandlingar. Gunnar Sundberg (2006) avslutar antologin med att konstatera att "skolans styrning och ledning är aktiva konstruktioner, i princip öppna för förhandling och inte givna storheter." Svedberg (2004) har olika diskurser som utgångspunkt även när han i en artikel går igenom en policytext, *Lärande Ledare*, för att synliggöra vad som styr rektorer och rektors utbildning. Även Larsson (2006) diskuterar diskurser i rektors tal.

Övriga som har studerat kommunikation gör det ur ett mer verksamhetsnära och organisatoriskt perspektiv. Boyd studerar inställningen till lärare som inte har ett svenskt ursprung och hur deras modersmål påverkar bedömningen av deras insatser (Boyd, 2003). Ärlestig, har i sin avhandling flera publicerade artiklar som behandlar rektorer och lärares vardagskommunikation (Ärlestig, 2007a, 2007b, 2008). En av artiklarna är kvantitativ och bygger på enkäter till lärare och rektorer i tjugofyra skolor. Analysen visar att det finns en omedvetenhet kring hur kommunikationskultur och struktur påverkar verksamheten. Många möten mellan rektor och lärare ägnas åt information. Många lärare uppger att de sällan eller aldrig får klassrumsbesök. Rektorer i de framgångsrika skolorna kommunicerade oftare om visioner, skolutveckling och resultat än rektorerna i de mindre framgångsrika skolorna. Det område som rektorerna i de mindre framgångsrika skolorna ägnade mer tid än rektorerna i de framgångsrika skolorna var vardagsproblematik. Samtliga rektorer överskattade sin förmåga att kommunicera. Kommunikation förknippas ofta med personen och dess egenskaper vilket kan få till följd att planeringen av en organisations kommunikationsstruktur och kultur kan underskattas (Ärlestig, 2008).

### Övriga områden

Övriga artiklar och böcker berör ett antal olika ämnen. Några behandlar rektorers utbildning (Johansson, 2001, 2004; Svedberg, 2004). Johanssons

båda artiklar är internationellt publicerade och behandlar rektorsutbildningens framväxt i Sverige. Även Svedbergs artikel behandlar den rektorsutbildning fanns under 2000-talet är internationellt publicerad. Detta är tre bra exempel på att artiklar inom ett forskningsområde som borde vara centralt för diskussionen i Sverige troligen aldrig når en svensk publik eftersom forskarna väljer att publicera i internationella tidskrifter. Det finns även artiklar som behandlar lärande ur olika perspektiv. Bretell (2000) har skrivit en artikel om lärandestrategier via en modell som kallas Complex instruction (CI). Artikeln är baserad på en workshop där en skola som under en längre tid använt sig av modellen används som ett fall. Fokus ligger på att förstå de rollförändringar som har uppstått bland såväl lärare som rektor. Samarbetet och det kollegiala stödet skiljer sig mellan fallskolan och andra skolor. Bretell konstaterar också att det inte är tillräckligt att rektor är engagerad. Rektor måste använda sin makt att påverka lärarna såväl individuellt som i grupp i flera avseenden som struktur, kunskap värderingar och känslor (Ibid). En annan artikel behandlar metoder för motivation i brand och räddningsutbildning (Ivarsson-Jansson, Cooper, Augustsen & Frykland, 2009). Det finns även exempel på artiklar som handlar om genus (Franzèn, 2005; Johansson & Davis, 2003, 2005). Även här gäller att dessa tre publikationer är publicerat internationellt. Franzèn samt Johansson och Davis har dessutom publicerat sig i samma bok som behandlar ledarskap, genus och kulturella uttryck inom utbildningsområdet. Franzèn har i sin studie analyserat vilka diskurser som rektorer uttrycker för sitt arbete. Hon finner att de två diskursers som får mest utrymme är de som innehåller relationen till lärare och elever. Hon för sedan en diskussion omkring hur rektorer tänker i relation till dessa diskurser. Johansson och Davis analyserar mäns och kvinnors ledarstilar och de finner vissa skillnader mellan män och kvinnors ledarstilar. Kvinnorna i studien uttrycker att de tror att de har nytta av sin tidigare tjänstgöring som lärare i större utsträckning än vad männen gör. Det framkommer också att kvinnor anser att de är mer känsliga för kritik än rektorer som är män. De visar också hur annonser efter nya ledare förändras under 1990-talet och fler egenskaper som efterfrågas i annonserna kan beskrivas som mjuka värden. Andelen kvinnor som är rektorer ökade också kraftigt under 1990-talet.

## Vad finns det för tendenser

De artiklar som är skrivna efter 2000 behandlar olika typer av ämnen och perspektiv utan att vi direkt kan se något som dominerar. Bland författarna finns både de som har skrivit om rektor tidigare och de som vi inte tidigare

har hittat som författare av artiklar om rektor och rektors ledarskap. Under 2011 har det också kommit eller är på väg att publiceras tre böcker om rektors ledarskap. Förutom *Struktur, Kultur, Ledarskap- förutsättningar för framgångsrika skolor* (Höög & Johansson, 2011) som presenterats tidigare i kapitlet har Gunnar Berg (2011) i sin bok *Skolledarskap och skolans frirum* utvecklat sina teorier om skolans styrning och aktörernas frirum. Boken syftar till att belysa och bena upp den komplexitet som uppstår mellan de arbetsvillkor som finns i den institutionella strukturen och rektors professionella roll. Han eftersträvar att synliggöra rektorers vardagsarbete utifrån de formella och informella styrning- och lednings-mekanismer som många gånger ligger utanför den individuella rektorns räckvidd. Berg beskriver bl.a. hur struktur och samhälle har förändrats över tid och hur det påverkar rektorers frirum via tre metaforer, slipsen, molnet och elipsen. Han behandlar även skolans kulturer och det goda pedagogiska samtalet. I boken finns en metodbilaga som innehåller anvisningar för hur en vardagsnära kulturanalys kan genomföras. Under hösten kommer en antologi *Skolledaren i fokus – kunskap, värden, verktyg* där Ulf Blossing är redaktör.

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# KAPITEL 4: FRAMTIDA FORSKNINGSPERSPEKTIV PÅ REKTOR – VILKEN FORSKNING SAKNAS?

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## Introduktion

Under det senaste årtiondet, 2000–2010, har forskning kring skolans rektorer fått ett rejält uppsving inom det nordliga EU området. Denna volym är tänkt att ge en heltäckande forskningsöversikt på området – såväl dess innehåll, utformning och centrala upptäckter som våra slutsatser och rekommendationer för hur forskning om skolans rektorer bör utformas i framtiden. I del I av den här volymen sammanfattar Helene Ärlestig och Olof Johansson forskningsläget i Sverige genom att beskriva den forskning kring skolans rektorer som har publicerats där under perioden. Deras intresse är både avhandlingar – kapitel 2 – och publicerad övrig forskning – kapitel 3. I del II sammanfattar forskare från Norge – Jorunn Møller, Danmark – Lejf Moos, Finland – Mika Risku & Pekka Kanervio, Island – Börkur Hansen, England – Christopher Day, Tyskland – Stephan Huber, Polen – Joanna Michalak och Lettland – Dainuvite Blūma & Ineta Daiktere forskningen kring skollledning och rektorskap under det senaste årtiondet i sina respektive länder.\* Stephan Hubers utvärdering inbegriper även forskning från tre andra tyskspråkiga länder – Österrike, Lichtenstein och Schweiz. Vi skulle vilja tacka alla dessa författare för det är troligen första gången som forskning samlat från alla dessa länder sammanställts på detta sätt och härigenom blivit tillgängligt för en bred läsekrets. Nedan undersöker vi vilka faktorer som har påverkat forskningen kring rektorer i dessa länder under det senaste decenniet.

För det första har länder inom EU, liksom många andra delar av världen, under senare år genomgått omfattande sociala, ekonomiska och politiska förändringar. För att ta itu med de överväldigande utmaningar som dessa förändringar utgör så här i början av 2000-talet har beslutsfattare och medborgare i allt högre utsträckning börjat undersöka syften och mål

\* I detta kapitel refereras endast till författare som deltar i denna forskningsöversikt. Därför finns ingen referenslista till detta kapitel.

med rådande utbildningssystem. Krafter såsom globalisering, ökad ekonomisk konkurrens, ökad in- och utvandring, sociala nätverk och teknologiska framsteg, de dramatiska politiska förändringarna i Östeuropa under slutet av 1900-talet, internationella jämförelser rörande elevers inläring såsom PISA och ökade krav på goda elevprestationer och frågor om vilket ansvar som ska läggas på ledarskapet vid skolorna har även skärpt kraven på yrkesverksamma inom utbildningssektorn, och då särskilt rektorerna. Dessa krav har lett till noggrann analys av hur rektorernas ledarskapsroll, ansvarsområde, förhållanden och arbete kan sättas i relation till hur effektivt de klarar av utmaningarna genom den utbildningskvalitet som ska tillhandahållas i skolorna.

Till skillnad från Australien, Kanada och USA, där forskningen kring rektorer är väl etablerad på såväl universitet, forskningscentra som inom myndigheter på olika nivåer visar forskningsansatserna i den här översikten att man i vissa länder befinner sig i en inledningsfas där man fortfarande definierar och utformar en samordnad agenda för forskning kring rektorsarbete. Europeiska forskare inom ämnet har mycket att vinna på att dela med sig av sin forskning, hur stora de strukturella, kulturella, kontextuella och historiska skillnaderna på utbildningsområdet än må vara. I avsnittet som följer identifierar vi de återkommande teman som är gemensamma för rektorsforskningen i alla de länder som finns representerade i denna översikt. Med dessa forskningssammanställningar som grund ger vi i det sista avsnittet våra rekommendationer för hur rektorsforskningen inom EU ska kunna utvecklas. Vi avslutar med att parafrasera Christopher Days summering av rektorsforskningen i England: vi anser att denna volym visar att forskningen kring rektorer är "vid god vigör". Vår förhoppning är att denna utgåva rörande forskningen kring rektorer 2000–2010 dels synliggör behovet av fortsatt excellent och välgrundad forskning, dels gynnar och påverkar den framtida utvecklingen inom detta forskningsområde och dels hjälper till i hanteringen av de enorma utmaningar som skolledningar, lärare, elever, beslutsfattare och lokalsamhällen står inför.

## Rektorsforskning – Återkommande teman

I detta avsnitt urskiljer vi återkommande teman som är gemensamma för sammanfattningar som rör rektorsforskningen i olika nationella studier, kulturer och kontexter. Även om det finns stora skillnader i såväl forskningens fokus som resultaten mellan de olika länder som finns representerade i denna volym, så vill vi här lyfta fram gemensamma drag där forskningsresultaten tyder på att forskare kan ha gemensamma intressen och således med fördel kan samarbeta i mellanstatliga forskningsprojekt under det

kommande decenniet. Dessutom belyser vår tvärvetenskapliga diskussion dels styrkorna i dagens rektorsforskning, dels viktiga områden som ännu inte berörts och föreslår på så sätt vilken bana framtida forskningsansatser bör ta. Detta kan göras trots, eller kanske tack vare, skillnaderna mellan politiska system, skolsystem och formerna för hur skolsystemen styrs.

### Ett forskningsområde under utveckling

Mellan 2000 och 2010 har forskningen om rektor blivit märkbart större inom EU, vilket märks i ett ökat antal doktorsavhandlingar, forskningsrapporter och publikationer. Men även om forskning om rektor ökar i de olika länderna, så visar resultaten i forskningssammanfattningarna att detta fortfarande är ett forskningsområde under utveckling i de berörda länderna. Trots att intresset har ökat för rektorers arbete och roll(er), är forskningen på området i de flesta länder tämligen begränsad. Forskning om rektor är utan tvivel ett relativt nytt forskningsområde på universiteten. Orsakerna till knappheten i forskningen varierar från land till land. Michalak (Polen) och Blüma & Daiktere (Lettland) beskriver hur det politiska, sociala och utbildningsmässiga arvet från Sovjettiden resulterade i en uppdelning mellan ledarskap och rektorskap, i såväl teori som praktik. Ledarskap förknippades traditionellt med den auktoritära statsmaktens kontroll, och det fanns helt enkelt få iögonfallande frågor att forska kring. Rektorer utsågs i regel med kommunistpartiets godkännande, varför partiloyalitet ansågs väga tyngre som urvalskriterie än kvaliteter såsom ledaregenskaper och pedagogisk kompetens. I detta system fanns inget större intresse för forskning kring rektorer. Huber (Tyskland) konstaterar att det i de tysktalande länderna (Tyskland, Österrike, Lichtenstein och Schweiz) historiskt sett inte har forskats särskilt mycket kring ledarskap på skolor. De studier som ändå har gjorts var i regel knutna till forskning kring utbildningspolitik och utvecklingsprojekt för skolor. Då huvudfokus har legat på andra frågor har undersökningen av rektorernas arbete och ledarskap på skolor hamnat i skymundan. Huber menar vidare att forskare måste kunna frambringa övertygande bevis för att skolledning och rektorernas arbete skiljer sig från exempelvis offentlig förvaltning om man vill att forskningsområdet ska vinna legitimitet inom universitetsvärlden.

Våra författare föreslår ett antal olika orsaker till det ökade forskningsintresset kring rektorer. Exempelvis förändringar i den nationella utbildningspolitiken, och då allt som oftast alltmer decentraliserade utbildningssystem, den strida strömmen av utbildningsreformer, allt tuffare skolmiljöer, globaliseringens verkningar och högre krav på ansvarsskyldighet har komplicerat arbetet och gjort vardagen mer utsatt för såväl rektorer som den personal de leder. I Norge, Sverige, Finland, Danmark och Island beskriver Møller, Ärles-

tig & Johansson, Moos, Risku & Kanervio och Hansen effekten som yttre krafter har på skolor och rektorer, liksom hur den starka interna dynamiken i utbildningssystemen ställer nya krav på rektorerna. I jämförelse med tidigare årtionden har forskare vid universitet och olika myndigheter mer noggrant börjat studera rektorers arbete och hur detta kan relateras till målen för den nationella skolpolitiken och deras ansvarsskyldighet för de studerandes prestationer, både vad gäller akademisk och social utveckling. I England finns en längre tradition av forskning kring skolledning, och där grundades National College for School Leadership av Labourregeringen år 2001. Day härleder det senaste decenniets våg av rektorsforskning dels till kravet på förbättring och större effektivitet inom skolan, dels till att man inom utbildningssystemet har börjat inse vikten av social rättvisa och jämlikhet. I Sverige överlät Skolverket ansvaret för rektorsutbildningen till tio utvalda länsorganisationer för första gången 1976, en andra gång 1993/94 då antalet minskades till sex nationella regioner. Därefter utökades utbildningsanordnarna till åtta universitet i slutet av 1990-talet och en fjärde förändring skedde 2009 då Myndigheten för skolutveckling gav uppdraget till sex universitet. Vid varje organisatorisk förändring har också en justering av uppdraget ägt rum. Samtidigt som man uppförde olika centra för skolledarutveckling utökades också antalet utbildare, varav några var forskarstuderande. I dessa fall fullbordades ett antal forskningsprojekt, artiklar, uppsatser och doktorsavhandlingar. Men det finns än idag krav på mer forskning vid de olika centra för skolledarutveckling. I denna forskningsöversikt finner vi forskning att rapportera från Umeå, Uppsala och Karlstad.

### Intensifieringen av rektorernas arbete

På 1990-talet spred sig skolreformerna som ringar på vatten över en rad länder, samtidigt som makt och ansvar flyttades över till lokala myndigheter och skolor. En annan stor förändring som åtföljde dessa reformer vara att utbildning och fortbildning för rektorer förflyttades från nationella myndigheter till utvecklingscentrum vid universitet. Tillsammans med förändringar i den nationella skolpolitiken hördes ökade krav på ansvarsskyldighet för mätbara inlärningsresultat mot bakgrund av allt mer konkurrensutsatta studiemiljöer. Samtliga av dessa krav orsakades av de studerandes allt mer skiftande grupptillhörighet, ökade sociala konflikter i skolan och i samhället, förändringar i läroplanen som kräver ny teknologi och krav på en ny sorts kunskaper och färdigheter som 2000-talets medborgare behöver. Tillsammans har de ökat arbetsbelastningen för rektorer och väckt frågor kring den framtida effektiviteten i ett traditionellt utbildningssystem. Arbetsbeskrivningar för rektorer har i allmänhet varit oklara och vagt formulerade i

lagar och policy-dokument. Med tanke på den historiska bristen på forskning kring rektorers arbete, samt de kvaliteter, strategier och kompetenser som alla rektorer behöver för att kunna ta på sig ansvaret för att möta den mängd utbildningsmässiga utmaningar som väntar, så är knappast förvånande att beslutsfattare, forskare och rektorerna själva såg mycket allvarligt på såväl oklarheterna som bristen på forskningsresultat. Till följd av denna större tonvikt vid rektorernas roll i uppfyllandet av dessa krav stimulerades framväxten av forskning om rektor, samtidigt som de policy-relaterade kraven på rektorerna ökade.

## Hinder för rektorers pedagogiska ledarskap

Även om det finns undantag, exempelvis i England genom Christopher Days arbete och bland forskare utsedda av National College of School Leadership, så är den inrapporterade forskningen kring rektorer som undervisningsledare i denna volym ytterst begränsad. Forskningsöversikterna ger flera förklaringar till detta. För det första råder ännu ingen konsensus bland forskare kring vad pedagogiskt ledarskap egentligen innebär. Det diskuteras och beskrivs allttjämt olika beroende på forskarens perspektiv detta gäller även på väletablerade ledarskapsprogram och forskningscentra vid Nordamerikanska och Australiensiska universitet. I deskriptiva studier av rektorernas arbete har de flesta som innehar en ledarroll inom skolan lärarbefattning sedan tidigare och har med sig denna pedagogiska kompetens i det nya jobbet. Trots detta får, som Møller förklarar i sin översikt av forskning i Norge, begreppet kring pedagogiskt ledarskap väldigt lite uppmärksamhet. Hon visar att rektorer i Norge inte ser det som en huvuduppgift att lägga sig i vad som händer i klassrummen. Denna diskussion är relevant även i Sverige. Detta står i skarp kontrast mot den vikt man i Australien, Storbritannien och Nordamerika lägger vid olika former av ansvarsskyldighet där rektorer får allt större krav på sig för att övervaka verksamheten och skapa meritbaserade belöningar för lärarprestationer och studieresultat. Det finns allttjämt tendenser till förändringar i en studie från Norge där man ser viktiga skillnader mellan äldre och yngre rektorer. I denna studie såg man hur nya rektorer tog på sig ansvarsskyldighet för studieresultat och såg diskursen kring verksamhetens utförande som en viktig del av sitt ledarskap. Äldre rektorer (55 år och uppåt) ansåg sig snarare ansvara för en mer administrativ aspekt av skolans verksamhet, såsom effektiviteten i skolans organisation.

En annan orsak till att begreppet kring pedagogiskt ledarskapet har fått begränsat fäste inom forskningen och i rektorernas arbetsliv står att finna i de starka normer som råder kring rektorers och lärares yrkesmässiga självständighet. Rektorer anser att det är lärarnas ansvar att stå för den pedagogiska expertisen och på så sätt skapa en god lärandemiljö i klassrummen där

alla elever kan lyckas. Trots de ansatser som har gjorts bland rektorer för att förbättra undervisningskvaliteten i sina respektive skolor, så hindrar starka normer kring professionell autonomi rektorerna från att få inblick i vad som händer i klassrummen och från att påverka pedagogiska beslut och praxis.

### Arvets inflytande på undervisningen och rektorernas arbete

Varje enskilt land i denna volym har en unik historia, struktur, policymiljö och kontext beträffande det offentliga skolsystemet, vilket naturligtvis har påverkat rektorernas roll. Forskning kring rektorer speglar följaktligen detta arv. Även om det finns mycket att lära från studier som sträcker sig över nationsgränserna, så fyller ändå rektorsstudier inom den nationella, regionala och lokala kontexten en viktig funktion på forskningsområdet. Vi kan dra lärdomar från internationella studier, men att bara översätta, applicera och flytta över forskningsupplägg, undersökningsinstrument och forskningsresultat kring rektorer från ett sammanhang till ett annat är varken tillräckligt eller ens lämpligt. Kontexten spelar roll och Stephan Huber skriver:

Det finns uppenbara kontextuella skillnader beträffande ledarskap, såsom graden av självbestämmande som skolledare har i skolsystemet och vilka urvalskriterier de anställs på, medan mindre uppenbara kulturella skillnader gör det än mindre lämpligt att blott importera resultat från en kontext till en annan utan åtminstone viss bearbetning.

Exempelvis USA, där offentlig utbildning enligt konstitutionen faller under delstatsmyndigheternas ansvar, ett decentraliserat offentligt utbildningssystem med en lång tradition av starkt lokalt inflytande, står i skarp kontextuell kontrast till europeiska länder där nationella utbildningsmyndigheter dominerar. Som tidigare konstaterats i denna sammanfattning har dessutom beslutsfattare och skolpersonal i länder som tidigare stod under Sovjetunionens kontroll (Polen och Lettland) under de senaste två decennierna försökt nysta upp arvet från de strukturer och den politik som formade den offentliga utbildningen och rektorernas arbete under sovjettiden. Som Michalak (Polen) och Blüma och Daiktere (Lettland) redogör börjar en forskning om hur dessa dramatiska förändringar i makt-, lednings- och kontrollstrukturer påverkat rektorer att växa fram. Resultaten kommer förhoppningsvis att kunna sprida förståelse kring de transitionsprocesser som äger rum när politiska styrningssystem förändras radikalt.

### Forskningsupplägg och metoder

Forskningen kring rektorer som förekommer i denna utgåva är företrädesvis kvalitativ och deskriptiv. Fallstudier, undersökningsstudier (intervjuer och frågeformulär/enkäter), levnadshistorier, aktionsforskning och observa-



tionsstudier är de vanligaste metodologiska strategierna. Deskriptiva studier på rektorer är viktiga eftersom de skapar en taxonomisk baslinje och klassifikationssystem som kan utgöra en språngbräda vid utvecklingen av forskningsplaner och projekt som undersöker rektorers arbete. Dessa studier möjliggör utformningen av undersökningsprotokoll för större studier och projekt där man tillämpat s.k. "mixed methods" och frambringat hypoteser som kan prövas med hjälp av kvantitativa metoder. Även om dessa deskriptiva studier ger en god bild av lärarnas och rektorernas perspektiv, så är de nuvarande forskningsuppläggen allt för snäva i såväl omfång som storlek och begränsar forskarnas förmåga att närma sig en rad frågor, såsom hur rektorernas ledarskap förhåller sig till lärarnas undervisning, förbättringssträvanden och målsättningar inom skolan, elevernas prestationer på det akademiska och sociala planet, rektorers ansvar för verksamheten och styrningen av resursfördelningen, för att nämna några.

I den här volymen finns det ett begränsat antal forskare i varje land vars forskning riktar in sig på skolrektorer. De är i många fall pionjärer inom sitt område. Forskningsarbeten existerar, men de flesta studier utförs av enskilda forskare, och då ofta i form av doktorsavhandlingar, vilket inte minst är fallet i Sverige (kapitel 2). Ett mindre antal av dessa nya forskare skriver artiklar och publicerar sig inom samma område efter sin doktorsexamen (kapitel 3).

Med tanke på att majoriteten av studierna är kvalitativa i sin utformning är det föga förvånande att det inte finns många storskaliga kvantitativa studier i de inrapporterade forskningsammansattningarna. Trots att det finns mycket myndighetsdata att tillgå rörande resurser, utgifter, utbildningsinsatser och studieresultat har få forskare använt kvantitativa metoder och stora nationella och internationella data för att närma sig grundläggande frågor kring förutsättningar för och hur rektorernas yrkesutövande förhåller sig till lärarnas undervisningsmetoder, klimatet och kulturen på skolan, arbetsplatsmiljön, genomslaget i politiska beslut och skolresultat. Bristen på storskaliga studier som tillämpar kvantitativa modeller kan också ha sin grund i bristen på statlig finansiering för sådana ansatser och i det faktum att enskilda forskare fördrar kvalitativa undersökningsmodeller, eller en kombination av de två. Att sätta ihop forskarteam, lägga upp en forskningsplan för rektorsforskning, skapa långsiktiga forskningsupplägg och att utföra och redovisa resultaten från sådana studier är resurskrävande och kräver mer än enskilda forskares uppmärksamhet. Det krävs investeringar från statliga myndigheter för att stabilisera forskningscentrum och för att stödja de grupper som är engagerade i denna forskning. Till dags dato är sådan forskning kraftigt underfinansierad.

## Rektorers rekrytering, urval och socialisering ägnas lite uppmärksamhet

Det finns inte mycket i denna utvärdering som tyder på att forskare ägnar nämnvärd uppmärksamhet åt viktiga policyagendor för att förstå hur kvalitetsfrågor kan relateras till hur rektorerna rekryteras, förbereds, utses och till sist socialiseras in i sina formella ledarskapsroller på skolor. Utbildning och fortbildning av rektorer har traditionellt fallit på statliga utbildningsmyndigheter och kommuner. Exempelvis i Sverige förväntas alla rektorer i tjänst delta i ett treårigt, universitetsbaserat yrkesutvecklingsprogram som utrustar dem med kunskaper, kompetenser och verktyg för att utföra sitt arbete framgångsrikt. Viktigast av allt är att dessa program skapar tillfälle att kritiskt reflektera kring det vardagliga ledarskapets utövande och resultat. I nuläget finns det inte mycket forskning kring hur effektiva dessa utbildningsprogram är, och det finns inga aktuella studier som rör rektorernas rekrytering, urval och socialisering. Undantaget i denna utgåva är forskningen som redovisas från National College of School Leadership i England.

## Forskning kring rektorer – en kaskadeffekt

Det råder knappast något tvivel om att intensifieringen av rektorernas arbete, i kombination med en ökad medvetenhet kring hur viktigt deras ledarskap är, har stimulerat viktiga förändringar i rektorernas arbetsliv. I en dynamisk social och politisk miljö med ökade krav på att skolor och yrkesrutiner ska omformas på sätt som tillmötesgår elevernas och lokalsamhällets behov, är rektorernas traditionella roll i förändring – den bearbetas, omdefinieras och omförhandlas. Här är åter kontexten en viktig faktor, och hur väl rektorer hanterar dessa externa policyförändringar är en viktig kvalitetsmarkör för rektorn. Forskning från Norge visar att förändringar i yrkesroller tenderar att påverka rektorer olika beroende på var i karriären de befinner sig. Møller konstaterar till exempel att:

Veteranerna verkade, till skillnad från de nyutträdde cheferna, mindre påverkade av ansvaret för det administrativa arbetet. Det såg ut som de lät sina grundläggande värderingar styra beslutsfattandet, trots de omvälvande förändringar som skedde på andra ställen. Det är som om de försöker hålla fast vid den psykologiska belöning de fick som lärare. Detta skulle kunna benämnas som en vilja att hålla kontakten med ungdomarna.

Rektorerna som befinner sig i mitten och början av karriären berättar å sin sida om etablerandet av professionell ansvarsskyldighet. Vissa av dem välkomnar också ansvarsskyldigheten hos ledningen, men de vill också behålla den sorts psykologiska belöning de fick som lärare. De helt nyutträdde rektorerna kände däremot inte till något annat än det rådande klimatet av

ansvarsskyldighet. De tycktes ta det för givet, välkomnade det, och såg det som ett uttryck för professionalism. Diskurserna kring ledarskap och ansvarsskyldighet på kommunal nivå har förändrats, men ansvarsskyldigheten hos skolledningar är något som ses som ett "förväntat misslyckande". I Sverige – kapitel två och tre – ser vi ingen forskning om rektorers ansvar för verksamheten och väldigt få studier fokuserar på elevresultat, men desto fler studier beskriver rektorernas komplexa arbete och ett komplicerat styrningssystem. I samband med att rektorer omförhandlar och skapar nya yrkesroller kommer de att behöva stort stöd från beslutsfattare, lärare och de lokalsamhällen de tjänar. Tid, pengar och möjlighet till professionell fortbildning för att ta till sig nya kunskaper och kompetenser kommer att vara av stor betydelse då rektorer utvecklar nya ledarskapsidentiteter.

## Rekommendationer för att driva rektorsforskning framåt

Med utgångspunkt i de sammanfattningar som presenteras i denna utgåva, och vår analys av dem, använder vi de återkommande teman vi har kunnat se i rektorsforskningen för att föreslå hur studier kring ledarskap inom skolan ska kunna bli ett erkänt forskningsfält inom EU. Vi hoppas även att dessa rekommendationer för framtida forskning kommer att fungera som vägvisare för forskningssatsningar i respektive land. Vi inser att forskningen i varje land har kommit olika långt; somliga forskningsområden är i sin linda, medan andra har längre och rikare traditioner av att studera rektorer. Därför bestämmer den lokala och nationella kontexten, liksom den befintliga mängden forskning om skolans rektorer som finns till hands, hur man bäst går vidare med individuella och gemensamma forskningsprojekt. Slutligen menar vi att denna sammanställning av sammanfattningar kring rektorsforskningen 2000–2010 kan fungera som en god utgångspunkt för mellanstatliga forskningsprojekt.

Våra rekommendationer baseras på en rad forskningsgrundade antaganden. För det första anser vi att rektorernas ledarskapsroll(er) även i fortsättningen kommer att vara central för skolans utveckling, förbättring, organisatoriska kapacitet och elevresultat. Efter kvaliteten på lärarnas arbete och undervisningsmetoder får ledarskapet på skolan ses som den näst viktigaste faktorn för elevernas utveckling och studieresultat. Kombinationen av decentraliseringen och centraliseringen av utbildningsmässiga riktlinjer och styrelseskick har intensifierat vardagen för rektorer, och kraven på administrativ skicklighet och dynamiskt ledarskap kommer att fortsätta öka med oförändrad styrka. Med tanke på rektorernas centrala

roll för elevernas studieresultat, oavsett nationella/lokala kontexter, kommer rektorsforskningen med all säkerhet att fortsätta att växa i betydelse i framtiden. Ett fortsatt intresse för rektorsforskningen kommer naturligtvis att generera fler studier – mastersuppsatser, doktorsavhandlingar och en rad olika publikationer i vetenskapliga sammanhang och i facktidskrifter. Framväxten av olika centrum för skolledarutveckling, där allt fler mastersstudenter och doktorander studerar, vidareutbildas och utvecklas, förser forskningsområdet med nya idéer och forskare. Det är emellertid viktigt att det finns en strategisk överblick som kan identifiera vilket fokus forskningen bör ha, så att struktur ersätter ett mer stegvist tillvägagångssätt. De utgångspunkter som vi har identifierat i denna forskningsöversikt som anses lovande och/eller icke existerande beskrivs nedan. Men det finns ingen "silverkula" i materialet, inga enskilda rätta svar där man föreslår normativa beteenden för skolledare. Forskningsresultaten kommer att genomsyra ledarskapspraxis inom skolan på så sätt att de kan tolkas och tillämpas på ett unikt sätt inom olika lokala, historiska, kulturella och strukturella kontexter. Somliga forskningsämnen saknas i forskningsbeskrivningen, medan andra beskrivs som områden med väldigt få forskningspublikationer.

- *Viktiga pedagogiska utmaningar för att informera beslutsfattare.* Denna typ av forskning kan ske på uppdrag från regeringar och myndigheter på olika nivåer och består av båda de forskningstyper som står att finna i vår forskningsöversikt, men kan även vara en typ av öronmärkt forskning kring viktiga policyfrågor.
- *Realiseringsprocessen i förhållande till nationell skolpolitik och lokala styrningsstrukturer.* Det är uppenbart att vi i vårt material finner för få studier som diskuterar processen mellan lagstiftning, beslutsfattande och skolan. Vad händer på vägen, och vad karaktäriserar de lokala styrandestrukturer som skapar goda realiseringsresultat på skolnivå med förbättrade studie-resultat?
- *Hur nationell policy påverkar förändringsprocessen i den lokala skolan.* Hur påverkar beslut på nationell nivå det praktiska arbetet inom skolan, och hur lång tid tar det innan man kan mäta eventuella förändringar i elevernas prestationer?
- *Påverkan av internationella mätningar på elevprestationer.* Många politiker hävdar att vi behöver ökat fokus på akademiskt lärande inom grundskolan för att även i fortsättningen ligga i topp på OECDs PISA-lista. Men bidrar verkligen en topposition på denna lista till en bättre skola för alla elever? Dessa internationella mätningar och statistik har bidragit till att skapa skolsystem där alla beslutsfattare kräver ansvarsskyldighet från skolornas

sida. Och ansvarsskyldighet på beslutsfattarnivå innebär förbättringar på skolnivå. Frågan är naturligtvis hur man skapar en bättre skola och bättre kommunala förutsättningar. Och vad man menar med "bättre" avgör vilka krav som ställs på skolan. I alla länder förväntas de utvärdera mera, analysera hur väl man uppfyller sina mål och jämföra sin effektivitet med andra skolor, inte bara i det egna skoldistriktet, utan också nationellt och internationellt. Hur denna trend påverkar lokala skolor, rektor, lärare och elevresultaten måste analyseras ytterligare.

- *Hur effekterna av förändringsprocesser inom skolan på lokalnivå förhåller sig till lokala styrningsstrukturer.* Rektors effektivitet vid låg- respektive högpresterande skolor är viktig att studera för att förstå vilka faktorer som bidrar till undermåliga prestationer. Skolan är en del av ett större nationellt statligt och lokalt styrssystem där det finns ett delat ansvar mellan olika nivåer i systemet. Staten styr skolorna och aktörer på lokal nivå realiserar besluten. Forskningsprojekten måste undersöka hur den lokala strukturen och kulturen påverkar prestationerna på skolor där elevernas resultat är märkbart lägre än väntat. Genom att studera låg presterande skolor kan nya kunskaper kring hur styrnings- och ledarskapsprocesser påverkar skolresultaten erhållas.
- *Rektorernas beslutsfattande i förhållande till styrning av skolan.* Vi vet väldigt lite om hur rektorer fattar beslut, hur de dokumenterar dem och vilken information de har eller skaffar sig innan de tar beslut. Många gånger styr rektorer genom handling och fattar besluten i samband med att de går runt på skolan. Processerna kring rektors beslutsfattande och dess relation till styret av skolan skulle vara ett viktigt område att få mer kunskaper kring.
- *Rektors strategiska beslutsfattande i förhållande till förbättringar inom skolan.* Strategiskt beslutsfattande är en ytterst väsentlig del av det systematiska kvalitetsarbetet på skolor. Det för närvarande nästan ingen forskning på området. Rektorerna sysslar ofta med det forskare skulle definiera som strategiskt beslutsfattande, men de dokumenterar emellertid sällan besluten. Studier kring hur variationer i rektors strategiska beslutsfattande påverkar det systematiska kvalitetsarbetet och förbättringsarbetet i skolor välkomnas.
- *Rektors ledarskap i multikulturella och utmanande miljöer.* Hur agerar rektorer i välintegrerade skolor som genererar goda prestationer hos alla elever när de tar beslut och leder sina skolor?
- *Ledarskap i förhållande till sociala och demokratiska värderingar, mobbning och elevresultat.* Vi behöver mer forskning om hur rektorer kan stödja utvecklandet utvecklande av demokratiska värderingar. Hur kommer det sig att mobbning och kränkningar blir ett stort problem på vissa sko-

lor, medan det på andra endast förekommer i liten, om än oacceptabel, utsträckning. Hur tänker rektorerna och hur viktig är träningen i demokrati som för allas bästa bör förekomma på varje skola? Slutligen, hur kan detta relateras till elevernas prestationer?

- *Effekterna av rektorsutbildningarna.* Det finns inga analyser av hur rektorsutbildningarna eller rektorernas fortbildning påverkar sättet som de leder och styr sina skolor. Vi vet till exempel inte om kapacitetsskapande leder till en förändrad beteendemässig roll bland rektorer. Det finns ett behov av studier på olika ut- och fortbildningsprogram och deras effekt. Sådana studier skulle med fördel kunna vara komparativa mellan olika länder.
- *Hur förbättrade elevprestationer förhåller sig till rektorers relation till lärarna.* Vi diskuterar ofta rektorns roll i förhållande till elevernas prestationer, samtidigt som vi vet att lärarna är den viktigaste faktorn för att eleverna ska lyckas. Men det finns väldigt lite forskning på hur förhållandet mellan rektor och lärare kan påverka elevernas lärande och utveckling. Kan rektor genom att bygga upp en positiv anda av förväntningar på skolan påverka lärarnas arbete med eleverna och följaktligen elevernas prestationer?
- *Organisationsinriktad analys av hur skolledarnas agerande påverkar skolresultaten.* I denna forskningsöversikt finns det nästan inga studier som forskar om skolor genom en rent organisatorisk perspektiv. Forskningsområdet skulle vinna mycket på att titta på skolor som organisationer och på att försöka förklara rektorernas agerande på ett organisationsinriktat plan. Detta är ytterligare ett område där man med fördel skulle kunna göra komparativa studier mellan olika länder.

Brännpunkterna i den forskningen vi har presenterat ovan tydliggör behovet av storskaliga forskningsprojekt som tillämpar "mixed-methods" inom och mellan länderna som finns representerade i denna volym. Utan att förminska värdet i enskilda forskningsansatser, så skapar koordinerad forskning både koherens och värdefulla begreppsmässiga, teoretiska och metodologiska ramar som individuella studier kan knytas till. Lanseringen av storskaliga forskningsstudier skulle också kunna stimulera ökad användning av mixed methods vid undersökningar av rektorers arbete och dess förhållande till skolan och elevernas utveckling.

För närvarande råder det brist på kvantitativa studier om rektorer. Kvalitativa metoder kan ge detaljrika och givande beskrivningar av rektorer och deras arbete. Men inom akademierna, och i många fall inom det rådande politiska klimatet, lämpar sig kvantitativa studier bättre då man närmar sig avgörande frågor – de skulle förstärka legitimiteten i detta framväx-

ande forskningsfält och förse beslutsfattare och yrkesutövare med värdefulla data. Kvantitativa upplägg och metoder skulle också skapa ramverk för att närma sig frågeställningar kring hur rektorernas ledarskap påverkar skolornas och studenternas resultat och hur detta förhåller sig till rektorernas agerande/arbetsuppgifter och lärarpraxis, skolkultur, organisatorisk tillit och utvecklingen av skolans och yrkets kapaciteter. För att främja storskaliga studier, särskilt sådana som är långsiktigt utformade, måste finansieringen inom och mellan länder utökas. Författarna i den här forskningsöversikten rapporterar att det finansiella stödet för forskning om rektorer i de flesta länder är undermåligt. Det är troligt att man kan vänta sig det procentuellt största stödet från särskilda forskningsråd, men också öronmärkta medel från statliga och kommunala myndigheter skulle välkomnas varmt. Att få beslutsfattare på alla nivåer att se vikten av rektorsforskning är således av yttersta vikt när man söker kompletterande finansiering.

Studier kring rektorer skulle med fördel kunna ske i tvärvetenskapliga perspektiv. Traditionella akademiska discipliner såsom statskunskap, historia, sociologi, psykologi och pedagogik, för att bara nämna några, har potential att öppna upp nya och givande forskningsfält inom rektorsforskningen.

I vissa länder finns stora luckor inom forskningen kring rektorer, medan det i andra länder bara funnits ett begränsat intresse för vissa forskningsområden. Vi rekommenderar att forskare börjar ta sig an dessa frågeställningar för att berika och vidga spännvidden i sina undersökningar. Fyra områden har identifierats i forskningssammanfattningarna. Dessa är som följer: 1) pedagogiskt ledarskap för bättre lärande, 2) rekrytering, utbildning, urval och tillträde, 3) förändringar i roller och ledarskap och 4) mer uttryckliga samband mellan rektorernas ledarskap och olika resultatvariabler såsom skolans utveckling, organisatoriska förändringar, kapacitetsskapande och elevprestationer. Det är också tydligt i materialet att kontexten har stor betydelse. Att använda sig av gemensamma begreppsmässiga ramar, metoder och datainsamlingsverktyg skulle kunna vidga forskningen om rektor och skolans ledarskap i samtliga av dessa länder och underlätta kunskapsutbytet kring rektorer och deras yrkesutövande. Samtidigt måste forskare alltid disciplinerat hålla fast vid ett dubbelt perspektiv där man visserligen tillägnar sig det som kan användas från mellanstatliga studier, men samtidigt är medveten om viktiga kontextuella skillnader på det nationella och lokala planet.

Vår sista rekommendation bygger på de föregående. Även om vi förstår att det finns en viss tvekan inför att anamma de många decennier av forskning på skolledarskap som finns att tillgå i Nordamerika och Australien av rädsla för att bli alltför influerad av dess innehåll, metoder och kontexter, så

menar vi att man i förbiseendet av detta digra forskningsmaterial har ett alltför kortsiktigt perspektiv och riskerar att behöva uppfinna hjulet på nytt inom forskningen om rektor. Att dra lärdom från andra forskare är viktigt när forskningsområdet växer fram i den europeiska kontexten. Forskare bör och kan vara lyhörda och uppmärksamma på historiska, kulturella och moderna kontexter som rör utbildningspolitik, samtidigt som de drar lärdomar från en rikedom av existerande forskningsmaterial.



**DEL II**

**RESEARCH ON SCHOOL LEADERS  
WITH NORDIC AND EUROPEAN  
REVIEWS 2000–2010**





# CHAPTER 5 RESEARCH ON PRINCIPALS IN SWEDEN

Helene Ärlestig & Olof Johansson,

## Introduction

This chapter describes and analyzes Swedish research on school principals during the period 2000 to 2010. The chapter has two different sections. First, our focus is on research done by students in the various Ph.D. programs. We report on all Ph.D. theses written that have used *principal* and/or *school leadership* as one of their keywords for libraries. Secondly we have a section in which we report on all published research with at least one Swedish author and with the words *principal* and/or *school leadership* as keywords. The chapters and articles also have to contain and describe Swedish data.

## What do dissertations have to say about Swedish principals?

The principal has the formal responsibility for operations in the local school. This means that the principal needs to be engaged in a number of different issues in order to be able to contribute to the organization and its advancement, i.e. school development. Moreover, principals need to have knowledge about governance and leadership, the functions, structure, and culture of the organization, work in relation to goals, results and quality, and changes in society. In various evaluations, principals are put forward as one of the most important actors, and school outcomes are explained to some extent by how well the leadership functioned. This should entail that leadership and organization are highlighted in Swedish research on schools. The question is how much research there is with the main focus on principals and school leadership.

In several dissertations on schools, principals are respondents or are included as one factor among others. This led us to delimit our compilation. We limited our key words to *rektor* (principal), *skolledare* (school leader), *school leader*, *principal*, *headmaster*, *educational administration*, and *educational leadership*. The search was done via Libris, the search function for Swedish university and research libraries. We found twenty-three disserta-

tions dealing with principals. This means that dissertations on school development, policy, and political governance land outside the scope of our search unless 'principal' is one of the key words or subject words or is in the title. An example of dissertations excluded is Ola Holmström's (2007) thesis in sociology at Lund University, *Skolpolitik, skolutvecklingsarena och sociala processer: en studie av en gymnasieskola i kris*. (*School Policy, School Development Arena and Social Processes. A Study of a High School in Crises*). Holmström follows a newly started upper secondary school and how the principal impels the development of the school. When disagreements get out of hand, the principal resigns. Holmström chose to use the words *skolutveckling*, (*school development*), *gymnasieskolan*, (*upper secondary school*), *utbildningspolitik*, (*educational policy*), and *utbildning*, (*education*) as key words. Björn Alström's (2009) dissertation in sociology at Umeå University, *Bullying and Social Objectives: A Study of Prerequisites for Success in Swedish Schools*, treating the role of principals in work to curb bullying and enhance student influence in successful and less successful schools. Ahlström's key words are *mobbning* (bullying) and *skolor* (schools). These examples show that there are in fact more than the 23 dissertations we will be writing about here that touch on and deal with the leadership of principals in Swedish schools. What the dissertations we chose have in common is that they all have principals and school leadership as a major aspect of the thesis and as key words in Libris.

Most of the dissertations were written towards the end of this period. Almost all of them are in the subject of education. The others are in sociology, sociology of law, and business studies. A total of nine higher-education institutions are represented, Umeå University, Linköping University, and Lund University dominate. Only four dissertations were written in English, two of which are monographs (Björkman, 2008, Söderqvist, 2007) and two compilation dissertations (Törnsén, 2009, Ärlestig, 2008). The dissertations written in Swedish are all monographs.

Virtually all of the dissertations deal with compulsory schools. There is one dissertation with respondents from upper secondary school and one from a special school. There are no theses with empirical data from preschools or from independent schools. Most of the dissertations are based on small case studies where the author followed a school or a principal for a period of time. Interviews, questionnaires, document studies, and observations are the most common methods. Many use principals' or teachers' own perceptions and statements as their point of departure. Several of them also provide a historical survey in their dissertations. Only one thesis is comparative, in that it compares Sweden and England (Söderqvist, 2007). Except one survey to all superintendents there are no major quantitative studies (Nihlfors, 2003).

## Dissertations 2000–2010

During the first two years, 2000–2001, there were two dissertations that focused on principals. Lars Svedberg (2000) dissertation in education at Uppsala University, *Om skolledarskapets gestaltning (The Principal's role: a study of the formation of educational leadership)* addresses the role of the principal and sense-making within the referential framework of social psychology. In a case study Svedberg interviewed the school superintendent and four principals at the compulsory-school level in a small municipality in Sweden in the course of a year. Svedberg claims that there are contradictions in how the role of the principal are interpreted and viewed which become apparent in various discourses

The goal-directed discourse relates to a political will to effect change, the municipal discourse expresses technologically rational and economic way of thinking, and the professional discourse reflects the need for everyday stability, all of which creates a balance – and a compromise situation where vicarious changes constitute a “solution” (Ibid, 2000 p. 202, our translation)

As Svedberg sees it, the power of the system increases, while power over the system seems to decrease. He argues that it is therefore important to highlight the emotional and relational aspect of the role of the principal.

Stephan Rapp's (2001) dissertation in education at Örebro University, *Rektor – garant för elevernas rättsäkerhet (The Headteacher – a guarantee for pupils' legal security? A case study)*, focuses on how principals work with legal issues that defend the rights of students. Rapp has used both questionnaires and interviews. Besides following principals in one municipality Rapp has interviewed a few persons in positions of authority and studied the content of the national principal program. The thesis shows that there is no historical tradition of principals actively grappling with legal issues. Principals' knowledge and training about policy documents and school law were limited at the turn of the century. Several of the principals had so little knowledge that they could not be seen as a “guarantor” of the rights of their students. Furthermore, the Swedish National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*), which then was the authority that inspected schools, had no rights to put sanctions towards the municipality and the local school. The avenues available to students and their guardians to appeal or to pursue a matter legally were limited.

*Skolledare i grundskolan. En fallstudie av biträdande rektorers möte med skolledningen (School leaders in the comprehensive school. A case study of assistant principals' meeting with school management)* is the title of Ingvar Persson's (2002) thesis in education from Lund University. The case study was carried

out at a school that had just instituted a new leadership organization. The study follows the six recently appointed assistant principals, where 50 % of their assignment was as principal, focusing on pedagogical leadership, and 50 % working as teachers. The empirical material consisted of journal entries and interviews. The assistant principals experienced uncertainty during the first semester and felt it was difficult to switch from the role of teacher to the role of principal without extensive training. The dissertation shows that principals need basic training before they take on the work as a principal and then need continuing education. It also turned out that it was difficult to combine a leadership position with teaching. The new tasks involved many interruptions and the ability to act on short notice which effected teaching negatively. The views of these assistant principals on educational leadership can be divided into four categories: administrative, stabilizing, supporting, and developing. Persson writes about the various competencies a principal needs and that the assistant principals express in varying degree. What's more, Persson claims that the reality that the assistant principals encounter is different from what was depicted when they were hired.

One other dissertation that appeared the same year and lies very close to principals and their work is Ninni Wahlström's (2002) dissertation in education, *Om det förändrade ansvaret för skolan: vägen till mål- och resultatstyrning och några av dess konsekvenser (On the shift of responsibility for compulsory schooling. The path to management by objectives and results and some of its consequences)* from Örebro University. Wahlström includes *ledarskap* (leadership) and *målstyrning* (goal-directed governance) as subject words. The thesis is a document study of policy texts, primarily written by governmental commissions, during the latter part of the 20th century. The aim was to study the allocation of responsibility on the basis of three search words: *decentralisering* (decentralization), *kommunalisering* (municipalization), and *målstyrning* (goal-directed governance). She also studied the consequences of goal-directed governance in a case study in one municipality. Wahlström shows that there has been a shift in governance away from municipal implementation, central rules, and rule-governance to municipal responsibility, local responsibility, and goal- and outcome-related governance. She maintains that this impacts the schools and the role of the principal. There is a lack of clarity regarding the character and function of objectives, how evaluations should be used to realize the goals, the function of goals as a governing instrument, and the possibility of interpreting goals formulated at another level and making them concrete. Principals were made responsible for more operations and were given more explicit responsibility for educational activities and school outcomes.

Ulrika Tillberg's (2003) dissertation from the Stockholm School of Economics, *Ledarskap och samarbete – en jämförande fallstudie i tre skolor* (*Leadership and Collaboration: A Comparative Case Study in Three Schools*) was carried out in three compulsory schools representing different school types. Tillberg's is the only one of the twentythree dissertations that is a thesis in business administration. The aim of the study is to develop a simple theoretical model to describe how schools are organized and managed and to study the relationship between leadership and collaboration. The model features six central concepts: the historical and societal context of schooling, meta ideas, the organizational preconditions of schools, identity and structure, everyday work in schools, and leadership and collaboration. Tillberg studied teachers teamwork as an ideal model for collaboration and is interested in how school leaders can pursue school development through collaboration. The main findings of the dissertation indicate that there are a variety of ways to work with collaboration and leadership for school development. The possibilities available to school leadership are determined by positioning, relations, and actions that in turn are based on organizational identity and organizational structure. Collaboration as such is not viewed as a model but rather as a complex organizational phenomenon.

One dissertation treats superintendents and is titled *Skolchefen i skolans styrning och ledning* (*The Position of Director of Education in the Control and Administration of the School Sector*). In her dissertation in education at Uppsala University, Elisabet Nihlfors (2003) used document studies, a national survey to all superintendents that had served during the 1990-ies and interviews with stakeholders to study how the national government's governance of schools can be understood. She focused on how the relationship between the state and the municipality is reflected in the position of superintendent of schools. She approaches the issue via a historical description of how the position of school superintendent emerged and has changed. From the perspective of the school superintendent, the relationship between the state and the municipality can be depicted as a balance between state and municipal interests and between political and professional responsibilities. The system of governance is described as four subsystems that have shifting importance over time. These four subsystems are termed economic, legal, ideological, and evaluative and monitoring systems. The findings indicate superintendents themselves have been allowed to interpret and specify their mission. The constraint that they see is the municipal economy. How the role is formed and what it entails differs across municipalities. Even though it is officially stated that decisions and prerogatives are decentralized, there is hidden governance in force via ideology and via monitoring and evalua-

tion. Nihlfors's various examples describe a form of pressure from below, that is, that governing documents are written in such a way that demands on the municipalities also come from the professionals in the form of principals and teachers and from students and parents. The local school level has been strengthened in issues that need to be solved on the municipality level without the municipality level actually being strengthened.

The only dissertation to deal with a special school is Filippa Säwe's (2004) dissertation in sociology at Lund University, *Att tala med, mot och förbi varandra (Talking With, Against, and Past Each Other: Conversations between Parents and School administrators in a School for Students with Hearing Impairment)*. She studied parental involvement at a special school by following 17 meetings between parents and school representatives. Furthermore, she made nine interviews, primarily with parents. The purpose behind the meetings was to start a dialogue. Her approach is to use a constructivist perspective to study speech acts and interplay in order to uncover what problems are created in communication between the hearing and the deaf. Säwe claims that conversations can be understood in many ways. Using conversation to convey meaning, knowledge, and understanding is a complicated process where social order both affects and is affected by the communication. Conversation involves various strategies and perspectives. The thesis is based on a number of smaller studies where the focus is more on how people converse than the content as such. In one chapter Säwe identifies four components that she calls the basic premise, the causal proposition, the proposal of measures, and the character feature. Depending on how these are combined and focused, various perspectives emerge. The results show that school leadership often chooses a solution-directed perspective, whereas parents prefer a legitimizing perspective. The result may be that the discussion revolves around overarching problems and avoids addressing various underlying causes. The dissertation also shows that there is an ideal of mutual understanding where vagueness in the conversations is accepted since it sometimes offers the only way to achieve unity.

The next thesis, Pär Engström (2005) is also a dissertation in sociology about communication and conversations from Göteborg's University. *Samtal och ledarskap: En studie av medarbetarsamtal i grundskolan (Dialogue and Leadership. A study of staff dialogue in compulsory school Conversation and Leadership)*. Engström studied individual appraisal conferences between principals and teachers by listening to and recording twelve such conferences. Each conference was followed by interviews with both the principals and the teachers. A total of twelve teachers and seven principals participated. The analysis was based on a quantitative part that illuminates the rela-

tionship in the conference and a qualitative part focusing on the creation of meaning and content. The findings reveal variation in the relationship that is largely explained by participants in terms of how long they have shared a professional relationship. If the relationship is new, the principals dominate by controlling the dialogue, while the conditions and the interplay are more egalitarian if the relationship is a more long-standing one. The principals regard individual conferences with teachers as an opportunity to build trust and get more information about the teacher and the school. There is also a control function in which the principal checks that the teacher is doing his/her job in a satisfactory manner. Teachers perceive that they are receiving support by directing the principal's attention toward areas they initiate and choose to talk about.

During 2006–2008, nine dissertations about principals were published, that is, an increase compared to previous years. The first one primarily deals with what unspoken rules guide principals in the form of norms. Helena Hallerström's (2006) dissertation in sociology of law at Lund University is titled *Rektors normer i ledarskap för skolutveckling (Principals' Norms in Leadership Practice for School Development)*. When the schools were decentralized and the municipality became responsible, both the content and significance of the principal's leadership changed. Hallerström has a special focus on the views of principals on the development-oriented part of leadership. As the law is written in a way that is open to interpretation, a principal's actions are influenced by the issue and by the personal traits and norms of the principal in the context at hand. Her findings are based on individual and group interviews with principals in one municipality where Hallerström had a part time position to work with school development. The dissertation show, among other things, that when principals want to influence teachers' interest in school development, they underpin teachers' suggestions and ideas so that the teachers perceive that the proposals come from them rather than linking the proposals to the implementation of what is stipulated in the national governing documents. Hallerström describes principals as steered from several directions and as being sensitive to the wishes and expectations of the personnel. School development should preferably be pursued in close collaboration with the personnel. This entails that the principal leads without controlling. Across the board, the principals were reticent about their own opinions and will. There is a risk that principals may be so familiar with the work and attitudes of their teachers that they cannot dissociate themselves from the teachers perspective sufficiently to be capable of lead and administer the organization.

*Is i magen och ett varmt hjärta: konstruktion av skolledarskap i ett könsperspektiv (Cool Practice With a Warm Heart)* is the title of Karin Franzén's



(2006) dissertation in education at Umeå University. She studied the talk of teachers and principals about school leaders via interviews with principals and teachers. She identifies three arenas in which principals' act: the supporter, the boss, and the educational leader. Regardless of whether it was female or male principals who were interviewed, they had the same view of how a school leader positions him/her in the three arenas. On the other hand, the views and expectations of teachers regarding school leaders were more gender typical. Male principals who were viewed as sensitive to the views of others were seen as unclear, and female teachers identified female principals as supportive to a greater extent.

Attitudes to aesthetic subjects among teachers and principals are the point of departure for Monica Lindgren's (2006) dissertation in music education at Gothenburg University, *Att skapa ordning för det estetiska i skolan – diskursiva positioneringar av samtal mellan lärare och skolledare (Bringing order to aesthetics in school. Discursive positioning in discussions with teachers and head teachers.)* The study draws attention to the fact that in the early 2000s there was a change in the rhetoric surrounding aesthetic activities in policy documents and elsewhere. In group interviews with teachers and principals, Lindgren uncovered discourses about aesthetic activities. Lindgren is interested in how linguistic interaction and statements relate to power and governance. The findings show that aesthetic subjects are described as unique in comparison with other subjects. What is stressed is pleasurable, and that activities are free and individualized. There is a faith in the inherent power of aesthetic activities to help students develop into free and harmonious civil citizens. Teachers are described more as free and as model-providers than as professionally competent individuals.

Anita Nordzell (2007) wrote a dissertation at Linköping University titled *Samtalat ledarskap. Kategoriserings och identitetsarbete i interaktion (Doing School Leadership. Categorization and Identity Work in Interaction)*. She analyzed three recorded management group meetings from compulsory and upper-secondary schools and interviewed three principals. The dissertation consists of four studies that all elucidate the importance of language in categorizing and in creating identity. The way one presents oneself is important for interaction and is a key part of the management meeting conversations. Meetings of management groups contribute to the formulation and reformulation of school leadership and its identity. Concepts and categories contribute to the description of individuals and processes. Some examples of categories that the principals identified themselves with are, problem-solver, changer, and innovative thinker. School leadership thus becomes something that is mutually constructed instead of being conceptualized as the heroic work of an individual.

*En riktig rektor. Om ledarskap, genus och skolkulturer* (*A Real Principal. About Leadership, Gender and Culture*) is the title of Josefin Bråde Sundin's (2007a) dissertation in education at Linköping University. Bråde Sundin chose an ethnographic approach and followed a female principal in her daily work for a year and a half, as well as following two other principals in two smaller studies. The study attempts to depict the complexity of the everyday work of a principal. The ambition is to describe what a principal actually do rather than what they are expected to do. The many small duties may each seem trivial, but together they form a significant whole. The main finding is that school leadership should preferably take place in interaction with others. Relationships and meetings are a crucial part of a principal's everyday work. As schools consist of a number of subcultures that the principal is supposed to lead, the emotional dimension is a significant aspect that affects how the principal acts. Everyday work is full of micro-political acts in which much of the principal's power is contingent on trust and confidence. Moreover, the study shows that the profession of school principal is gender-coded as masculine, even though most principals today are women.

There is one comparative dissertation about principals from the decade, *School leaders' view on market forces and decentralization: Case studies in a Swedish municipality and an English county*. It was written by Björn Söderqvist (2007) at the Department of Education, Stockholm University. Söderqvist studied how market forces and decentralization have impacted schools in Sweden and in England. He interviewed twenty school leaders in a Swedish municipality and twenty school leaders in an English county. He also undertook case studies of seven Swedish schools and ten English schools. The school systems in Sweden and England differ in many ways, even though both can be described as decentralized. Sweden has taken decentralization further, and principals have a higher degree of independence, whereas principals in England still cannot make certain decisions themselves but are rather centrally governed. In England there are also restrictions on the possibility of parents and students freely choosing among schools. When principals were asked to list what they believed was crucial to what school parents choose, principals from both countries put proximity in first place. Swedish principals listed reputation second, while their English counterparts listed outcomes. Among Swedish principals, outcomes come only in seventh place. Principals regard higher quality and better efficacy as positive effects of increased competition and free choice of schools, whereas the negative aspect is a risk of greater segregation. The Swedish principals are perceived as being more satisfied across the board and a probable explanation according to Söderqvist is the far-reaching decentralization.

Therese Vincenti Malmgren (2008) studied what factors and concepts that are important in attaining the objectives of the National Curriculum in a dissertation at Lund University titled *Motiverande grundskolemiljö med fokus på klassrummet (An Inspiring Compulsory School Environment with a Focus on the Classroom)*. Her study contains a quantitative part based on questionnaires to students in the final grades of compulsory school and a qualitative part based on interviews with principals and analyses of texts. She concludes that teacher relationships, co-determination/influence, and teacher competence are variables that are especially important. Fulfilling goals requires an inspiring school environment in which attitudes, responsibilities, and self-confidence affect results.

The following three dissertations in 2008 and 2009 were all part of the project 'Struktur, kultur ledarskap; förutsättningar för framgångsrika skolor' (Structure, Culture, Leadership: Prerequisites for Successful Schools). The project gathered data from twenty-four secondary schools in 12 municipalities. The empirical material consists of documents, questionnaires, interviews, and observations with students, teachers, principals, superintendents, and politicians. Conny Björkman (2008) has in his dissertation in education at Umeå University *Internal Capacities for School Improvement: Principals' Views in Swedish Secondary Schools* focused on readiness capacities for school improvement. By analyzing the principals' statements about forms of collaboration, staff development, and leadership, he discusses qualitative differences in principals' conceptualizations. According to Björkman, principals' views can provide an indication of how those principals act and interact with other actors in the local school. These principals' views are then interpreted on the basis of the concept of structure, which can be understood as decisions, and culture that entails how decisions are realized in the form of distribution of tasks. Based on this interpretation, three conceptualizing categories emerge. The first, which is most common in the most successful schools, means that the principal makes decisions alone or with his/her leadership team regarding forms of collaboration, competence development, and leadership. These decisions are then realized in teams of teachers, which constitute the core of operations. In the second category, the principal still makes the decisions, but they are realized by individual teachers. The third category comprises only decisions about competence development where the level above the principal makes the decisions and the principal realized them. On the whole, the findings indicate that principals' views in the successful schools are more team-based and activating than the views of principals of less successful schools. According to the principals, staff development was used in the more successful schools as a

lever in improvement efforts, whereas staff development in the less successful schools was more temporary and individual. The views of external collaborative forms show that they are based on the efforts of individual enthusiasts rather than a shared approach in which everyone works to include the local school in what is happening outside the school.

Helene Årlestig's dissertation in education at Umeå University (2008) *Communication between Principals and Teachers in Successful Schools* treats the importance of everyday communication for school outcomes. In four published articles she elucidates where and how principals and teachers communicate with each other. The first article deals with what principals and teachers regard as important parts of a school's communication. The second article describes a theoretical model that can function as an analytical tool for school communications. The three parts of the model are information, confirmation and feedback as well as interpretation. The third article addresses the communication structures of schools in the form of quantitative analyses of meetings and their content. The fourth article focuses on the five successful schools and their communication cultures. The conclusions of the dissertation are that everyday communication largely consists of information that to a great extent deals with individual students and everyday matters. Even though the teachers regarded it as easy to talk with their principals, the issues rarely had to do with learning and teaching. Furthermore, communication was unevenly distributed across teachers. The teachers perceived that they received little professional feedback, and many pointed out that their principal did not conduct classroom visits. There was also a lack of meetings where principals and teachers together interpreted and analyzed tasks and results. Even though communication was described as important, there was a lack of awareness and a lack of knowledge regarding how to organize, use, and work with developing internal communication. In the successful schools, differences in opinion were more of an asset, and the principal communicated more often about matters involving learning and instruction. The principal provided teachers with more individual feedback and visited classrooms more often.

The third dissertation in education at Umeå University, *Successful Principal Leadership: Prerequisites, Processes, and Outcomes*, was written by Monika Törnsén (2009). Her main purpose, as the title indicates, is to investigate how preconditions, processes, and results affect successful leadership. Her thesis is based on four published articles. The second article deals with what preconditions must be in place to enable successful leadership. The first, third, and fourth articles describe and highlight the leadership processes of successful principals. She establishes that what contributes to the success of

a principal is knowledge, that the principal enjoys the trust of teachers, and that the interaction with and between teachers functions. Other important prerequisites are a delimited sphere of responsibility, access to administrative support, and support functions at the municipal level. In the leadership processes Törnsén takes as her point of departure section 2.8 of the National Curriculum, which prescribes the duties of the principal. According to teachers, the principals of successful schools take the duties laid down in the National Curriculum more seriously. They are more active as educational leaders by bringing forward the national goals and getting involved in the inner processes of the school. Törnsén shows that in schools that have been successful in working towards social goals but not knowledge goals the principals are perceived as taking a greater responsibility for the duties prescribed by the National Curriculum than principals who work at schools that have been successful in achieving knowledge goals but not social goals. Törnsén maintains that the findings raise questions about what this entails for equality in education.

In the period, 2009 and 2010, six dissertations appeared. *Samproducerat ledarskap: Hur rektorer och lärare formar ledarskap i skolans vardagsarbete* (Co-Produced Leadership: The Formation of Leadership between School heads and Teachers in Everyday Educational Practice) is a dissertation in education written at Jönköping University. Ann Ludvigsson (2009) studied how leadership is constructed in the interaction between principals and teachers in their everyday work. The empirical material consists of interviews and observations from three K-6 schools. Ludvigsson claims that schools cannot be regarded as uniform instead they should rather be described as multicultural with many perspectives. The social dimension of work is central, and it is important to create an understanding of each other's perspectives and points of departure for negotiation. Disparities in education and experience among teachers may lead to cultural and political tensions. She maintains that her findings raise the issue of who is leading whom. Even though the principals sometimes lead, teachers also lead in various ways. As Ludvigsson sees it, the image of the great leader should be questioned, as it hampers rather than helps the principal. Instead, it is better to describe leadership as co-produced.

*Slaget om femininiteten: Skolledarskap som könsskapande praktik* (The Battle over Femininity: School Leadership and Gender-creating Practice) is the title of Monika Söderberg Forslund's (2009) dissertation in education at Stockholm University. The aim of the thesis is to shed light on how conceptions of gender and gender discourses have affected the preconditions for principals' leadership in various eras. By studying a number of documents and interview-

wing eighteen principals, she covers a period from 1830 to 2006. From the early 19th century into the 20th century, biological explanations were taken for granted. In the 1970s conceptions were based on psychological models, only to shift in the early 1980s to understanding gender via cultural and sociocultural constructions. Biological conceptions have lost ground over time but have not been abandoned. The dissertation highlights four gender discourses: the essential sexual difference discourse, the sameness discourse, the difference discourse and a transgressive gender discourse. Söderberg Forslund claims that sexual difference discourse still with limited gender perspectives dominates. At the same time the school leadership that are conducted in the beginning of the 21th century shows that a difference discourse's femininity affirming dimension has been normalized and takes shape in a new and transgressive gender discourse where both femininity and masculinity are available for both female and male principals' identifications and materializations.

Gender is also the focus of Tina Forsberg Kankkunen's (2009) dissertation in sociology at Stockholms University, *Två kommunala rum: Ledningsarbete i genusmärkta tekniska respektive omsorgs och utbildningsverksamhet (Two Municipal Spaces: Leadership Work in Gender-marked Technical, Caring, and Educational Departments)*. Forsberg Kankkunen shows that leadership duties in female-dominated caring and educational activities differ from those in male-dominated technical services. She studied gender marking at the organizational level, not between individuals. Leaders in educational and caring administrations have poorer organizational preconditions for social interaction with the levels below them. One example of this is that caring and educational leaders have an average of fifty-five employees under them, while those in technical administration have an average of eighteen. Moreover, leaders in caring and education have less administrative support. Leaders in caring and education also have a harder time influencing decision-making processes relating to politicians and the levels above their own than do leaders in technical administrations. The fact that leaders in caring and education cannot make their needs known and cannot draw attention to their ongoing operations, and moreover are closed off from strategic decisions, can result in traditional gender patterns being reproduced without becoming visible. She stresses that the difference does not lie in men's and women's different ways of leading but rather in how the organization is set up.

In 2009 one further dissertation in education about school leaders appeared *Skolledares perspektiv på gruppHandledning (Reasons for supervision. School leader's perspective on supervised grouptalk)* from Jönköping University. Using a Web survey of more than 400 persons and interviews with

twelve principals who are favorably inclined toward and have experience of supervision, Karin Åberg (2009) studied principals' understanding of supervision, along with its advent and its development. The findings indicate that principals' contextual understanding creates differences in preconditions for supervision in their schools. Three main views on supervision can be discerned: activity-oriented, professional development, and personnel-support. Åberg shows that there is a need for different sorts of supervision for teachers. Principals perceive a need of their own for group supervision, as they often feel isolated in their work. Many principals view supervision as the most important form of competence development and competence application.

The final dissertation about principals for the decade came out in 2010. Ulf Leo (2010) wrote a dissertation in sociology of law at Lund University titled *Rektor bör och rektor gör (What a Principal Should Do and Does Do)*. His interest is in investigating whether there are specific professional norms for principals' leadership in terms of the democratic mission of schools. He also aims to develop methods for identifying and analyzing professional norms. Data was collected via individual interviews and focus group interviews. The focus is on acts rather than characteristics. Leo compares what principals should be doing according to the policy documents with what they say they are doing. The principals describe the democracy mission as an attitude where they should act as role models. A major part of the mission is about interaction and cooperation, where physical presence and various forms of conversation are central.

## Dissertations – reflections and summary

Schools are a complex research area with many actors involved. The principal occupies a central role in what happens in a local school. It is sometimes averred that there is too little research about schools and their operations. Dissertations constitute a part of basic research about schooling in Sweden. In the research overview by Mats Ekholm et al. from 2000 'Forskning om rektor' (Research on Principals) only five dissertations are mentioned. In that perspective the number of dissertations about principals is increasing at the start of the 21st century. There could have been more dissertations if the authors had chosen key words with greater care, but we must assume that they did not regard principals as central to their theses, as they did not select *principal* as a key word. On the other hand, in the perspective of all research done on schools, studies focusing on principals and their leadership are relatively few in number. In this chapter we have accounted for 23 Ph.D dissertations. Since 2006 some 600 doctoral dissertations have been written

in the field of education in Sweden, and fifteen of them deal with principals according to the dissertation authors.

In terms of content, there is considerable range in the content of the dissertations. There are a few areas that have attracted greater interest. One such area is the role of the principal. Both the first dissertations from 2000 and the last dissertation from 2010 address the role of the principal and what principals do (Leo, 2010, Svedberg, 2000). Even though shifts in the job duties can be established, goal- and result-directed governance and the complexities of the role are emphasized from the very beginning of the decade. Several authors studied what principals do and the norms that govern them (Brüde Sundin, 2007a, Hallerström, 2006, Ludvigsson 2009). They all highlight the importance of interaction and relationships. The last two authors in particular studied the everyday work of principals. Nihlfors (2003) who studied superintendents and Persson's dissertation (2002) about entering the school leader role also treat what school leaders do and is expected to do.

Another area in focus in several dissertations is communication (Engström 2005, Nordzell, 2007, Säwe 2004, Ärlestig, 2008). The dissertations focus on various types of communication, and all of them involve both the form and the content of communication.

A third area that recurs in the dissertations is gender and gender discourses (Brüde Sundin, 2007a, Forsberg Kankkunen, 2009, Franzén, 2006, Söderberg Forslund, 2009). During the decade, most principals have been women. Nevertheless, all these authors establish that leadership is influenced by a traditional masculine gender discourse.

A fourth area that recurs in the dissertations has to do with governance, goals, goal fulfillment, and school development (Björkman, 2008, Hallerström, 2006, Nihlfors, 2003, Rapp, 2001, Söderqvist 2007, Tillberg 2003, Törnsén, 2009, Ärlestig, 2008). The authors approach the field from different perspectives. Many of the dissertations address pedagogical leadership. Although several authors describe what principals do, the emphasis is on immediate leadership, and it is difficult to generalize or concretely define what pedagogical leadership entails and what impacts it should have.

Further, there are two dissertations that are hard to categorize, Monika Lindgren's, about attitudes towards aesthetic subjects (2006) and Karin Åberg's dissertation on school leaders and group supervision (2009).

Although relationships and conversations dominate, there is less emphasis on culture than in the review of research on principals by Ekholm et al. from 2000. Our review shows that interest in areas such as successful schools and gender remains strong. Other areas that are important in everyday life in schools, such as leadership in multicultural environments and leadership to combat harassment in everyday school life, are not represented at all. It is



also interesting that no clear linkage is found in any of the dissertations between the study of school development and principals. We mentioned in the introduction Ola Holmström's dissertation, which touches on principals, but Holmström chose not to include *principal* as a key word. In recent years, it has been stressed that school activities must be based on scientific knowledge and experience, and this is also inscribed in the school legislation that takes force on July 1, 2011 (SFS 2010:800). This is virgin territory for research: How does the principal take the responsibility for ensuring that scientific knowledge informs the instruction provided? Scientific approaches can also be linked to school leadership with issues involving to what extent the principal makes use of various theories in her/his leadership and how well read the principal is regarding various models for systematic quality work, for instance. On the other hand, one might wonder just where the principal might find academic literature in these fields. Unfortunately, hardly any international research on school leadership is translated into Swedish. This is a troublesome fact, as we as researchers know that few Swedish principals read English texts. We are missing out on very valuable knowledge here. This is especially pertinent since several of the Swedish researchers who are treated in Chapter 3 present their findings in English in various journals that never benefit Swedish school practitioners. At the same time, it is easy to understand that researchers prefer to present their research results in English books and journals in order to gain a wider audience for their findings. Swedish is a small language area, and there are no good journals on school leadership in Swedish.

There are also no Swedish dissertations and research on leadership in many of our school forms. Nearly all research treats compulsory school. As evidenced above, research often consists of relatively limited studies. The exception above is the Structure, Culture, Leadership Project, which studied twenty-four schools and used this material to produce four dissertations, a number of articles, and a book. More studies of that scope with a special focus on upper secondary or independent schools would probably be able to yield several dissertations and contributions to our knowledge.

Finally, there are no dissertations and research about who becomes a school leader and why and about the effects of training for principals and how training affect teachers work and students' goal fulfillment. Questions that remain unanswered are what principals do before and after completing the state training program for principals and what effects all the courses and conferences that principals participate in have on school operations and their development. A major research project should be initiated to find forms for measuring the impacts of the efforts the state has undertaken since the mid 1970s.

## Research publications on principals

Besides doctoral dissertations, a number of books and articles about principals and school leadership were published during the first decade of the 21st century. Here, too, we have limited our search to cover principals only. This means that parts of what was written about policy, political governance, and implementation will not be included unless the word *principal* was given as a key word by the author. In our search we have entered the following key words and titles: Sweden; principal, school leader, educational administration, school administration, *rektor* (principals), *skolledare* (school leaders), *skolledning* (*school leadership*). Further, we limited our search to Swedish authors. We searched via Libris and the databases Eric, Academic Search Elite, and SocINDEX. We only included articles appearing in peer-reviewed academic journals. As the databases do not cover all journals, articles published in lower-ranked academic journals are not included. This also means that we do not cover R & D reports appearing as part of various higher education institutions' own publications, governmental evaluations, and books by foreign authors that are translated into Swedish. We have also left aside so-called refereed conference papers, as they are not always included in various search engines. There is a problem here, because the formulation 'refereed articles/papers' is used by the Swedish Research Council regarding research grants and by universities themselves when researchers are asked to give an account of their publications, but most of these papers never become published articles, they remain conference papers. This means that these authors very rarely have their papers refereed; instead the quality mark is based on a statement about an abstract of varying length that enables the author to present the paper at a particular conference. The various authors have subsequently either found that their papers were not of sufficiently high quality, that is, ready for publication in an international journal or have refrained from publishing them for other reasons unknown to us. In connection with an expert review for a position as first amanuensis at Oslo University, the experts – professors Mats Ekholm and Olof Johansson – highly commended the way in which one of the applicants had dealt with her refereed conference papers. They had largely been published in international journals within a year following the conference.

Where to draw the line has been a recurrent subject of discussion. Some articles and books lie on the borderlines, making it difficult to determine where to set the limit. Examples of books that have been left out are Jon Pierre's anthology that summarizes a project on school governance and leadership carried out at Gothenburg University (Pierre, 2007). The book

has *skola* (school), *administration*, and *förvaltning* (administration/management) as subject words. Jarl and Rönnberg's book *Skolpolitik* (School Politics) (2010), which has *utbildningspolitik* (educational policy), is not included either. *Skoljuridik* (School Law) is a book that primarily targets principals, but it does not include either *rektor* (principal) or *skolledare* (school leader) as key words (Boström & Lundmark, 2011). There are also a number of university department reports and books dealing with principals and their leadership that are not mentioned in the chapter. In certain anthologies there are chapters on principals and their leadership. Chapters sometimes appear via search engines, sometimes not. This entails that we are not covering all chapters written about principals.

We performed an extra search via the universities' homepages, Libris and databases of journals to see which of those who recently completed their doctorates have continued to write about principals and their leadership. Some of these authors have rewritten their dissertations into books for a broader audience (Brüde Sundin, 2007b; Persson, 2002). Six of the 23 authors have published books or articles following their dissertation. Those who have published the most are Lars Svedberg and Elisabet Nihlfors. They are also among those who completed their doctorates early in the decade. Stephan Rapp has written one article and two books, while Helene Årlestig has written one article and six chapters, besides the four refereed and published articles in her dissertation; Monika Törnsén has written three chapters besides the four refereed and published articles in her dissertation; and Conny Björkman has one article and one chapter.

Researchers connected to Karlstad dominated the overview of research by Ekholm et al. (Ekholm, Blossing, Kåräng, Lindvall, & Scherp, 2000). Only a few of the authors mentioned in Ekholm's book are included in our search. They are Ekholm, Scherp, Blossing, Hultman, Berg and Johansson. Today research on principals is found at many higher education institutions. The person who dominates publishing is Olof Johansson at Umeå University. Besides his own articles, he has co-authored a number of articles and books with both national and international scholars. Few of the other authors who were included in the previous research review have written more than one article relating to principals. Today the National Principals Program is offered at six universities in Sweden. It is at two of these university centers that research is pursued and published. Umeå is the place with the greatest number of active scholars working in the National Principal Program, while at Uppsala only Lars Svedberg is included in our list of publications.

There is great variation regarding in what type of journal the articles were published. Most, however, are leadership journals. The journals are Euro-

pean or International in orientation. Few textbooks target the leadership of principals. Although we have not included translations of foreign literature, our searches have revealed that they are not numerous. In recent years, the Swedish National Agency for Education and Swedish School Inspection Agency provided a couple of reviews of the state of knowledge. They contain a mixture of various knowledge sources, such as research, evaluations, and presentations for a general audience.

In our review we found about 80 scholarly articles and books that take up principals and their leadership. Some areas have been more frequently addressed. In our account below, we have divided the publications into five areas.

### **Governance, quality, inspection, and monitoring**

Much of the research in the field deals with governance and policy more in general than in direct relation to principals. Apart from Ekholm's article *Management models in schools in Europe* (2002), all articles were written in 2006 or later. This attention can be explained by a new structure of authority in which the obligation to monitor schools was strengthened. The articles evince various approaches. Wickström (2006) has a historical review on changes in the governing of Swedish schools in relation to decentralization, assessment and grading. She sums it up by stating that the school system has gone through a turbulent period of economic cuts and a central system of governance that is highly decentralized today. The new political reforms that take effect in 2011 entail changes that will continue to be interesting to follow. Berg describes societal changes in relation to political governance and what scope it creates for the principal to act within (Berg, 2007, 2011). The profile of requirements that society and the state have is delineated in four governance models: rule steering, result steering, frame steering, and goal steering. Depending on the institutional structure, the structure of schools takes on different forms. Berg identifies three forms, which he calls the 'core', the 'pulp', and the 'peel'. The 'core' was dominated by rule governance and prevailed primarily before 1990. It was succeeded by the 'pulp', which was most common in the 1990s, dominated by goal steering. Today what dominates is the 'peel', whose center is result steering. According to Berg, this leads to three distinct roles for principals. In the 'core', the principal primarily functions as chief executive official, whereas the 1990s saw the principal as the person responsible for operations. With the advent of outcome-based governance, the principal has transitioned into the person responsible for outcomes and operations. The different forms of governance create various degrees of freedom, with the 'pulp' providing the broadest

scope-for- action. The scope-for- action strategy is predicated on school culture and entails that, for scope-for-action to be effective in school development, the individual school must discover its own scope-for-action, that is, be aware of its external and internal constraints and demands (Berg, 2011). Early in the decade a pilot project were pursued where some schools were empowered to deviate from the national regulations regarding hours. In several of the studies it is established that even though schools perceived that they were making changes, these adjustments were not very extensive in practice (Nyroos, 2008; Rönnerberg, 2007; Westlund, 2007).

One of the few longitudinal studies followed schools and their actors via interviews on four occasions, in 1980, 1982, 1985, and 2001. The study brings to light the reforms that were carried out and advocates continued decentralization (Ekholm & Blossing, 2008). Blossing uses that study as one of his points of departure in his books about school development (Blossing, 2003, 2008). He argues, for example, that schools today, compared with those of 1980, have a collective work organization with a clearer structure, and more effective dissemination of information has become more firmly rooted. Two articles that take up governance are comparative, both make a comparison with other European countries in order to describe the effects of decentralization and marketization (Daun & Siminou, 2005; Ringarp & Rothland, 2010). The latter article focuses on how to look to other countries to develop school policy. Ringarp and Rothland studied the effects of the PISA results and saw how Germany turned to Sweden and Finland to learn from their educational systems. At the same time, Sweden has problems that are being debated on various levels. The authors maintain that policy is not borrowed or copied fully but should rather be seen as a point of departure in a debate on school improvement.

Bunar (2010) discusses how free school choice impacts schools. He does so from an ethnic perspective. He identifies three types of schools: "white schools," regular and religious/ethnic free schools, and neighborhood urban schools. He claims that free choice creates new opportunities and problems. In her dissertation articles, Törnsén studied principal in successful schools and the prerequisites for them to become successful (Törnsén, 2008, 2009, 2010). In one of the articles she studies two schools that appeared to have the same prerequisites, high student grades and principals with the reputation to be successful. Törnsén's analyze shows that the leadership styles and cultures differs which raise the question how much the processes can vary and still be equal (2008).

Löfhdal and Perez Prieto (2009) place their focus on preschools and these schools' work with quality and documenting quality for outsiders. They dis-

cuss their findings using the concept of “performativity,” which sees implementation as control and change, and the concept of “institutional narratives,” which describes how activities are performed from a local perspective. They maintain that the system renders it impossible to report failures. Svensson and Klevsjö (2006) studied quality work by investigating work with TQM in an upper-secondary school. Their conclusion is that organizations too often begin to work with models without having taken a stand on why and how the project should be carried out. If the school is not mature to work with the model, it is a waste of resources to work with this type of self-evaluation project. In many of the articles, the point of departure is school improvement. In comparison with the survey by Ekholm et al. from 2000, the research focus has shifted to external governance and control of schools rather than internal school cultures.

### Successful schools

A closely related area that has garnered more and more attention is studies of successful and effective schools. Grosin (2002) claims that principal’s pedagogical leadership is significant for schools efficiency. A school’s social and pedagogical climate (Pesok) is affected by principals and teachers expectations, as well as their norms and views in the school’s mission, opportunities and restriction. The school climate affects the school efficiency to help all students despite of their socio-economic background (Ibid, 2002). A study of 24 schools in 12 municipalities that were deemed to have achieved varying degrees of success were described in several articles and in an anthology (Ahlström & Höög, 2008, Björkman & Olofsson, 2009, Höög & Johansson, 2011, Törnsén, 2008, 2009, 2010, Ärlestig, 2007a, 2007b, 2008). The study includes ordinary schools which mean that the differences in student outcomes do not vary too much. Nevertheless it is possible to discern varying degrees of success. The definition of success is contingent upon how the schools have reached the academic as well as the social and civic objectives in the curriculum. The academic outcomes are measured by grades for students in year 9. It includes both how many students that have passed and the merit rating for all subjects during a period of three years. For the social and civic objectives, a questionnaire SCOS (social and civic objective scale) was constructed. It is based on Swedish National Agency for Education’s BRUK material, which is fundamentally a self-evaluation instrument to assist schools in their quality work. The questionnaire was given to students in the 9th grade and contained questions about their own attitudes and work with social goals as well as those of their friends and of their teachers. The analysis discerned four types of schools.

		Focus on academic objectives	
		Yes	No
Focus on social and civic objectives	Yes	5	8
	No	7	4

Five schools were categorized as successful. They had high scores in relation to both academic objectives and social and civic objectives. Seven schools had high scores in relation to academic objectives, but the questionnaire about social and civic objectives showed e.g. that students were not content, that they had a greater amount of bullying and a lower degree of student influence. In eight schools the students were content. The questionnaire also showed that they had a higher degree of influence and collaboration, but, on the other hand, they did not fulfill the academic objectives. Four schools had low scores in relation to both academic objectives and social and civic objectives.

Even if all researchers have investigated different areas they have in common that they treat their areas in relation to the organizations structure, culture, and leadership. Höög (2011) has problematized various ways to measure successful schools in relation to academic objectives and the students' socio-economic background. On top of that he highlights the problems and advantages with measuring the social and civic objectives that are included in the curriculum. To be able to compare schools and understand if their work has made a difference in student outcomes requires a consciousness around what is measured through different scales and techniques (Ibid). Lindberg (2011) has chosen to empirically cover the schools ethos and relates the findings to their success. The view of principals' knowledge, their caring and how predictable their behavior is are included in the ethos concept. Four out of five schools are assessed to have a strong ethos. Törnsén (2011) has analyzed the five most successful schools from a theoretical perspective and criteria's for leadership. By studying the schools from a structural, a HR, a political and a symbolic perspective she claims that three out of five principals are successful in all areas while the other two are not seen as successful as the other three. She concludes by saying that the principals self-esteem and consciousness about their strength and weaknesses affect how leadership is viewed and conducted (Ibid). Olofsson (2011) has studied the teachers' views on their principal's leadership. He means that the views vary. An open, including and democratic leadership style is what many teachers ask for. There is a group of teachers who means that principals ought to concentrate their work on school administration. The view on school development is to a

high degree affected by the teachers' views and opportunities to work in teacher teams. Årlestig (2011a) writes about every day communication and pedagogical leadership. She has analyzed the schools in relation to how principals and teachers mean that various parts in communication such as information, confirmation and feedback and interpretation work in their school. In almost all schools teachers and principals are satisfied with the information they get and the social confirmation and interaction. At the same time the majority of the teachers claim that they do not get professional feedback and that it is too few conversations between teachers and principals that make a deeper interpretation in relation to objectives and visions as well as how they conduct their everyday work. In the successful schools teachers and principals agreed to a higher extent and were more satisfied with how meetings and conversations were conducted (Ibid). Årlestig (2011b) has also written about quality-reports and their effect on local school development. In Sweden quality reports have been mandatory and have several aims and target groups. This can lead to that the actors in the local school views the quality-reports as a task they do on demand from the school district rather than an instrument that support their own pedagogical work inside the school. Even if the teachers contribute to the reports they don't see themselves as involved and responsible. The quality-reports have become an administrative document instead of an instrument and strategic plan that affect the work in the classroom (Ibid). Björkman (2011) writes about principals' leadership in relation to the schools capacity building. With principals views as a point of departure he compares the more successful schools with those who are less successful. He categorizes principals' views in two dimensions and calls the first one for an involving leadership. Decisions are taken by the principal and are realized by the teachers-teams. Participation and visions are important parts as well as the work in teacher-teams. This category is most common among the successful schools. The other category is called a separated leadership. The decisions is still made by the principal but is realized by the individual teacher. The principal communicate mainly by giving information. The principal believe that the actors in school do a good work and leave most of the work and responsibility to the individual teacher and their knowledge about their subject. Ahlström (2011) is interested in bullying and the schools work with social and civic objectives with a focus on student influence. He has compared four schools and his results shows that there is a relation between lower degree of bullying and a higher degree of student involvement. There is also a difference in how the leadership was conducted. Aspects as ethics, involvement and development are significant for the leadership in the schools with a low degree of bullying and a high degree of stu-



dent influence. Myrlund (2011) writes about the political school boards and their work. He shows that there is a variation in how the municipalities organize their school boards and what type of errands they deal with. The meeting protocol shows a variation in working methods and errands. Some of the duties are decided in working committees or at the administration level. Many of the errands can be seen as purely administrative while few errands treats evaluations, policy and principle matters. There were also few examples where the principals have the chance to leave their opinions to the board. Myrlund claims that the politicians often are satisfied with their own work, while teachers' express low trust in the school boards. Johansson (2011) studies the superintendents' role and function. The superintendent is a follower who is expected to implement and realize the decisions that are taken by the municipality CEO and politicians. At the same time the superintendent is a CEO for the municipalities' schools and their work. Johansson claims that the administrative role is important at the same time as the superintendents' work with planning and development is as important to become successful in relation to outcomes. About 50% of the superintendents claimed that they were very interested in school development. All together the results show that the superintendents' work and tasks varies largely in the various municipalities which effects the success of the local school system.

### Values, ethics, and equality

Another area that has attracted several researchers has to do with values, ethics and equality. The point of departure is often a democratic worldview and that everyone should be treated equally. In an article Francia (2011) sheds light on the dilemma regarding children's rights and decentralization. By studying reforms such as decentralization and centralization, changed policy and the independent school reform that have been conducted during the last decades she focuses on how responsibility is divided between various actors. She also discusses how school choice and manifoldness creates new dilemmas. Can further centralization of assessment and new standards in all subjects disadvantage some groups? Is it possible to guarantee students from underprivileged groups to not be met by to low expectations if there isn't a high degree of centralization? Can we except that ethnic and religious groups make free choices without the individual students right to education is restricted is questions that are posed in the end of the article.

Norberg and Johansson (2007) have also studied various ethical dilemmas in decision making. By comparing the views of leaders on their ethical dilemmas, they show that a dilemma on one level in the system is not a dilemma on other levels. They argue that there is a risk for a conflict between profes-

sional and personal values that can impact the rights of students. Ethical dilemmas on a lower level in the organization become rational decisions on a higher level in the system. At the higher level professional decision-making in relation to the school law solve the problem that at the lower level became an ethical dilemma because of individual empathy or an individual relation (Ibid). Three publications compare Swedish and Canadian conditions. Begley & Johansson (2003, 2008) conclude that the personal values of the principal affect their way of solving problems. Consensus is often sought after, and the presumed consequences affect what stand the principal will take. When parents meet principals in an argumentation about something important for them and/or their children they very seldom argue on the level of consensus and consequences. Their base for the discussion is rather personal preferences' and different stronghold positions which they use as their arguments. When this happens it is very difficult to come to an agreement that can be accepted of both parts. Another article studies inclusion of students in social challenging areas. One of the conclusions is that principals consciously cover up differences. They are pragmatic in their actions and try to minimize any differences that exist (Goddard, Johansson & Norberg, 2010). A number of authors write about inclusion and equal opportunities for all (Bordin & Lindstrand, 2007; Johansson, Davis, & Geijer, 2007; Westling Allodi, 2007). Two articles take up more specifically children in need of support and how principals view the importance of specialist teachers and specialist educators in creating an inclusive mode of working (Giota & Emanuelsson, 2011; Mattson & Hansen, 2009). They show that even if an inclusive special education dominates the traditional view of special education affect the schools working methods. Problems are often connected to the students' background and motivation rather than to teachers' methods and didactics.

In her book *Interkulturellt ledarskap: förändring i mångfald (Intercultural Leadership: Change in Diversity)*, Lahdenperä (2008) discusses leadership from a perspective of ethnicity and diversity. She builds her arguments on research that are close to practice where she has done interviews with principals in multiethnic areas. She has also studied principals' work in minority schools in Sweden, Spain and Finland and leaders as role models. Her book is structured after a model with three components 1. The understanding of multiculturalism/ intercultural 2. Leader quality and competency 3. Leaders intentions and actions.

Anders Persson and his colleagues studied school culture on the basis of what alliances a principal has. In a interdisciplinary project they have for example studied alliances to handle everyday work in schools, schools work with ethics, the schools attempt to create desirable students and students

experiences of schools. They maintain that the principal has gone from being first among equals to the last among superiors (A. Persson, 2003; A. Persson, Andersson, & Nilsson Lindström, 2005).

## Comparative studies

Several of the articles are comparative studies in which Swedish conditions are compared with those of other countries. One of the studies has a Scandinavian perspective (Moos, Møller, & Johansson, 2004). The authors discuss how theories about New Public Management affect principals' leadership. They mean that principals are the ones who end up in crossfire between a changed national or local policy and the culture in the local school and the surrounding community. They argue for the Scandinavian vision with a democratic, reflective and learning leadership. Rapp (2010) studied principals and their situations in decentralized schools in England and Sweden. He interviewed five principals in each country. Rapp has focused on how principals work as pedagogical leaders in a decentralized organization. He argues that English principals have a higher personal responsibility for the school results and that they conduct a clearer leadership in relation to teaching and learning. In the Swedish schools the focus is on the processes rather than the outcomes. Swedish principals divided to higher extent the role between administration and pedagogical leadership. They spend the most time on administration and leave the responsibility for teaching and learning to the teachers (Ibid).

Some of these publications are linked to an international study on successful principals, ISSPP, the International Successful School Principal Project. ISSPP is an important project that has produced many books, articles and thematic numbers in journals that describe principalship in different settings. The researchers in the project have cooperated during ten years and will continue to work with new comparative studies. The aim with the project and the research is that they should inform principals, administrators and political decision-making about school leadership. The studies were carried out through a collaborative effort that started with eight countries and has today been expanded into sixteen countries. The empirical material is based on case studies in the various countries, which were then followed up five years later (Höög, Johansson, & Olofsson, 2005, 2009; Moos & Johansson, 2009) As mentioned above, ethics and values were the point of departure for comparative studies between Canada and Sweden (Begley & Johansson, 2003, 2008; Goddard, et al., 2010). One of the studies focuses on school superintendents in Sweden and the United States (Klar, Bredeson & Johansson, 2011). Two of the studies address training for principals. The first is a

comparison between Sweden and Australia. The findings indicate that there are more similarities than differences between the two countries and that the leaders' own opinions to a great extent influence how education develops and changes (Gamage & Hanson, 2006). The other article is based on an EU-funded study in which Cypress, England, Greece, and Sweden participated. In those countries with a more centralized system (Cypress and Greece), training for principals was arranged to a lesser extent than in the more decentralized countries (Sweden and England). The study shows that even though training always helps, it is the recruitment of the right individuals for positions as principal that is crucial for the outcomes in the local school (Thody, Papanoum, Johansson, & Pashiardis, 2007). Reading about and comparing conditions and operations in various countries does not seem to be something that principals devote much of their time to. Höög, Bredeson & Johansson (2006) extensive material with interviews with 32 principals. They were especially interested in the principals' views of what they mean with a successful respectively an effective school. The principals connected the concepts to their own practice and did not connect the concepts to a general discussion about a newly presented PISA report. In the interviews there are virtually no references to international collaboration or any global interest.

## Communication

Another area that multiple authors touch on is language and communication and how they relate to leadership and power. In an anthology (Sundberg, 2006) gathered several scholars who are interested in leadership and different types of linguistic expression. They all have in common that they regard language and communication as something that constructs leadership and governance. "Schools and their leadership are not objective facts, existing in themselves, but subjective, linguistic, and socially borne constructions" (translated from Sundberg, 2006 p. 14). This entails that they see school leadership as something conditional and contingent that must have a broader perspective than traits and individual competence. Larsson (2006) has analyzed principals' talk during four meetings to inform parents about school choice. The four principals had different strategies to give legitimation to their school. The first principal used concept that related to tradition and the well-known parts of schooling. The next principal emphasizes school efficiency in the form of learning. The third principal highlights policy documents like the curriculum and the school act. The fourth principal talked about new and different learning strategies and methods referring to schools in the future. Börjesson and Nordzell (2006) has followed conversations about an evaluation and if it should be anonymous or not. The

study analyzes linguistic interaction during seven teacher team meetings. The authors problematize how governing and leadership is constructed and reconstructed by focusing on principles and negotiating. Nordzell (2006) has analyzed interviews with three upper secondary principals. The interviews are about how they view their own leadership. She has studied how time is used to categorize and visualize descriptions of leadership. The stories depict the principals views on their work as something new and different, a work that are in contrast with an old view of leadership. Svedberg (2006) has studied the superintendents in three municipalities that were in the top of the Swedish teacher unions award *Sweden's best school municipality* 2002. Svedberg is interested in how narratives contribute to how reality is constructed and shaped in various social and cultural contexts. He means that retro perspective success stories leave out or reduce perspectives that are not suitable and that aspects such as democracy, critical awareness and solidarity are not getting enough attention. Nestor (2006) has followed three meetings in one municipality. The first meeting is between the CEO of the municipality and the department leaders, including a school superintendent and two meetings between the superintendent and principals. Nestor has the focus on issues handling student with special needs during the meetings. The issue was not on the agenda for the meetings instead it was raised in relation to economic matters. The conversations are described as negotiations that contributed to administrative decisions. Nestor shows that some issues even if they are important and recurrent never are negotiated. Sundberg (2006) state that "a schools governing and leadership is active constructions open for negotiations and not given greatness in itself". Svedberg (2004), uses various discourses as his point of departure also when he goes through a policy text called Learning leaders with the aim to analyze what governs principals and Swedish principal training. Larsson (2006) also discusses discourses in speeches given by principals.

Others who have studied communication do so in a perspective that is closer to praxis and organization. Boyd (2003) attitudes to teachers whose origins are not Swedish and how their native languages affect the assessment of their work (Boyd, 2003). In her dissertation, Ärlestig had several published articles dealing with the everyday communication of principals and teachers (Ärlestig, 2007a, 2007b, 2008). One of the articles is quantitative and builds on questionnaires to teachers and principals in twenty-four schools. Her analyze shows that there is an organizational blindness about how communication structure and culture affect the organization. Many meetings between principals and teachers are concentrated to give information. Teachers claim that they never or almost never have classroom visits. Principals in successful schools communicated more often about visions,

school development and results than principals in less successful schools. Everyday problems were the only area that the principal in the less successful school communicated more often about than the principal in the successful schools. All principals overrated their ability to communicate. Communication is often connected to individual ability which can render to that the planning of communication structure and work with communication culture is underrated (Ärlestig, 2008).

### Other areas

The remaining articles and books treat a number of disparate areas. Some look at the training of principals (Johansson, 2001, 2004; Svedberg, 2004). Johansson's both articles are international publications and treat how principal training have changed in Sweden from a historical perspective. Svedberg's article that treats principal training in Sweden during the first decade of the millennium is also an international publication. These three articles are good examples of a research area that ought to be central in the Swedish discussion about schools that probably haven't reached a larger Swedish audience since the researchers choose to publish their articles in English for an international audience. There are also some articles that treats learning from various perspectives. Bretell (2000) wrote an article on learning strategies via a model called Complex Instruction (CI). The article is based on a workshop that analyzes a case study about a school that has used the learning strategies during a longer period of time. The focus is on role changes that occur among teachers and principals. Cooperation and the collegial support differ between the school in the case study and other schools. Bretell claims that it is not enough if the principal is engaged. Principals need to use their power to affect individual teachers as well as groups of teachers in perspectives such as structure, knowledge building, values and emotions. Ivarsson et al. write about the importance of motivation for learning in upper-secondary school (Ivarsson-Jansson, Cooper, Augustsen & Frykland, 2009).

There are examples of articles that address gender (Franzèn, 2005; Johansson & Davis, 2003, 2005). This is also an example of three publications that are published internationally. Franzèn, Johansson and Davis are published in the same book, a book that treats leadership, gender and cultural aspect in education. Franzèn has in her study analyzed what kind of discourses principal express in relation to work. The discourses that get most attention are discourses that express the relations to teachers, students and the inner work of the school. She also discusses principals' views in relation to these discourses. Johansson and Davis analyze men's and woman's leadership styles and finds some differences. The females in the study express that they

think their earlier experience as teachers are beneficial to a higher extent compared to the males that participated. The results also show that females working as principals were more sensitive to criticism than their male counterparts. The authors also describe how advertisements for new leaders have changed during the 90thies. More of the desirable abilities can be described as soft abilities. The number of females in the principal position in Sweden increases during this period.

## What are the tendencies?

Articles written after 2009 deal with various types of subjects and perspective where no theme is more frequent than another. They include articles by authors who have written about principals in the past and by authors we have not previously found as authors of articles about principals and their leadership. In 2011 three books have already come out or soon will appear about the leadership of principals. *Struktur, Kultur, Ledarskap förutsättningar för framgångsrika skolor* (*Structure, Culture, Leadership: Prerequisites for Successful Schools*) is an anthology that has been presented earlier in the chapter (Höög & Johansson, 2011). In his book, *Skolledarskap och skolans frirum* (*School leadership and the schools scope-of-action*) Berg (2011) develops his theories about school governance and the free scope for action among actors. The aim is to visualize and deal with the complexity that occurs between working conditions that are inherent in the institutional structure and principals' professional role. He wants to visualize principals' everyday work in relation to the formal and informal governing and leadership's mechanisms that oftentimes is outside the individual principals' ability to handle. Berg describes how structure and society has changed over time and how that affects principals' scope-of-action through three metaphors the 'core', the 'pulp', and the 'peel'. He also deals with school culture and good pedagogical conversations. The book has a method appendix including a praxis close culture analysis instrument. In the autumn an anthology will appear with Blossing (2011) as its editor.

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# CHAPTER 6 RESEARCH ON PRINCIPALS IN NORWAY

Jorunn Møller

## Introduction

Over the last 10 years there has been an increasing interest and investment in research on the principalship in Norway. The purpose of this paper is to provide a review of research on principals and principalship within a Norwegian context from 2000–2010. It includes both PhD dissertations and other research projects funded by the universities, university colleges, the Research Council of Norway, and other external agencies. Reviewing literature is essentially an act of interpretation. As a reviewer I have selected which literature to include and which to exclude based upon the guiding parameters for the review. Those decisions shape the conclusions from the review.

## Parameters for the review of the research

The studies for the review come from the following key sources. First, I have collected information on all PhD dissertations on school leadership during the last ten years in Norway. Eight PhD-studies are included in the review. Two dissertations are concerned with the construction of school leadership (Myhre 2010; Presthus 2010), one focuses on middle management in upper secondary education (Paulsen 2008), one was designed as an intervention study aimed to investigate what happens when reading experts/researchers support seven schools and their school leaders in developing reading education for students (Aas 2009), and one is evaluating principals' and teachers' implementation of a program aiming at developing students social competency (Larsen 2005). Three of them focus on how governance and governing have implications for leadership at the local school (Homme 2008; Roald 2010; Skedsmo 2009)<sup>1</sup>. The majority of these studies have a qualitative approach, and only one has a quantitative approach<sup>2</sup>.

Second, I have searched the Norwegian research and publications links on the websites of organizations that are at the forefront of work with school

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1 Only published studies are included. Currently there are eight ongoing PhD-projects which will be finalized within the next couple of years. These projects are not part of this review.

2 Three of these dissertations are written in English. The ongoing projects, however, will all be in English.

leadership in Norway<sup>3</sup>. The third source of literature comes from searches on the University of Oslo Library's databases for scientific articles and books on principals and school leadership published between 2000 and 2010. The result of this search, although not exhaustive, produced several books and quite a few articles of which the majority were published in Norwegian. In selecting material for this literature review, the review was limited to published scientific articles, books or book chapters that included *empirical studies* on school leadership (cf. the list of references). This means that paper presented at international educational conferences are not included.

To broaden the review I have chosen to include studies on governing, governance and accountability because research on these issues helps our understanding of the context of school leadership in Norway, and hence our understanding of principalship in a Norwegian context. The sources used for the review can be grouped into five categories:

- The historical and social construction of the position as school principal
- Understanding school leaders' experiences and practices
- The relationship between leadership and student outcomes
- Action research on school leadership / Intervention studies
- The impact of governing and accountability on school leadership

## The historical and social construction of the position as school principal

I first turn my attention to a PhD-thesis which provides an institutional analysis to the development of the Norwegian school system over a period of 250 years (Homme 2008). The thesis is written in Norwegian. Homme has in her PhD dissertation carried out a thorough historical analysis seeking to understand how the Norwegian elementary school is and has been shaped in the tensions between national and local interests over a period of 250 years. The thesis brings together research from two traditions – research on schools and research on local government – and she has the ambition of getting these two traditions to 'talk to each other'. In doing so, the thesis makes an important contribution to developing a broader understanding of the interplay of factors shaping the local school over time and place in Norway. The historical analysis is mainly based on written secondary sources,

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3 The Department of Teacher Education and School Research, University of Oslo, is leading a network of all Norwegian higher education institutions which offer leadership education for school principals, and each institution has provided a report on the research going on at their institutions.

but the richness of her material drawing on research from several disciplines on both the history of the Norwegian school and of local government allows her to provide a fairly nuanced picture of the different twists and turns – the dynamics – in the development of the local school in the interplay between local and national interests. In addition, she has interviewed 41 informants, school principals included, working in the educational sector in four different Norwegian municipalities. She demonstrates how the principals occupy a key position in balancing professional and political governing, and also how differently they construct their role. A main argument is that both national and local actors have been essential in the shaping of the elementary school, and that school leaders' identities are shaped both by their institutional belonging to the school and the local community, their identities as teachers, and by their more formal instructions as school principals.

Another study applying a historical lens is exploring school leadership in Scandinavia (Møller, 2009 a). First, attention is drawn to some aspects of the ideology and the history of the Scandinavian education systems in order to discuss how these aspects intersect with the globalised policy trends, and where there is likely to be tensions between the global trends and the cultural and historical imperatives of schooling and school leadership in Scandinavia. For instance, an international project like *Improving School Leadership* seems to have strong influence on policy makers. Second, the analysis shows how the devolution of greater responsibilities to schools has contributed to a number of demands upon them, in particular on school principals. Organizational ideas like New Public Management have been implemented in Norwegian municipalities in order to increase efficiency in the public sector, and new tensions have emerged and created dilemmas for those involved. This is above all the case for principals in late career who have been socialised and selected for positions under very different conditions from those now developing. Nevertheless, so far, the emerging age of accountability has had only small consequences on classroom practice in Norwegian schools. A main argument is that even though there is a growing homogenisation of approaches to school leadership due to global forces, local traditions ensure that they are played out differently in national contexts.

A comparative study which aimed to investigate how principals framed their professional identities within different local and national contexts in Norway, Denmark, UK and Ireland was carried out in the beginning of the new millennium (Sugrue, 2005). In this study a life history approach was chosen, and 12 principals (early, mid and late career) from each country were selected to participate in the study. The findings across all four countries



demonstrated that identities as school leaders are multiple, subjectively constructed, and change with context. Both the male and female principals in the study indicate that leadership, as a social practice is an emotional practice, not just an intellectual rehearsal. Purpose and commitment are central to what they define as good leadership.

Focusing particularly on the Norwegian part of the study (Møller, 2004, Møller, 2005 a/b) and applying a gender perspective on the data (Møller, 2003) the findings indicated that women as well as men are willing to play with power, but these principals did not counter the emphasis on hierarchical structure in the school system. That is taken for granted. It is important being loyal to the school's mandate. Nevertheless the principals in the Norwegian sample find great latitude for pursuing their visions and ideas. They give the impression of designing their job in their own way, and their core knowledge base is to some degree rooted in teacher education, but mainly it is based on their local experiences. For sure, they experience conflicts and dilemmas in their jobs, but listening to their stories, these principals seem to have no problems in handling them. They are in a position where they express no fear of the implications for their career as a result from being instructed by their superintendents. It seems, however, that the intensification of work hit women even more than men because female principals try so hard to live up to all kinds of expectations and are juggling with finding a proper balance between public and private lives. Comparing different stages of career, the veterans, in contrast to newly appointed heads, appeared less influenced by the obligations to administrative work. It looked like their basic beliefs drove their actions despite the turmoil of what was going on other places. It is as if they want to retain the kind of psychological rewards they have got as teachers. It could be framed as "keep in touch with the kids". The mid-career and early career principals on the other hand tell stories about establishing professional accountability. Some are also welcoming managerial accountability, but they too want to retain the kind of psychological rewards they have got as teachers. The Norwegian principals seemed to have the 'option' of paying little attention to managerial accountability, and particularly the veteran principals seem to have a rather relaxed attitude. According to the principals participating in the study they did not run any risk by this approach. The newly appointed school principals, on the other hand, did not know anything else but a climate of accountability. They seem to take it for granted, they welcome it, and relate it to being a professional. The discourses of leadership and accountability at municipal level have changed, but at school level managerial accountability has more a status of "anticipated future".

The social construction of Norwegian leadership may also be illuminated by exploring which expectations teachers have to their school principal in post, the principal responses to these expectations, and how these expectations are related to changed conditions around schools at the macro level. This is the theme of a PhD-project submitted last year (Myhre, 2010). The data in this project is gathered through case studies of three schools. Core methods include observation of interaction between principals and teachers, and interviews with principals and teachers. The study showed that the teachers' expectations to a low degree were rooted in an individual autonomy, but rather in a collective autonomy. As a result of the complex society surrounding the schools today, the teachers were not able to sort external impulses on their own. Therefore they ask for leaders who are able to help them interpret the external demands placed upon the school, and may help them prioritize. They expected the principal to both be a link to the environments and a coordinator of the single school. A main argument is that the principal gained legitimacy if the teachers also got the opportunity to both discuss and transform the external impulses and demands in relation to their own context.

Ottesen (2011) explores the ways in which talk is a tool for leadership in schools. The empirical context for the article is school development projects in two schools aiming to use ICT in the development of their teaching and learning practices. The article is an analysis of talk in the project teams in the two schools. The analysis shows how the project, its aims and work processes, are redefined through the talk in the team as initiatives and agency fluctuate between participants, and how the group shapes and reshapes its understanding of the school's practices and the project's development. The different perspectives and contributions of the principals and teachers generate a dynamic project trajectory when resistance, power and influence are at play. Based on these results, the author discusses school leaders' moral responsibility for both being responsive to the voices of others, and for reformulating the "landscape" that constitutes and gives form and direction to developmental work.

## Understanding school leaders' experiences and practices

As a part of the International Successful School Principalship Project (ISSPP), which aims to investigate the characteristics, processes, and effects of successful school leadership across eight countries a survey among principals was conducted in 2005 (Møller et al. 2006). The themes were derived

from findings from more than sixty case studies which were conducted during the first part of the project. In Norway survey data from 632 principals in primary and secondary schools were examined. The way the Norwegian principals answered to questions of tensions and dilemmas provided examples of how they experience their relationship with their superior and how they cope with conflicting values/goals. The findings demonstrate a significant correlation between the question “I experience tensions between my loyalty to the expectations of my employers and the priorities made at school” and the principals’ age. Principals who are more than 55 years old experience this dilemma more than younger principals. The same is the case for tensions “between loyalty to my employers and the need to take part in the public discourse about schooling”. Also, there is a variation in responses from principals located in different municipalities. This can be related to the fact that some municipalities are characterized by stronger top-down governance and have established stronger managerial accountability systems compared to others. At the same time, the principals have reported a high degree of job satisfaction, which probably can be related to the feeling of making a difference.

Irgens’ (2010) study explores experiences with a new policy on work-time agreement and his study is based on interviews with school administrators and shop stewards at six schools. The regulation of working hours became the responsibility of the local school and the agreement emphasized that teachers’ work does not only include individual work, teaching and time spent with the pupils. It should also include time set aside for cooperation with colleagues, development of individual competency, cooperation with parents and external authorities. The study showed that the individual practice and the day-to-day running of the school is prioritized by teachers as well as the school principals, even though the locally regulated working time arrangements were supposed to give room for developmental work and cooperation. Irgens suggests that individual autonomy among teachers has a very strong position in Norwegian schools.

The main purpose of Paulsen’s (2008) PhD-thesis is to illuminate how adaptive learning is managed in an educational context characterized by strong dependency on external environments. He has done this by posing the following research question: How is local adaptive learning managed within the given educational context? In order to answer this question he has posed the following sub-questions: 1) What is the nature of the external demands imposed on school organizations? 2) What kind of learning and adaptation processes occur in order to deal with externally imposed demands? 3) What role do middle managers have in school organizations’ adaptation and learning processes? Paulsen has chosen a case-study oriented

research strategy, and the study builds on the premise of school organizations as loosely coupled systems. Empirical cases are drawn from the field of vocational upper secondary schools in Norway. The findings show that vocational training institutions operate in fragmented external environments. Fragmentation means that school professionals depend on, and have to relate to, several different domains in their environments: Local working life, the state directorate, regional governance and stakeholders of the teacher professions. The study demonstrates how middle managers play a crucial role as mediators between the schools technical cores and external stakeholders. They also function as brokers between loosely coupled internal sub-units.

Vedøy (2008) raises the following question in her dissertation: How is leadership practiced in multicultural schools at the compulsory levels, and how can this practice be understood in light of a democratic perspective on leadership? Vedøy has chosen a bifurcated research strategy. In the first part, formal leaders in eight schools were interviewed, both as teams and individually. The interviews were analyzed in order to explore which discourses formal leaders chose in discussions of minority pupils' education. The study indicates that leaders choose three discourses; a formal, a compensatory and a participatory discourse. They also place themselves within three different discourses concerning ethical rationality for leadership of education: an administrative discourse; a discourse of care and a discourse of justice. In the second part, two of the schools from the interview sessions were chosen for a case study. In this study, Vedøy undertook observations in the classroom, shadowed the formal leaders for five weeks and carried out group interviews with teachers, minority students and their parents. She has adopted two approaches in her analysis of the case study. Firstly, she has given descriptions of the two cases to imply how the members of the leadership at these two schools are distributed. Secondly, the interaction and management practice in the case schools are analyzed from a critical theory angle. The schools are presented as prototypes (also, see Vedøy & Møller 2007). The dissertation points to which social dilemmas may appear in proportion to the leadership and values in a multicultural school. Thus, the work has been exploratory with regards to a democratic perspective on leadership.

Equally, Fred Carlo Andersen investigates in his PhD-study how school leaders respond to challenges with linguistic and ethnic diversity, but his empirical data is collected in two upper secondary schools. In one article published so far (Andersen & Ottesen, 2011) the authors analyze interviews with the principal and the senior staff in one of the schools. Intercultural education and inclusive leadership give theoretical lenses for investigating how certain values and presuppositions are normalized within the school

and how they are manifested in the school's visions, plans and practice. The results from this study indicate a monocultural approach to teaching and learning. Although the schools' leaders express concern for students from linguistic and ethnic minorities, this does not translate into explicit strategies for inclusion. To a large extent, in this school access depends on the students' proficiency in Norwegian. The school and the senior management team seem to lack competence and experience that enable them to recognize and address the specific challenges of students from linguistic and ethnic minorities.

Presthus (2010) chose to shadow three successful school principals in five weeks at each site in order to understand how they framed their experiences, how they negotiated the culture of schooling, and how they tried to meet institutional expectations. In addition to shadowing, interviews with these principals were conducted, asking them to comment on what had been observed. Her PhD-thesis demonstrates how the daily work of the principals was characterized by busy activities and how the principals invest both their intellect and their emotions in their daily work. At first their activities seemed very fragmented and ad hoc oriented and characterized by brevity and discontinuity, but over time it was possible to identify the longer lines in their work. Presthus suggests weaving as a metaphor for leadership in practice, because in weaving with its roots in basketry, the essential difference lies in the mechanism of the loom to hold taut the lengthwise strands, called the warp, while the crosswise strands, the woof, are woven in. Overall, the analysis showed four main dimensions that constitutes their leadership of educational activities; a structural dimension, a personal dimension, an ethical dimension and a deliberative dimension.

In a project which aims to study the role of administration and institutions in the implementation of the reform, the role of school leadership was particularly analysed (Møller 2010). The findings demonstrate a lot of tensions and ambiguities in governing processes and the data indicates the multi-layered character of autonomy and control in school leadership. It is not a simple either/or position. For instance, the intended empowerment of teachers seems to be undermined by lack of opportunities for in-service training, and the principals contribute only to a small degree to organizational supports for capacity building. Lack of time for systematic reflection is highlighted as a major problem. On the one hand the schools experience that their role is defined to carry out strategies and solutions defined by central authorities. Particularly in areas like outcome-based accountability the coordinating principle is characterized by top-down governing. On the other hand they experience ambiguous and weak governing when it comes to implementing basic skills in all subject areas. As such there is leeway for

professional agency on certain areas. The data from this project has also been reanalyzed through the lens of school leadership as a profession (Møller 2011). The findings demonstrate that reflection on experiences or sharing of knowledge is the principals' preference to leadership training, and "best practice" is held as a basic principle. A main argument is that although learning from practice has shown great potential, a cultivation of the daily language without reservation may both mask and preserve in relation to status quo. Alternatively, it can entail that one almost unreservedly embraces the latest trends without being equipped to analyze the models more critically.

## The relationship between leadership and student outcomes

School leaders' impact on schools' learning environment is well documented internationally, first and foremost on teachers' motivation and working conditions, and indirectly on the students' performance (Day & Leithwood 2007; Robinson et al., 2008). As mentioned in the introduction of this paper, very few the studies conducted within a Norwegian context have added the element of student achievement data to their results. It implies that studies with a focus on the relationship between leadership and student outcomes are mainly based on interview data about achievement. One example is perhaps the analysis by Bonesrønning (2003) who has used survey information to make sense of the findings about the effect of class size and teaching. However, in these analyses he does not focus on the relationship between leadership and student outcomes.

Imsen (2004) has explored the relationship between school leadership and classroom activities and to what extent the principal intervenes in the schools' inner life? A survey to teachers and classroom observations were the basis for the analysis. The study showed a strong correlation between leadership and the schools' orientation towards development and change, and concludes that the principal has a great influence on the school culture. She also identified a correlation between the quality of the school leadership and the school's way of organizing teaching and learning activities. The traditional schedule divided in subjects was the most common one in schools with a weak leadership, whereas more open forms of schedules were more used in schools with a skilful leadership. However, regarding the relation between the teachers' activities in the classroom and the leaders' role, the attitude may be described as accepted zones of influence.

Twelve Norwegian schools participated in the International Successful School Principalship Project (ISSPP) which aimed at identifying the quali-

ties and the characteristics of successful leadership practice within the Norwegian elementary and secondary school system. The methodological approach was multi-site case study methods. It should also be noted that the Norwegian case schools that participated in the ISSPP study were not selected based on their academic outcomes. Norway had to use a different set of criteria for selecting the cases, because there were no public test results, no inspection reports, or “league tables” to base choices for successful principals when this project started. The Norwegian team selected schools that had received public recognition by the Ministry of Education and Research based on the schools’ efforts to improve the learning environment (Møller et al. 2005). Since then a national evaluation system has been developed in Norwegian education, and although it is not part of public policy, the newspapers have started to develop “league tables”.

The findings demonstrated that leadership in the Norwegian schools was almost entirely characterized by collaboration and team efforts. During our fieldwork we learned that leadership is an organizational quality in these schools, i.e. a distributed practice (Møller et al., 2005; Møller & Fuglestad, 2006). Second, the learning-centered approach was the focal point for the schools’ philosophy as well as for their practice. This approach implied a concern for the individual students’ learning process, guided by the curriculum visions and goals. Also the development of a teacher-student relationship characterized by mutual respect, and the fostering of a conducive learning environment was a main concern in our schools. The respect of the individual student and colleague in building professional communities of practice seemed to be a basic value and a guiding norm of conduct. Third, even though the municipal governance of the schools recently has been framed within the discourse of New Public Management (NPM) and with a focus on managerial accountability, the discourse and the practice at the local schools appear to be of a different kind. The practice is not dominated by an instrumental rationality, which is so often closely linked to NPM. Both the leadership team and the teachers are working hard to fulfill a mission based on democratic values (cf. Møller 2006).

In revisiting three of the successful schools (Møller et al., 2009) the main findings demonstrate, despite the new expectations which are raised towards schools in society, a situation of continuity at the local school. This is above all the case at two of the schools. Both principals communicate the same philosophy of schooling as was highlighted five years ago. Their work is characterized by a blend of human, professional, and civic concerns, and their intentions have been and still are to cultivate an environment for learning that is humanly fulfilling and socially responsible. They are both experienced and deeply committed principals, their stories convey confidence

rooted in experience, and their message is about what makes people continue to work hard. The new principal at the third school emphasizes leadership strategies that differ to a great extent from those of the former principal. Still, his values and philosophy of schooling are very much in harmony with the descriptions of this school five years ago. Academic performance has remained relatively stable over this time, and the school's reputation among the parents remains high. In all schools we found that the learning centred approach we identified earlier had been sustained during the five years, and all principals focused on multiple ways of influencing staff motivation, commitment and working conditions. The continuity of success is reflected in the principals' capacity to promote good relationships among the staff members, and the moral imperative of developing the whole child is still at the forefront of those working in these schools. A common characteristic is equity and social justice as personal commitment, an ethic of care and a concern for the common good. All three principals present themselves as persistent, resilient and optimistic. They are not dictated by the shifting political contexts in which they work, but they demonstrate to some degree responsiveness to this context. However, they did report on their struggle to sustain and promote equity and social justice in an age of increasing competition and managerial accountability.

During the last ten years there has been increased awareness of bullying in schools. A study which evaluated a school-based social competence program on the promotion of social skills and the prevention of bullying, suggested that the principals are crucial to the success of the improvement program (Larsen 2005). The findings are based on interview with four principals and 17 teachers at four primary schools. The results suggested that the principals needed to use leadership and management strategies, addressing teachers' predisposing factors, securing the alignment of their staff, articulating a direction for the future, and monitoring teachers' use of the program.

## Action research on school leadership – Intervention studies

"Leadership for Learning" was an international action research project involving three schools residing in each of the seven countries, namely Australia, Austria, Denmark, Norway, Greece, UK and USA (cf. MacBeath & Demster, 2009). The focus of the project was on the role of school leadership in creating a stimulating learning environment, not only for students but also for those who support them in their learning. The project is concerned most directly with inquiring into and supporting the development of lead-



ership and learning practices within involved schools. In this sense the project is an extended exercise in school development. However, the project also intends to further our understanding of these phenomena and as such it must be regarded as a research undertaking. The following broad research questions drive both the research and development process: How is leadership understood in different school contexts? How is learning understood and promoted within the schools engaged in the study? What is the relation between leadership and learning? A centerpiece of our collaboration with the schools was mutual reflection on actions. After each school visit, we wrote a detailed account of what we had observed, and this account was sent back to the school with a final section focusing on questions for reflection. The purpose was to keep track of the school's development, to provide feedback, and to stimulate further reflections. At the same time these field notes had status as data for our analysis related to the research questions. In this review the focus is on the Norwegian part of the project. In this review I include analyses based on the Norwegian part of the study.

An analysis across the three Norwegian schools reveals a close connection between the school culture, the understanding and manifestation of leadership, and the scope of actions for both principals and teachers (Møller 2008). The three principals tried to balance the varying expectations of leadership held by the teachers, students and the families with whom they work. Obviously they had different social and cultural conditions to deal with in their local community, but they also had a diverse way of dealing with disagreement and conflict. As such, the study provides an example of how principals have the power to set the tone and the agenda for school development even though leadership practice is an interactive process involving many people. Another analysis draws upon interviews with the principal, the deputy head and a group of teachers in one of the Norwegian schools participating in the project (Møller 2009 b). The principal's story is juxtaposed with references to how her deputies and a group of teachers frame their experiences about leadership for learning at this particular school. Shared leadership is one of the cornerstones in their stories. In this instance, the sharing of leadership is considered successful because those wishing to share in the leadership of the school have learned first to share in the leader's vision of leading. A main argument is that in constructing her story about leadership for learning the principal is also negotiating who she is for others as well as for herself, and her identity construction is work in progress. In the analysis it is highlighted how her story is embedded in a cultural notion of the school as a hierarchical organization in which principalship is thought of as crucial and leadership is associated with role and authority.

Postholm (2010) has done a follow-up study of a research and development work project with school leaders and teachers in a lower secondary school. The purpose was to present an understanding of what the practitioners find they have learned during the project and how they experienced the situation with regards to developmental work about two years after the project had ended. The analysis is based on interviews with the principal, two deputy heads and a team of teachers. In addition to these qualitative interviews data was collected by asking all the teachers at the school to fill out a questionnaire. The study shows that teachers want to observe each other's practice directed by a common focus and use the observed practice to reflect on and improve their teaching practice. A continuity in leadership and teacher teams meant that teachers and school leaders could develop an identity with a common objective over time. The study also demonstrates that teachers prefer continuity with regards to the focus in development work.

Aas (2009) has in her PhD-thesis focused on leadership for learning and the development of professional communities among school leaders and teachers. The aim of her study was to investigate what happens when reading experts/researchers support seven schools and school leaders in developing the reading education for students. The participants were introduced to new methods and ideas through seminars and school conversations. The theoretical framework was cultural-historical activity theory. By following the collective discourses from the seminars to schools, she examined how and why the talk establishes the foundation for action. The findings indicate that collective knowledge building can happen when school leaders and teachers share classroom experiences from their own school or from other schools, when a group of individual teachers follow the same education, and when critical friends support the school's investigation of their own reading practices. The professional learning community seemed to be an important arena for discussing how professional changes can be handled in a new organisational structure. The analyses also demonstrated how tensions and contradictions provided a potential as well as an obstacle in developmental processes, and how "everything is connected to everything". It implied that developing reading education for students meant developing the entire school organisation.

After defending her thesis Aas has developed her analysis further, and in an article she focuses above all on the relationship between leadership and school improvement (Aas, 2011). She demonstrates that leading for learning is a challenging mission for school principals. School leaders are expected to handle conflict and disagreement in such a way that expansive learning will be the result. It implies managing tensions and dilemmas and collective learning follows the negotiation of meaning. Mutual trust and respect seem to be

at the core to establish legitimacy for the improvement strategies, and trust creates the conditions and mobilizes people to action and collaboration.

Helstad's (2011) project draws upon an intervention study where experts from the University cooperate with a group of teachers with the purpose of promoting writing in and across the disciplines. Special attention is paid to how the teachers make use of the resources, and how they explore their knowledge and practice connected to their work with student's texts. The research questions are: How is professional knowledge negotiated? What kind of professional knowledge is at play? How do external experts and school leadership contribute to the processes? The project investigates the influence of leadership on teachers' knowledge development at work place in a socio-cultural perspective. Observations and interviews are main methods. Key findings from the study underlines the importance of facilitating structures for learning, such as allocated time for cooperation, follow-up over time and external support, but it is also about developing tools for writing across disciplines. The importance of dedicated and visible leadership that is both supportive and challenging of the teachers' practice is well documented in the material. Although a lot of leadership and supervision of the project is given to teachers, and particularly to the leaders of the departments and the project manager, it seems that the principal as the overall formal leader has a central function. A main argument is that taking the school subject as the starting point for capacity building seems to be a promising approach to developing a culture of learning. Also, the more school leaders are involved in and have their attention related to teachers' learning the better the possibilities of collective knowledge building in the workplace.

Many of the research projects financed through the national research program PRAKSISFOU have chosen action research as their research design. The research project Learning and Leading in Communities of Practice have explored how leaders within the educational sector may develop new knowledge through dialogue conferences and networks. A dialogue conference is a form of communicative space where people can hold structured discussions with the aim of understanding and developing their respective fields. In this project more than 130 heads of schools and kindergartens participated in such dialogue conferences. The project shows that these types of conferences create a good structure for managing reform-work in schools and kindergartens. Collective knowledge is developed when school leaders contribute with their individual interpretations of and approaches to reform-work. The project also shows that these conferences may contribute to the development of schools and kindergartens through municipal and regional collaborations by providing structures for knowledge development across schools and institutions (Lund et al. 2010).

## The impact of governing and accountability on school leadership

Recently, there has been an increased awareness of the roles of municipalities as school owners and as political agents in education. There is also evidence that extended tasks and responsibilities at the municipal and county level have been delegated to the principals, and also that leaders at the school level experience an increased pressure to perform bureaucratic tasks, such as for example reporting (Engeland et al. 2008). Accountability has become an important concept, if not the most important concept of school policy in many places in the world. Less than ten years ago, the supervision of Norwegian schools was based on extensive central planning (directing the input) and less focus on results (the output). This stands in clear contrast to the USA, which has a long-standing tradition of measuring performance in schools. The research project “Achieving School Accountability in Practice” (ASAP) takes a closer look at what happens in Norwegian schools when they have more freedom to supervise the input themselves, while school performance on the other hand, are subject to rigorous control (Langfeldt et al. 2008). A number of different methodological approaches have been used in the different studies within the ASAP project: textual analysis of policy documents, curricula etc; interviews with senior management at the national level, and at the local level, school manager, teachers and pupils; observation, questionnaires and mapping. Two of the sub-projects are included in this review.

Since Norway introduced tests and other types of measurements the press, with a negative bias, has placed the spotlight on those schools which performed badly in attainment measurements. The press reconstructs from public sources “league tables” of aggregated student achievements but at present the official position opposes the public ranking of schools. Elstad (2009) has published a study which shows, that with the exception of Oslo, there are almost no controls at present that have direct consequences for school leaders, and it is also difficult to identify tough consequences at the local level. It is the counties and municipalities that are legally responsible for quality, but the extent to which assessment systems are in place varies from one school governing body to another. However, the media continues to blame poorly performing schools and this spotlight brings with it heightened levels of stress inside the schools.

Roald’s (2010) dissertation was connected to the ASAP project and his study focused on how schools and school owners collaborate on questions of quality assurance in a national system based on management by objectives, performance management and accountability. The main findings show a

marked division between unsystematic, systematic and systemic features of quality work. Schools and municipalities that emphasize the systemic approach, develop larger organizational learning capacities than those choosing an unsystematic or systematic approach to quality assessment. Additionally the study shows that assessment work at one level is dependent on good assessment processes at other levels of the educational system. More specific, the quality assessment work seems to function productively when an assessment culture is created from below throughout the municipal school system. Roald points out that the assessment information in itself does not lead to new understanding or active development work. Unless data is presented in ways that provide collective insight and commitment, increased availability of information can actually be counterproductive.

Skedsmo's (2009) dissertation explores how national school authorities develop new tools to regulate and renew comprehensive education, and the linkage between the national evaluation policy and principals' perceptions of evaluation tools and new accountability forms (cf. also Skedsmo, 2010). The methods and analytical techniques applied in this thesis are multiple and include mapping of theoretical perspectives, text analysis with a particular focus on content and discourse in policy documents, and quantitative analysis of data from a national survey conducted among school principals in Norway in 2005. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is used to analyze the survey data. One of the main elements in the new toolkit is the national comprehensive evaluation system which was introduced in 2004. This system consists of different evaluation tools, such as standardized tests, diagnostic tests which create new expectations to schools and principals. The question is, in what way and to what extent governing structures and processes develop and transform through the introduction of a national comprehensive evaluation system in Norwegian education. The increased focus on outcomes in education policies since 2006 is to a certain degree reflected in principals' perceptions. However, the way the principals conceptualize the purposes of different tools and functions of evaluation shows a more nuanced picture. According to the principals' perceptions, certain tools which are introduced as part of the national evaluation system represent an administrative oriented evaluation system which is only loosely connected to tools used in classroom practices to improve student learning. A main argument is that advanced evaluation tools and techniques can never replace professional judgments. Professional perspectives are essential in the processes of analyzing and interpreting evaluation results as well as judgments related to implications for policy and practice.

Another research project has explored how accountability and transparency reforms affect teacher autonomy in Norway and Sweden (Helgøy &

Homme 2007). The study is based on interviews with teachers and principals in two large municipalities in Norway and Sweden. Approximately 70 teachers and principals at seven schools were interviewed over a one-year period from spring 2005 to spring 2006. While both Norway and Sweden have decentralized and devolved school governance to the local level, Sweden has done so to a larger degree than Norway. In order to connect autonomy to teacher professionalism the authors introduced two ideal types of professionalism. By *old professionalism* they mean professional practice relying on formal education and occupation, monopoly and licensing. *New professionalism* implies that professional competence is becoming more personal, implicit, individual, and connected with the contexts of positions, tasks and actual performance. According to the old professionalism, the actual object to be held responsible is the collective level, while the individual level is held responsible according to the new professionalism. The analysis indicates that Norwegian teachers are characterized by *old professionalism*. The authors argue that the strong regulations in Norway limit individual teacher autonomy. However, even with weakened individual autonomy, Norwegian teachers, in contrast to Swedish teachers, still manage to supply conditions for national education policy making and their influence on national policy processes is still strong. This means that Norwegian teachers still are quite autonomous at the collective level (ibid).

Sivesind and Bachmann (2011) have in their recent research examined national supervision in education and the relationship between rule governing and professional judgment. The analysis is based on official documents and conversation interviews with eight people in a state agency, who conducted supervision in Norway in 2008. First, the article describes how a new form of state inspection was introduced in Norway in the mid 2000s, based on the principles of state supervision and system audit. Second, the paper explores how this new system interrogates old government and calls for quality measurements and supervision as a new steering strategy in Norway compared to Sweden. For the moment, these two cases represent two different systems on how principals at the school level are held accountable for their practices and outcomes. The article contributes with new knowledge on the changing interrelationship between state authorities and schools as a result of school auditing systems introduced in Norway in the mid 2000s. It also shows how state inspection raises different expectations to school principals in Norway and Sweden in the late 2000s. The authors argue that principals in both cases are expected to know the law and regulations to pursue their role as civil servants, but cannot handle their professional leadership tasks without educational knowledge.

## Conclusion

As mentioned in the introduction: Reviewing literature is essentially an act of interpretation. That is, the reviewers select which literature to include and which to exclude based upon the guiding parameters for the review. Those decisions shape the conclusions from the review.

Most of the studies reviewed in this paper may be categorized as research for understanding meaning and experiences of school leaders. Historical analyses are included to help explaining the past and ethnographic work and case studies examine school culture as a context for leadership and principals' experiences. Other studies may be categorized as more policy-related research where evidence can support the formulation and monitoring of policy, or evaluative research where researchers focus on measuring the impact of principals on outcomes and undertake comparative analyses (cf. Gunter, 2005). Quite a few studies highlight that even though the municipal organization and governance of schools has become framed within the discourse of New Public Management (NPM) with a focus on managerial accountability, effectiveness, and competition, there has been a strong norm of non-interference in the teacher's classroom activities. Trust in teachers' work has for long been a tacit dimension in principals' approach to leadership, establishing accepted zones of influence. In addition, schools are not, maybe with the exception of schools in Oslo, under threat of sanction if exams scores are low.

Rather few Norwegian studies on school leadership have been published in international journals, and most of the articles published internationally are related to three large international research projects, i.e. "The life histories of school leaders across four countries", "The Leadership for Learning Project (L4L)", and "The international successful school principals project (ISSPP)". The last one includes the following up study "Revisiting Successful School Principals five years later". Hardly any of the studies conducted within a Norwegian context have added the element of student achievement data to their results. It implies that studies with a focus on the relationship between leadership and student outcomes are mainly based on interview data about achievement.

There is a general need for more knowledge about the connections between school leadership, organization, resource use and learning outcomes and about which administrative forms produce good results at the various levels within the educational system. In Norway there are few studies on principalship applying a quantitative approach and with a focus on the relationship between school leadership and student outcomes. Further research

should draw broadly across various methodologies to document both the construction of school principalship and how school leaders can support and promote teaching and learning. It is important to look for the diversity of learning outcomes, rather than only focus on achievement test scores.

In addition, we lack research on issues related to the legal aspects of education, i.e. the relationship between school leadership and the students' rights to adequate learning conditions and the employees' rights to a safe and sound working environment<sup>4</sup>. This may also entail the legal aspects of the public administration of education and the consequences of international developments that Norway must take into account due to its membership of multinational organizations such as the EU.

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4 Welstad (2011) is an exception. He has done a study on how principals used the school legislation to ensure the students' right to adequate learning.



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# CHAPTER 7 RESEARCH ON PRINCIPALS IN DENMARK

Lejf Moos

## Introduction and frame

This review covers Danish school leadership research publications from 2000 until October of 2010. Only publications (article, books or reports) that report on primary empirical studies from Danish (basic and youth) schools were included in this review: The author(s) has gathered and analyzed data her/himself. The reason for this choice was to make sure that the publications reported on research, and that it was carried out on Danish school leadership. Some of the publications report on comparisons of Danish research with research from other countries.

I wrote a number of the publications in the review as I was leading or participating in research projects. I could not avoid including this material because the total mass of school leadership research in Denmark is very small and I did a substantial part of it. This means that my review cannot be neutral. But it can be fair to all of us, and I shall try to be that.

One distinct, Danish feature of the educational system needs to be mentioned here: There is a long lasting, still existing and deep divide between the basic school ('Folkeskole': primary and lower secondary, students age 6 through 16, grade Kindergarten Class through grade 9 or 10) and the Youth/Upper Secondary education (Gymnasium/High School, Vocational schools, students age 16–19). The divide needs to be explained because it does not only have bearing on the practices and visions of schools, but also on the research on schools and school leadership. The split can be illustrated with a number of structural and cultural aspects:

**The education of teachers is different:** Teachers of academic upper secondary school, the Gymnasium, must acquire a Masters degree at a university. Vocational school teachers are trained in professions with short pedagogy in-service courses. Teachers in the 'Folkeskole' are educated outside universities: they were until 2000 educated in teacher training colleges. Those were merged into CVU (Centres of Continuous Education) in 2000 and the CVU's were again merged into university colleges from 2007. From 2004 on the teacher education was transformed into a professions-Bachelor education following the Bologna process.

**The ownership of the schools is different:** Gymnasia and Vocational education are self-steering organizations with direct reference to the Ministry of Education, while 'Folkeskoler' are 'owned' by the municipalities and have indirect reference to the ministry.

**Different Acts governs schools:** so the purposes and aims used to be different: The Gymnasium was very subject-oriented and aiming at further education. Vocational schools were aiming at the professions and 'Folkeskolen' had broad, comprehensive aims. This has amongst other things meant that the culture in schools and the self-perception of its teachers and leaders were very diverse. Contemporary reforms are homogenizing the purpose and aims of these school forms.

**The restructuring of public sectors also called the Modernization:** has carried changes to both content/purpose of schools. All schools are being transformed into cross-curricular, collaborative and self-steering entities. The 'Folkeskole' started this transformation more than 20 years ago. The Vocational school had its reform in 1991/2000 and the gymnasium in 2005.

**The governance of schools also has been changed:** Finances, management and internal direction were decentralized from ministry to municipality to 'Folkeskole' in 1992. Vocational schools were made self-steering in 1991 and the Gymnasium followed that path in 2007.

**Education of leaders has also been diverse:** Until 2006 leaders of 'Folkeskoler' were not required to have any formal education in leadership. From then on they need a diploma degree in leadership. Leaders of Vocational school and Gymnasium need not have formal leadership education. Traditionally leaders of 'Folkeskoler' were educated teachers who were trained at in-service courses or Diploma in general, public leadership courses that belonged to the University Colleges. Leaders of gymnasia were also educated teachers who could have short courses or study for Masters in Education in a university. Vocational school leaders attended short courses in leadership.

**Partly because of the history of schools we see that research on leadership is also divided. We see three forms of school leadership research:** One is the based on the understanding, that leadership is a generic feature that functions all over. Another approach finds that leadership in all public institutions is alike. Those two forms are mostly to be found in Business and Management Schools and are not included in this review unless there has been collected data in schools as part of the study (one study is being reviewed here). The third approach to leadership studies is based on data from youth education (mostly Gymnasium, only scarcely in Vocational schools) or data from the 'Folkeskole'.

Because realities of the Danish educational system are as they are, I have chosen to structure the review according to this: In part one is Research on

Youth Education. In part two is research on leadership in 'Folkeskoler'. Both parts end with short summaries.

## Leadership in youth education

As mentioned above there has been a governance reform of the vocational school in 1991 and a reform of vocational education curriculum in 2000: 'The Vocational School Reform.' The reforms of the Gymnasium have been implemented within a very short two-year period: 'The Gymnasium Reform' in 2005 and the 'Self-steering reform of the Gymnasium' in 2007.

It has not been possible for me to find research publications on the reforms and the leadership situation in the vocational schools, while the gymnasium has been investigated in several studies covering the pre- and post years of the gymnasium reforms: Pre-reform (Klausen and Abrahamson), Post curriculum reform and pre self-steering reform (Raae and Abrahamson) and post both reforms (Raae and Pedersen).

*Kurt Klaudi Klausen: Strategic leadership. Many arenas.* (Klausen, 2004)

The study of the gymnasium was built on interviews with rectors and inspector rectors from five academic upper secondary schools and two commercial upper secondary schools one year prior to the curriculum reform in 2005. All of the rectors and inspectors of course knew, that the reform was coming, but had not been practicing according to it until now. (This study is also publicized in: (Klausen & Nielsen, 2004)).

Klausen is interested in analyzing the strategic leadership of public organizations, among them the gymnasium and vocational school. The basis for the text is the understanding that '*strategic leadership is setting goals and making prioritized efforts to fulfil them*' (p. 128)

Strategies are produced in strategic arenas: '*arenas, where certain battles are fought about diverse issues, through diverse means and on the background of diverse rules.*' (p. 45)

Klausen's general impression from the academic gymnasia interviews was that, although the leaders performed strategic leadership to some extent, none of them was aware that this was, what they did. In Klausen's view this would create problems in the light of the upcoming reforms that would produce uncertainty and turbulence. There is also a comment on the traditional status of teachers versus leaders in the gymnasium. It is being described as teachers being 'alien to leadership' and this would pose a barrier to the necessary, strategic leadership (p. 131).

The analyses of the interviews are reported and discussed within the eight strategic arenas, constructed by Klausen: The arena of production,

social relations, market, politics and decisions, production of consciousness, vision, culture and aesthetics.

The arena for *production* – the technical surrounding: The issues in this arena are the structure, the division of labour and coordination. These are strategic challenging in situations of change and rectors report that they work on to change teachers' attitudes in order to have them accept that relations between themselves and the leadership are changing because of the reform. Teacher autonomy used to be very high, but will be challenged.

The reform will challenge the division of labour and thus also the social relations between teachers. Collaboration is going to be a very central feature on the *social arena*.

The *market* has been present, but not pressing for some years. Schools have reacted by restructuring their offering said rectors. But the market is going to become more challenging with the 'Self steering reform' because it is built on a market model of governance.

The rectors are very aware of the situation on the *political arena*, as they have for years made great effort to legitimize their schools to local/regional policy makers. They are also working hard on the inner political arena, as they focus on the 'political plays' between committees and fractions of teachers.

The arena for *production of consciousness* was not an arena that rectors acted on with the outside of school. But on the inside they find it important to work with teachers so they would accept their leadership and find it legitimate.

None of the rectors are working on the arena of *visions* in any way that is connected to other parts of their leadership. They did so in the mid-90's, but do not consider it worth the pain. However the *mission*, the foundation for the school's existence, is seen as very important issue in the current discussion of the curriculum reform: Should they insist on preserving the traditional enlightenment and Humbolt view of the gymnasium, or should they surrender to the new gymnasium which main purpose is to prepare students for further studies?

One arena, where many battles are to be fought, is the *cultural arena*: How should the organizational culture and the values be developed in the light of the reforms? Klausen predict that these battles are going to be hard because of the 'glorious past' of the gymnasium.

The arena for *architecture and aesthetics* is already a very important arena in the minds and practices of the rectors. They have for years used this arena as a mediator for battles on other arenas: Reorganizations and extensions of the schools are good levers for other changes as they give support to the psychical well being of teachers and students. (p. 141).

Generally Klausen finds that the leadership in the gymnasium is very consensus-oriented and communicative. Teacher committees are making many decisions and teachers are often 'alien to leadership'. Klausen also interviewed leaders at two commercial upper secondary schools in order to contrast the findings from the academic gymnasium. The strategic leadership here is very different from that of the academic gymnasium: The commercial gymnasium is market oriented and very strategic and hierarchically managed.

One may remember that the commercial gymnasium is meant to be preparing students for a work life in commerce and that they have been self-steering since 1991. This underscores that Klausen's point of view in this piece of research is the strategic leadership, which is in line with the intentions of the self-steering reforms. Those again are conceived within a New Public Management logic: Public institutions should be looked at as if they were placed in a market place – while they are in fact centrally governed state institutions in many respects. But even so they shall act as autonomous institutions and therefore work strategically with a strong leadership with real power over teachers' work.

*Marianne Abrahamsen: Ledelse til en forandring [Leadership for a change]. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Southern Denmark, Odense (Abrahamsen, 2008)*

The case study of two universities took place prior to the curriculum reform in 2005 and was focusing on leadership and on leaders' options in relation to the implementation of information technologies. Abrahamsen interviewed many leaders, middle leaders and groups of teachers, she observed leadership for some time and she carried through a survey that builds on a Cameron & Quinn questionnaire on organizational culture. The theoretical basis, on which the thesis is built, is systems theory (Niklas Luhmann) assisted by structural functionalistic theories and new-institutionalism. Schein's theory on organizational culture is also used. The interviews were analyzed as discourse analyses. The following discourses were found with different weight in the two gymnasia: bureaucracy-, professional-, collegial-, friend-, democracy-, development-, wage earner- discourses plus the following leadership discourses: bureaucratic-, development-, effective/goal-oriented and the distribution discourses.

The Cameron & Quinn questionnaire develops four types of organizational culture: The clan culture, the hierarchy culture, the ad hoc culture and the market culture. These are then the cultures that are found in the material from the gymnasia: The provincial gymnasium is dominated by clan- and hierarchy cultures and here leadership is not given much room for manoeuvre. The city gymnasium is dominated by ad hoc- and market cul-



ture and it is more open to leadership, change and to relations to the surroundings.

The main conclusion is that the pressure of complexity is increasing and that produces new demands on leadership. Leaders must be able to identify the trends and tendencies of their time, of the politics and culture. They must be able to identify the kind of cultures that can be found in their schools, the discourses that are dominant and the patterns those create. Thus, the leader must be able to work on several levels: First order leadership with simple tools for decision making; second order leadership that is conscious of the situation and the culture when it acts and makes decisions; third order leadership that builds on analyses of the interpretations being made within the organizational culture and fourth order leadership that aims at creating frames for a leadership culture.

The conclusion is in line with, what Abrahamsen found in her literature review on leadership in Nordic countries: There is a tendency to move the focus from leaders and their personal qualities towards looking at leadership as complex activities with focus on social relations, action and relations to the surroundings and political expectations.

*Peter Henrik Raae & Marianne Abrahamsen: Fremtidens ledelse af gymnasieskolerne I [The Future Leadership of Gymnasia]* (Raae & Abrahamsen, 2004) This study was commissioned by the Ministry of Education in preparation for the implementation of the Reform 2005. In 2003–04 Raae and Abrahamsen carried through interviews with stakeholders: two Consultants from the Ministry, three regional Superintendents, Teachers, Rectors and Inspector of three gymnasia. The focus of the interviews was how stakeholders anticipate the role and functions of leaders in the gymnasium in implementing the curriculum reform.

The external stakeholders (consultants and superintendents) expect that rectors must focus on education: the teaching, learning and collaborations between teachers and on school development, developing the whole organization. Thus there will be a need to develop the competences of rectors in respect to leadership of strategy, pedagogy, staff and administration.

The internal stakeholders (teachers and inspectors) agree that leadership is going to be even more complex as they must work with heavy traditions and cultures when moving schools into the reform thinking: Teachers in gymnasium were never fond of leadership and change, so it will be a challenge to overcome the uncertainties of the change processes.

The rectors themselves find that the pressure of work has increased over the past decade and so has the pressure on leadership because of the decentralization of some tasks and decisions. This was most visible in schools that

had been involved in developmental projects. The pressure also brought a new focus on pedagogic-, strategic- and staff leadership. This will bring new leader-roles: While the rector used to be a loyal civil servant, he/she now will need to be both a manager and a leader of more autonomous institutions.

The 2005 reform will bring changes to the perception of teaching (from single curriculum subject towards cross curriculum content), which will challenge the traditional teacher identity. It will also bring expectations of teacher collaboration in teacher teams that are responsible for teaching classes. This will also challenge the traditionally individualistic teacher identity. Both will pose challenges on leadership, and so will the expectations on gymnasia forming leadership teams bringing the inspectors more to the front of leadership.

*Peter Henrik Raae: Rektor tænker organization [Rector is thinking organization] (Raae, 2008).*

This study is made in a point of time where the Gymnasium reform from 2005 has been implemented for two – three years and the Self-steering Reform for one year. Rectors of eight gymnasia were interviewed in 2007. The study is, like the Klausen and Raae-Abrahamsen studies, part of a bigger structure reform research project. The theoretical point of view for this study is neo institutionalism, looking at the organization, and psychodynamic theory, looking at the organization from the point of view of subjects.

As mentioned in the introduction, there have been two major reforms of the upper secondary, academic school, the gymnasium: A curriculum reform, the Gymnasium reform and in two years later the Self-steering Reform. The first intended to change the ways of thinking and practicing teaching and thus learning from traditionally subject oriented towards more cross-curricular project oriented pedagogy. The latter intended to bring the gymnasium form being owned and governed by the counties (that were restructured into bigger Regions in 2007) to be self-steering: They are now directly governed by the Ministry of Education by ways of 'aims and frames' and new social technologies: decentralization, cash-per-student grants and contracts with ministry (with performance measurements and self-evaluation), and user governed through user choice and strong boards and competition. The logic behind this reform is clearly New Public Management.

The external expectations towards the gymnasium and its leadership are clearly showing in the ways rectors think of their organization and their own functions and roles. Raae synthesizes the findings from the interviews into a model with four diverse conceptions of the gymnasium, two traditional models: the professionally governed gymnasium, and the 'Bildung' governed

gymnasium; and two more 'modern' models: the gymnasium as enterprise, and the politically governed gymnasium. The professionally governed gymnasium is close to the traditional gymnasium, building on high professional standards in individual curriculum subjects. The teachers were seen as autonomous subjects on the basis of his/her education and expertise. Relations within the organization are based on autonomy, negotiations and majority decisions. Leadership style was tactical.

The 'Bildung' governed gymnasium is another traditional interpretation of the gymnasium: The purpose and aim of the gymnasium is the coherent education of students that was built on traditional virtues and curriculum subjects. The teacher was an expert and a role model. Relations were interpreted from traditional relations and roles. The leadership style was 'primus inter pares'. The gymnasium as an enterprise is a conception that is thought to fit to the new, responsive, and market-place-state. Relations in the organization are built on competition and innovation. Teachers are seen as employees and innovators and leadership style is strategic.

The fourth conception, the politically governed gymnasium, is - but in another way as the third one, built on the contemporary state: institutions are intended to carry out the aims of the state - effective schools. Teachers are loyal employees and the leadership style is directly influencing.

The four models indicate very clearly, that rectors of gymnasia are left in new cross pressures and that they have not yet found clear ways of mastering them. One could also say that they find many ways of manoeuvring in the new landscape of external pressure and disturbances. In order to understand this, Raae discusses the new situation with the concepts of 'buffering' and 'bridging:' how organizations and leaders of them can protect the inner life of their organizations from external pressure. The 'buffering' trend belongs to the traditional gymnasium that is interested in preserving the traditional values and relations while the 'bridging' trend seem to belong more to the new models of the gymnasium that are interested in finding ways of adapting or adjusting to new expectations.

*Dorthe Pedersen & Marie Ryberg: Faglig planlægning, organisering og ledelse efter gymnasireformen [Planning, organizing and leading following the Gymnasium Reform] (Pedersen & Ryberg, 2009).*

This study is also reported in (Pedersen, 2010). In the process of implementing the Gymnasium reforms it was discussed how to reduce the administrative burdens at the institutional level in a conference arranged by the 'Monster-Committee' in 2008. Prior to the conference schools were asked questions in a short survey and at the conference there were presen-

tations and minutes form group works. That is the empirical basis for this study.

The background for the reforms is again described as the neo-liberal governance: steering of steering, the special combination of central governance with local self-steering and self-evaluation. This is seen as a steering of contexts that 'direct the gymnasium the freedom to describe itself in new ways and to develop new practices and oblige them to evaluate and exercise reflective self-control' (2010, p. 9). This means that leadership is obliged to translate external expectations and produce meaning within their schools.

Pedersen and Ryberg find in the short reports from 67 schools that the gymnasias are subject to a number of pressures from the reforms:

- self-descriptions: find new ways to describe the practice of the gymnasium,
- documentation: a number of new documentations (study reports, quality system, self-evaluation, result assessment etc.
- planning: because teaching is made more flexible and cross-cutting there is a need for much more planning
- collaboration: many new teams are established across diverse subjects, classes etc.
- leadership: need for strategic, pedagogical and subject oriented leadership
- coordination and communication: because of new relations internally and externally there is a need for the leadership to coordinate and communicate much more then previously (p. 11).

Three ideal types of leadership are synthesised from the material: The planning, collegial leadership; the dialogue-based leadership and the formalized, strategic leadership.

The planning, collegial leadership focuses on central and formalized steering via planning, management of details and clear demands on teams and teachers to deliver plans and descriptions like manuals and descriptions of functions. Strict divisions of labour, clear positions and standards also accompany this kind of leadership.

The dialogue-based leadership is based on teacher involvement, collaboration and dialogue in teams in order to produce shared, collective meaning with the reform. Teams and teachers are co-leaders in a big organism. Leaders are committed to coordination and supervision in educational and administrative functions.

The formalized, strategic leadership can be found in hierarchic structures with a strategic level, a staff level and an operative level with clearly defined

tasks and functions. Strategies towards the market place and development of the organization according the external expectations are in the forefront of these gymnasia (2010, p. 12)

One observation: There is no reference to the publications on the Gymnasium Reforms from the University of Southern Denmark in these two publications from Copenhagen Business School.

### **Summing up on the research in the upper secondary school and the gymnasium**

It is interesting to follow the processes of reforms from 2004 until 2008. But the research is also shaped by the fact, that the early research was done in a field, that knew full well, that reforms were coming on them, and the later research was done at a stage where only parts of the reforms can have been brought the whole way from Parliament and Ministry to each and every gymnasium and every leader and teacher in those gymnasia.

Therefore it is not surprising that the findings are overlapping and (maybe) first and foremost shaped by the preconceptions, interests or points of view of the researchers: When Klausen finds that rectors and inspectors are not well aware of strategic leadership, it could be due to the fact that his interest is: strategic leadership. He also finds that although rectors do not use the concept of strategic leadership, they perform considerable parts of it in their daily leadership practice.

When Raae find four models of organization and leadership in the stories from rectors and Pedersen & Ryberg find other kinds of pressure and other models of leadership it could be because Raae comes from doing research in educational system and is both looking backwards and forward in history; and because Pedersen and Ryberg come from mainly researching in public sector governance and leadership.

Never the less we can see many similarities in the research on the gymnasium:

- there is a distinct move from discussing the leaders, their values and qualities, towards discussing leadership: the relations, interactions and communication between agents in organizations,
- there is a clear recognition that gymnasia and leaders hereof can not go on living in a secluded, eremitic position, unaffected by the surrounding society, but must adapt to the external expectations,
- there is an observation that leaders in gymnasia have to act both as strategic, pedagogic leaders and leaders of change at the same time as they must manage administration and finances.

## Leadership in basic education

The overarching principle for this part of the review is again chronology, starting with a research project that was launched in 2000.

Most of the publications will show that this decade was turbulent for schools and school leadership. Some of the changes were made because of the public sector restructuring (modernization) in line with new Public Management logics. A major change has been the restructuring of the public sector in 2007 where 271 municipalities were merged into 98. This had several effects: The distance between municipal institutions, like schools, to municipal leadership, superintendency, has been prolonged and thus made the relations between them much more formal.

Other changes were made because education, and in particular the basic schooling, is increasingly being used as a political battlefield for political parties. Since 2001 when a new liberal and conservative government took power with the permanent support from the right wing party, Danish Folk Party, there have been 28 changes of the 'Act on the Folkeskole' (primary and lower secondary school with students age 6–16). From the beginning of this era there has been a focus on 'values-politics:' for many years this political wing has been stressing the dangers of immigration and often letting it develop into real xenophobia. The fights about education have gradually been brought into the same battlefield using the PISA results as an instrument.

*Leif Moos & John MacBeath: Skoleledelse* (Moos & MacBeath, 2000).

This book is a Danish version of John MacBeath (Eds) (1998): *Effective School Leadership: Responding to Change*, which was a report from the English, Danish and Australian research project: *Effective School leadership, 1995–1998*. The project was carried through as a series of case stories from 30 schools all together. The school leaders met at a number of seminars, where detailed notes were made of the discussions in workshops, and interviews of leaders, deputies, and groups of teachers, students, parents and school board representatives in all schools were carried out.

School leaders were asked what they should be able to do in order to be effective/good school leaders. In summarized form they answered: School leaders should be able to:

- solve conflicts, create expectations and show their norms
- be open to approaches and set up a vision for the future and not retreat from difficult questions
- show interest in other people, be good personal relations and also be able to evaluate and make judgements
- be well informed and distribute and find resources.

The study showed similarities and differences between leaders from the three educational systems. This is also the case both with the expectations from stakeholders like students, parents, boards and teachers. There were differences in the structural and political expectations as the English and Australian leaders were more accustomed to the New Public Management logics than the Danish leaders were.

*Svend Kreiner & Jill Mehlbye: Arbejdsmiljøet I folkeskolen [The working environment in the 'Folkeskole'] (Kreiner & Mehlbye, 2000)*

This survey covered a random, national sample of 89 schools in 1997. It covers teachers and leaders' perception of their working environment. The main results of the leaders' answers were that they found their work inspiring and with good opportunities for professional and personal development. Relations to teachers were described as good. Close to 80% answered that they were very happy in their job and did not want to leave it.

The leaders spend their working hours doing administrative work, meeting with teachers and students and with educational leadership and management. The study shows that three aspects of school leadership are important for developing a good school and improving professional environment in schools:

- Leadership for pedagogic development: leaders contribute to the teaching and learning environment
- Close relations between leaders and teachers produce good working environments for teachers
- Active school development raises the experience of a good working environment.

*Lejf Moos: Folkeskoleledernes arbejdsforhold [Principals' working conditions] (Moos, 2001).*

This survey covered a random, national sample of 511 schools (77% of the schools chosen) in 2001. It covers school leaders' (68% principals and 32% deputies) description of leaders' relations to the school district, to parents, teachers and students. A parallel survey was distributed in Norway (Jorunn Møller) and in Sweden (Olof Johansson). Some of the main results are:

- administrative work is a heavy burden
- most schools have established leadership teams, but the distribution of tasks is similar to what it used to be: Most principals still take care of relations to the surroundings and the educational relations to teachers and parents, while most deputies still take care of administrative tasks.
- most school districts, municipalities, have delegated financial tasks and decisions to schools

- leaders find the superintendencies helpful and supportive, but the local politicians are not well informed, nor are they interested in schools
- the 1999 'General Agreement on Teachers Working Conditions' between the national Association of Municipalities and the Teachers Union opened up for more flexible relations inside schools and for 'self-steering teacher teams'. It is seen as a good instrument for collaboration and school development but also as an extra administrative burden to the leader
- one third of the schools have established self-steering teams
- the major tasks internally in schools are described as developing the educational values by setting the agenda for the professional discourses and stimulating the subject matter and pedagogical discussions among and with teachers.
- only very few leaders say that they observe teaching in class. They would like to do so, but cannot find the time, they say.

*Leif Moos: Pædagogisk ledelse [Pedagogic Leadership] (Moos, 2003)*

The analyses in this book built on many sources.

One study penetrates all chapters: the international (England, Denmark, Ireland and Norway) study on school leaders life histories: 'Passionate Principals' also reported in (Sugrue, 2004; Biott, Moos, & Møller, 2001). In all sites three – four long, very open-ended life history interviews with 10–12 school leaders were conducted. They were summarized into life histories and also analysed thematically in order to find common trends of similarities and differences between national peers and between the countries involved in the study.

All chapters commence with a life history that hints at the theme of this chapter and some of the thematic analyses are reported in journal articles (Moos, 2005a Moos, 2004a; Moos, 2004b). These analysis will be reviewed at the end of this review.

The life histories illustrate as well as serve as the foundation for the analyses where more studies and theories are taken in. A theoretical point of view as well as a summary of the findings of the 'Educational Leadership' would state that:

- educational leadership is the goal oriented and specialized communication, and organizing of communication and the preconditions for communication, that aims at stimulating learning and communication,
- public organizations are established in order to pursue one or more purposes. The purpose of schools is contested and politically and educationally decided, so the foundation for leadership in schools is the purpose of schooling,



- political, administrative and cultural expectations are meant to regulate schools in a political system, so leaders must translate external expectations into internal meaning and direction,
- the core activities in schools are student learning and teacher teaching, so leaders must have deep insights into learning and teaching,
- leadership is only in small parts positional, because leadership takes place in relations,
- relations between agents in school take place in an organization or a community and they build on regulations and trust at the same time,
- the contemporary society is very fast moving and changing and therefore school development is the everyday practice,
- contemporary governance politics and collaboration concepts – like distribution of power and accountabilities – point to the need for teachers and leaders to collaborate in the everyday practice, so teams of leaders or of teachers are an important way of organizing relations, communication and work,
- demands from both market place interests and local community interests underscore the need for schools to be open and open minded to local communities and parents and thus school leaders must collaborate with the local community and parents.

Thematic analyses of life histories are, as mentioned, reported in the article: *'How do schools bridge the gap between external demands for accountability and the need for internal trust?' (Moos, 2005a)*. The Danish school leaders were very concerned and challenged with the demand for – new – accountabilities and the need to reconcile them with the internal relations and the internal trust. In order to structure the analyses a set of accountabilities are introduced: Managerial-, market oriented-, public/political-, professional- and ethical accountabilities (p. 323). Principals struggle most with the external demands for managerial- and market place accountabilities (those are demands for documentation and evaluation and demands on parental choice and competition), because they seem to be new and exotic to educational thinking and practice, so they report on ways in which they try to translate them into internal meaning. In some cases it can also be seen that principals retract into a 'protective cocoon,' shielding themselves and teachers from realities and transforming their consciousness from this new and threatening features.

Another thematic analysis is reported in *'Membership and relations in a changing context'* (Moos, 2004a). The principal, whose life story this chapter refers to, tells a story of how he moved in and out of different communities

of practice in diverse roles as outsider or member. The chapter '*Regulation and trust: negotiating relationship*' (Moos, 2004b) is a story about principals from all four countries in the study struggling with their relations to teachers. The contemporary, neo-liberal governance is difficult to combine with much needed trust between leader and teachers. The new demands for 'strong leaders' are difficult to reconcile with the (traditional) urge for trust in relations for the Danish and the Norwegian and partly Irish principals, while the English principals seemed to have gotten used to it.

*Charlotte Ringsmose & Jill Mehlbye: Elementer i god skolepraksis – De gode eksempler [Elements in good school practice: The good examples] (Ringsmose & Mehlbye, 2004)*

This book reports from a classical effective school study with a number of publications: a thorough description of how good schools were selected, a study of classroom practices and this study at the school level. This study builds on surveys and qualitative cases from 15 schools and includes studies of teachers, school and leadership. Only the latter is reviewed here. Effective school leaders are characterised by the following:

- leadership is distinctive, has clear structures and procedures for decision making, and has clear demands on staff. The demands on and procedures for teachers' annual plan is one way of making leadership clear, says one leader: *'The municipal goals govern our discussion and all of the municipal areas for initiatives must be elucidated in each annual plan.'*
- leadership follows up on decisions, e.g. in respect to the annual plan: Leaders should feed back and discuss them,
- leadership is visible, in the daily practice in classrooms, teacher room and school,
- leadership supervises, advises and enters into dialogue with staff. Often this takes place in regular meetings/interviews with individual teachers and teacher teams,
- leadership works hard, in order to produce shared actions and goals e.g. in schools' activity/strategy plans,
- leadership involves staff in decisions, again with the strategy plan because it is only going to be an active feature in school life if it has been produced in collaboration between leaders and teachers (p. 94).

*Leif Moos: From still photo to animated images. (Moos, 2005b)*

This article reports on a development of a research method: 'animated images', and on findings from the use of it in the 'Leadership 4 Learning' project. Researchers and school leaders from England, Denmark, Australia, Austria, Greece and Norway participated over a period of three years.

The researcher interviewed school leaders and teachers, observed school practices and wrote on these basis case stories/images. The images were brought back to the schools and discussed with stakeholders. A year later the same process was carried through, this time beginning with looking back on the image of the previous year. In some cases this was done a third time. Every time stakeholders reflected on their practice and development and develop their shared understanding of themselves and their school.

*Lejf Moos, John Krejsler & Klaus Kasper Kofod: Meninger i ledelse – successful skoleledelse mellem visioner og selvledelse [Meaning in leadership – successful school leadership between visions and selv-leadership] (Moos, Kofod, & Krejsler, 2007)*

The book and several books and articles report arguments and findings from ‘The International Successful School Principalship Project’ with participation of researcher groups from New York State (USA), Canada, England, Victoria and Tasmania (Australia), China, Sweden, Norway and Denmark. Denmark joined the project in 2002 and it is still running and producing research.

The initial, English, criterion for selecting case principals was whether they were moving their school upwards on national league tables of skills and knowledge. A second criterion was if they were being assessed as successful by external inspections and the third was if they were being recognised as successful by their peers. Those indicators were not directly applicable to the Danish situation because there was no national league table nor school inspections – and the selection of schools was therefore based on other methods, like the superintendents assessment of the schools along the same lines (superintendents’ knowledge of student outcomes, school performance and peer recognition). The Danish group chose a more epistemological perspective to the first phase: They wanted to inquire stakeholders about their perception of success. The point of observation was their choice position on the purpose of schooling (Democratic Bildung) and the legitimacy of leadership that built on communication.

In the first phase of the project 11 schools were chosen and stakeholder images of the schools were produced through interviews with school principal, middle-leaders, groups of teachers, students and parents and the superintendent. In the next phase three of those schools were chosen for deeper investigations: More interviews with stakeholders, observations and ‘shadowing’ of leader, teacher and student. At that stage a national, representative survey of school leaders was carried through and had a response rate of 69%. In 2008, five years after the first round of visits, school leaders of the three schools were interviewed again in order to get account of how successful

leadership was sustained over time. In this summary in 2011 there will be arguments and findings from the first phase and from revisiting schools: *'The International Successful School Principal Project: success sustained?'* (Moos & Johansson, 2009), *'Successful school principals in Danish Schools'* (Moos, Krejsler, Kofod, & Jensen, 2005) and *'Sustained successful school leadership in Denmark'* (Moos & Kofod, 2009)

The changing context of schools over time was constructed, building on the accountability categories introduced above. Here they are compressed into three:

- Have the national and local *managerial* expectations changed, and have the demands from the *marketplace* changed – as interpreted in the competition situation and the financial situation?
- What are the *political* and local community and parents' expectation?
- How do *professionals* interpret how they best meet the needs of learners, the *ethical* demands?

National *managerial* expectations and *marketplace* demands: Over the past five years it has become more visible that the dominant political discourse is changing from traditional 'Democratic Bildung' towards effective, 'back-to-basic' schooling. There is more focus on national level goals and accountability and on contracts (Tests, Quality reports, Student Plans...). The couplings between national, local and school levels have changed so that finances and day-to-day administrative business has been loosened and the setting of goals and evaluations of student outcomes have been tightened. It should be mentioned that a comparison across all involved educational systems shows that in countries with high stake testing there is a clear tendency towards leaders using more direct leadership forms than in countries with less strong accountability systems:

*Successful Principals: Telling or selling? On the importance of context for school leadership'* (Moos, Kofod, & Krejsler, 2008).

Local *community* and *parent's* expectations: Parents have become more of a focus for principals. In one school because of a temporary dive in student results, in the other because of threats of the school having to merge with another school.

*Professional* and *cultural-ethical* expectations: The traditionally vision of the comprehensive 'Democratic Bildung,' that encompass both subject matter, personal and social competencies was very strong. The notion is still strong, but now this approach is being challenged and there is much more focus on basic literacy and numeracy. The principals are worrying whether they can keep the broad vision alive.

## Successful Principalship

The categories used to report results and arguments on successful leadership are found in a model of leadership functions, developed by (Leithwood & Riehl, 2005; Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, & Hopkins, 2006).

First main function: *Leading school's direction*: This understanding is implied in the generic concept of leadership that is understood as: 'Lead the way ...' and 'be at the head of ...' It is also understood in this way in the research, where it is found that successful principals are setting the direction for their schools: "... successful leadership creates a compelling sense of purpose in the organizations by developing a shared vision of the future, helping build consensus about relevant short-term goals and demonstrating high expectations for colleagues' work." (Leithwood et al., 2006).

Second main function: *Understanding and developing people* is another major task. As teachers are the most important persons for student learning in school, they need to be given and themselves construct optimal conditions for their relations to students. This means that structures and school cultures for education and teaching must be good and that support and capacity building must be in place: '*Communicative Strategies among Successful Danish School Principals*' (Moos, Krejsler, Kofod, & Jensen, 2007).

Third main function: *Designing and managing communities*: schools are organizations, held together by structures, but if they are to be effective and successful, they must also be communities, held together by a shared sense of identity and by sufficiently common norms. Classrooms and schools are social fields and education and learning take place in those social fields. Loyalty and commitment to the organization is not by any means an automatic starting position for any institution; so building and deepening it is a leadership duty and mission. If staff and students are to behave loyally to their organisation, leaders should make an effort to transform the organization, that is characterized by all members being sufficiently committed to the ethos of the community.

Fourth main function: *Managing the teaching and learning program*: If the principal focuses her/his attention and that of the teachers around a given set of goals, standards and criteria – as those laid out in the teaching program, there is a better chance that students will acquire the competencies, aimed at.

We shall add one more important practice to the four: *Leading the environments*. Schools are profoundly dependent on their environments, be they political, administrative, community, professional, cultural or other. Therefore it is a very important practice for the principal to manage and lead the relations to the outer world. They must be able to understand and interpret

signals and expectations from many stakeholders and they must be good at having the environments think that the school is doing a good job, be it through league tables, inspection reports or through political negotiations with stakeholders.

*The leadership functions in the Danish cases:* Leading direction: At this time there is a growing attention to the external demands following the growing national goal setting and accountability-demands. The trend of governments tightening the couplings with schools through the use of more detailed and strict social technologies like testing, comparisons, rankings and benchmarking is showing results in that most of the principals are more focused on the effectiveness and 'back-to-basic' trends. At the same time they are trying not to neglect or let teachers neglect the comprehensive, holistic goals. Leadership is more like translating the external expectations into internal direction, more re-active than pro-active: '*Sustained successful school leadership in Denmark*' (Moos & Kofod, 2009).

Understanding and developing people: Principals often lead in indirect ways by setting the agenda or the scene. Most teachers are working in self-steering teacher teams with a high degree of responsibility and autonomy but also with new forms of internal accountability. Principals recognise that teachers need to be self-leading, meaning that they are given room for manoeuvre followed by tight standards and demands for accountability. Principals are aware that teachers need to be given support and care in order that they can manage the choices and room for manoeuvre, they are given and thus creating a safe and secure working environment for them. This is often in a form of 'pastoral leadership' (Moos et al., 2007).

Designing and managing communities, leadership, organization and relations, communication: Leadership teams as well as teacher teams are pivotal features of schools. Principals relations to individual teachers, teams and the whole staff are multilayered and often take place in an intricate mix of meetings. Contracts between the principal and teacher teams and individual teachers are important tools for leading: '*What is Successful Leadership?*' (Moos, Krejsler, & Kofod, 2008b) and '*How Distributed Leadership Emerges Within Danish Schools – Experiences With New Systems of Governance*' (Moos, Krejsler, & Kofod, 2008a).

Managing the teaching and learning programme: The shift in external expectation has had impact on the inner life of schools. The need to measure outcomes and the more detailed, national goals, especially with respect to literacy and numeracy, have brought more attention to those areas of curriculum and less to cross curricular activities. In order to support teachers more specialists, like reading consultants, are brought into schools. Principals

put more weight on new social technologies like teachers and teams' annual plans and on student plans and thereby making expectations explicit. Teacher teams and networks are strengthened: *'School Leadership for 'Democratic Bildung': fundamentalist beliefs or critical reflection?'* (Moos, 2008) and *'From Successful School Leadership Towards Distributed Leadership'* (Moos, 2010).

Leading environments: At this point in time most case schools have expanded their community work considerably, some in relations to parents and others in relation to and in partnership with institutions and enterprises. There are clear indicators of a move towards systems leadership in most places: Schools are looking for support from parents; they are forming partnerships with social and cultural institutions that can support schools with challenges that are not easily, if at all, met within schools; some schools are forming partnerships with institutions and enterprises in order to facilitate a broader learning-area for their students and then some schools are networking with authorities and policy makers at several levels in order to try and influence the context and expectations of their school. There is more focus on collaboration with parents for two reasons (one: involving them in re-culturing the school and two: in the fight against merger with another school). The relations to local authorities have changed in some places from being based on dialogue to being based on written formal principles, procedures and contracts.

### Summing up on sustainability in school leadership

Sustainability is, with reference to the United Nations Brundtland Commission (Nations, 1987): 'the capacity of organizations to self-renew and, if applied to schools, underlines the importance of ordering institutions in ways that are sustainable in the long term.' This means that we have to shift the understanding of school development – and thus of successful school principals – from the work of individuals towards a more organizational, collaborative understanding, from leader towards leadership. This is not news to the principals in our case schools, but it has been underscored in most schools over the past five years.

Again building on the Brundtland Commission: 'Meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.' One can focus on the interdependencies between schools and their present and future contexts. The principals in the Danish cases know, that their schools are placed in and are part of local communities in every respect: Culture, social circumstances, economical, history, caring for past and future generations etc.

Schools tell how they work on distributing leadership: Leadership teams are widely used because no one person can reach the whole school and all the actors in it. Principals also experience that sharing knowledge, observa-

tions and thoughts with peers and teachers are important features in leading a school because no one person can observe everything; nor can they know everything, nor develop thinking on her/his own.

Case schools are developing their organisations into being team-based networks, or webs. Leadership is parallel to being distributed from the principal to leadership team also being distributed to teacher teams. On one hand this trend seem to leave more room for manoeuvre to teachers and focusing on colleague-based capacity building in teams, while at the same time principals develop new ways of influencing teachers. Sense-making in many forms – like setting the scene, producing narratives of the school's future, focusing on important differences in the everyday life of schools – or through the use of new social technologies like annual plans, team meetings with the leadership and other regular meetings.

There are clear indications that many principals are turning their attention towards more direct interactions and communications with teachers on a practical everyday level: observing classroom teaching, consulting and supervising teachers individually and in team meetings and not relying too much on strategic plans and formal visions. Thus there is more focus on reciprocal leadership than on strategic or direct leadership. Leaving more room for teachers does not mean that principals abstain from leading teachers, but they develop new forms of influence (Moos, 2009). Generally there seems to be a trend towards recognising that teachers need to be self-leading and given room for manoeuvre followed by tighter standards and more detailed demands for accountability.

*Leif Moos, Øystein Ballo, Nilse Gjermund Næss & Peter Ulholm: Ledelsesutvikling gjennom skolevurdering og kulturmøter – et dansk-norks aksjoneforskningsprosjekt [Leadership development through school evaluation and culture meeting] (Moos, Ballo, Næss, & Ulholm, 2006)*

This book is a record of an actions-research and actions-learning project with 12 Danish and 12 Norwegian schools. The data was extensive participant observation, seminar material, preparation material and interviews.

The findings demonstrated that school leaders learned, when being exposed to a relatively new culture in a structured and well-prepared way.

*Leif Moos, Per Fibæk Laursen, Martha Mottelson & Christina Jørgensen: Inklusion I praksis – kommunal skoleudvikling I Randers. [Inclusion in practice – municipal school development in Randers]. (Moos, Laursen, Mottelson, & Jørgensen, 2006)*

This book reports from a research project that followed a municipal school development project. We interviewed leaders, teachers and students and we observed lessons, meetings and conferences.



On the school leadership level is reported that leaders focused on both structural changes as well as cultural changes.

*Dorthe Staunæs, Malou Juelskjær & Hanne Knudsen: Psy-ledelse. Nye former for (skole)ledelse set gennem tre optikker [Psy-leadership. New forms of (school) leadership seen through three optics]* (Staunæs, Juelskjær, & Knudsen, 2009)

This article builds on an unspecified database, produced by teachers and students in a Masters programme. The article falls into three main parts: Affectivity (emotions), Virtuality (the possible and not yet existing) and Materiality (architecture) and leadership. The main interest of all parts is to look into and discuss how the new types of governance (self-leadership, self-evaluation, contracting etc.) in contemporary public institutions – could be schools – is affecting and influencing psychological aspects of leaders and relations.

In the first part, it is reported how contemporary governance and social technologies urge leaders to involve themselves deeply into building leadership-relations to staff and other agents. Self-leadership depends on all parties accepting close relations, friendship-like connections, bonding to the others. In this perspective leadership needs to be transformed from influencing other people's behaviour towards influencing their consciousness and emotions.

The second part discusses new social technologies that anticipate future situations and relations, and transfers/imposes them on agents by making all kinds of contracts/agreements that describes expectations and roles. The relations and roles are being played out/negotiated (by leaders/teachers and students/parents) within asymmetrical but apparently creative and playful settings. Those situations produce possible futures or possible room for manoeuvre for teachers, parents and students.

In the third main part it is discussed, how important architecture is for leadership behaviour, actions and thinking in organizations.

*Camilla Sløk & Marie Ryberg: Strategisk ledelse I folkeskolen [Strategic leadership in the Folkeskole]* (Sløk & Ryberg, 2010)

This study builds on qualitative interviews with 22 school leaders. The starting point for the study was the criticism in the Danish background report for the OECD 'Improving School Leadership' project: that Danish school leaders do too little strategic leadership and too much pedagogical/professional leadership.

The study finds that school leaders see very close connections between strategic and pedagogic leadership. They describe strategic leadership in three ways: leadership happens through leading the communication in

school; it happens through organizing e.g. by establishing committees and restructuring; and it happens through leading networking and positioning themselves in the networks/webs.

A model from military is introduced in order to distinguish between strategy and tactics. Strategy is here defined as 'the power to define the overarching structures' and tactics is about 'constantly to reformulate occurrences in order to create possibilities'.

The study argues that tactic leadership is the order of the contemporary school while strategy could be a good model of what school leadership needs to be.

*Frode Boye Andersen: Den trojanske kæphest. Iagttagelse af kommunikation der leder. [The Trojan Hobbyhorse. Observations of communication that leads] Ph.D. thesis (Andersen, 2008)*

This systems-theoretical (Niklas Luhmann) analysis of leadership in a school is based on a number of case stories, 'images'. FBA participated as a process consultant in a school that took part in a larger School evaluation project. The images are constructed on the basis of analysis of project documents, his own project notes and interviews with the school principal while he was the project manager.

A fundamental observation is that the school is very dependent on the autonomy and participation of participants and therefore it is not dirigible, which means that leadership must be indirect and 'leading of self-leaders' through leadership-communication. One of the pivotal phases of this kind of leadership is the construction of premises for decision-making that take into account the relations and communication in the whole organization and the purpose of the school as it is formulated in visions: differences that make a difference.

The mixed metaphor in the title of the thesis points to this: The Trojan horse contains and hides something that is being brought into Troy: the indirect leadership, and the 'hobbyhorse' means that leadership has a purpose or direction. Unfortunately, the mix metaphors in the title are no more opaque as the rest of the text.

### **Summing up on the research in primary and lower secondary school, the 'Folkeskole'**

Research on 'Folkeskoler' show, even more clearly than research on the youth education, that schools are embedded in, dependent on and active agencies in society. As the Danish society gets more complex and multicultural and less dependent on traditions, and thus loosing some of the shared, common,

national culture and leaving the production of meaning to smaller communities and individuals, this has also become a major task for schools and in particular for school leaders in relation to teachers.

This research also shows that the state is trying to cope with major changes because of Globalization and trans-national collaboration like the EU, where the public sectors are being restructured, modernized. This causes big changes for the relations between state, local communities and institutions, like schools. At this stage we see two major trends in this restructuring:

- A tightening of the couplings between state and schools: more detailed aims, standards, and national tests and documentations are being implemented
- A loosening of the couplings as some of the tasks and decisions are decentralized to schools followed by new contracts between state/local authorities and schools where self evaluation and self-leading are pivotal aspects.

This combination has brought a very strong focus on leadership and leaders at all levels: someone(s) is needed to translate the national goals into internal meaning and someone needs to be accountable 'at the end of the day.'

Research produces many new insights in the effects of these changes:

- Policy makers and their administrators want to be in command (because they are accountable to the press and the voters) and therefore make much more detailed goals and aims. At the same time they demand that school leaders must lead strategically. This produces opaque and muddy understandings.
- School leaders are trying hard to balance the diverse demands on accountability and the Global, PISA-competition on one hand and on the comprehensive 'Democratic Bildung' and room for collaboration and creativity on the other hand.
- Schools and leaders are adapting to new means of governance and new social technologies like the contract, self-leading etc. and trying to balance the total commitment and thus colonization of the agents minds and souls with their demand for room for trust, manoeuvre and leeway.
- Schools are opening up to their surroundings and establishing collaboration and partnerships with agencies and institutions on the outside. At the same time they strive to establish sensible forms of collaboration with parents.
- Successful school leaders try not to forget the students.

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# CHAPTER 8 RESEARCH ON PRINCIPALS IN FINLAND

Mika Risku & Pekka Kanervio

## Development Plans and Research – Key Roles in Developing Education in Finland

The five-year development plans, which attempt to dissect the education system and education as a systemic aggregate, have been the main parliamentary development tool for education in Finland since 1991. According to the decree issued in 1991 (Act165/1991), the development plans are to cover the whole education system as well as the research conducted by institutions of higher education. The development plans are to include besides the foci of educational policies, also the White Papers for the structures of education, for the most important development programmes on quality assurance and for the quantitative goals. (Varjo, 2007, p. 113)

All the three development plans (Ministry of Education, 2000, 2004 and 2008) that affect the scope of the present review i.e. research on principals during 2000–2010 emphasize the value of research as a tool for developing the Finnish education system. As it is written in the Education and Research Development Plan 2007–2012 (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 72), “it is important to have sufficiently well analysed evidence on the education system and environmental factors”(ibid, p 72).

There is to be valid information based on research to be able to evaluate the consequences of the prospective solutions in advance, to support efficient implementation and to enable the monitoring and impact assessment of the solutions carried out. Data production is to be developed to improve the availability and usability of research information. (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 72)

The research information is to be obtained from a diversified network of research information producers. Statistics Finland is responsible for collecting the basic information on education and students which is used by the National Board of Education and by the Ministry of Education. It is also considered essential that research is conducted independently by separate research institutes like the Finnish Education Evaluation Council and the

Finnish Institute of Educational Research, and by the various university departments. (Ministry of Education, 2008, pp. 72–73)

National research is not regarded to suffice as a development tool for education. To be able to analyse the Finnish education system in a larger framework there is a need for international comparisons and benchmarking. Because the international indicators tend to guide both discussion and development it is considered necessary to have an active role in the international production of information on education. It is important to try to influence “so that the indicators produced are relevant for national development and the national features are adequately taken into account”. (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 73)

## Research on Principals Is Not Prolific but Interesting and Including Fresh Starts

As research is seen to be a key tool for developing the Finnish education system and “school leadership has become a priority in educational policy agendas across OECD and partner countries” (Pont, Nusche & Moorman, 2008, p. 19), one would think that principalship, and educational leadership in general, would be included amongst the fields of research and as the priorities of the Education and Research Development Plans. One would also assume there to be ample research information on Finnish principals, both nationally and internationally. That does not seem to be the case, however, although Haavisto (2006, p. 4) claims that the training of school leadership has been one of the priorities of the State already for years.

The Education and Research Development Plan 1999–2004 (Ministry of Education, 2000) does not incorporate principalship at all. In the Development Plan 2003–2008 (Ministry of Education, 2004) there are two mentions concerning the management of the school. The first one (*ibid.*, p. 16) calls for a strong recognition of prior learning in the *continuing* (writer’s addition) training of school leadership. The second one (*ibid.*, p. 27) states that management must be one of the priorities in teachers’ continuing education. In the Development Plan 2007–2012 (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 33) there is one mention concerning the management of the school. It concerns vocational education and states management of vocational institutions as a key development target for the education providers’ strategies.

### Doctoral dissertations on principals

On the basis of the list of Finnish universities and university networks by the Ministry of Education and Culture (2010, the name of the Ministry of



Education was changed in 2010), a survey for this review was conducted on the doctoral theses in Finnish universities during 2000–2010. In all, 661 dissertations in educational and behavioural sciences were found in the internet archives of the universities. Of the dissertations merely 28 (4.2%) were categorized as dealing with principalship.

On the basis of the survey on the doctoral theses on principalship, the scopes and interests of the universities seem to vary somewhat which can be regarded as a profitable situation for both the instances needing research information and for the researchers with their various research interests. A bit more than a half (15) of the 28 dissertations on principalship focused on the many contexts of the principal, e.g. on schools, on municipalities and other concerns, and on the national educational framework. The other half (13) addressed themselves to the principal, or on the training or work of the principal.

Doctoral theses on principalship were typically made by researchers who either had been or were working as principals. The theoretical reviews of the doctoral theses included a lot of interesting and valuable information on the Finnish society and education system, and on the theories related to educational leadership. The research methodology almost never was solely quantitative but either completely qualitative or based on both the quantitative and qualitative approach. All dissertations were written in Finnish except for one in Swedish and another in English.

The websites for the Finnish universities and for the Finnish Academy reveal a few doctoral programmes which seem noteworthy concerning doctoral research on principalship. The Finnish Doctoral Programme in Education and Learning (FiGSEL, KASVA) is the largest graduate school in education in Finland. It is funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture, and by the Finnish Academy. The board of the graduate school includes representatives from most Finnish universities. Presently, the graduate school is led by Professor Risto Rinne and managed by the University of Turku. The graduate school has been operating since 1995 and has produced many doctoral theses of which the ones on the comparative research on educational policies, funding and evaluation are closest to educational leadership. Principalship or other forms of educational leadership as such seem, however, not to be included in the research areas of the graduate school. (University of Turku, 2010; Finnish Academy, 2010)

Concerning national doctoral research on principalship, the role of the Institute of Educational Leadership at the University of Jyväskylä becomes evident. Of the 28 dissertations on principalship found in the internet archives of the universities nine were produced at the University of Jyväskylä. Besides, three dissertations conducted in connection with the Institute were

excluded from the results of the survey because they did not fit in the framework of the present review. One was on day care work and leadership in a distributed organization (Halttunen, 2009) and the two others (Lahtero, 2011; Pulkkinen, 2011), which were on principalship, were approved at the beginning of 2011.

The Institute of Educational Leadership is a good example of the need and significance of creating focus, systemacity and sustainability. Through the proper education system also research flourishes. The Institute began its first Principal Preparation Programme in 1996 under the leadership of Docent Maija-Liisa Nikki. The Principal Preparation Programme (25 ECTS) was included in the qualifications for principalship in 1998 (Act 986/1998, 2 §). The University President Aino Sallinen gave the unit the status of an institute in the Faculty of Education in 1999. The Institute has been lead by Professor Jukka Alava since 2001. The Advanced Leadership Programme (35 ECTS) started in 2000, the international Master's Degree Programme in Educational Leadership (120 ECTS) in 2007 and the international Master of Educational Management and Leadership Programme (80 ECTS, former MBA in Educational Leadership) in 2010. The Master's Degree and the MED Programme are available also in the virtual distance learning format. The first doctoral programme started in 2002, the second one in 2004 and the third one, which is international, in 2010. (Alava, 2006; Nikki, 2000, p. 10; University of Jyväskylä, 2010)

Besides the doctoral theses, the Institute produces also international master theses on educational leadership including principalship and is conducting the first inclusive national research programme on educational leadership in Finland. The research programme, presently concentrating on general education, started in 2008 and is funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The first report, which is on educational leadership in the municipal level i.e. on superintendency, was published in 2009 (Kanervio & Risku, 2009). A report on leading educational change in Finnish municipalities will be published in 2011 and two reports on educational leadership in the school level i.e. on principalship will go out during 2011–2012. The programme is to include also leadership in the class level i.e. teacher and student leadership. The research is conducted both as Nordic and global collaborations.

Concerning research on leadership in vocational education The Research Centre for Vocational Education at the University of Tampere stood out in the survey of doctoral theses. Most of the all together seven dissertations examined leadership in the polytechnics but the scope also included some studies on leadership in general education.

The University of Helsinki shelters a graduate school called *Research Unit for Social and Comparative Studies in Education* (SOCE, KYK) which was founded in 1998. Its research areas include also the new politics and management of education (KUPOLI). (University of Helsinki, 2010) There was also an effort to aggregate a group of doctoral students interested in educational leadership in 2004 but the programme did not have continuity (Karikoski, 2009, p. vi). However, at least two of the dissertations included in the present survey were initiated through that effort: Kunnari (2008) and Karikoski (2009). In total, six of the doctoral theses were produced at the University of Helsinki.

In 2009 the University of Helsinki and the University of Åbo Akademi started a collaborative Doctoral Programme in Education and Educational Leadership in a Multicultural Society which is to enhance research on the provision of education in the Swedish-speakers' framework in Finland (Holm & Uljens, 2009, p. 3; University of Åbo Akademi, 2010).

### Regular research on principals

Regular research on Finnish principals may be somewhat more frequent than those concerning the doctoral theses but are not numerous either. There are, of course, studies where the principal is included but very often in the outskirts of the study. And, there are several non- and semi-scientific books and articles where principals have written about their work or others have written about the principals and their work. Those publications, too, are in most cases creditable with a lot of information and tacit knowledge to convey but they are not in the focus of this review.

Considering the very Nordic character of the present book, it is highly appropriate to start the review on the regular research on principalship with Finland's participation in the Nordic research project on school leadership conducted by the Nordic Council of Ministers in 1999. A report on the project was published in Danish by the Council (Nordisk Ministerråd, 2000) and an edited version in Finnish by the National Board of Education (Opetushallitus, 2001). The reports will serve as a solid background for the Nordic research collaboration on principalship which will be conducted in 2011 and 2012.

The studies on the status of local evaluation in education by the National Board of Education in 2000 (Rajanen, 2000) and 2004 (Löfström, Metsämuuronen, Niemi, Salmio & Stenvall, 2005) include interesting information also on principalship in the Finnish municipalities. The information is especially useful when one wants to analyse the longitudinal development of principalship, to which purpose the survey by Local Finland (Pirhonen & Janhunen, 1995) is essential, too.

In 2004 the Institute of Educational Leadership at the University of Jyväskylä was asked to participate in an international comparative action research project (HEAD) into school management training programmes in five countries: Norway, England, Finland, France and the USA. The project was funded by the Norwegian Research Council (NFR) and implemented by the Centre for Education Management Research (CEM) at BI Norwegian School of Management, in cooperation with the University of Oslo's Institute for Educational Research. Concerning Finland the project produced two reports in English on school management training in Finland: Värri & Alava (2005) and Alava (2008).

The book on the experiences of good practices in principal training by Taipale, Salonen and Karvonen (2006) is a meritorious and many-sided compilation on both the basic and continuing training of principals, and of the work of the principal. The book consists of fifteen articles of which many are written by experts with a long and many-sided experience in principalship and principal training. The articles include interesting theoretical contemplations, descriptions of studies, practical advice for principals and laudable insights towards future principal training.

As a result of the Finnish PISA successes that baffled both domestically and internationally, an array of reviews, surveys and analyses in English have been produced. Good sources for those publications are the websites of the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, the National Board of Education and the Finnish Institute of Educational Research. The publications very rarely recognize and describe the role of the principal concerning the PISA results. A refreshing exception is the historical review by Aho, Pitkänen & Sahlberg (2006). The review is written in English and published by the World Bank.

The Ministry of Education participated in the OECD project on Improving School Leadership and produced a country background report in English of the project in 2007 (Ministry of Education, 2007). The two OECD publications on the project went out in 2008 and included also information on principalship in Finland (Pont, Nusche, & Hopkins, 2008; Pont, Nusche & Moorman, 2008).

In 2008 the Ministry of Education started an inclusive research programme on educational leadership in general education in collaboration with the Institute of Educational Leadership at the University of Jyväskylä as mentioned earlier. The first report (Kanervio & Risku, 2009) of the programme concentrates on the municipal level and on superintendence but includes a lot of information also on principals.

It would be tempting to include here many of the valuable studies on the overwhelming change that is taking place in the Finnish society. In the study by Kanervio & Risku (2009, p. 104) only 5,7 percent of the superintendents anticipated no major changes taking place in the production of the educational services in their municipalities by 2015. However, only two studies will be mentioned here, both by Local Finland.

Local Finland is the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities. The role of the municipalities and, thus, of Local Finland has increased since the Municipal Act of 1995 (365/1995) gave the municipalities a constitutional autonomy and transformed them into the main providers of public services. As the relationship between the municipalities and the State has changed the municipalities have had to rearrange their service structures and processes. This change has been enforced by the radical demographic changes in the society and also by the Act on Restructuring Municipalities and Services (169/2007) which was passed in 2007.

The restructuring of municipal services started mainly with health and social services. It seemed for some time that no real concern was set on educational services although there were major problems trying to ensure equity in education in the whole country. A project for supporting and studying the rearrangement of educational services in municipalities was launched by Local Finland in 2008. The two reports included here are reports of that project. The first one by Sirviö, Eskelinen, Rajala, Salminen and Selkee (2008) concerns general upper secondary education which has lost much of its earlier popularity to vocational upper secondary education and awaits radical changes. The second one by Karvonen, Eskelinen and Aunola (2009) is the final report of the project. Both of the reports, though meritorious, are typical in the sense that they focus on the changes in the environment and in the organizational alterations. Principals are mentioned mainly when their role in the change needs to be evaluated through legislative constraints.

Due to the many changes and pressures on personnel in education, both the Trade Union of Education in Finland and the Association of Finnish Principals have been very active in their trusteeship. The Ministry of Education has also been willing to conduct a consistent dialogue with them in the same way as with the other national stakeholders. Concerning the Association of Finnish Principals, the report by Johnson (2005) on a survey for principals about their work, the disquisition of the judicial position of the principal by Souri (2009), and the Pro Rexi programme need all to be included in this review.

## What Research Tells Us about Principals in Finland during the First Decade of the 2000s

The following description on principals in Finland during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be based on the results of both doctoral and regular research on principals conducted in Finland 2000 – 2010. The research analysed for this review also forms the basis for the headings of the description thus highlighting what researchers have considered topical concerning principals at the beginning of the 2000s. The role of regular research is significant concerning the first heading, the formal position of the principal. The role of doctoral research becomes more dominant concerning the second and third heading which deal with the context, work and identity of the principal. An attempt has been made to let the dissertations and their foci and results stand out to form collectively a picture of principals in the Finland of the first decade of the 2000s. The dissertations are not presented in a chronological order but their presentation is arranged so that larger pictures could be pieced together. Concerning dissertations, but not regular studies, the aim and composition of data are described besides the main results.

Municipalities are the main education providers in Finland although the production of education is going through a strong process of diversification. In 2007, 98.2% of comprehensive schools were maintained by municipalities. In 2006, the corresponding percentage for upper secondary general education was 89.6%. Most upper secondary vocational institutions are maintained by municipalities, joint municipal authorities and the State. About 40% are maintained by private organizations but only 20% of the students study in these institutions. (Opetushallitus, 2009)

Educational legislation in Finland treats municipalities, other public entities and private education providers in the same way, with the exception that the municipalities have the obligation to offer basic educational services, and private education providers do not. In this review the concept education provider will be used to all types of education producers.

### Research on the formal position of the principal

Everybody in Finland seems to agree that the formal position of the principal has changed dramatically during the last two decades. Aho et al. (2006, p. 119) describe the change as follows.

The role of school principals also has dramatically changed since 1990. Principals are not only the educational leaders of their schools but managers who are responsible for financing, personnel, and the results of their institutions. Previously, a school principal was an experienced, senior teacher who was promoted for good service to education. Today's school principal must be a qualified leader who understands education development and has solid management skills to lead a school. Selection of new school principals is often based on procedures more typical of the private sector, with interviews and psychological tests to confirm the suitability of the candidate. The top requirement for the position of principal is teacher-education and experience. (Ibid, p 119)

According to the disquisition by Souri (2009, p. 10), the formal position of the principal is today determined more through general than special legislation. The qualification of the principal is, however, still defined by the special Decree on Qualifications for Personnel in the Provision of Education (Act 986/1998). The qualifications of the principle include the Master's Degree, a teacher's qualification for the corresponding school level, sufficient work experience as a teacher, and the educational administration certificate according to the standards of the National Board of Education or at least 25 ECTS of university studies in educational administration or a sufficient knowledge in educational administration acquired in some other way.

The studies by Nikki (2000), Nikki (2001), Värri & Alava (2005) and Alava (2007) are both interesting and informative reviews on the history and reasons of the attempts to create a real qualifying basic training for principals in Finland. Much of that history relates to the history of the Institute of Educational Leadership at the University of Jyväskylä. The main message from the Institute is that the work of the principal has become a profession of its own and that legislation needs to be revised to ensure that schools have principals with the appropriate and sufficient basic training in school leadership. The demand is shared widely for example by superintendents (57.4 % according to Kanervio & Risku, 2009, p. 96), the Association of Finnish Principals (e.g. Souri, 2009, pp. 5 and 26) and by the writers of the doctoral theses examined for this review.

The OECD report by Pont, Nusche and Hopkins (2008, pp. 90, 91,100) on the OECD project on Improving School Leadership conveys the worry of the level of basic training for principals in Finland. According to the OECD report, the profession of the principal in Finland has been learnt on the job while already working as a principal, especially concerning older principals. This finding is confirmed by Pennanen (2006) according to whose study on 141 basic education principals 49% had not received any leadership training prior starting to work as principals. The OECD report demands for ade-

quate principal training in Finland. (Pont, Nusche & Hopkins 2008, pp. 90, 91, 100; cf. also Kanervio & Risku, 2009, p. 126).

The issue of raising the level of basic training for principals is urgent because a new generation of principals needs to take over the leadership at schools during the next decade. According to Pont, Nusche and Moorman (2008, p. 29) 68% of the principals working in general education were 50 years or older in 2006/7.

Doctoral theses which studied the qualifying and continuing training for principals seemed to be rare but the issue was raised also in dissertations concentrating on other issues. A good example is the dissertation by Mustonen (2003, p. 179) which, for example, states that there has not been comprehensive national continuing training for principals since the 1990s. Mustonen's remark is accurate but, fortunately, some progress has been made, too.

Haavisto (2006, pp. 4–7) summarizes the steps taken by the State in the 2000s to develop principal training. Jukka Sarjala, then the General Director of the National Board of Education, summoned a working group to reform principal training in 2002. On the basis of the suggestions of the working group, the principles for a principals' basic training programme with a continuing training character were outlined. The principles included the organization, administration and finance of the school; the curriculum and the learning outcomes; personnel administration and management; and strategic planning.

A new national continuing education project called Osaava (Skilful) was initiated by the Ministry of Education in 2009. The Education and Research Development Plan 2007–2012 (Ministry of Education, 2008, pp. 33, 69–71) set the goal of ensuring the supply of competent teachers. On the basis of the goal, a yearly 11.4-million-euro government subsidy has been allocated for the continuing education of the teaching staff of schools. The memorandum for the project includes school leadership and states principals as one priority group for the project. (Ministry of Education, 2009, pp. 10, 16–19, 26, 28)

Continuing education will not abolish the problem with principals' qualifying training but developing it is a move towards recognizing the need of adequate training for principals. Fortunately, principals with their attendance percentage of 81% are the most active continuing training users amongst the education personnel (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 19).

There was only one dissertation which did have its focus on principal training. It was the one by Taipale (2000). Taipale studied the use of the Peer-Assisted-Leadership model (PAL) which has been created for commercial purposes in the USA. The study also included an informative analysis on the profession of the principal and on the continuing training of principals in



Finland. The use of PAL was evaluated to be a workable and useful method in principal training.

Principals are appointed by the education providers and they serve the education providers. In municipalities, most principals are mostly recruited through an open public application process (83.8%) and appointed by the local school board (77.1%). In the selection of the principal, the principal's qualification, education, leadership qualities, experience and personality are considered to be the most significant aspects by superintendents. (Kanervio & Risku, 2009, pp. 94–95)

Legislation requires every school to have a principal who is responsible for the operations of the school. The education provider can, however, decide whether a principal's office is founded in the school or whether the task is delegated to a teacher. Also, the education provider may decide whether a principal leads one or several schools. (Souri, 2009, p. 10)

Comparing the results of Pirhonen and Janhunen (1995, pp. 21–26) and Kanervio and Risku (2009, pp. 123–124) one can conclude that during the last decade the number of schools sharing their principal with another school has increased but only a little (from 14.3 % to 17.1%). The comparison between Rajanen (2000, pp. 29–30), and Kanervio and Risku (2009, p. 125) on the other hand indicates that the number of principals working also as superintendents has decreased somewhat during the last decade (from 25.1% to 21.4%). One of the recommendations of the Association of Finnish Principals (Souri, 2009, p. 11) is to avoid combinations where the principal also works in the central administration of the municipality, a recommendation which is strongly supported by the results of Kanervio and Risku (2009, p. 84).

There are still quite few district and leading principals between the superintendent and the school principals. In 2008, 6.2% of the municipalities had district principals coordinating schools and principals regionally and 1.4% had leading principals coordinating the schools and principals of a school form (Kanervio & Risku, 2009, p. 93). Concerning larger cities and through municipal mergers the percentages will most likely grow in the future.

Legislation leaves the job description of the principal open only stating that the principal is responsible for the operations of the school. There are no longer any detailed task lists for the principals in legislation but the job descriptions are made by the education providers. The alterations in legislation and the societal situations have expanded the principal's responsibilities and thus the demands of the profession. Powers and tasks have been delegated down in organizations. The principal is both a more central person for the people in the school and more clearly the employer's representa-

tive. (Kanervio & Risku, 2009, p. 26; Pont, Nusche & Hopkins, 2008, pp. 83, 89; Souri, 2009, pp. 8, 21)

The open definition of the principal's position in legislation causes both incongruities and problems. Principals have the responsibility of an official for their actions. The yearly plan of action is central in determining the scope of school activities, for which the principal is responsible. If the principal considers it impossible for the school to act according to the regulations he or she should give notice of the defects to the education provider. Educational legislation mainly obligates the education provider, not the principal or other school staff. (Souri, 2009, pp. 12, 15, 16; see also Mustonen, 2003, p.121; Pennanen, 2006, p. 4; Vuohijoki, 2006, pp. 5, 170)

Topical issues creating incongruities and problems for principals are protecting the rights of the students for example in instances of lay-offs and strikes, ensuring the safety of the learning environment for example concerning the condition of the school building, and the follow-up and supervision of the realization of the curriculum and evaluation. (Souri, 2009, pp. 16–20; cf. also Lapiolahti, 2007, and Svedlin, 2003)

More than half (51.9%) of the superintendents expect the principals' responsibilities to expand further. The expansion is considered to be a result of the increase both in administrative responsibilities and in the number of separate tasks. Merely 5.8% of the superintendents believe that the responsibilities of the principal will be delimited and that the workload will become lighter in the future. (Kanervio & Risku, 2009, p. 108)

## Research on the context of the principal

The following review is based on the results of the dissertations. More than a half (15/28) of the doctoral theses addressed themselves to the various contexts of the principal. Besides, the focus of most dissertations included a variety of contexts that were intertwined with each other. The dissertations are presented in an order that attempts to direct the reader from the broader to the narrower contexts. In one way or another, the concept of change seems to be included in all the studies. At least Mustonen's (2003) dissertation could be included here, too, but is reviewed later in the section dealing with the principal's work and identity.

Varjo (2007) explored the legislative processes on education policy in the Finnish Parliament during the 1990s. The study focused special attention on how the international discourse on education policies had been restructured in the context of Finnish legislation. The research data consisted of all the public parliamentary documents relating to education at that time. The results of the dissertation describe the ideological battle between the wel-

fare state and the market economy supporters and the shift to the result steered education policy in the Finnish society. (Cf. also Rinne, Kivirauma & Simola, 2002 )

Kunnari (2008) set out to chart the operational context of the upper secondary general school principals and the historical, cultural and structural factors that steer their everyday work. The data consisted of literature on steering, steering forms and management forms, from 1950 to the present, and of the national steering texts concerning the educational environment and the operational culture of upper secondary general schools. The data also included descriptions of the operational culture and the central documents of five upper secondary general schools, whose principals were interviewed for the study. The results indicate that the descriptions of the operational cultures by the people in the school communities mediate the structures they use both in their thinking and acting in the context, and when renewing the context. Thus describing the operational cultures also seem to support the evaluation of the operational culture in the direction of the goals and visions depicted in the descriptions.

Sometimes national decisions may threaten the existence of a whole form of schools, as happened to private schools in the midst of the implementation of the comprehensive school in Finland. Kanervio's (2007, cf. pp. 3, 29–31, 161–169) dissertation published in English is a study on the school leadership at the "Crisis and Renewal in one Finnish Private School" which almost went bankrupt in the 1980s because the comprehensive education legislation did not account adequately for private schools and their funding. The data for the study consisted of minutes, reviews and interviews. As a result of the study a theory of change was constructed. In the theory, the recognition of crisis was seen as the source for change. At least partly through the actions of the school which was studied in the dissertation, legislation was revised and all education providers are now treated in the same way in legislation and government funding. And, the school that was in a crisis flourishes.

National core curricula guide all the activities in the schools. Many feel that the pace of revising the core curricula has become too rapid. In his doctoral thesis Hellström (2004) studied "the implementation and success of pedagogical development projects at the experimental schools of the Aquarium-project 1995–1998". The Aquarium-project both prepared and experimented with the radical 1994 national core curriculum reform. Hellström's main focus was to examine how the way of making a change at school is connected to the feelings of success resulting from the change. The data consisted of 339 pedagogical development projects coordinated by the

National Board of Education. Of the informants 27% were principals who had also been leading the development projects at their schools. Most (86%) development projects were evaluated as successful. The study produced a list of 20 rules for succeeding in school projects. The rules emphasize the role of the participants, the innovative idea, the project, the manner of dissemination and the quality of the school.

Johnson's (2006) dissertation studied the implementation of the 1998 Basic Education Act on the integration of basic education in the municipal level in one city. The data of the dissertation was composed of two action research studies conducted in 2000–2002 and 2003–2005. The first phase focused on four schools, and the second covered the city's whole provision of Finnish-speaking basic education with its administration, 11 schools, 230 teachers, and 3200 students. The central research data consisted of group and individual interviews with teachers and school administration staff including principals. The results of the study indicated that although teachers' roles and the hierarchical structure of basic education seemed to alter only slowly development towards integrated basic education did take place. The conclusions demanded more opportunities for teachers' collaboration, and an increase in continuing education, the planning and coordination of which should be improved.

According to, for example, Kanervio and Risku (2009, p. 102) and Pesonen (2009, p. v), regional collaboration and networking have become and will continue to become more common in the production of educational services in Finland. Nykänen (2010, cf. pp. 11–12, 113–114) examined leadership in regional networks by interviewing 61 members of five regional development networks dealing with guidance and counselling. The interviewees very broadly represented the fields of education, health and social care, administration (including principals) and industrial life. According to the results, the role of leadership and management in networks is essential in the creation of their structures, in the recognition and promotion of the processes, and in the management of the distribution of work, know-how and well-being. Networks seem to presuppose shared leadership to be able to succeed in their tasks.

In Finland, most schools are maintained by municipalities and thus the nature of the processes in the municipalities is of great importance to the principals. That was also the focus of the dissertations by Kangaslahti (2007) and Lapiolahti (2007). Kangaslahti's dissertation will be reviewed in the next paragraph. Lapiolahti's scope is a bit different, on local evaluation, and will be dealt later together with Svedlin's (2003) dissertation which also examined local evaluation.

Kangaslahti (2007) studied the strategic leadership and the development processes of the provision of education of a Finnish city. The two-year action research project which examined also the views of the principals concluded as its results that the strategic leadership of a municipal provision of education consists of constant search, recognition and conciliation of multifilament dilemma. In order to succeed, the leading officials and political leaders have to take into consideration the various dimensions of the dilemma, not merely accept the right actions and reject the wrong ones.

On the basis of the legislation from 1998 (e.g. Basic Education Act 628/1998), education providers are obligated to evaluate their education and its impressiveness. The local evaluation of education was the topic for both Lapiolahti (2007, cf. pp. 159–165) and Svedlin (2003, written in Swedish). Lapiolahti studied the conditions created by the national framework for local evaluation and the execution of local evaluation in a Finnish city. Svedlin's focus was in the selection of the objects of evaluation and the execution of evaluation at the school level. The data of both studies included interviews. Svedlin interviewed four superintendents and the principals whose superiors the superintendents were. Lapiolahti interviewed altogether 30 people from the various levels of the provision of education. Besides interviews, Lapiolahti's data included also protocols, memos and strategy plans. The results of both studies indicate that local evaluation is not connected to the goals of the curricula and thus does not have a real effect on the activities of the municipalities or schools.

Finland is still considered quite a mono-cultural country which perception may be supported with the fact that only one of the dissertations on principals studied principalship in the multicultural context. Kuukka (2009, pp. 8–9) interviewed 25 comprehensive school principals on multiculturalism at school. In her study, the principals described multiculturalism as the difference of ethnicity, as the diversity of both Finns and immigrants and as the commonplace of diversity. Multiculturalism was connected with standardization, with both critical and respectful reciprocity and with the inclusiveness of differences. The challenges of multiculturalism for principals included students' learning and reaching the goals of the curriculum, as well as ethnic-cultural interpretations, interaction and integration. Issues of religion and special education seemed to create dilemma with the parents, whose impulsiveness also could be a problem for the principals.

The principal is the head of the school unit and thus most of the principal's leadership work is conducted inside the school which makes the micropolitics of the school important for the principal. Vulkko's (2001) aim was to find out how teachers conceive the school's decision making culture. The target group

was the teachers (N=201) and principals of one municipality. The results indicated that the teachers' and the principals' conceptions on the preparation and execution of decisions and on the awareness of the economic situation differed from each other. The teachers presented several suggestions to improve decision making in their schools. They considered a good decision making process to include sufficient background information and preparation, open atmosphere, participation, commitment and follow-up, clear operational models for the meetings and appropriate actions by the principal. Both teachers and principals emphasized the importance of interaction.

Surviving as a school unit in the constantly changing Finnish society requires successful visions and strategies both from the principals and from the schools. The following four doctoral theses studied the school context from the point of view of change and strategic development. Kanervio's (2007) dissertation which was reviewed earlier could be categorized to belong here, too.

The focus of Toikka's (2002, pp. 7–8, 145–146) dissertation was in the strategic integration process of two regional polytechnic projects: how the integration process succeeded, what obstacles there were and how the strategic leading of the polytechnic can be modelled. The data of the study includes reports, minutes, memos and 24 thematic interviews with members of the government of the polytechnic, with principals and with other leaders. The results indicated several defects in the strategic leadership of the integration process. The integration process was not lead according to the vision and strategies which had been confirmed by the school community. The strategic learning of the staff was not adequately taken into consideration during the integration process. And, the strategies were described based on the past and not as orientations towards the future. The dissertation includes a model to avoid the defects.

Kirveskari (2003, pp. 8–10, 135–136) examined school leadership relating it to strategic leadership and vision building regarding them, together with change leadership, as the essential tasks of the principal. The data was collected from the 17 participants of a school leadership programme using thematic questionnaires with open-ended questions. The participants represented various school forms. Two of the informants did not see any meaning in strategic work because the decisions were considered to be made elsewhere. According to the results, visions and vision building include both expressions of the will for the change and comments on the execution of the will. The researcher made a clear distinction between visionaries and developers. To her, visionaries express thoughts to organize the work, feel responsible for their organizations and for the society, and seem to have a control of the

past, the present and the future. Developers, on the other hand, want to benefit more also themselves, are guided more from the outside and have a more passive attitude to the future.

Tiusanen (2005, pp. 5–7, 86) compared the staff's conceptions on developing the school with those of the administration at a polytechnic. Altogether 86 informants answered the structured questionnaire. According to the results, the administration seemed to believe that when the strategic plan, organizational structures, distribution of work, determination of responsibilities, leadership principles, values and team agreements have been implemented in practice the school will become of good quality. The staff, on the other hand, seemed to emphasize the importance of the atmosphere and interaction. It was believed that when they are in order, and there is a good flow of information, the grounds for agreeing on the development of the school are more solid.

Antikainen's (2005, pp. 7–10) goal was to find out how transformational leadership had created "possibilities for the growth and empowerment of the staff at a polytechnic". The data consisted of a survey to the whole staff and of thematic interviews to seven teachers. According to the results conditions for growth at the polytechnic were quite good although there was quite a lot of criticism towards the strategic leadership. The extent of how work was rewarded seemed to be the most important factor for worker commitment. Workable interaction and communication were also considered to be essential.

## Research on the work and identity of the principal

The work and identity of the principal were also very common (13/28) foci of the doctoral theses. Taipale's (2000) dissertation is categorized to be included in this section but has been reviewed earlier in connection to the formal position of the principal. The basis of the presentation of the dissertations is on the results of the studies. The first eight dissertations concentrate on the work of the principal and the last four on the identity of the principal.

According to the study on the experiences and viewpoints of the comprehensive school principals in one Finnish town by Pesonen (2009, p. v), school leadership has changed a lot during the last few centuries, which is an interpretation that everybody seems to agree with (cf. e.g. Aho et al. 2006, p.119). The analysis of the thematic and group interviews indicated that the principals considered leadership in the 1980s to have been instructed more from outside the schools. Leadership in the 2000s was regarded more multifaceted, which trend was also believed to expand as the society changes. The

principals anticipated collegial leadership with other principals and networking both inside and outside school to increase in the future.

On the basis of a survey, supported with thematic interviews, for 141 principals in basic education, Pennanen (2006, p. 5) states that principals consider their work comprehensive, demanding, future-oriented and including a lot of co-operation in managing practicalities. The principals in his study conceived the decisions made on the local level to affect them most.

Mustonen's (2003, cf. p. 5) aim was to find out why there is a need for principals in the schools by conducting a comparative study in Finland, Germany and the Netherlands. The data collection included a questionnaire to both principals and teachers, and interviews with principals in all the three countries. According to the results, the Finnish principals considered the development of the yearly work plan, goal and result oriented management, co-operation with interest groups and the development of internal functions in the school to be in the core of their work. The results also indicated that the Finnish principal's role is changing from a more administrative to a more modern human-oriented director. The teachers considered the principal's role to be more administrative than the principals themselves did. The teachers seemed fairly satisfied with the work of the principals but also expected the principals to concentrate more on being pedagogical leaders. The teachers wanted to have more support, opportunities and communication but considered themselves not to need so much control and advice. The work and the work conditions of the German principals resembled the ones in Finland in the 1970s and 1980s. In the Netherlands, both the independence and the authority of the schools seemed to be larger than in Finland.

In the context of the multifaceted leadership referred to by Pesonen (2009, p. v), Raasumaa (2010, pp. 4, 304–307) examined the views of 15 principals and 39 teachers belonging to the management and development teams of 15 schools. Raasumaa describes the relation of the principal to the teachers in basic education in the terms of knowledge management connecting knowledge management with the concept of broad-based pedagogical leadership. According to the results, principals should adopt an active and constant knowledge management approach with the teachers. The thesis includes 'a handbook' for knowledge managing pedagogical leaders.

Studies on how principals use their working time differ in their categorizations but are congruent in that the Finnish principals are focusing on something else than on developing the quality of teaching and learning. According to the study on basic education principals ( $n=141$ ) by Pennanen (2006, p. 180), managing things seems to take much more (70%) of the prin-



cipals' working time than the time spent on leading people (30%). The results of Mäkelä (2007, p. 198), who followed his own work as an elementary school principal for two years, show that he spent 33% of his leadership work on administration and finance, 31% on networks, 22% on staff and 14% on pedagogical leadership. Karikoski (2009, p. I, 123) shadowed one lower and four upper comprehensive school principals, of whom four were acting also as district principals, using the Peer-Assisted-Leadership model. According to her results, the principals spent 40% of their working time trying to cope with the daily life of the school, 30% with activities connected with emotional intelligence, 20% with activities of strategic thinking and 8% in quality management. About half of the principal's working time was spent in the office.

The main aim of Vuohijoki's (2006, cf. pp. 5, 96, 121, 170–172) dissertation was to find out about the well-being of general education principals at their work. The data consisted of empathy-based stories written by teachers (11) and principals (10), and of the 76 answers to a questionnaire to principals. About 80% of the principals felt they were overburdened with work and almost a half wanted to change their jobs. There were health concerns and problems distinguishing work and free time from each other. The findings of ill-being are supported e.g. by Johnson (2005). The main reason for the ill-being was the undefined role of the principal which resulted in contradictory expectations. Female principals seemed to suffer more from the contradictions than male ones. All principals felt that the superintendents and the structures could not support them sufficiently.

Lehkonen (2009, pp. 9–10) tried to answer the question what makes the principal a survivor using as data principals' subjective perceptions on their survival at work. The data consisted of both free-formed answers (20) to the research question and of 11 interviews with principals. The main answer to the research question was that "the principal becomes a survivor via experiencing that even in contradictory circumstances it is possible to pilot the school towards what is seen as its most valuable goal: realizing the pupil's benefit by using means that will not, subjectively thinking, be of higher value than the goal itself". According to Lehkonen (*ibid.*), principals should be trained to become self-directed universal leaders, for both the school and the principal to survive and flourish.

What kind of identity portrays the principals who try to do their work as principals and survive as leaders? The doctoral theses surveyed for the present review form a picture of people who live strongly in their contexts, have a positive self-image, believe positively in what they do, want to serve others and show some differences that seem to be related to their gender.

According to Ahonen (2008, pp. 55–58, 167–169), whose research data consisted of 10 interviews with principals and of 14 life stories written by principals of various school forms, principals construct their own leadership identity in a social interaction which creates tension between the various expectations. Thus the principals' leadership identity is both contextual and dynamic.

Nikander (2003, pp. 6, 112–113) tried to describe leadership at school with the help of the open answers and essays of 64 leaders and administrators at a polytechnic. According to her, leadership at the polytechnic manifests itself as five leadership dimensions: as the leader's positive self-knowledge, as the leader's exemplary behaviour, as the leader's ability to collaborate, as a collective profession and as various threatening affective factors.

Hänninen (2009, p. 4) studied the writings of the principals who had been nominated as 'Principals of the Year' by the Vocational Principals' Organization in 1994–2002. The principals described their thoughts on five themes about their work and life. Good leadership in the principals' writings could be seen as their deeds in the everyday life. The good was found to be in the principals' will to serve others, and to know, lead and develop themselves.

According to Juusenaho (2004, cf. pp. 13, 78, 125–128), although at the beginning of the 2000s about 70% of the teachers were female only 34% of the principals were women. The data of Juusenaho's dissertation consists of the answers of 43 female and 37 male principals to a questionnaire with open-ended questions, and of the thematic interviews with 10 female and 10 male principals. The results indicate that gender seems to determine somewhat how principalship is practiced. Female principals more often emphasize soft values and negotiation, and want to be easily accessed. For male principals, administration and having authority seems to be more important.

## Conclusion

The Finnish education system has been developed through governmental five-year Education and Research Development Plans since 1991. All the three development plans that affect the scope of the present review i.e. research on principals during 2000–2010 emphasize the role of research in developing the education system. The plans have included principalship or research on principalship only marginally.

The marginal role of principalship in the development plans may be one of the reasons why there is only a little research on principalship in Finland. The doctoral programmes focusing on educational leadership, and thus also

on principalship, are few. In the survey for the present paper, not more than 4.2 percent of the dissertations in educational and behavioural sciences were categorized as focusing on principalship. Regular research on principals was not much more numerous. Three universities produced most of the doctoral theses on principalship. The role of the Institute of Educational Leadership at the University of Jyväskylä became evident both in the education and research of principals. Active research on principalship in vocational education was also found at The Research Centre for Vocational Education at the University of Tampere. Quite many dissertations on principalship had been produced also at the University of Helsinki.

The results of the research on principalship show that the formal position of the Finnish principal has changed radically during the last two decades. The senior head teacher has been transformed into a professional educational leader managing an educational company. The qualifications and the qualifying training for principals do not seem to suffice the need any more and the open job description of the principal in legislation causes a lot of incongruence.

A little more than a half of the doctoral theses on principalship focused on the context of the principal which seems logical concerning the nature of the constantly altering Finnish society. Change was in one way or another present in all the dissertations which studied the context. The results described in a many-sided manner how the changes in the society affect schools and principalship. Strategic leadership is both required and conducted by principals to be able to manoeuvre their Finnish schools successfully.

The other common foci of the doctoral theses on principalship were the work and identity of the principal. The results illustrated the alteration in the work of the principal and the professional leader's role of today's principal. The working time of the principal is not directed at pedagogical leadership as it should be. Principals seem to be overburdened by their work and have major problems coping. The dissertations portrait principals as leaders who are working according to their contexts, have positive self-images, believe positively in what they do, want to serve others and show some differences that are related to their gender.

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# CHAPTER 9 RESEARCH ON PRINCIPALS IN ICELAND

Börkur Hansen

## Introduction

A formal program in school administration and leadership was established at the Iceland University of Education (now the School of Education at the University of Iceland) in 1988. It was a 15 credit program (30 ECTS) organized for practicing principals through both campus based seminars and distance-learning (Hansen, 1994). In 1994, this program was reorganized leading to a M.Ed. degree. Today, this program in school administration and leadership, along with programs in entrepreneurship and educational evaluation, are being offered at the department of Educational Administration and Evaluation, within the School of Education, University of Iceland. The foundation of this program in school administration and leadership enhanced research in relation to school principals, primarily in Basic Schools (age 6–16). Today, about 50 masters students have graduated with a dissertation focusing on school principals from this program, but no Ph.D. students as of yet. There are other programs in educational administration at other Icelandic universities which are smaller in scope.

The policy development in Iceland during the last few decades has emphasized decentralization and the empowerment of schools, participative decision-making, self-evaluation, and strong professional leadership. This emphasis was stipulated in the policy document *Skýrsla nefndar um mótun menntastefnu* (1994) (e. Report on Educational Policy Formation). This document can be seen as the foundation for the main changes in laws and regulations that followed, both at the basic school level (age 6–16) and the upper secondary school level (age 16–20). This policy emphasis has influenced research in relation to principals during the last ten years. Existing research has, however, primarily focused on principals at the basic school level, i.e. on issues concerning their role, the role of middle managers, self-evaluation practices, governance, multi-culture, values, and special education. This research varies in scope and size, depending on the interest of the researchers and the political context of schooling at any given time. The research described in the following section is empirical in nature and to a large extent presented in peer-reviewed journals or books. It must be emphasized that there is a limited number of people in Iceland with research obligations concerning school principals.

# Research

## Role of principals

The policy environment of schools is constantly changing, affecting the role of school principals in one way or another (Fowler, 2009). The transfer of Basic Schools from state to municipal control in 1995 changed the working environment of Basic School principals considerably. The 1995 *Basic School Act* stipulates considerable powers to principals both as directors and as educational leaders of their schools. The role of principals was also discussed in the teacher contracts that followed the Act, stressing their role as leaders and directors of their schools. In an extensive survey from 2001 amongst Basic School principals, Hansen, Jóhannsson and Lárusdóttir (2002a, 2002b) examined their views concerning the transfer to municipal control and how the working environment that followed affected their role. They were asked about issues in their “new” working environment as well as the task areas they spent time on. The majority of principals were very positive towards their new environment. As an example, 86% of the principals said that municipal support had increased considerably during the last few years, 77% said that funding allocations had increased, and 80% said that they had more influence on the operation and management of schools than in the previous state-run system. When asked about empowerment, 73% of the principals said that they had increased authority in making budgetary decisions, 68% said that they had more influence in the management of special education, and 60% said that they had more professional independence in the new system.

This study also revealed that the task areas they spent most of their time on had changed considerably since 1991, but at that time a study on their role was conducted by the same research team (Hansen, Jóhannsson and Lárusdóttir, 1997). The conceptualization of the tasks in these studies was based on McCleary and Thompson (1979) who did an extensive study on management emphasis of principals in the US in collaboration with the *National Association of Secondary School*. The task areas were:

- *Program development* (curriculum, instructional leadership, etc.)
- *Personnel* (evaluation, advising, conferencing, recruiting, etc.)
- *Student activities* (meetings, supervision, planning, etc.)
- *Student behavior* (discipline, attendance, meetings, etc.)
- *Community* (PTA, advisory groups, parent conferences, etc.)
- *District office* (meetings, task forces, reports, etc.)
- *Professional development* (reading, conferences, etc.)
- *Planning* (annual, long range, etc.)

The findings of the 1991 and 2001 studies show that the ideal ranking of these task areas are similar. The actual ranking, on the other hand, had changed considerably during this period. Also, the gap between the actual and the ideal ranking of these tasks widened. Hansen, Jóhannsson and Lárusdóttir (2002a, 2002b) concluded that the principals were drifting away from their ideal rank emphasis on various tasks by engaging in more and more managerial tasks and duties at the expense of pedagogical tasks.

A third study was conducted in 2006 by the same research team (Hansen, Jóhannsson and Lárusdóttir, 2008), examining the development of the role of Basic School principals. The same framework was used concerning the tasks areas as in the previous studies in 1991 and 2001. The findings suggested that the principals role has stabilized somewhat, the gap between their actual and preferred rank ordering of tasks had narrowed again from the 2001 study, and they did not seem as overwhelmed by managerial duties as in 2001. However, the study showed an increase in the time the principals were spending on issues concerning their personnel. The study concluded with discussions of the linkage between educational leadership and teacher development.

## Teachers and principals

In order to examine if teachers and parents were as pleased as principals with the transfer of Basic Schools from the state to the municipalities, a study was conducted in 2004 by Hansen, Jóhannsson and Lárusdóttir. Principals, middle managers, parent representatives and groups of teachers were interviewed in four Basic Schools. This study reinforced the positive views of principals found in the study from 2001 and suggested that parent representatives were also very pleased with this new environment. On the other hand, the study showed that teachers were not as pleased in their new working environment as the principals and the parents. They saw the principals becoming increasingly distant from the world of teaching, and felt as though the school boards were trying to increase their influence in the schools, and have more control over the work of the teacher. This interference was however limited to the schools that belonged to large municipalities with well resourced central offices (Hansen, Jóhannsson and Lárusdóttir, 2004).

On these premises, a study of the views of teachers was conducted in 2005 by Björnsdóttir, Hansen, Jóhannsson and Lárusdóttir (2006, 2008), based on a larger random sample of all practicing Basic School teachers in Iceland. The study focused on the views of teachers regarding their independence as teachers, the independence of their schools, their participation in decision making in their schools, the level of co-operation within the schools, and external pressures and expectations concerning their duties. This study

revealed that teachers wanted to be more involved in decision-making in key areas of schooling and perceived that their influence was very limited in a number of areas. The narrowest gap between interest in decision-making and the perceived influence of the teachers was in the area of teaching methods, while the gap was relatively wider in other key areas, such as the professional plans for teachers, self-evaluation practices, development projects, student groupings, and resource allocation.

When asked about co-operation, 49% of the teachers said that they did not co-operate much with principals, 63% said that they co-operated somewhat with middle managers in schools and the same ratio, or 63%, said that co-operation between teachers in general was considerable. 83% stated that co-operation between those who teach the same year group was considerable. 86% said that co-operation with the central office was very limited. This last point is strongly related to location, the teachers in the greater Reykjavík area co-operate considerably less with central offices than teachers beyond the greater Reykjavík area. On the other hand, 71% of the teachers found co-operation between principals and central-office to be considerable.

When the teachers were asked about external pressure, about 50% of them claimed that they had experienced a general increase in pressure regarding what was expected of them during the last five years. 69% claimed that they experienced increased pressure from parents, 64% claimed increased pressure from the central offices, and 50% claimed that principals were putting increased pressures on them. Pressure from the central offices is strongly based on location, but about 80% teachers in the greater capital area perceived considerable pressure from their central offices, while 46% of teachers from other areas experienced considerable pressure from their central offices.

In sum, these findings suggest that teachers were not as pleased with their working environment as the principals. They saw the principals as managers of their schools who did not involve teachers in decision-making to the degree they would like. Teachers saw principals and central offices working closely together, at the expense of their influence on the management and operation of their own schools. Teachers in the greater capital area experienced greater control by their central offices than teachers in the rural areas.

## Middle management

An emphasis on middle management was emphasized within Basic Schools in various policy documents as well as the 1995 *Basic School Act*. Accordingly,

a number of middle management positions were established in larger Basic Schools. In 2005 a study on middle managers was conducted by Guðjónsdóttir, Björnsdóttir and Jóhannsson (2007) using the survey method. The sample included 785 teachers in 22 Basic Schools. The sample of principals was based on all the 78 Basic Schools that had had middle managers, but there were 175 Basic Schools in operation at the time.

The results showed that both principals and teachers viewed the work of middle managers positively, especially the principals. Both principals and teachers believed that the role of middle managers was important and vital for enhancing the quality of schooling. They also believed that the creation of a middle management position within Basic Schools has resulted in better management practices. The study also showed that the interaction between principals and middle managers was more frequent than between the teachers and the middle managers. Furthermore, the study showed that a relatively large proportion of the teachers were not fully aware of the nature of work done by the middle managers. The study concludes by highlighting the importance of strategic cooperation between middle managers and teachers as well as middle managers and principals.

## Self-evaluation

Self-evaluation practices were stipulated in the 1995 *Basic School Act*. The Act also states that the Ministry of Education should oversee how the schools implement this policy. During the period of 2001–2003 the Ministry conducted evaluations of self-evaluation practices in all Basic Schools in the country. The Ministry's 2004 report states that there was a great difference between schools, but does not provide information on why there is such a difference or of what nature. A study was conducted by Hansen, Jóhannsson and Lárusdóttir (2005) to examine the views of principals and teachers in six Basic Schools towards the implementation of self-evaluation practices. Principals in all the schools were interviewed individually, but middle managers and regular teachers were interviewed in groups.

The findings showed a considerable difference among the schools regarding self-evaluation activities. The schools were classified into three groups. In the first group of schools, very little work had been done in self-evaluation. Considerable work had been done in three of the schools. Finally, extensive work had been undertaken in one of the schools. The findings indicate that the critical factors are the knowledge and skills of principals and teachers of self-evaluation methods, clear leadership within schools, and the attitudes of principals and teachers towards self-evaluation as a means for change and development.

Other studies on self-evaluation in Icelandic schools have been conducted by Davidsdóttir and Lisi (2006, 2007, 2009) and Lisi and Davidsdóttir (2008). Their concern was also the problem of implementation of self-evaluation practices. They organized a project in four schools during 2001–2002, two Basic Schools and two Upper Secondary Schools. The project was aimed at enhancing empowerment processes within these schools concerning self-evaluation. The researchers coached school-evaluation teams in their self-evaluation efforts in all the schools and assessed its effect. The researchers taught the staff to evaluate school work and take responsibility for development in order to empower the schools in their self-evaluation practices. This was supported with data from a longitudinal data collection from the schools. The findings indicate that the four schools need to continue their work on building a collaborative learning community and engage more teachers and other staff in that process. The findings also indicate that the schools made progress in this direction based on the support they received. Results indicate that evaluation worked best when schools took on a democratic stance. Program fidelity was an indication of improvement within the schools. In order to implement important changes in the school work, it seems advisable to allow some time for them to take root. In this study, the main changes did not happen until four years after its initiation. The project continues in the two Upper Secondary Schools and the scope has been broadened to include three more Upper Secondary Schools.

## Gender

Guðbjörnsdóttir(2007) outlines her research on why there are not more women that hold management position in schools in Iceland in her book *Menntun, forysta og kynferði*(e. Education, leadership and gender). The section in this book describing this research was previously published as an article in 1997. Guðbjörnsdóttir gathered her data in 1992 when effective school management was a big issue in educational discourse in Iceland. Her main concern was to develop an understanding of the view of female school managers concerning this development. She interviewed and surveyed all female principals at the basic school level, a large number of female managers at the upper secondary school level, the university level and other female managers within the educational system. She also collected data from an equivalent number of male managers for comparative purposes. She found a significant difference between male and female school managers, but not as many differences than in comparable studies from elsewhere. She concludes that the female managers show many characteristics of facilitative leadership styles which emphasize good working relations, distribution of

power, collective decision making and active involvement of staff. The male managers show many similar characteristics.

Guðbjörnsdóttir (2007) continued this research with a study on how female school managers understood dominant discourse on power, performance management and gender. She interviewed 11 female managers from all school levels in Iceland around the millennium. The findings were first published in an article in 2001. The findings show that discourse on the above issues is prevalent at all school levels. The discourse on performance and competition seemed more acceptable at higher levels within the system they seemed to associate themselves more with such a discourse than for example managers in pre-schools. The study concludes with discussion on the necessity of continuing this research in an environment that increasingly favors competition and performance based management.

## Governance

### *Charter schools*

The public school has been criticized extensively during the last decades (see e.g. Berliner and Biddle, 1995). Various reforms have been proposed suggesting changes in governance and operation of public schools (see e.g. Chubb and Moe, 1990). Hansen (2002) critically discusses the establishment of a charter school in Iceland in Hafnarfjörður, a town of 25.000 people in the greater Reykjavík area. In order to assess the value of this experiment, Hansen reviewed the theoretical basis of charter schools and explored empirical research on their effects.

The charter school idea has many strong advocates who argue that their existence increases choice in education and facilitates competition between schools in teaching and learning. These advocates also claim that the charter school idea does not involve a total restructuring of the public educational system, rather it makes it possible to establish public schools that are much more independent and flexible than traditional schools. The effects of this will enhance improvement in teaching and learning and create better schools.

The comprehensive review of empirical research on charter schools, conducted by Gill and associates (2001) for the *Rand Institute*, is used by Hansen to assess the Icelandic experiment. Their review indicates that parents are pleased with the option of being able to send their children to charter schools. They also point out that charter schools have not facilitated improvement in academic achievement. On that basis, Hansen concludes that charter schools will not revolutionize schooling regarding academic success of students. Expansion and popularity of charter schools must rather be explained with reference to the ideology of choice and competition.

### *Site-base management*

The philosophy of self-management is strongly emphasized in the report *Skýrsla nefndar um mótun menntastefnu* (1994), the ideological foundation of the 1995 *Basic School Act*. Hansen (2004) reviewed the literature on site-based management in order to analyze the school management emphasis of the report. He claims that site-based management is a prominent part of the decentralization emphasis put forth in the report as well as in the teachers' contracts that followed the enactment of the Act. He also outlines that the major emphasis in the Icelandic context was to empower principals in order to enhance the professional development of schools, but previously the management power within Basic Schools was to a large extent nested in teacher councils. The principals must, however, cooperate with teachers, parents and local authorities. The paper concludes with a discussion about the importance of researching the practices of decentralization and site-based emphasis in Basic Schools.

### *School boards*

Ásmundsson, Hansen and Jóhannsson (2008) conducted a study on the ideas that school boards of Basic Schools have about their role, influence and impact. In order to situate the governance structure of Basic Schools in Iceland, the composition and role of school boards in the United States, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Norway and Denmark was reviewed. The study was delimited to interviewing four district superintendents and six principals in the same districts. The findings indicate that the formal power of school boards was mainly restricted to monitoring the adherence of schools to policy ends in the Basic School Act. In practice, however, school boards were extending their role by making policies concerning issues that the Basic School Act defines as the task of individual schools. The main conclusion of this study was that the law and regulations concerning the role and jurisdiction of principals and school boards were not explicit and clear enough, causing uncertainties for both parties.

Hansen, Jóhannsson and Lárusdóttir (2010) did a study on how municipal policies have affected the professional independence of Basic Schools, but many school boards have developed municipal education policy documents during the last few years. These municipal policy documents state various policy ends concerning the operation, management and curriculum of Basic Schools. In a survey amongst all Basic School principals in 2006, two main themes were addressed; their views on the operation and professional autonomy of schools and their views concerning the influence of school boards on their schools. The findings show that 60% of Icelandic Basic School principals



said that the professional independence of Basic Schools was considerable and 72% claimed that their schools were professionally independent. 75% also said that it was important to further increase the professional independence of Basic Schools. 43% of the principals claimed that municipal education policies increased their independence as principals. The findings also indicated that principals took an active part in educational policy development at the municipal level, i.e. 77%. A majority, or 89% of the principals, were supportive of municipal policy making concerning school affairs, and believed it would enhance school improvement and performance. However, 71% of the principals claimed that school board involvement in school affairs should remain as it was, neither to be increased nor decreased. The study concludes with discussions about the functional governance structure of Basic Schools as collaborative in nature, in practice somewhat similar to the system in Norway, where a council of stakeholders governs their Basic Schools.

### *Superintendents and regional support*

Iceland was divided into eight educational regions with the enactment of the 1974 *Basic School Act*. Each region was managed by a superintendent who was an employee of the Ministry of Education. In every region, a regional council was established by municipal authorities, to assist the superintendents in their functions. This structure was in operation until 1995, when the governance of Basic Schools was handed over from state to municipal control.

Hansen and Jóhannsson (2010) conducted a study on the role of superintendents during this period. They interviewed 11 of the superintendents who were in office during the time period 1974 to 1995 regarding their experiences. They were inquired about the establishment and operation of central offices in their regions, their main task areas, development projects they initiated, relations with Ministers of Education, local politicians, principals, teachers and parents.

The interviews were analyzed according to their role as instructional leaders, administrators, politicians, communicators and social scientists. Laws and regulations defined the general role of superintendents that included a variety of tasks. A major task was to administer and develop a fiscal system for the management of Basic Schools, to monitor their operation, and provide them with professional support. Due to the geographical size of the country and differences between the regions, the superintendents defined their roles differently by locality. Issues like the number and size of schools, distances between schools, availability of certified teachers, and access to specialized support staff, affected their role considerably.

The study concludes with discussions about the system that replaced the 1974–1995 structure. Instead of eight regions with regional superintendents, now each municipality has a school board that governs its schools. At the present there are 77 municipal authorities with school boards. Due to the size and financial capacity of these municipalities, their central office services vary considerably. The analysis of the superintendents' roles and activities during 1974–1995 suggests that the existing system does not provide for the same equality for schools and students as in the previous system.

### **Multi-cultural issues**

Multicultural issues have become an important dimension in the operation and development of public schooling in Iceland (Hansen and Ragnarsdóttir, 2010; Ragnarsdóttir, 2007). Sigurjónsson and Hansen (2010) conducted a study in 2009 concerning the link between schools and parents with culturally diverse background in two schools in eastern Iceland. The schools belong to separate municipalities. The study focused on who initiated communication regarding the children in these schools and what the communications involved. School principals, teachers and a sample of parents with cultural diverse background in these two schools were interviewed. The interview scheme was built on Epstein's (2001) *school, family, and community partnership* model with six elements of communications between schools and parents.

The findings suggest that parents with cultural diverse backgrounds were very pleased with most factors about their communications with the schools. Furthermore, they showed that the parents' seldomly initiated those communications. In general, their role was very passive regarding their relationship to their school. The interviews with the principals and the teachers showed that there is no big difference in the interaction between Icelandic parents and parents with culturally diverse backgrounds. Primarily, the interaction had to do with the homework of students. The study concludes with discussions about the importance of establishing strong home-school relations with the active involvement of parents, particularly parents of culturally diverse backgrounds.

### **Ph.D. research**

Research in relation to principals during 2000–2010 is limited to four Ph.D. research projects, by Lárusdóttir (2008), Einarsson (2008), Sigurðardóttir (2006) and Marinósson (2002).

#### ***Leadership values and gender***

Lárusdóttir (2008) conducted a study on leadership, values and gender amongst female and male principals in Iceland for her Ph.D. thesis – 10 prin-

cipals and 9 assistant principals. She contextualizes the study in the policy environment for principals in Iceland and more widely in a context which is being more and more driven by market force values. The study's methodology is located within the interpretive framework and informed by the perspectives of social constructivism and feminism. The study is situated in the theoretical context of values in leadership and leadership and gender. The purpose of her study is to shed a light on the interface between values, gender and leadership behavior. This is conducted by "seeking answers to questions on the impact of headteachers' values on their actions, in particular when facing value related dilemmas (p. iii)."

Lárusdóttir describes and discusses the unstable working environment of principals, the dilemmas they encounter and the conflicting demands made upon them. The findings reveal that while male and female principals have similar values, the position of men and women leaders is unequal. The major factors that influence this inequality are "discriminatory behavior towards women, and new competencies, such as computer literacy where more men than women are proficient." Lárusdóttir discusses her findings concerning the positioning of male and female principals with reference to new task areas. The study provides information about the impact of recent changes in the working environment of Icelandic schools, on the role of head teachers and the gendered nature of these changes. Regarding the position of women leaders she says (p. 233): "Women have faced gendered discriminatory behaviour by school stakeholders, they have less administrative experience, they are entering headship at a time when stereotypical masculine values permeate educational policy and they are less likely than men to have been encouraged to lead."

### *Time management*

Einarsson (2008) studied the use of a computerized diary for school principals in his doctoral work. The purpose of his study was to „assess the usefulness of the diary as a research instrument, and also to evaluate how well the computerized diary worked as an aid for a time management strategy and for prioritizing in a school setting (p.1).“ The purpose of his study was also to collect information through the diary on how four newly appointed Basic School principals in Iceland used their time during a four week period, and to capture the nature their work, i.e. their major task areas. The principals registered the content of their activities in the diary. The registrations provided a basis for semi-structured interviews with the principals.

His main findings are that the computerized diary is "suitable as a research instrument in education and is an improvement on the traditional diary method, particularly concerning graphical feedback showing how time was

spent and in terms of motivating the participants to record (p.1).“ He says that the computerized diary can be used as an aid for individuals as well as for the whole school in terms of more effective prioritizing and time management strategies, i.e. prioritizing tasks, setting clear goals, not using time on unnecessary tasks, having a structured program to follow, delegating work, spotting time-wasters and consolidating time. The study concludes with discussions about value of the design of this computerized diary as a management tool and a contribution to the diary method.

### *Professional learning communities*

Sigurðardóttir (2006) conducted a study on professional learning communities within three schools in Iceland. The purpose of the study was to explore the relationship between learning communities and their effectiveness defined as a value added scores on national standardized tests. In one of the schools an intervention was administered specifically aimed at strengthening its learning community features. The following variables were used in the study as learning community components: shared values and vision with a focus on student learning, teacher expectations concerning student learning, shared and democratic leadership, mutual support of all staff, collaborative learning of academic staff, organizational arrangement of the collaboration, working habits that support collaboration, social climate that supports collaboration, satisfaction and the commitment of staff.

The findings show that professional learning affects student outcomes. The schools with more mature professional learning components scored higher on the standardized tests. Shared leadership and shared values and vision had the strongest relationship with the level of effectiveness and the values were affected by the principal's interest and what issues he or she chooses to focus on. The study also showed that the learning community within schools can be changed in order to affect student outcomes. Furthermore, the findings showed little collaboration by teachers in daily work, i.e. limited discussions, challenges and sharing of ideas concerning teaching and learning. The study concludes with discussions about ways to strengthen learning communities within schools in order to enhance student outcomes.

### *Schools and diversity*

Marínósson (2002) did an intensive long-term case study in a mainstream Basic School in Iceland. The purpose of the study was to examine how the school responded to the diverse learning needs of its students and why it responded as it did. The research processes are defined as ethnographic where the data was collected during a four year period by observations,

interviews and collection of relevant documents. The themes that emerged from the data “include the school as an organization, the management of behavior, pedagogic practices, construction of special educational needs, parental influence and expert services (p. 2).

One of the factors that influenced the schools’ response to pupils’ diversity was the management of the school. This is defined as being rational-technical with an emphasis on effectiveness as well as being evolutionary concerning unpredictable issues. As stated regarding the principal: “Thus, despite his ambition to make Mossy Mount a model school as quickly as possible, he chose a course of incremental changes, where the results of each step were studied and learnt from before the next actions were taken.” This contrasted with viewing the school as a learning organization where teamwork, diversity, conflicting ideas, and mistakes were valued. The study also revealed that diversity was seen as a nuisance rather than strength. The study concludes with discussions about inclusive education in relation to the control and care functions of schools.

### Concluding remarks

In addition to the above, there are two large ongoing research projects with relations to principals worth mentioning. One of the projects is called *Teaching and learning* in Basic Schools 2009–2011. This project is divided into six sub-projects where one focuses on educational leadership. Data is collected in 22 schools by means of questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations. Hansen and Lárusdóttir (2010) presented some preliminary findings on how supervision was acted out in the participating schools. Preliminary results indicate that teacher appraisal and feedback varies from one school to another. On one hand, there are schools where principals provide teachers with very limited supervision in the form of direct guidance. On the other, there are schools where supervision and teachers’ professional development are integrated into the everyday activity of the school. The collection of data finishes in 2011.

The other ongoing study is a longitudinal with a focus on student motivation in eight Basic Schools in Iceland. The main data collection takes place 2007–2011 but will continue if circumstances allow. Three papers have been developed out of this study by Björnsdóttir, Kristjánsson and Hansen (2008, 2009, 2010) – one on students’ motivation and relations with standardized test scores, another on extracurricular activities, and the third on how student motivation changes with age in Basic Schools. One of the issues to be explored in this study is the relationship between elements of the management and of the teaching culture of the schools and student motivation.

As this review shows, the major emphasis of this research has been on principals in Basic Schools and their policy environment. A relatively large section of the research has focused on the principals' role and how it has changed over time. Another relatively large section of the research has focused on issues concerning the governance of Basic Schools. The transfer of Basic Schools from the state to municipal control influences the research in both these areas very clearly. The other studies reported in this review focus on important issues concerning the operation and management of schools. All these studies are focused on the practice and reality within education in Iceland with implications for that same context.

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# CHAPTER 10 SCHOOL LEADERSHIP RESEARCH IN ENGLAND

Christopher Day

## Introduction

In writing of school leadership research in England since the year 2000, it is necessary first to establish the dominant policy context in which schools and their leaders have been working. In the last ten years, they have experienced an unprecedented emphasis nationally upon the twin government agendas of school effectiveness and improvement as defined by measurable student attainment outcomes at different stages of their schooling. In pursuit of this focused agenda, governments imposed a national curriculum, external school inspections, annual school improvement plans, target setting in classrooms, increased parental choice, local management of schools and, alongside this, increased bureaucracy, intensity of work, less teacher autonomy, more transparency of teaching and learning and more contractual accountability. Alongside this there has been a strong social justice, equity and citizenship and community engagement in which schools are seen as key players. It is these contexts which have influenced both the direction and focus of much of the English research on school leadership and management. In addition, early in this period – in 2001 – the Labour government established a National College for School Leadership (later to be renamed the National College for School Leadership and Children's Services). Its remit, in recognition of the crucial role which headteachers would play in the implementation of the national agenda of raising standards in schools, was and is to provide training and development for leaders at all levels in the system.

It must be acknowledged, also, that although England is an island, it is not immune from influence by research and researchers in other countries. Indeed the longest and, arguably, one of the most productive and informative pieces of research on successful school principalship has been carried out by a 16 country international research network on successful school principals' work which was established in 2001 (ISSPP). This network has the largest collection of case studies of successful school principals and its members have published more than one hundred journal papers and three books (<http://www.uv.uio.no/ils/english/research/projects/isspp/>).

Other sources of international influence and interaction have been CCEAM (Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration and Management), ICSEI (International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement) and the OECD policy oriented project on Leadership Improvement (OECD, 2008). In England, itself, the work of members of two school leadership networks has been influential, though individual and fragmented – BELMAS (British Educational Leadership, Management and Administration Society) and the Special Interest Group of the British Educational Research Association. The former sponsors a widely read and reputable journal, *British Educational Leadership, Management and Administration Society*. Unlike many other European countries, however, there is not tradition in English universities of PhD candidates who work alongside academics in producing academic research.

## Four Strands of Research

If we begin by examining briefly the major government reforms in schools in England, then, it is possible to identify a persistent focus upon increasing their effectiveness in terms of student examination results both in England and in comparison with other OECD countries (through, for example, PISA, TIMMS, PERLS). So, there is a strand of leadership research which has grown through studies of school effectiveness. Increasing effectiveness in these terms was not, however, the only emphasis. Government also intervened to promote school improvement through, for example, increasing training and development opportunities for school leaders and beginning to differentiate between conditions for learning in schools serving more advantaged communities and those serving socio-economical disadvantaged communities. Its policy level emphasis upon identifying particular needs spawned a second strand of research on the conditions for leadership in schools in challenging circumstances as well as those schools who, regardless of social circumstance, improved and sustained improvement in student test scores. In England, then, some schools were identified as being ‘leading edge’, ‘beacon’ and a focus for research.

The definition, identification and elaboration of the characteristics and behaviours of successful headteachers has been a third ongoing and developing strand of research on school leadership, also beginning during this period with a study of successful heads commissioned by the National Association of headteachers (Day et al, 2000). Alongside this and other empirical studies has been the development of theories of distributed leadership (Gronn, 2000; 2003; Harris, 2008) much influenced by the work of reser-

chers in the USA (Spillane, 2006; Lambert, 1998), emotions in leadership (e.g. Harris, B. 2007) and continuing research on models of transformational and instructional leadership (e.g. Southworth, ?), influenced by the work in North America of Hallinger (2006) and Leithwood (1989) in particular.

A fourth strand of leadership research is carried out largely by educational sociologists who position themselves as critics, both of the effects of government policy upon schools, teachers and headteachers, finding that the biggest effect is oppression (see for example, Pat Thomson's (2009) richly authentic book, 'Heads on the Block') and who also critique fellow researchers who, in their view, do not distance themselves sufficiently from government policy in their work and, therefore, are accused of colluding with it (Thrupp, 1999).

Apart from the international journals, there are two journals which provide an outlet for most English research on school leadership and management. The first is, 'School Leadership and Management' which claims to be an international, refereed journal. The editorship is English as is the Editorial Board and the majority of the papers. However, it also has an International Advisory Board. Its aims are to publish articles which are written for academics but are aimed at both practitioner and academic audiences. It tends to publish small scale qualitative research. The second journal is, 'Educational Management, Administration and Leadership', which is the journal of the British Educational Leadership, Management and Administration Society. It is also peer reviewed, and publishes original contributions to educational administration and management of schools, further and higher education institutions, on administration and policy at all levels and on the study and teaching of educational administration. Like, 'School Leadership and Management', it has a group of Associate Editors from England and an International Editorial Board and welcomes papers from those directly involved in practical management and administration as well as from academic communities worldwide. The contents of both these journals illustrate the 'cottage industry' or 'artisanship' of much of the research in England (and elsewhere). They provide valuable and rich insights into the contexts and issues of the nature of leadership policy and practice but, because they are, on the whole, lone endeavours, 'atypical, non-canonical small stories' (Georgakopoulou, 2004) their strength is also a weakness in terms of their potential for impact on the wider leadership research community and street level bureaucrats responsible for advising and implementing school leadership policy.

What follows, then, is a brief and selective synthesis of the research carried out by English researchers which have made contributions to advancing

knowledge of school leadership in what this author considers to be four areas of particular significance:

- 1) Leadership policy effects: here I will draw upon the work of Helen Gunter and Pat Thomson
- 2) The work of principals in schools in challenging circumstances: here I will draw upon the work of researchers based in the Universities of Cambridge, Warwick and Manchester
- 3) Distributed leadership: here I will draw upon the theorisation work of Peter Gronn (University of Cambridge) and Alma Harris (Institute of Education, University of London)
- 4) Effective successful school principalship in improving schools: here I will draw upon the findings of a three year national, mixed methods project (Day et al, 2009; 2011)

In selecting these, there is no intention to belittle or denigrate the work of many others who continue, with integrity, to conduct research on other areas of importance to the further development of knowledge of school leadership and its contexts – for example, leadership preparation, identities, passion and school improvement and effectiveness.

### Leadership Policy Effects

The high frequency interventionist policies of successive governments in England since 1988 when the first Education Reform Act was implemented and the tensions for school leaders which these have created in schools and other public services have been well documented (e.g. Day, 2003; Ball, 2001). Among the negative consequences of centrally imposed initiatives have been an increase in teachers' work time, low morale, and a continuing crisis in teacher recruitment and retention, partially in those schools which are in challenging socio-economic contexts. Alongside (though not necessarily associated with) these, has been an increase in dissatisfaction of their school experiences by a significant number of pupils. These are expressed in increases in absenteeism, behavioural problems in classrooms and in the less easily measurable but well documented alienation from formal learning of many who remain. Ball (1997) and others have described this central drive for quality and improvement as being embedded in three technologies – the market, managerialism and performativity – and placed them in distinct contrast to the post-war public welfarist state. He and others identify a 'new public management' in which schools are opened to market pressures (through parental choice), given greater financial autonomy and expected to improve on a yearly basis in

terms of both teacher and pupil performance (through independent external inspection and pupil target setting and testing across four key phases, annual performance management reviews of individual teachers and associated annual school development plans and self evaluation.

## The performativity culture and school leadership: right versus right

All this, it is argued, places increasing pressures upon those who lead and manage schools to produce 'added value' to pupils' learning and achievement. 'Performativity,' it is suggested, is:

A mode of regulation that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as a means of control, attrition and change. The performances (of individual subjects or organisations) serve as measures of productivity or output, or displays of 'quality', or 'moments' of promotion or inspection. As such they stand for, encapsulate or represent the worth, quality or value of an individual or organisation within a field of judgement. (Ball, 2001: 4)

Among the harshest critics has been Helen Gunter who theorised leadership in education, through the use of Bourdieu's theory of practice, as 'an arena of struggle' (Gunter, 2001: 4). In applying this to reforms in English schools which promote site-based performance management and 'training' rather than 'professional learning', Gunter draws attention to what she finds is a 'distortion' of the, 'educational nature of professional work' (ibid: 92) and to what Bourdieu terms, 'illusion of freedom...the misplaced belief in illusory freedoms. Freedom is not something given: it is something you conquer – collectively' (Bourdieu, 1990:15, cited in Gunter, 2001:153). This critique was complemented in the research carried out, for example, by Michael Fielding (2001). Gleeson and Husbands (2001), in an edited volume, also identify and critique the increasing preoccupation by government with pupil, teacher and school performance and its consequences for the reshaping of the teaching profession and, therefore, the nature of the leaders' role(s). In one of the chapters in this book, Husbands identifies a key issue:

In the hands of gifted headteachers and team leaders, working in school cultures where improvement and development are well established, performance management policies will probably consolidate already successful practice. In schools where insufficient attention is still given to strategies for improvement and development, performance management may contribute to short-term gains... [only]..., following from the Hawthorn effect'. (Husbands, 2001: 16)

In a more recent publication, Pat Thomson (Thomson, 2009) highlighted the 'risky business' of headship in English schools. Using stories of headteachers' everyday work and drawing upon her own previous experience of headship, she revisits the 'contemporary pressures, dilemmas and tensions' (Thomson, 2009: 2), felt by heads who are not always happy with their roles and who find themselves presenting the illusion of control to policy makers, parents, the community as well as staff and students, no matter how uncertain they themselves may feel. Thus, like Ball (2001) and Gunter's (2001) earlier work, that of Thomson critiques a policy system which results in a narrowing of the educational function, identified by Shulman as being, 'the exercise of judgement under conditions of unavoidable uncertainty' (Shulman, 1998:9) to one in which measurable performance outcomes become the primary objective.

### The work of principals in schools in challenging circumstances

A case study published in 2003, in response, 'to a call for richer descriptions of improvement and leadership in schools in challenging contexts', focused on the, 'attempts by leaders in one low-attaining secondary school in England to build the capacity for improvement' (Chapman, 2003: 137). Chapman found that leaders in these schools needed to focus upon, 'facilitating relationships and team building within and beyond the organisation' rather than adopting an autocratic approach (ibid: 151). This response, initially to research by Margaret Maden which had charted the life of schools in challenging socio-economic circumstances over a five year period (Maden, 2001), Chapman has developed a typology as a means of exploring differentiated strategies, noting that a, 'finely differentiated and targeted programme of intervention for schools in challenging circumstances...is needed if school improvement through external intervention is to become a reality' (Chapman, 2004; 2006; 2008). Much of his work is undertaken in collaboration with other English researchers.

John MacBeath and his colleagues in the University of Cambridge have also contributed to knowledge in this area, through their research about 'schools on the edge' (MacBeath et al, 2007) in which they investigated eight English secondary schools in challenging circumstances which had been, 'selected and recruited by the DfES (Department for Education and Skills, now renamed the Department for Education) as a test bed for examining improvement (p.4). Their investigation is firmly located in and reported through their analysis of the English policy landscape in which schools, they claim, 'find themselves trapped in the force field of turbulent communities and uncompromising government policy' (p.4). One of their nine conclusions is a similar, but more nuanced, view of the kinds of leadership needed

for schools in challenging circumstances to that of Chapman. This might include 'heroic' leadership in the initial phase of development of schools in challenging circumstances but will need to move beyond this in the longer term through forms of distributed leadership.

These and other research in England and elsewhere (Harris et al. 2006; Reynolds et al. 2006) are illustrative of an increasing amount of writing about principals who 'turnaround' schools which are experiencing difficulties or failing to improve standards, particularly schools in challenging or disadvantaged urban contexts. Turnaround is one thing, sustaining turnaround is, however, another. It involves the application of layered leadership in managing transition. Transition is different from change.

An example of leadership and management of transition is to be found in an elementary school in England which was threatened with closure but eight years on was identified as being 'outstanding' by Ofsted (the national external school inspection agency). The principal is neither 'charismatic' nor 'heroic' in the classical sense of their meanings. However, her work is illustrative of how successful principals model and draw differentially upon combinations of attributes and strategies which are 'fit for purpose' at their time of use to first 'turnaround' the school and then sustain an improvement trajectory (Day, 2007).

*Phase 1: Coming out of 'special measures'*

Here the focus was on enriching the teaching and learning environment; providing security for the students; establishing a behaviour policy, gaining community acceptance; and improving classroom teaching.

I talked a lot about my beliefs and expectations...I acknowledged that I had just come out of the classroom...So I knew what it was like, and that there would be flexibility as long as the job's done...I talked about working habits...and I brought some examples of the standards of work I would be expecting... (Headteacher)

*Phase 2: Taking Ownership: an inclusive agenda*

Here the emphasis was upon combining five strategies: vision and values to develop the school's mission; distributing the leadership, communicating a belief in practice that many people can take responsibility for leading change and demonstrating that they can be trusted to do so; inclusivity – integrating students from different social and cultural environments so that, for example, incidents of bullying and racism were dealt with fairly and



consistently; appraisal and continuing professional development designed to support staff; and a persistent priority placed upon improving teaching and learning although peer observation and the use of student progress and performance data to inform classroom decision making.

Teachers watch each other and analyse...and, slowly, staff attitudes have changed from being self-engrossed and defensive to a professional atmosphere in which teachers are comfortable with observing and supporting each other... (Headteacher)

### *Phase 3: Going deeper and wider: sustaining the momentum*

As a result of the strategies used in phases 1 and 2, over the previous 3 year period, during the next three years the leadership was broadened and its functions reviewed; liaison with community groups increased; students took more ownership of their learning through evaluating their progress; staff development and well-being continued to be emphasised; and the horizons for students were widened, with links to schools in other countries.

She's very good at pacing anything new that comes into school so that staff don't feel overwhelmed...she's very good at prioritizing...and everything is brought in for discussion...so that we all feel as if we matter, that we all count. (Teacher)

### *Phase 4: Excellence and creativity: everyone a leader*

Today, a visitor to the school could be forgiven for appreciating its bright, almost pristine environment. Classrooms are purposeful, the welcome for visitors is genuine, the warmth of relationships is evident and the sense of achievement by staff, students and all connected with the school, palpable. The students seem to be like those in any school in a thriving area of town, city or countryside. It is difficult to believe that many return each evening to homes which are emotionally dysfunctional, socially and economically disadvantaged, or that some are involved in crime on a regular basis. Indeed, household income is in the lowest 10% nationally and crime and disorder statistics are in the worst 3%. Pupil mobility is high, with 42% not completing their education programme in this school, 40% having social services involvement and 35% classified as having 'special educational needs' (SEN). There are 13 different languages spoken and 80% of students are in one parent families. Yet:

The children want to achieve now. You can feel it...A few years ago it was quite a struggle. You were up against a lot of negativity from the children...not despair, but disinterest. And now, because their success is celebrated, they want more of it...they want to do well for themselves and can see a means of doing it. (Teacher)

## Distributed leadership

Distributed leadership is a concept which is very much “in vogue” with researchers, policy makers, educational reformers and leadership practitioners alike (Hammersley-Fletcher & Brundrett, 2005; Storey, 2004), and there is a growing confidence that this contributes to the effectiveness of the school. However, as yet there seems to be little, if any, empirical data which links this to improved influence on pupil outcomes. Moreover, while there seems to be widespread interest in the idea of “distributing leadership”, there are competing and sometimes conflicting interpretations of what distributed leadership actually means. The definitions and understandings vary from the normative to the theoretical and, by implication, the literature supporting the concept of distributed leadership remains diverse and broad based (Bennett, Harvey, Wise, & Woods, 2003).

Bennett et al. (2003) write about “distributed or devolved leadership”. Distributed leadership assumes a set of direction-setting and influence practices potentially “enacted by people at all levels rather than a set of personal characteristics and attributes located in people at the top” (Fletcher & Kaufer, 2003, p. 22). This accumulation of allied concepts means that distributed leadership has sometimes been used as a shorthand way to describe any form of devolved, shared or dispersed leadership practice in schools. It is this catch all use of the term that has resulted in both the misrepresentation of the idea and the common misunderstanding that distributed leadership means that everyone leads (Bennett et al., 2003).

Interest has also accumulated because of the expansion of different forms of imposed collaboration between and across schools in England e.g. in the form of executive head, co-headship, assistant headteachers and leadership teams that traverse two or three schools in federation or partnership. Within the growing context of school to school networks, it has been argued that distributed leadership may provide greater opportunities for members to learn from one another. A recent systematic review of the literature on the impact of networks on pupils, practitioners and the communities they serve concludes that networks offer opportunities for teachers to share, initiate and embed new practices (Bell et al., 2006). While the direct link between networking and achievement was not forthcoming from this review of the research evidence, the data that does exist highlights a positive relationship

between increased teacher collaboration both within and across schools and organizational development.

In his work Gronn (2000) sees distributed leadership as an *emergent property of a group or a network of interacting individuals*. Here leadership is a form of *concerted action* which is about the additional dynamic that occurs when people work together or that is the product of conjoint agency. The implication, largely supported by the teacher development and school improvement literature, is that organizational change and development are enhanced when leadership is broad based and where teachers have opportunities to collaborate and to actively engage in change and innovation (Hopkins, 2001; Harris, 2008; Little, 1990; MacBeath, 1998). Links have also been made between distributed leadership and democratic leadership (Woods, 2004) and connections have been made to the literature with teacher leadership (Harris, 2004).

Gronn (2003) distinguishes between two distinct forms of distributed leadership. Gronn labels these forms “additive” and “holistic”. Additive forms of distribution describe an uncoordinated pattern of leadership in which many different people may engage in leadership functions but without much, or any, effort to take account of the leadership efforts of others in their organization.

Gronn has suggested that concertive forms of distributed leadership may take three forms:

- *Spontaneous collaboration*: “From time to time groupings of individuals with differing skills and knowledge capacities, and from across different organizational levels, coalesce to pool their expertise and regularize their conduct for duration of the task, and then disband” (2002, p. 657).
- *Intuitive working relations*: This form of concertive distributed leadership emerges over time “...as two or more organizational members come to rely on one another and develop close working relations” and, as Gronn argues, “leadership is manifest in the shared role space encompassed by their relationship” (2002, p. 657).
- *Institutionalized practice*: Citing committees and teams as their most obvious embodiment, Gronn describes such formalized structural as arising from design or through less systematic adaptation.

The extent and nature of coordination in the exercise of influence across members of the organization is a critical challenge from a holistic perspective. Interdependence between two or more school staff members may be based on overlapping roles and responsibilities: for example, all teachers in a

school may assume responsibility for student discipline in spaces outside the classroom. Interdependence also may be based on complementarity of skills and knowledge.

Harris suggests that: “it would be naïve to ignore the major structural, cultural, and micropolitical barriers operating in schools that make distributed forms of leadership difficult to implement” (2004a, p. 19). She suggests that there are three major barriers to distributing leadership. First, Harris argues that distributed leadership can be considered threatening to those in formal power positions, not only in terms of ego and perceived authority, but also because it places leaders in a vulnerable position by relinquishing direct control over certain activities. Second, Harris argues that current school structures, such as department divisions or rigid top-down hierarchies which demarcate role and responsibility prevent teachers from attaining autonomy and taking on leadership roles. Finally, Harris suggests that top-down approaches to distributed leadership, when not executed properly, can be interpreted as misguided delegation.

When role overlap occurs in a coordinated fashion there can be mutual reinforcement of influence and less likelihood of making errors in decisions. When the use of complementary knowledge and skills is the form of interdependence, those providing leadership have opportunities to do what they know best as well as increase their own capacities by observing their colleagues doing the same, a “huddle effect” according to Gronn (2002, p. 671).

Distributed leadership, like any new theoretical perspective, urgently requires further empirical testing, not only to establish whether any link with student learning outcomes exists but also to generate sharper operational images of effective practice. Undoubtedly, the effects and impact of distributed leadership on school and student outcomes will depend upon the forms and patterns distribution takes and how those forms and patterns are determined. The current research base has not explored this in any depth even though the patterns of distribution may inevitably affect the outcomes (Harris, 2004a; 2004b, 2005). Within a school, for example, encouraging administrators, teachers, support staff and students to exercise leadership over those decisions about which they have the most information would seem an obvious way of extending leadership responsibilities. On the other hand, assigning a group of teachers without the knowledge and skills to make appropriate decisions would seem unlikely to generate leadership capacity and would more likely result in potential chaos for the school, as a whole.

Distributed leadership is gaining more prominence in the contemporary leadership literature. As noted earlier, the empirical evidence of its benefits

remains limited. Bennett et al. note in their review of the literature on distributed leadership “there were almost no empirical studies of distributed leadership in action” (2003, p.4) which in part reflects the fact that this theoretical perspective on leadership is still in its infancy.

### Effective successful school leadership in improving schools

Whilst much less has been written in the English context on school improvement (e.g. Harris et al, 2003; Hopkins, 2001; 2007; Higham et al, 2009) there has been relatively little systematic research conducted on a national scale. One exception to this is ‘IMPACT’, a three year empirical, mixed methods, multi-perspective research project on the impact of heads in academically improved and effective primary and secondary schools upon pupil outcomes.

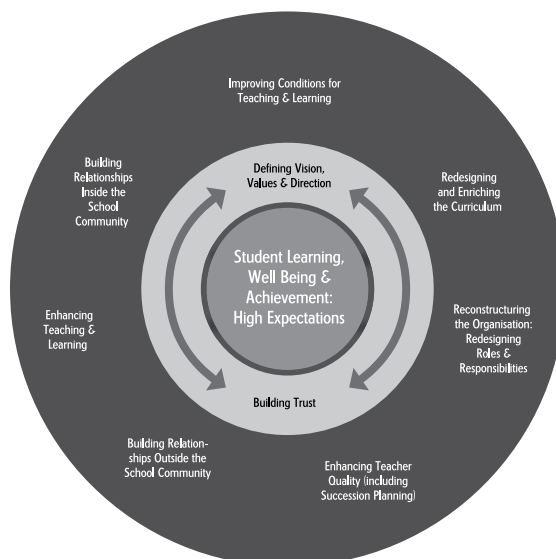
Its conceptual base drew upon a review of selected empirical studies of transformational leadership internationally (Leithwood et al., 2006), and found that:

- a) heads are central to school improvement
- b) heads are second only to classroom teachers in their influence upon pupil outcomes
- c) whilst heads influence pupil outcomes indirectly, they do so through their selection, timing, combination and accumulation of strategies and actions which are appropriate to individual, organisational and external social and policy contexts
- d) heads and their staff measure success both in terms of pupil test and examination results and broader educational purposes
- e) heads are not charismatic in the traditional sense. However, they possess a number of common traits (e.g. flexibility, openness, fairness) and their work is informed and driven by strong, clearly articulated moral and ethical values which are shared by their colleagues
- f) heads are respected and trusted by their staff and parental bodies and they work persistently, internally and externally in building relational and organisational trust [see also Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Seashore-Louis, 2007; Day, 2009].
- g) heads build the leadership capacities of colleagues through the progressive distribution of responsibility with accountability.
- h) heads place emphasis upon creating a range of learning and development opportunities for all staff

- i) heads whose schools draw their pupils from highly challenging socio-economically disadvantaged communities face a greater range of challenges in terms of staff commitment and retention and pupil behaviour, motivation and achievement than those in more advantaged communities (see also, Day & Johanson, 2008)
- j) heads of primary and secondary schools in all contexts are able to achieve and sustain successful pupil outcomes, but the degree of success is likely to be influenced by the relative advantage/disadvantage of the communities from which their pupils are drawn
- k) heads in schools in disadvantaged communities are likely to be less experienced and stay for shorter periods than those in more advantaged communities.

Figure 1 below illustrates eight key dimensions of effective leadership identified by the English IMPACT research (Day et al. 2008; 2009). The inner circle illustrates the core focus of leaders' attention, the inner ring their core strategies, and the outer ring the actions they take in support of these strategies. The building of trust is an intrinsic part and embedded within each of the core strategies and an essential part of the actions in the outer ring.

*Figure 1* Dimensions of successful leadership (Day et al, 2010)



*Defining the vision, values and direction.* Effective heads have a very strong and clear vision and set of values for their school, which heavily influences

their actions and the actions of others, and establish a clear sense of direction and purpose for the school. These are shared widely, clearly understood and supported by all staff. They are a touchstone against which all new developments, policies or initiatives are tested.

*Improving conditions for teaching and learning.* Heads identify the need to improve the conditions in which the quality of teaching can be maximised and pupils' learning and performance enhanced. They develop strategies to improve the school buildings and facilities. By changing the physical environment for the schools and improving the classrooms, heads confirm the important connection between high-quality conditions for teaching and learning, and staff and pupil wellbeing and achievement.

*Redesigning the organisation: aligning roles and responsibilities.* Heads purposefully and progressively redesign their organisational structures, redesigned and refine roles and distribute leadership at times and in ways that promote greater staff engagement and ownership which, in turn, provide greater opportunities for student learning. While the exact nature and timing will vary from school to school, there is a consistent pattern of broadening participation in decision making at all levels.

*Enhancing teaching and learning.* Successful heads continually look for new ways to improve teaching, learning and achievement. They provide a safe environment for teachers to try new models and alternate approaches that might be more effective. Where this is the case, staff respond positively to the opportunity. It affects the way they see themselves as professionals and improves their sense of self-efficacy and job satisfaction. This, in turn, has a positive impact on the way they interact with pupils and other members of staff.

*Redesigning and enriching the curriculum.* Heads focus on redesigning and enriching the curriculum as a way of deepening and extending engagement and improving achievement. Academic attainment is not in competition with personal and social development: the two complement one another. The heads adapt the curriculum to broaden learning opportunities and improve access for all pupils, with the emphasis on 'stage not age' learning. Many of these changes are in line with government initiatives. In primary schools there is particular emphasis on greater flexibility and continuity between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, while in secondary schools the focus is on personalised learning and providing different pathways towards vocational qualifications. Building creativity and self-esteem features heavily in the curriculum, as does a focus on developing key skills for life. There is recognition that when pupils enjoy learning, they are more effective learners. Heads also emphasise on the provision of a broad range of extracurricular activities, including lunch time and after-school clubs, as well as activities during school holidays.

*Enhancing teacher quality (including succession planning).* Heads provide a rich variety of professional learning and development opportunities for staff as part of their drive to raise standards, sustain motivation and commitment and retain staff. They place a high premium on internally led professional development and learning, and teachers and support staff are also encouraged to take part in a wide range of in-service training (inset), and are given opportunities to train for external qualifications. This combination of external and internal continuing professional development (CPD) is used to maximise potential and develop staff in diverse areas. Succession planning and targeted recruitment are feature of effective heads.

*Building relationships inside the school community.* Heads develop and sustain positive relationships with staff at all levels, making them feel valued and involved. They demonstrate concern for the professional and personal wellbeing of staff. The relationship between heads and senior leadership teams (SLTs), in particular, is one of trust and mutual respect.

*Building relationships outside the school community.* For all heads, building and improving the reputation of the school and engaging with the wider community are essential to achieving long-term success. They and their SLTs develop positive relationships with community leaders and build a web of links across the school to other organisations and individuals. Strong links with key stakeholders in the local community benefit the school.

*Common values.* Successful heads achieve improved performance, not only through the strategies they use but also through the core values and personal qualities they demonstrate in their daily interactions. As figure 1 illustrates, they place pupil care, learning and achievement at the heart of all their decisions.

## The Work of the Successful Head-teacher

Headteacher leadership remains the major driving force and which underpins their school's increased or sustained effectiveness and improvement. The IMPACT research identified the following as the key leadership and management strategies:

### *Alignment: a key strategy*

A *key strategy* in the endeavours of heads to improve the cultures of teaching, learning and achievement in their schools is the *alignment of structures and cultures with 'vision' and 'direction'*. In effect, they *reposition their schools internally* through changing expectations, aspirations, structures and cultures so that they are able to build and sustain performance. They increase effectiveness through a sustained focus upon raising the quality of teaching



and learning whilst at the same time raising the levels of individual and collective efficacy and involvement of staff.

### *Positioning For Improvement: More Than A Repertoire Of Basic Leadership Practices*

Successful head-teachers engage in, and are acknowledged to demonstrate four core sets of leadership qualities and practices: building vision and setting directions; understanding and developing people; redesigning the organisation; and managing (directly or through others) the teaching and learning programmes. However, there are differences in the degree of their perceived emphasis between leaders in primary and secondary and teachers in relatively advantaged and relatively disadvantaged schools.

### *Improving the teaching and learning*

In the IMPACT research the vast majority of primary headteachers (81%) focussed on improving the teaching and learning programme, in combination with a range of other foci, the most common of which are related to; redesigning the organisation (44%); setting directions (31%); developing people (36%); increasing the academic emphasis (34%); and distributing leadership (16%). For secondary heads: 89% reported a priority action related to improving the programme; 46% to setting direction; 25% to the academic emphasis or press; and 23% to developing people. Further analysis of the items related to improving the teaching and learning programme indicated that this included a wide range of actions that will be further subdivided.

### *Diagnosis and Differentiation*

Heads do not engage *simultaneously* in developing, implementing and sustaining all the strategies recognised in the literature as being necessary for effective leadership, but that they prioritise according to context. It is their ability to identify the most important changes and to ensure that these were made which are key characteristics of successful heads. They do not pursue only one strategy in their quest for success. Rather, they combine a number but prioritise within them. In other words, they are able to *diagnose* (needs), *differentiate* (in levels of importance and timing of strategies to meet these) and actively *co-ordinate* these strategies. Successful heads apply their judgements about the timing, nature of change and prioritise their change strategies in their schools in different ways according to their diagnosis of need in relation to purpose and context.

Although heads draw upon the same range of qualities, strategies and skills, then, the combinations will vary as will the way the way they are

applied or enacted, since this relates closely to their personal qualities and traits. This helps to account, for example, for the different ways in which they distribute leadership influence among staff.

*Building Care, Learning And Achievement Cultures: Changing Expectations And Improving The Quality Of Practice*

The literature on leadership in general rarely focuses upon the work of head-teachers in building cultures which *both* promote student engagement in learning *and* raise students' achievement levels in terms of value added test and examination results. The IMPACT study data suggest that heads are perceived by their staff to focus primarily upon:

- creating and sustaining cultures of high expectations for themselves and others by staff and students;
- distributing responsibilities and accountabilities, particularly in disadvantaged (high FSM) contexts;
- nurturing care and trust with collegiality;
- improving relationships between staff students;
- connecting student behaviour with student outcomes. All heads were perceived to have influenced the quality of classroom practice through encouraging more consistency in classroom teaching approaches (e.g. adopting the 'three part' lesson espoused in national policy documents);
- engaging productively with external agencies in ways which provided added benefits to the school

*Leading the Learning: Being Responsive To Context*

The claim that school leaders improve teaching and learning indirectly and most powerfully through their influence on staff motivation, commitment and working conditions is well substantiated in all the research reviewed here. There are many examples of heads: i) aligning CPD to the school development plan; ii) improving the physical working conditions for staff and students; iii) nurturing staff self-efficacy and motivation; iv) engaging in succession planning through, for example, clarifying roles and distributing responsibilities to selected staff; and v) building inclusive teams of staff in order to break down barriers to the commitment to whole school vision. The timing and application of these strategies are always sensitive to context but all are used. Robinson and her colleagues (2009) found that when school leaders promote and/or participate in effective professional learning, this has twice the impact on student outcomes across a school than any other single leadership activity.

*Broadening staff participation in decision making processes*

All research points to the recognition by heads of the importance to the success of the school of broadening participation of staff, consulting with them on a regular basis and, in some cases, the increased involvement of students in school wide decision-making processes. There is widespread evidence, also, of the reshaping and broadening of the senior leadership team into a group which represented more strongly the 'core' business of teaching and learning standards.

*Similarities across improvement groupings.*

Overall, there appear to be more similarities than differences between schools serving different communities, particularly in relation to i) the extent to which leadership practice in school is provided by other people or groups; ii) the way that leadership tasks are distributed or shared within schools and iii) the kinds of leadership practice provided by the SLT in school.

*Differences by improvement groupings in the extent of change.*

Significant differences were found in both primary and secondary schools between the three improvement groups in terms of the extent headteachers reported change or improvement across their schools, including aspects related to disciplinary climate, reduction of staff mobility and enhanced commitment and enthusiasm of staff. More improvements or changes were likely to be reported by heads in the Low to Moderate/High improvement group. This finding provides evidence that effective headteachers have a positive influence upon the mindset of the school and its culture and staff and student relationships in the school. School leaders tend to improve teaching and learning and pupil outcomes indirectly and most powerfully through their influence on staff motivation, commitment and working conditions. This is likely to be especially important for schools in challenging circumstances which start from a low base in terms of student attainment.

*Differences by SES context*

The finding that heads in high disadvantage schools were more likely to report change in leadership practice in their schools supports the hypothesis that effective headteachers in challenging circumstances have to be more responsive to school cultural and policy contexts in order to improve pupil outcomes. They also have to make greater efforts to effect improvement in a range of ways.

This finding is consistent with earlier evidence which indicates that a change of head can act as a catalyst for improvement for schools in difficulties. These results support the findings of a recent study of improving secondary schools by Gray et al (1999) who noted that both tactical and more deep seated changes were needed and that more successful schools used a range of approaches to support continued improvement (in policies, practices and culture).

There is now a growing body of research which suggests that successful heads use the same basic leadership practices but that there is no single model for achieving success. Rather, successful heads draw equally on elements of both instructional and transformational leadership. They work intuitively and from experience, tailoring their leadership strategies to their particular school context. Their ability to respond to their context and to recognise, acknowledge, understand and attend to the needs and motivations of others defines their level of success.

It is the way in which leaders apply leadership practices, rather than the actual practices themselves, that demonstrates their ability to respond to the context in which they work. New evidence of how these core leadership practices are used sensitively according to context relates more widely than to school turnaround scenarios (Day & Leithwood, 2007). We see from this example how geographical location is not a barrier to the exchange of ideas and experience and the growth of knowledge. For example, studies forming part of a five-year study of leadership and learning in the US (Louis & Leithwood et al., 2009) indicate that student poverty, diversity and school phase (primary or secondary) can significantly moderate the positive effects of school leadership on pupil achievement (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2009; Gordon & Louis, 2009).

Overall, it was concluded that success is built through the synergistic effects of values and qualities of the head and the combination and accumulation of a number of strategies which are related to the head's judgements about what works in their particular school context.

### *Combining transformational and pedagogical/instructional leadership*

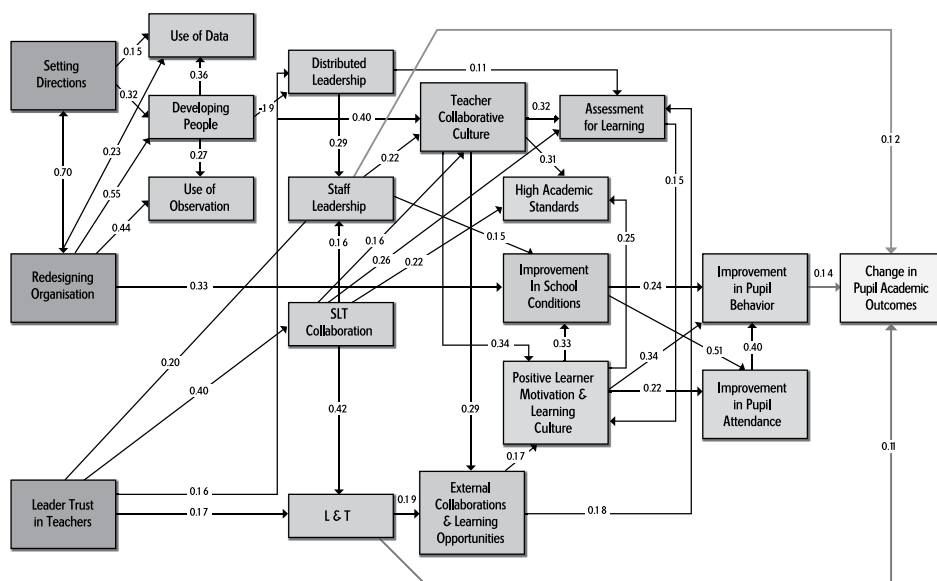
Figure 2 (Day et al., 2010) shows how pupil learning and achievement are affected by a combination of leadership strategies which, taken together, address school culture and staff development, and focus on enhancing the processes of teaching and learning.

It presents an explanation of the relationship between leadership practices and changes in secondary pupil outcomes over three years and is the result of detailed analysis of the quantitative evidence gathered from suc-

successful heads in secondary schools. In all cases, examination results had improved over at least three consecutive years under their leadership, and their performance was identified as highly effective in value-added analysis of school results.

The influence of variables on pupils' learning and behaviour is indirect, but there is clear evidence on their effects on retention and attendance of staff, improvements in pupil attendance and behaviour, and increases in pupil motivation, engagement and sense of responsibility for learning, all of which are themselves the result of leadership values, strategies and actions.

**Figure 2: Example of Leadership Practices and Changes in Secondary Pupil Outcomes Over Three Years: A Structural Equation Model (N=309)**



While all the links between the different dimensions are significant, some are stronger than others. The strength of these connections indicates which features of leadership practice are most closely linked. Figure 2 shows that the school processes directly connected with headteachers' leadership strategies are the ones that also connect most closely with improvements in aspects of teaching and learning and staff involvement in leadership; these in turn help to predict improvement in school conditions, and so improvement in pupil outcomes.

The analysis provides new empirical data that shows that it is the combination and accumulation of actions and strategies over time that results in school improvement: the headteachers' leadership directly both creates and influences improvements in the school organisation, in the teachers and the teaching and learning environment, which in turn indirectly improve pupil outcomes. The results are significant because they show the complexity of the leadership strategies used by these successful heads over time and their contribution to improving pupil outcomes over three school years.

Of particular note are:

- The roles played by heads' trust in teachers, both in relation to the SLT (Senior Leadership Team) and broader staff leadership.
- The important link between redesigning and realigning the organisation and setting directions.
- The way redesigning the organisation predicts improvement in school conditions.
- The way leadership strategies to develop people link with the teacher collaborative culture, and with high academic standards and positive learner motivation and a learning culture.
- The positive associations between improvement in school conditions for teaching and learning and better outcomes in terms of pupil behaviour, pupil attendance, and learner motivation and learning culture.

Among the most powerful variables are:

- Influencing pupil outcomes and improvements in school conditions, such as an emphasis on raising academic standards.
- Assessment for learning.
- Collaborative teacher cultures.
- Monitoring of pupil and school performance.
- Coherence of teaching programmes.
- The provision of extra-curricula activities.

## School Development Phases

The IMPACT research in English schools identified three broad phases of leadership success. While the number of phases differed, they could be classified under three broad headlines – early (foundational), middle (developmental) and later (enrichment). In the early phase, heads prioritised:

- Improving the physical environment of the school to create more positive, supportive conditions for teaching and learning, and for teachers and pupils.

- Setting, communicating and implementing school-wide standards for pupil behaviour.
- Restructuring the senior leadership team, and its roles and responsibilities.
- Implementing performance management systems for all staff; there were differences in timing and emphasis between sectors, but in general this had the effect of distributing leadership more and led to the development of a set of organisational values.

In the middle phase, heads prioritised:

- The wider distribution of leadership roles and responsibilities.
- A more regular and focused use of data to inform decision making about pupil progress and achievement; learning objectives and target setting were important practices in all case study schools.

In the later phase, heads' key strategies related to personalising and enriching the curriculum, as well as wider distribution of leadership. In schools in more challenging contexts, greater attention and efforts were made in the early phase to establish, maintain and sustain school-wide policies for pupil behaviour, improvements to the physical environment and improvements in the quality of teaching and learning than in other schools.

## Conclusions

Taken together, then, it is clear that leadership research is alive and well in England and that, paradoxically, this is at least in part the result of the government's policy emphases upon raising standards in schools. Far from being the 'secret gardens' which they once were, schools' teachers' and head-teachers' work is now the subject of the most intensive scrutiny by the public, by government itself and by researchers. All wish to understand it more in order to help its improvement. It is clear, however, even from the limited viewpoint which this chapter represents, that there is no silver bullet, no single model of head-teachers' qualities, dispositions, strategies or practices which can be easily transferred as a template to ensure the success of others. Yet, there are two 'elephants in the room', subjects of extreme importance discussed only briefly in this chapter. They are issues of head-teacher values and democratic schools. Whilst there are those in England who focus upon these, (notably Fielding, 2001 and Bottery, 2004) and whilst 'moral purpose' is widely promoted by researchers and policy organisations as being essential to effective, successful leadership, issues of democracy in schools remain much less debated.

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# CHAPTER 11 RESEARCH ON PRINCIPALS IN THE GERMAN SPEAKING COUNTRIES

Stephan Gerhard Huber

## Introduction

Over the years, education and school research had rarely focused on themes such as school leadership and leadership practices in German speaking countries such as Germany, Austria, Liechtenstein, and Switzerland. Research that explicitly focuses on school leadership and school leadership practices has just started over the last two decades.

Studies have been done on the macro level (the school system level) and on the micro level (the teaching and learning level), which include references to the meso level (the organisational level of an individual school). Nonetheless, there exists a deficiency of research based knowledge about educational leadership action, about leadership competences, about development measures that are needed to improve school leadership, and about the working conditions of school leaders. Despite the existence of a few studies before the 1990s, empirical research on school leadership has only recently increased in number. Since around 2000, the state of research on school leadership has been improving.

## Review methods

In order to evaluate the state of research in the German speaking countries, numerous sources have been used. The literature survey by Huber (2003) served thereby as a basic starting point. To gain an overview of studies from 2003 onwards, various relevant German databases such as GESIS and FORS were consulted. Additionally, various internet search engines as well as associated tools such as “scholar” and “books” were searched.

The results provided by „books“ were examined in the online catalogue of the research library in Erfurt/Gotha (Germany). Additional sources referenced by relevant journals have been added to the research findings as well. Additionally, programs of conferences in the German speaking countries over the last decade were researched, and findings (projects with explicit reference to school leadership) have been included in the research overview.

Furthermore, relevant seminars and lectures of master's courses in the German speaking countries regarding leadership development possibilities within the field of education management were taken into account. Relevant studies presented during the school leadership symposia of the past few years, organized by Huber in the years 2004, 2005, 2006, 2009 (see [www. Edulead.com](http://www.Edulead.com) and [www. Schulleitungssymposium.net](http://www.Schulleitungssymposium.net)) have also been included. Finally, around 40 colleagues working in the fields of school effectiveness, school improvement, and school management were contacted in order to identify relevant studies in the German speaking context.

In the German speaking countries, there may be further (theoretical and empirical) studies and also further evaluation studies, however, if they are not listed below, it had not been possible to identify them by the research methods described above.

Nevertheless, there are numerous studies in the field of education research that include, along with other topics, school leadership (implicitly or explicitly). Usually, in empirical research about comprehensive schools or about specific school development projects, e.g. all-day schools, variables directly or indirectly linked to school leadership are collected but they have not often been analyzed with regard to a specific research question about school leadership (e.g. Holtappels 2004;2007 et al., 2008). Such studies have not been included in this survey.

Numerous smaller research projects about school leadership have been conducted in the context of master's courses for school leaders. Moreover, during other study courses at universities several research-based papers (Lizenziat theses, diploma theses, bachelor theses) have been written. These papers have not been included either, even though they may serve as a basis for PhD theses.

In this review, the studies are not presented in terms of a systematic juxtaposition. Such a strictly systematic presentation following the criteria a) aim/ research question, b) methodological approach/design, c) selected results, can be found on: [www.bildungsmanagement.net/SL-Research](http://www.bildungsmanagement.net/SL-Research)

## **Role, functions, tasks, self-concept, attributes, attitudes, and the workload of school leadership**

Among the few German research papers about school leadership from the 1980s and 1990s, the study by Nevermann (1982) is fundamental. It focused on the historical and legal aspects of school leadership.

Several studies around 1990 and 2000 focused on the role, tasks and the self-concept of school leaders. The job profiles of school leaders as well as the weighting of their different tasks according to the time spent on them are usually the subject matter of older studies such as the non-representative study by Schmitz (1980), the representative inquiry of school leaders and teachers in Hessen by Haase and Rolff (1980), the qualitative inquiry by Krüger (1983), and the analysis of school-internal administrative tasks of grammar school leaders in North Rhine-Westphalia by Wolfmeyer (1981).

Jarisch (1992) investigated the role-perception of school leaders of Lower Austrian secondary schools from the teachers' point of view. Wissinger (1994) investigated the tasks of school leaders in Bavaria. Rosenbusch's formulation of a structurally disturbed relationship between school leaders and education authorities referred to the results of a study in Bavaria about the relationship between teachers – school leaders – education authorities. There were investigations by Baumert (1984) and Baumert and Leschinsky (1986) about the role-definition of school leaders and a survey of newly appointed school leaders of secondary schools in Bavaria by Storath about how they define their roles (1994).

Rosenbusch, Braun-Bau and Warwas (2006) investigated the tasks of school leaders at Bavarian elementary schools and different types of secondary schools (Hauptschule and Realschule). In Lower Saxony, a job analysis was conducted (Vogel & Partner, 2005).

Rosenbusch and Schlemmer (1997) worked on the role of educational leadership in the context of new requirements for the individual school and its extended self-governance. Dalin and Rolff (1990) emphasized a dynamically and systemically oriented understanding of the school as an organization with enhanced roles and tasks for school leaders. In the study by Neulinger (1990) the school leader was seen in a mediator and intermediator function. Thereby, the school leader was regarded as a system stabilizer rather than a system developer. Riedel (1998), however, in a comprehensive survey of school leaders of all of Berlin's public schools, detected an overall agreement among the school leaders about the positive impact of decentralization of responsibilities.

Schratz (2004) investigated leadership behavior of the participants in the context of an Austrian leadership development program. He used an action learning approach, from and through the perspective of the school leader herself/himself. Dal Gobbo and Peyer-Siegrist (2000) looked at the school leadership reality of public schools (elementary and secondary level) in the German speaking Swiss cantons.

The dissertation by Issak (2001) focused on the interpersonal relationships between teachers and school leadership (areas of analysis were: communication, motivation, and conflict management) in Austrian public schools. Dätwyler (2005) analyzed the leadership structures in the interactions between selected school leaderships and school boards for the Swiss cantons of Berne, Aargau and Luzern.

The results of another inquiry about the relationship between school leaders and teachers by Schmitz and Voreck (2006) showed that there often was a discrepancy between the expectations of school leaders and the fulfillment of those expectations by the teachers; especially in cases where the school leaders were predominantly committed to school administration and school rules. Maurizia, Hostettler and Hellmüssler (2006) analyzed the data from the Swiss study: "Data collection of relevant leadership issues in the context of the school as an organization."

Schratz (2009) conducted the country study about Austria in the context of the international study "Cross Border Improvement of national LLL-Strategies – focus on Leadership" (with contributions by Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Austria). The study focused on the elaboration of a knowledge base for leadership actions during a decentralization process of the educational system.

In his theoretical paper, Szewczyk (2005) connected several explanation approaches in order to identify areas of change and management processes of vocational schools. In an analysis about school laws of the federal states of Germany, as well as regulations, enactments and requirements for school leaders, Schratz, Pisek and Wopfner (2002) investigated normative requirements as well as operative measurements in order to re-determine the legislation for the (new) functions of school leaders, in times of increasing self-governing of schools in the school system in Austria.

In her theoretically-oriented study, Spraul (2003) focused on school management, which requires navigating a tense relationship between educational tasks and economic requirements. The author concluded that school leaders will increasingly have to take over management tasks. Thereby, school management will hold a key position in the future regarding the strengthening and self-monitoring of the individual school. Furthermore, Spraul states that an integration of business practice methods is indispensable for the educational system.

Huber and Schneider (2007) provided a comparative overview of the changed descriptions of job requirements and job profiles of school leadership in all federal states of Germany. The results show that the central role of school leadership is becoming more and more focused on quality assurance and

quality development. The recently established task profiles reflect the complexity of school leadership actions.

A study including all 16 German state ministries (2008), published by the association “Schule Wirtschaft” (School and Economy) and the Cologne Institute of Economic Research, also identified the school leader as a manager, comparing his/her role with the one in the business sector.

Harazd, Gieske and Rolff (2009) identified teacher health care as a new task of school leaders. They illustrated how teacher stress can be reduced by health-oriented leadership action, which in turn increases school quality.

The study done by Bessoth (1982) focused on the school leader herself/himself, her/his attitudes, interests and opinions as well as motives relevant to leadership. It was a standardized non-representative inquiry about the professional interests of school leadership personnel. Kischel (1989) investigated work related attitudes of school leaders and teachers holding leadership positions compared to those of teachers having no leadership or administrative tasks.

The self-concept of school leaders of all types of schools in Bavaria was the object of inquiry of a study by Wissinger (1996). Bonson (2003) collected data about the conceptions of organization and leadership of school leaders in North Rhine-Westphalia. Weidinger (2003) analysed hierarchies within the school organization in a qualitative inquiry about the subconscious processes of school inspectors and school leaders of compulsory schools in Vienna.

Languth (2006) studied the professional ethics of school leaders and classified five types of leaders: professional, resigning, programmatic, skeptical, pragmatist. Warwas (2009) worked in a similar way by classifying school leaders in terms of performance types: generalist, teacher with administration tasks, educational leader, team leader and superior with educational responsibilities.

In an explorative study, Hildebrandt (2008) examined the attitudes, actions, and action sets of school leaders with regard to the learning processes of teachers over the course of their professional careers.

Stemmer (2011) collected data about the professional self-concept and perception of leadership of school leaders in the canton of Aargau.

The self-concept of women in leadership roles was studied by Lutzau and Metz-Göckel (1996). Hoff (2005) compared the institutional backgrounds of individuals in school leader careers in the 1960s and the 1990s. Using case studies he was able to compare people in leadership roles by generation and by gender. In a theoretical paper, Stroot (2004) analyzed the debate on women in leadership positions concretizing this debate in regards to the school con-



text. Kansteiner-Schänzlin (2004) also researched gender issues regarding school leadership. Miller (2002) investigated the career of female school leaders in primary schools in North Rhine-Westphalia. One of the central findings was that school leaders create networks in order to support each other. A few papers about the stress and pressure on school leaders have emerged recently: At the Institute of Education of the University of Berne, the pressure on school leaders has been under analysis since 1998. Zaugg and Blum (2002) presented a model for the evaluation of work and for the gathering of resources to assist school leaders. Furthermore, they presented a strategy for the practical implementation of this model. Behr, Valentin and Ramos-Weisser (2003) interviewed school leaders of elementary and secondary schools about their workload and concluded that a high number of social conflicts, big schools and a high percentage of students with a foreign background intensify stress on school leaders. Binder, Trachsler and Feller (2003) evaluated the temporary implementation of recommendations for school leaders' workloads and compensation in the canton of St Gallen. Nido, Ackermann, Ulich, Trachsler and Brügglen (2008) investigated working conditions, stress and resources of teachers and school leaders in the canton of Aargau (BKS).

In many Swiss cantons, schools had no principals but a governing body. This has been changed over the last 10 years nearly in every canton, and principals have been put in place (one canton still has schools without principals). Wehner, Vollmer, Manser and Burtscher (2008) examined in their study of schools with a school leadership (in Swiss German: "Geleitete Schule") the correlations between the tasks and work load of leaders with possible stress factors including the size of the school, team conflicts etc.

The education directorate of the canton of Berne (2010) authorized a pre-analysis of the strengthening of the school leadership. Bucher (2010) reported on the project "stress and relief in the educational context". In his school leadership study in the German speaking countries, Huber (2011) and Huber and Reinhardt (2011) are currently analyzing the work situation of school leaders in Germany (in three states: Baden-Württemberg, Saxony-Anhalt and North Rhine-Westphalia) as well as in the German speaking part of Switzerland; the inquiry is also being carried out in Austria (Huber & Zois, 2011). This German speaking school study in particular analyzes person-related professional biographical as well as job context information, general aspects of stress as well as what school leaders like and what they experience as a burden. With a subsample, data about daily activities are gathered using an experience sampling approach with an End-of-Day-Log.

## School leadership and the effectiveness and improvement of schools

Since the turn of the century, research interests have turned towards the impact of school leadership on school effectiveness and improvement. Under the overall supervision of Rolff, Bonsen, von der Gathen, Iglhaut and Pfeiffer (2002) analyzed the causal relationship between school leadership and school quality, identifying goal-oriented leadership, innovativeness and perceived organization skills as important features for successful school leadership. They presented, among other components, feedback as a central steering element of school leadership. In his investigation about the importance of school leadership in the design of school innovation processes, Capaul (2002) distinguished several innovation profiles of school leaders.

Bucher, Bucher and Wininger (2003) developed an overall report for regional collaboration in quality evaluation. Schäfer (2004) analyzed survey data of the public schools of the canton of Berne with respect to the effectiveness of the leadership behavior for organizational learning. The results supported the connection between transformational leadership and innovative arrangements of the school.

In their theoretical contribution, Seitz and Capul (2005) maintained that the dimensions of curriculum development, development vision, and the elaboration and evaluation of action plans are interconnected. They suggested that the school has to be regarded as a social system with its own identity. Here, management processes, core processes and support processes merge, for which the school leadership provides strategic guidance.

In the context of the PISA study, Rolff (2003) used the data collected in 2003 to further investigate the elements connected with school leadership. Wissinger (2002) compared the school leadership data of the results of the TIMS study and the PISA study.

Huber and Niederhuber (2004) questioned teachers about their views on and experiences with school leadership impact following a succession in the school leadership.

Donzallaz (2002) evaluated, in the context of the project "School leadership as quality development of kindergarten and primary schools of the canton of Fribourg", institutions which are on their way to becoming a "Geleitete Schule" (school with a school leadership). Kerle (2002) studied schools with a school leadership in the canton of Grisons. Wehner, Vollmer, Manser and Burtscher (2008) investigated this transformation and its internal coherence in the canton of Zurich. In the evaluation of the project „Schulen mit

Profil“ (“Schools with a Profile”). Büeler, Buholzer and Roos (2005) concluded that self-managed schools demonstrate improved effectiveness.

Huber (2003) conducted a needs analysis for school leaders at schools in Berlin, as preparation for the model project of self-governed schools. The results of this program evaluation were presented by Huber (2006) (recommendations were formulated by Huber, Ahlgrimm and Gördel, 2007).

Pekruhl, Schreier, Smelling and Zölch (2006) analyzed the employee evaluation and performance bonus system in cantonal schools in the Swiss canton of Solothurn. They stated that the development and usage of different instruments for employee evaluation and quality assurance showed positive effects in all schools.

Janke (2006) dealt, by means of a multi-level analysis, with the social climate in schools from the perspective of teachers, school leaders and students. In the context of the Berlin project “systematic classroom development by means of integrative quality management” a triangulative study “leadership and educational quality development” has been conducted at vocational schools since 2008 (Wagner, 2011, in preparation). The study includes questionnaires about the perceived leadership action from the teachers’ point of view as well as group discussions with leaders from individual schools about their understanding of leadership. Currently, in his effectiveness study about school leadership action in project schools of the region of Emsland, Lower Saxony, Lohmann is researching the issue of quality of instruction by leadership.

The international project „Leadership for Learning“ (for the Austrian part see Schratz 2004) combined basic research approaches and applied research with educational research of one’s own practice and the practices of others in an action research network, for the purposes of improving practice as well as generating theory.

The introduction of a changed steering procedure (New Public Management) was investigated between 2003 and 2006 by the joint project “Governing of schools for adults in Hessen (see [www.rub.de/sfe-hessen](http://www.rub.de/sfe-hessen)). The implementation of this procedure was a particular challenge for school leaders, who were to a large extent responsible for its practical realization – especially, in mediating with the teachers’ body. The effect on school management, therefore, was one of the central guiding questions of the project. Koch (forthcoming) investigates in a quantitative analysis the structure of interweaving conditions that impact on the effectiveness of school leadership.

In the context of the evaluation of the project, Self-Governing School“, Rolff (2008) analyzed school leadership and internal school organization in

North Rhine-Westphalia, Feldhoff and Rolff studied (2008) the effects of school leadership and steering group action, and (2009) school leadership in self-governing schools.

Lämmerhirt (2011) analyzed in his doctoral thesis the role and function of school leadership during the implementation (and institutionalization) of innovation taking the work on developing planning as an example.

Huber and Muijs (2010) analysed school leader effectiveness within the context of international studies. Looking at the German context, Huber, Lussi, Schneider, Lehmann and Heeb (2011) took into account steering processes and change processes and focused on the role of school leadership and steering groups.

Huber, Hiltmann, Reinhardt and Schneider (2011) compare studies in a meta-analysis, in which instruments that measure professional school leadership success are analyzed. Their goal is to be able to present and compare different ways of operationalizing “school leadership success”.

Tulowitzki (forthcoming) presently reconstructing in his doctoral thesis ongoing and recently finished school development projects in French schools, with a particular focus on the interactions between school leaders and their immediate professional environment.

## Professionalisation of school leadership: leadership development and selection

There has been no specific research on the development and training of school leaders for a long time. Without current and concrete research about school leadership development, it is hardly possible to formulate well grounded statements that can be used as a basis for creating programs that meet current school leadership development needs, let alone provide the basis for necessary modifications. For the 16 German federal states, Huber (1999d) created a synopsis (juxtaposition), which makes possible the analysis of the leadership development practice in Germany (see Rosenbusch & Huber, 2001; Huber 2002a).

Aside from the school leadership development landscape in Germany, Huber (2003, 2004) also focused, in a comparative study, on the development of school leaders in 15 other countries in Europe, Asia, Australia and North America and he identified changes across nations, tendencies of development and trends. From the results of the data, Huber generated a set of basic requirements for a development program and provided recommendations for the design of future programs.

Influenced by this prior research, conceptions of an ongoing professionalization of educational leaders in schools, amongst others in Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Thuringia, and Bremen as well as in the master's course school management at the University of Teacher Education Central Switzerland (PHZ) have been created. These conceptions include measurements for the short, medium and long term recruiting of new personnel as well as measurements of development and support for both newly appointed and experienced school leaders. As part of the development of the conception of the qualification of educational leaders for schools in Thuringia (2006), a needs analysis of the development and support for school leaders was conducted. The analysis and discussion of approaches to theories and considerations of the professionalization of educational leaders in general (Huber & Schneider, 2006) was the focus of two exploratory studies of the research group led by Huber.

Stückler (2005) investigated in her evaluation study the compulsory school management education for school leaders in the Austrian federal state of Kärnten's compulsory schools.

On behalf of the Swiss Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology, Schratz (2003) analyzed school management qualification courses, their philosophy and the training-relevant functions in all Swiss cantons and (2010) conducted a project about the development of school leaders in Austria funded by EU-LLL/BMUKK. The Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture was the initiator of the study "Innovation in schools by Professionalization of Leadership Personnel in the Leadership Academy" (Schratz, Hartmann & Schley, 2010). This study presented the first part of a longitudinal study, in which the effects and after-effects of a system intervention by the introduction of the Leadership Academy on the work of leadership personnel in schools is observed.

Because studies show that school leadership is important for a decentralized development of the individual schools, the professionalization of school leaders has become a key issue of educational politics. The OECD study *Improving School Leadership* took this aspect into account and organized national studies for the member states. Based on these reports, two extensive publications by the OECD in the form of a meta-analysis emerged. Austria took part in this study, Germany and Switzerland did not participate at that time. Huber functioned as an international expert for the study as a whole (*Improving School Leadership, Volume 1: Policy and Practice*) and worked on the case study about England (Huber et al., 2008: *Improving School Leadership, Volume 2: Case Studies on System Leadership*).

Witjes and Zimmermann (2009) carried out an evaluation of the project: "school leadership coaching by senior experts in North Rhine-Westphalia",

in which school leaders were taught about management knowledge by former or active leaders from the business world.

The criteria for the selection of school leadership personnel have barely been analyzed at all in Germany up to this point. Hopes (1983) analyzed the criteria for selection of school leaders, however, only for Hesse.

Rosenbusch, Huber and Knorr (2002) created a synopsis about the practice of personnel selection of school leaders in the German federal states. Huber and Gniechwitz (2006) actualized the synopsis. Huber and Pashiardis (2008) as well as Huber and Hiltmann (2010) investigated the international procedures and methods for the selection and recruitment of school leaders.

Huber and Hiltmann (2007; 2010) developed an online self-assessment tool for educational leaders (Competence Profile School Management, CPSM) based on psychological tests. The aim of CPSM is to offer a potential analysis for school leadership which serves as an orientation for teachers who are interested in school leadership tasks or as a basis for clarifying personal strengths and weaknesses for newly appointed and experienced members of school leadership teams. In close connection to the competence profile stands the interest-focused questionnaire by Huber and Zois (2011), Huber, Zois, and Mayr (2011) for future school leaders.

Hancock and Müller (2010; 2011) compare the influence of possible motivators and inhibitors that impact teachers' decisions to become principals in the USA and in Germany.

The perception of school leaders of the professional development of teachers was examined by Huber, Sangmeister, Skedsmo, Sassenscheidt and Reinhardt (2011) in a study of all continuous professional development means in Saxony-Anhalt.

Gibitz and Roediger (2005) also used a potential analysis as an instrument for the recruitment of educational leaders in Hesse. They did so, by highlighting a number of core competences for future school leaders and developing exercises to train them.

An evaluation study about the qualifications of school leaders of the association for Swiss school leaders (AEB-LCH) was published by Abächerli and Kopp (1997). Abächerli (1997, 1999) also published further evaluation studies. Kramis-Aebischer (1998) analyzed the management training for school leadership, school organization, and school development. Maag Merki (2003) concluded in the evaluation of the development of school leaders in the canton of Zurich that there is a need for further development and support in the fields of personnel development and team building as well as communication.

Rhyner (2004) evaluated a development program for future school leaders in the canton of Zurich in a large group design. In conclusion, the partici-

pants rated above all the small group work within the group design as positive for achieving their learning objectives. Landert (2004) evaluated the basic and further development of school leaders (AFS) in Bern and concluded that school leaders effectively work in the fields of public relations, structure formation, personnel introduction, organizational administration and school culture.

Rindlisbacher, Herren and Quesel (2008) evaluated school leadership development in Basle city and Basle Land (SLBB). Huber (2008a, 2009a) evaluated, in cooperation with the academy for adult education, the master's course school management of the University of Teacher Education Central Switzerland (PHZ) from the participants' perspective.

For the German context, Huber (2010a, 2010b) and Huber, Schneider, Skedsmo and Reinhardt (2011) evaluated leadership development programs in Bremen, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, and Thuringia. For this, a theoretical frame model for theory-based empiric research was developed (Huber 2009b, Huber & Radisch, 2010). This model forms the basis for several qualitative and quantitative evaluations, which besides the participants' point of view also include the opinions of the trainers (organizers, training staff) and the people responsible. The quality of teaching and learning arrangements are thus evaluated, as are individual learning processes and the transfer into practice.

Pfister (forthcoming) is currently investigating leadership approaches and theories with regard to their applicability to the structures of vocational schools, in order to collect in a standardized inquiry precise data about the wish of teachers in vocational schools to apply for leadership positions. Hartmann (forthcoming) is presently researching school leadership qualifications outside the German speaking countries, and specifically the professionalization of school leaders in the Canadian province of Ontario.

## Conclusion

Research in the field of school leadership has a relatively young tradition in the German speaking countries (as it does in many other countries, too). Since 2000 the research base has improved. In particular, the research teams of Rosenbusch, Rolff, Schratz, Wissinger, Huber, and Bensen have published several studies on school leadership. Aside from the research by these researchers, most of the studies have been undertaken by researchers who only did one study as a qualification study. Unfortunately, groups who could use an interdisciplinary approach, such as research consortia, for example, do not seem to exist in the German speaking countries.

However, a certain degree of internationality can be assumed, and the international literature is increasingly being used to inform the research into school leadership in the German speaking countries.

It is also noticeable that funding for research programs with a focus on school leadership/school management are extremely scarce or not existing at all.

This article is based on studies by researchers from the German speaking countries. Apart from these studies, there are further studies with different research questions, which along with their primary focus either implicitly or explicitly include school leadership. As stated before, such studies have not been included in this article.

The research desiderata that exist internationally (see below) also hold true for the German speaking countries. Moreover, results from international research (particularly from the Anglo-American context) certainly cannot be simply adopted and applied, but they could be used for conducting replicative studies. This would be a rewarding and challenging task, as when it comes to adapting the research instruments, for example, simply translating them into German would of course be insufficient. Such replicative studies could provide interesting comparative perspectives.

Based on this brief research review, further research desiderata become apparent, which will be outlined briefly:

There is still some need of further basic research into tasks of and demands on school leadership in German speaking countries. Among these should be surveys of school leadership recognized as 'good' and 'bad' according to various outcome criteria on the organization level as well as the individual level by teachers and pupils, for example. Of particular interest is the impact of school leadership on improving teaching and learning. Teaching and learning, or education and instruction, are the core activities of schools. In terms of an organisational-educational approach, it is from this that the core purpose of school leadership must be derived: what should school leadership activities be like in order to have the best possible effect on classroom instruction in a twofold sense, providing the best possible organisational conditions on the one hand, and having an (immediate) effect on classroom instruction and classroom development on the other hand?

Moreover, research on stress, burn-out, and on coping strategies of school leaders is needed. In addition, research about school leaders' values, interests, the tasks they like and how all this is linked to various other factors such as personal aspects or elements of the organizational context could be illuminating and also how this is changing over time as school leadership is professionalized (moving away from 'primus inter pares' to professional leadership and management with high decision-making power).



It is necessary to conduct analyses regarding the training and development needs of school leaders at different career steps and in different school contexts. Specific research has to be carried out to determine the ways school leaders develop competences which lead to successful leadership with a high impact on key variables. How do they generate knowledge? How do they develop expertise? How can the transition of the knowledge acquired in the development program into practice be improved? How does this change across the various career stages? What is considered supportive? International comparative studies particularly concerning the effectiveness of programs should be conducted. This will provide insights in the quality, and sustainability of development programs. A standardised research design, and not only one for a meta-study would be desirable here. There should also be educational-economic studies on the efficiency of training and development programs. These could provide information for educational-policy decisions concerning the overall efforts taken. Moreover, it would be interesting to investigate how the development of individual school leaders could be linked effectively to the development of individual schools in terms of qualifying school leadership teams and other change agents in the individual schools (including studies of schools that have realised alternative leadership possibilities such as shared leadership, etc.).

The importance of researching the election and recruitment of school leaders and its connection with school leader development should be emphasised.

Obviously, much more can be researched in, it is about specific issues of research within the different academic disciplines which can be applied in the specific field. Psychology emphasises social aspects, motivation, decision-making processes, contingency issues, etc. But other disciplines such as sociology or political sciences or economics or others will have fruitful research questions and additional fields and approaches.

That the research base is not as strong as one might expect reflects not just a dearth of research compared to prescription, but also deficiencies in research designs. Moreover, as to the data we have so far, there is a strong overreliance of self-report in leadership studies in the German speaking countries, where the most common form of research design is either a survey or interviews, usually of a limited number of school leaders. Studies are almost always post hoc, trying to work backwards with a retrospective view on the research object. This practice is clearly limited. Both survey- and interview-based methodologies, while highly useful, have some severe limitations, when used as the sole means of data collection. Post hoc interviews

are heavily prone to attributional bias (the tendency to attribute to ourselves positive outcomes, while negative outcomes are externally attributed, Weiner, 1980), as well as to self-presentation bias and interviewer expectancy effects (the tendency to give those answers that might be expected by the interviewer).

Survey questionnaires are likewise limited, especially where they are cross-sectional, as only correlational data can be collected. The issues of expectancy effects and bias exist here as well, as does attributional bias, for example. These limitations mean it is often hard to make strong statements either about impact or about processes.

The quantitative methodologies used need to be longitudinal more often and to take advantage of quasi-experimental designs, and even of field trials of new leadership methods. Moreover, there is a need to gather data not only from the school leaders but also from teachers and others (to add additional views from an external perception to the self-reports from a self-perception).

Additionally, observations, although cost intensive and not easy to implement as they most often intervene with the day-to-day practice which should be observed, might help the research move towards multi-perspectivity and triangulation.

Qualitative approaches likewise need to be more multi-perspective and longitudinal. They need to employ methods and instruments that allow more in-depth interrogation of processes such as ethnographic studies and genuine long-term case studies as well as the methods currently being used.

Researchers have recently begun developing mixed methods designs. Combining different approaches can in many ways be fruitful either in an explanative or in an explanatory way. Firstly, it is clear that researchers and scholars within the field of educational leadership need to be more explicit about the theories applied, the constructs used, and to have a conceptual awareness, meaning that the underlying assumptions guiding the research are identified. What is obvious is that the complexity of leadership processes and their impact requires the use of research designs which take this complexity into account. The research needs to be conducted in a coherent way, integrating research questions, conceptual framework, methods, analysis, and conclusions and critically engaging in a discussion of the research results, including the limitations of the study conducted and the implications for leadership practice (see Yanchar & Williams, 2006).

It is also interesting to see how alternative data gathering methods might illuminate the complexity of organisation and leadership context, as, e.g.

Huber (2008b, 2009c) uses Social Network Analysis, Life Curve Analysis, such as pictures and metaphors.

In addition to more complex data gathering methods, there is also a need for more refined methods of data analysis such as multi-level, growth models, structure equation modelling.

Moreover, research that takes the context and the contingency into account needs to be undertaken. However, these expected pieces of research imply high demands. There are obvious contextual differences in terms of leadership such as the extent of autonomy school leaders have within the educational system, their appointment and selection criteria, and many other less easily accessible cultural differences. It is about the culture of organisations and systems and the more general professional and general culture of a field and of countries. Carefully designed comparisons with other fields and other countries between the German speaking countries as well as between other European and non-European countries would be very illuminating.

This means that the tendency to move straight to prescription becomes potentially even more harmful where the research base is from an entirely different (cultural) context, where school leadership will operate under different circumstances and conditions.

To sum this article up, while leadership research has made important contributions to the field of education, which have had practical benefits, if we are genuinely to move both research and practice forward we need to perform more rigorous quantitative and qualitative research, aimed at both measuring impact and exploring processes, taking into account the complexity of schools as organisations, and refraining from an overly prescriptive approach that, on the basis of very limited research, posits absolute truths about good practice. Last but not least we need to create better 'fits' of theories, empirical research and experienced practice. Hence, besides all methodological and methodical questions and desired modified research practice, there is also a need to refine theoretical models and theories (whether with a very focused or with a broader approach). Empirical research should lead to further developed theories and theoretical assumptions should guide further empirical work.

Obviously, feasibility is also restricting the research (our own and that of our colleagues) and therefore the research designs should have the appropriate funding to make new kinds of research possible. Proper funding for research is an important aspect. There is a need to have research grants which are large enough to allow cooperative research arrangements to develop more sophisticated multi-perspective and longitudinal research designs.

National and international experiences should be considered and integrated, and international research co-operations should be promoted. As a basis for this, national and international networks should be further developed. In these networks, educationalists and practitioners should have a forum for the exchange of ideas and for cooperation.

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# CHAPTER 12 RESEARCH ON PRINCIPALS IN POLAND

Joanna M. Michalak

## Introduction

In the last decade a rise of interest in issues of leadership could have been observed both among scientists and practitioners in Poland. Nowadays no one in Poland must be persuaded that leaders are needed. It entails seeking out and supporting the best individuals who are able and wish to change our reality, possess skills enabling them to introduce change, engage others and search for new ways for their communities, which is especially important in education.

The purpose of this paper is to present a research review of the PhD research and regular studies on principals and school leaders in Poland. The presented research overview covers the period from 2000 to 2010, and it is preceded by a description of the school reforms in Poland.

## School Reform in Poland: Distribution of Responsibilities and the Scope of Role of the School Head

In Poland schools reforms are influenced both by debate with the profession (for example the concerns about accountability, standardised testing and accreditation that have come to the fore in recent years) and by wider social, political and economic context. By the early 1990s, Poland had one of the lowest participation rates in full secondary education and in higher education of any industrial country. After the demise of communism, this system seized up. The industry sectors that previously ran the vocational schools backed away from funding them and from guaranteeing employment to their graduates. The most important, immediate reasons which were underlying the necessity to carry out a comprehensive reform of the whole education system were connected with the lack of capacity within the education system to adapt to the pace and scope of economic, social and cultural change. And in particular these reasons were, as follow (Michalak, 2005):

- the crisis of the educational role of the school resulting from (a) the predominance of the transmission of information (understood as a set of facts) over the development of skills and the shaping of personality, and (b) the dominance of collective education over individual education (incalculating a Communist ideology);
- the crisis of narrow vocational education that prepared workers for jobs in huge state-owned industrial plants;
- the lack of equal opportunities in access to education at all levels and the low percentage of young people completing secondary and higher education;
- the necessity to adapt the education system to the provisions of the Constitution and the system reform of the State;
- the need to establish closer links between schools at all levels and the family, as well as the local community.

The move to a market economy, foreign investment and the preparation for entry into the European Union (which took place in 2004) were major influences on change in the educational system. In view of the urgent need to introduce reform of educational system, Polish policy makers decided on a far-reaching reform program. Educational policy documents expressed the need to educate citizens for lifelong learning, to develop greater flexibility and autonomy in learning and to ensure that areas such as ICT and foreign language were included in the curriculum. The priorities initially were to abolish the state monopoly on education, to reduce the number of people leaving school with only a basic vocational training, to reform curricula and textbooks, and to modernize the system of teacher education. The reform covered the following areas:

- changes in the methods of administration and supervision of education to adjust them to the new state system,
- the structure of the education system ranging from the nursery school to doctorate studies, including the introduction of a new school system,
- a curriculum reform comprising the introduction of the curriculum framework, as well as changes in the organisation and methods of teaching,
- the establishment of a system, as well as procedures for assessment and examination independent of the school,
- the determination of the economic status, sources and methods of financing the school,
- the identification of qualification requirements for teacher, which were linked with promotion paths and the system of remuneration at an adequately high level.

The new basic principles of the Polish education system have been included in the School Education Act of 7 September 1991 (with further amendments).

This Act regulates the division of competencies in the field of administration of each school (pre-school institution) – according to different state administration levels (central, regional, local). The reform of the State administration system and the education reform assume that only the national educational policy will be developed and carried out centrally, while the administration of education and the running of all types of schools, pre-school institutions and other educational establishments are decentralised. As a result of these reforms, from being a centrally planned, hierarchical and closed educational system, it has been transformed into a more open and highly decentralised system of governance. Each school is administered locally and possesses a high degree of autonomy. The responsibility for the administration of public kindergartens, primary schools and gymnasia has been delegated to local authorities (*gminy*). It has become the statutory responsibility of *powiaty* (districts) to administer upper secondary schools, artistic and special schools. The regions (*województwa*) have a co-ordinating function, supervising the implementation of the Ministry's policy and being responsible for pedagogical supervision. The Minister of National Education co-ordinates and carries out the state education policy, partially supervises the work of education superintendents (*kuratoria*) and co-operates with other organizational bodies and units in the field of education.

The 1999 Education Reform Act introduced a new structure of educational system. As a result of the reform the primary phase was shortened (from eight-year primary school to six-year primary school) and a new intermediate/lower secondary stage was introduced: a three-year compulsory school called *gimnazjum* (gymnasium). Thus all students would study a common curriculum – including courses in reading, mathematics, and science – until they turned 15. This provided an extra year of academic studies for those students who otherwise would have spent that year in vocational training. Compulsory education was prolonged and now it lasts from age six<sup>1</sup> to eighteen. In accordance with this reform the education system currently comprises pre-school institutions, primary schools, gymnasia and post-gymnasium schools.

Education in primary schools is divided into two stages: (i) the first stage of education (grades 1 to 3) offering elementary – integrated teaching (in

<sup>1</sup> A child aged 3 to 5 may receive pre-school education, which is not compulsory, but all six year-old children attend either kindergartens (*przedszkole*) or pre-school classes (*oddziały przedszkolne*) organized in primary schools as the Ministry of Education introduced one year of obligatory pre-school education starting the school year 2004/05.

new core curriculum defined as early school education), and (ii) the second stage of education (grades 4 to 6) at which subject teaching is provided. The reform of the school system has introduced an external standardized test upon the completion of the primary school (grade 6). For the first time it was conducted in 2002 by the Regional Examination Commissions. The test is obligatory for all pupils and taking this test is one of the conditions for graduation from primary school. Only pupils with moderate and severe mental handicaps are exempt from this obligation. The test aims at the assessment of skills defined in the national standards. The skills are divided into five areas: reading, writing, reasoning, use of information and practical application of knowledge. All pupils take this test, as the results are used for information purposes only, and it does not give the basis for any selection or ranking of pupils. Every pupil who graduated from a primary school has to be admitted to a lower secondary school – the gymnasium in his/her school area.

The gymnasium is compulsory for all pupils and offers 3-years of full-time general education for pupils who have completed the primary school. Study covers grades 1 to 3 (pupils aged 13 to 16) and it is not divided into stages. The gymnasium is concluded with an external compulsory exam, organized by the regional examination commission, giving access to upper secondary education. Gymnasium graduates can continue their education into either vocational or secondary post-gymnasium schools<sup>2</sup>.

Both academic and technical upper secondary schools offer a route into higher education on the basis of the result of the final exam, called *Matura* exam. Graduates from 2 or 3-year basic vocational school also have a possibility of taking the *Matura* examination, upon their successful completion of the 2-year supplementary general secondary school (*uzupełniająca liceum ogólnokształcące*) or a 3-year supplementary technical secondary school (*technikum uzupełniająca*).

The new external *Matura* examination introduced in 2005 has gradually replaced entrance examinations to universities. In the light of the existing law, institutions of higher education are excluded from the system as they form a separate higher education system or sector: all issues connected with

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2 Gymnasium graduates can continue their education in the following types of schools: (i) Basic vocational school with the minimum duration of 2 years and maximum duration of 3 years which leads to obtaining of a diploma confirming vocational qualifications upon passing of an exams as well as further education in supplementary schools; (ii) 3-year general upper secondary school leading to receipt of the *Matura* certificate upon passing of the *Matura* examination; (iii) 3-year specialized upper secondary school offering education in specializations of general vocational education which leads to receipt of the *Matura* certificate upon passing of the *Matura* examination; (iv) 4-year technical upper secondary school leading to receipt of a diploma confirming vocational qualifications upon passing of an examination, and also offering a possibility of receipt of the *Matura* certificate upon passing of the *Matura* examination; (v) 3-year special schools preparing pupils with SEN for employment leading to receipt of a certificate confirming preparation for employment.



the system of higher education are regulated in the Act of 27 July 2005 Law on Higher Education and in the Act on Scientific Degrees and Titles of 14 March 2003<sup>3</sup>.

School heads are recruited on the basis of an open competition and employed by the body running schools. (for five years) In justified cases this period may be shortened, but not shorter than 1 school year. In consultation with the body running schools, i.e. the commune or the *powiat*, the school head appoints and dismisses his/her deputy and other executive staff, if those posts are in agreement with the statute of a school (pre-school institution). In particular, the school head:

- manages the school (institution) and represents it externally;
- exercises pedagogical supervision;
- takes care of pupils and provides background for their harmonious psychological and physical development through various health promoting activities;
- implements the resolutions of the school council or the teachers' council (undertaken in accordance with their competencies);
- is in charge of financial means and is responsible for their proper use;
- co-operates with higher education and teacher training institutions in the field of organizing teacher pedagogical training;
- is responsible for the organization and implementation of the tests and examinations in his/her school.

In the contemporary Polish educational environment, the range of knowledge and skills that effective school principals need today is daunting: curricular, pedagogical, student and adult learning in addition to managerial and financial skills, abilities in group dynamics, interpersonal relations and communication. Polish principals are being pulled in many directions between management, leadership and accountability pressures. One can say that the principal is "responsible for nearly everything": budget allocation, interpretation and implementation of legislation, staff appointments, human resource management, professional development provision, action

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3 The higher education in Poland is one of the most dynamically developing areas of social life. In the last 20 years, rapid quantitative and institutional changes have taken place. Since the beginning of the change in the Polish political system (the new legislation: Higher Education Act of 12 Sept. 1990, uniform text published in the *Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland* of 1990, No 65 pos. 385 and Educational System Act introduced on 7. September 1991) the number of students have increased almost fivefold and more than one third of this rise consists of students from the non-public institutions of higher education. In Poland, before 1990 there existed only state institutions of higher education with the exception of the Catholic University of Lublin. In total, over a half of all these students participates in commercial forms of education. At present, almost 2 million students study in 458 institutions of higher education – 132 public ones and 326 non-public ones.

plans and target setting, dealing with parent requests and complaints, the 'soft skills' of teamwork and team building and also for teaching (Polish principals are required by law to have been teachers, and most continue to be engaged in classroom teaching for at least 2–3 hours per week; this enables them to remain connected to their pupils, and ensures that pedagogical leadership is not merely rhetoric but a day-to-day reality). The result of these pressures and the existing leadership role of principals lead to the situation where there exists a feeling that the principal's job entails more and more work and responsibilities. Shortage of time, increased pressure, expanded scope and accumulating perception of overload – these are the mounting burdens of the Polish principalship. And, to take matters even further, these problems are taking place within an inadequate and insufficient form of leadership support (Michalak, 2007, 2009).

**Summing up**, the school reforms began as late as the 1990s, as the Polish education system moved from the emphasis on vocational education and training that prevailed under communism to an education system that aimed to equip its citizens with a more rounded education that would enable them to adapt to a rapidly changing world. This push towards reform also entailed reforms in teaching and in teacher education<sup>4</sup>. Because of the decentralized nature of the system, leadership practices vary between the different communes (*gmina*) in Poland. School leadership rests on principles of subsidiarity; within a broad vision, legislative arrangements and funding structures, decision-making is moved to the level of those most able to secure their implementation.

## Ph.D Research on Principals and School Leaders

The review of pedagogical literature indicates an increase in interest in educational leadership, principal's role as a leader and a role of leaders at school. Nevertheless, a survey of scientific research from the period of 2000–2010 shows that at Polish universities there were few research projects (only 12)

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<sup>4</sup> Thanks to a series of major school reforms, Poland has dramatically reduced the numbers of poorly performing students in its schools and cut by half the variations in performance among schools. The PISA 2000 results and the PISA 2003 results mark the divide between the old and new systems of Polish education. The 15-year-olds tested in 2000 had already been streamed into their three distinct levels of schools. In 2003 and 2006, the 15 year olds tested on PISA were studying in the gymnasia. Not only did these students have a stronger foundation in academic areas, but the 2006 students had also participated in the revised primary curriculum as well as the new *gymnasium*. The reduced variance between schools may also be attributed to the fact that the 2003 and 2006 students attended gymnasia that were not streamed by academic ability, unlike the schools they would have attended under the old system. Thanks to a series of school reforms that began in the late 1990s, Poland has dramatically reduced the numbers of poorly performing students in the last 10 years and in the 2009 PISA tests ranked among the top 15 OECD countries. The changes to the country's school system that made this remarkable achievement possible were needed to help Poland adapt to a free-market economy, in place of the communist command economy that operated until 1989.

which led to writing PhD dissertations concerning educational leadership. These dissertations centred on the following aspects:

- principal's role and tasks,
- principal's competences and leader's competences at school,
- school and its development in the context of educational leadership,
- management models for educational organisations.

### Principal's role and tasks

The following two PhD dissertations can serve as examples concerning the first area listed above.

*Principal's role in managing a public school (2009)* Izabela Bednarska-Wnuk  
The University of Łódź

In this work the following thesis is formulated: "changes in the Polish educational system contribute to altering the role of a public school principal in such a way that the features characteristic of management roles in business organisations are implemented and developed." This thesis was verified in this work by means of three hypotheses:

1. the significance of principal's pedagogical expertise decreases and is replaced by expertise in organisation and management,
2. the structure of personality traits demanded from a public school principal is changing towards those that are helpful in performing a public school principal's role when free market mechanisms gain greater and greater ground in education,
3. modern role of a public school principal is primarily identified with a manager's rather than educator's role.

The research goal of this dissertation was to collect the opinions of public school principals, teachers, parents, children and pedagogical supervisors on actual and expected roles of a principal and on the factors influencing practical implementation of these roles. Empirical research was conducted in 2006 and 2007. The choice of research sample was deliberate and the criterion for this selection was location of public schools (primary and secondary ones) in the Łódź Province. The research was conducted with two research tools: questionnaire survey and questionnaire interview. It encompassed 392 respondents recruited from four groups: public school principals, pedagogical supervisors, teachers and parents. This dissertation presented the conditions facilitating playing the principal's role in the changing educational situation and basic recommendations for modified competence standards for a public school principal. In the conclusion, the author summed up all

considerations included in the dissertation and demonstrated evidence of changes in the educational system.

This research made it possible to formulate the following conclusions:

1. the significance of principal's pedagogical expertise decreases and is replaced by expertise in organisation and management,
2. a public school principal and their environment notice this change in the role,
3. principals' own perception is not highly dependent, but statistically noticeable, on their age, professional experience and type of their education,
4. common elements in the structure of basic competences needed in playing a public school principal role can be identified,
5. factors that influence playing the role of a public school principal were identified,
6. nowadays the role of a public school manager is not primarily identified with the role of a manager,
7. there exists a discrepancy between an actual role of a public school principal and a role that is perceived by their surroundings,
8. there is a functional similarity of a role of a public school principal and a manager's role in a business organisation.

The research showed that the role of a principal is becoming more and more similar to the role of a manager in a business organisation. This is happening due to the introduction of laws that contributed to increased principal's responsibilities for running a school.

*A vocational school principal in the period of social change (2007)* Maria Žak, Institute of Educational Studies

This dissertation presents the following issues: a theoretical description of a desired situation, presentation of a real situation and suggestions for changes. The main themes of the dissertation include: theoretical and descriptive concerning social changes in Poland concerning the turn of 20th and 21st centuries and organisational roles played by modern vocational school principal (especially concerning their manager's role and their role as a leader and an agent of change) and showed through the following parameters: tasks, authority, responsibility and working conditions; and through desired managerial competences: (knowledge, skills and personal traits). The empirical part contains both the review of the author's own research and the information about other research projects that lie within the scope of the dissertation. The dissertation also contains suggestions for changes.

Two strategies were used in the research: quantitative and qualitative. The following methods were used: a diagnostic survey (the respondents consisted of 83 vocational school principals – out of 102 – from the Podkarpackie Province), 10 school inspectors and 10 representatives of supervisory institutions from this region) and document analysis.

The research produced the following conclusions:

1. The most important external factors influencing change and modification of the role of modern vocational school principal are: political system transformation and its basic implications, and the reform of administration and education together with resulting changes in educational and general law.
2. Vocational school principal's tasks shape new roles: of a manager and of a leader and agent of change. In reality, principals are not managers in the strict meaning of this word, because they are not independent in their decision-making, they are rarely creative and their work is constantly disrupted.
3. The scope of tasks that a principal is burdened with is too extensive for one person, especially because of the shortage of auxiliary personnel. That is why most principals concentrate mainly on current matters characteristic of the manager of a business that concentrates on the organisation's survival in a constantly changing environment.
4. The main factors hampering vocational school principal's work are as follows: contradictory external requirements, external pressures, financial problems, competition ("battle" for a pupil), operating in a constantly changing reality, ambiguity of legal regulations and their changeability, too many tasks demanding knowledge from many areas, having not adequate preparation for managing change at school level, autonomy limitations concerning especially financial and personnel matters, necessity of taking unpopular decisions and red tape burdens.

The main hypothesis was verified positively: social change caused by new requirements imposed on a vocational school principal influence their organisational role and changes it.

### **Principal's competences and leader's competences at school**

The following two PhD dissertations can serve as examples concerning the second area listed above.

*School principals' social competences* (2008) Bożena Tołwińska, The University of Białystok

Principals' competences concerning communication, motivating for work and resolving conflicts was the subject of theoretical analyses and practical studies. The need to undertake this subject resulted from its significance to the institutions whose main type of activities is work with people. In order to achieve high quality, schools must be adequately managed, and among various areas of this process the first and foremost one must be managing teachers' staff. Releasing the potential lying in people is a very complex issue, requiring knowledge and skills aiding in shaping interpersonal relationships in order to achieve organisational goals and create atmosphere conducive to development.

This argument became a criterion for choosing three competences as the subjects of the analyses. They were described as ones that the whole group found necessary for holding a managerial position, fulfilling professional tasks and maintaining good interpersonal relationships. Appropriate human resources management and creating atmosphere conducive to staff's development should be treated as a priority by managerial staff. The cognitive goal of this dissertation was to get to know and describe how school principals assess their own competences concerning communication, motivating for work and resolving conflicts in the context of educational leadership, and to conduct comparative analysis of school principals' self-assessment of competences and the assessment of these competences done by teachers (partners in everyday interactions). The research sample contained 93 school principals and 433 teachers.

*Principal's competences in a school learning in the information society, (2007)*  
Dariusz Grzybek, Adam Mickiewicz University

The goal of this dissertation was to construct a theoretical model of school principal's competences running a school which is learning in the information society and on this basis to prepare postgraduate curriculum aimed at future school principals. This dissertation is situated within a few areas: a school as a learning organisation, a school principal as a leader, information society, the Polish educational system, differences in the meanings of "competence" and "qualification".

This dissertation consists of 9 chapters. The first four contain descriptions of the areas mentioned above and present the author's own considerations. The remaining 5 demonstrate the research findings and conclusions.

### **School and its development in the context of educational leadership**

The following PhD dissertation can serve as an example concerning the third area listed above.

*Conditions of integration and disintegration of teachers' teams in primary schools of Pomorskie Province* (2009) Jolanta Maciąg, The University of Gdańsk.

This dissertation is interdisciplinary in its character it lies within the areas of pedeutology, social psychology, organisational sociology and a theory of management. The author's interest in the issues of integration and disintegration among teachers of primary schools results from a few reasons. Firstly, analysis of integration processes gives an opportunity for learning: what is the attitude of a researched group of teachers towards their colleagues, school and profession. The analysis also provides information on their aspirations and plans. Altogether it contributes to getting to know a lot of problems connected with adaptation and integration processes occurring in a social working environment. Secondly, when there is no teachers' professional stabilisation, special attention should be paid to integration processes taking place at work, because it is an issue which is closely connected with shaping worker's social identity. Finally, work as one of the basic gluing elements of an industrial society should be analysed not only in the context of amassing consumer goods and increasing financial benefits, but also as a constant factor in working person's development, because each workers' team constitutes a closer environment for its members.

The goal of this dissertation is to analyse the issue of a degree of integration or disintegration on the basis of the results of empirical research conducted among teachers in a selected group of primary schools in Pomorskie Province. The direction of the studies and the arrangement of the dissertation content are defined by the following question: *"What conditions affect integration processes among primary school teachers and are there any relations between factors connected with a current workplace of respondents and a degree of integration or disintegration?"* Using knowledge amassed so far in the field of psychosocial human behaviours, an attempt was made to examine their state and the personal, material, professional and organisational factors influencing them as well as the factors connected with the manner of managing and running a school, was undertaken.

The research concerning integration processes to a large degree concentrate on the ingredients conditioning the make-up of a group (e.g. economic conditions, working conditions, internal relationships, personal attractiveness, approval of goals, group stability and appropriate authority structure). Assuming multifacetedness of this researched issue, factors linked with personality conditions were identified, as well as those connected with occupational and primary school infrastructure. The obtained empirical research findings enrich our knowledge concerning integration of the researched

teachers' groups. These findings also serve as the basis for determining the need for further research in the light of scientific work done so far. Thus the main social and practical goal of designed future research is formulating suggestions and guidelines for improving relationships among teaching staff in the context of educational leadership and the role played by principals. In this case, it is about stressing positive and negative conditions of some phenomena and their influence on shaping integration processes.

### **Management models for educational organisations**

The following PhD dissertation can serve as an example concerning the fourth area listed above.

*The models of management in educational institutions within PHARE-TERM and New School programmes. Implications for the educational system reform.* (2002) Tadeusz Bator, Institute of Educational Studies.

The goal of this dissertation is to improve standards of management in educational institutions on all levels of the Polish educational system. The dissertation aims at working out models of management for educational institutions. The study uses experiences gained from a foreign educational programme PHARE-TERM, and a Polish one called New School. The research findings and their analysis present the current system of management in selected countries in the European Union and in Poland and aid in creating management models for Polish educational institutions (also with the assistance of experiences gained in the EU countries).

## **Regular research on principals and School Leaders**

In Poland, in the area of educational sciences various, unconnected research projects concerning educational leadership appeared. There is no one research centre created in order to deepen our knowledge of educational leadership. In the 1990s, the Institute of Studies on Leadership was established in Collegium Civitas and in Poland it is the first and still the only interdisciplinary research and educational institution focusing on expanding our knowledge of leadership; however, of political leadership exclusively (<http://www.isnp.collegium.edu.pl>).

Despite the lack of a leading research centre dealing with educational leadership, in the last decade, a significant growth in interest in issues of educational leadership, principal's role and teachers as leaders has been



noticed. This translates into a number of publications which appeared in 2000–2010, especially between 2006 and 2011. They were both larger works in the form of books, as well as journal articles.

As far as the articles on educational leadership are concerned, generally speaking the authors of articles look at the theoretical and methodological aspects of educational leadership. They are mainly interested in different theories describing leadership in schools and methodological issues of research and theory and leadership practices in schools. They express their opinions constructing and reconstructing different research approaches to educational leadership and dealing with such issues as:

- *Principal's role* (Abratańska, 2002; Cichoń, 2001; Kwiatkowski, 2006; Michalak, 2009; Michalak, Jones, 2009; Nalaskowski, 2001);
- *Principal's competences and tasks* (Dzierzgowska, 2004; Gawarecki, 2003; Jaśko, 2008; Sawiński, 2003; Tołwińska, 2009; Tyburska, 2005);
- *Desired principal's personality traits and skills* (Malinowski, 2004; Sielatycki, 2004; Tołwińska, 2007);
- *Changing role of the teacher: teachers as leaders* (Bańka, 2000; Belcar, 2003; Gontarczyk, Koprowska, Pawłowa, 2001; Kołodziejaska, 2001, Kucz, 2001; Panasiuk, 2000; Potocki, 2001; Wlazło, 2010; Wójcik, 2000; Zarębska, 2002).

Taking into account the limited space for presenting this overview of research on leadership in Poland, I will mainly concentrate on some of the books devoted to the educational leadership.

One of the first books on educational leadership, which was released in Poland, was the edited book entitled *Przywództwo w szkole [Leadership at school]*. Joanna M. Michalak, (2006) as the book editor, invited academics that specialized in the field of educational leadership to contribute to the creation of this publication. There were not only Polish authors, but the authors from abroad as well. The book was a great success and it was due in large part to the scientific cooperation of Professor Christopher Day, University of Nottingham, who supported the book's editor in conceptual work on the book and in inviting some foreign authors to work on this publication. The book is based on the findings of the international research project "Improving Schools in Challenging Contexts Urban Contexts: Lifelong Learning Communities for All", which was carried out thanks to a University of Lodz grant. It is worth mentioning that this project, was conducted under the honorary auspices of the Committee for Educational Sciences of the Polish Academy of Science, the conference "Responsible Leadership. Teachers as Leaders of Changes" was held at the Faculty of Management, the

University of Łódź, on 6th May, 2004. It was prepared by the Chair of Educational Sciences of the University of Łódź in cooperation with the Centre for Teacher In-service Training and Practical Education in Łódź. The conference was accompanied by workshops for headteachers and teachers, which were held under a general title “Leadership at School” on 7th May, 2004. These workshops dealt with the following issues: “School as a Learning Organisation”, “Headteacher as a Leader of Changes at School” and “Change Management – Priorities and Strategies”. The workshops were also organised in collaboration with the Centre for Teacher In-service Training and Practical Education in Łódź. Profesor Christopher Day had a keynote during the conference and conducted the workshops for headteachers and teachers, which provided a very valuable experience for the workshops’participants.

The book *Przywództwo w szkole [Leadership at school]* attempts to introduce readers to the complex issues of leadership by demonstrating its theoretical, empirical and practical aspects, and provide readers with the answers to the following questions: What is the heart of leadership? What features, predispositions and skills should leaders possess? Is an individual born a leader? What is the difference between the roles of manager and leader in educational contexts? What types of leadership are desirable at certain stages of school development? How can educational leadership support school improvement? The collection of the chapters demonstrates there are no simple solutions resulting in school improvement. They indicate that those leaders who can act responsibly, build positive relationships and offer teachers, parents and pupils the possibilities of collective work aimed at improving their schools are the successful ones.

The book consists of three parts complementing one another. The first one, entitled *The Notion And Nature of Leadership at School*, comprises texts demonstrating the most current characteristics in the discourse on the nature, varieties, goals, scope and functions of leadership in schools. The complexity and dynamism of the context in which schools operate and the great number of theories concerning these issues make it difficult to select only one theory of good leadership which would be commonly, or at least widely, recognised and approved of. Therefore, the reader is acquainted with various possible interpretations of the notion of “leadership”. The texts in this section demonstrate different leadership models which do not offer ready-made recipes prepared for implementation, yet they give an overview of diverse approaches towards leadership in schools. Teachers and headteachers, who together belong to the school community, must find their own best method of leadership. A critical analysis of various ideas of leadership may support teachers in creating the leadership vision for their schools.

The second part, entitled *The Role of Leadership in School Development*, demonstrates the role that leadership plays in the process of school development. The articles comprising it refer to various programmes supporting school development through the implementation of the idea of leadership and thus through the creation of leadership potential, which in turn involves merging the processes of culture and structure change at school and developing teaching skills. In this part, the factors determining the strength and effectiveness of leadership are analysed with special attention paid to the role played by headteachers. It is noted that they should be characterised by perseverance in taking actions aimed at improving the situation of pupils and teachers. This is especially challenging in highly diverse school environments and in settings geographically and socially separated. This part presents the ways in which successful schools from environments threatened with social marginalisation operate. The examples described here demonstrate how it is possible to overcome existing barriers (by making good use of available environmental and human potential) in offering education of high standards. These examples can be useful in similar situations. In the last part, entitled *Leadership and Learning. New Challenges*, readers will find texts acquainting them with the little known research areas of school life. They present research on teachers' and headteachers' learning; some articles take into account the influence of an environment which can stimulate or hamper these processes, others focus on the phases of teachers' and headteachers' learning and discuss the idea of Corporate Social Responsibility, first implemented in business and now very significant for school development. The research presented here attempted to determine the factors influencing the manner in which the idea of teachers' lifelong learning is implemented and to what extent this implementation meets the needs of modern schools. This part deserves special attention, because our knowledge about the implementation of the idea of lifelong learning in Poland (which is especially significant in case of educational community) is still insufficient, whereas it is attached great weight in foreign literature.

In 2006 another book on educational leadership entitled *Authentic Educational Leadership: the challenges ahead* written by Christopher Bezzina and Joanna M. Michalak (2006) was published. This book is an acknowledgement of the contribution to high standards of teaching, learning and achievement that authentic educational leaders at their best engage in and use to lead to changes in their school. Christopher Bezzina and Joanna M. Michalak explore the part played by authentic leadership in building a school that is academically successful and an educational environment in which teachers, pupils and parents are happy to be involved in. They demonstrate that

authentic educational leadership is integral to school improvement and strives to develop sensitivity to the values and beliefs that others uphold in order to give meaning to the actions of the students, teachers, parents and community members with whom the school leaders interact. Authentic educational leaders are aware of the challenge of the broader social contexts in which they work. They believe they can make a difference to the learning and achievement not only of the pupils but the teachers as well. *Authentic Educational Leadership* is an ideal contribution to understanding and developing the concept of leadership in the personal and collective lives of school leaders, teachers, students and the community. It is also highly useful as a text for management courses and those wanting to actively participate in professional development.

In the studies presented in this volume its editors: Stefan M. Kwiatkowski and Joanna M. Michalak (2010) like to break the stereotype that leadership should be only associated with politics and placed in the context of power and performing political functions. Politics, power and attributes associated with it in the colloquial sense pass over schools and their immediate environment. However, this is not a sufficient argument for the book editors to justify the absence of leadership categories in texts forming the canon of pedagogical reading. Stefan M. Kwiatkowski and Joanna M. Michalak assume that leadership is not only an interdisciplinary notion but it also has interdisciplinary consequences. Therefore, for this publication they have tried to invite authors representing various scientific disciplines and different environments. This idea is reflected in the structure of the volume which is determined by the associations between the theory and practice of educational leadership (part one), the issues of leadership in school and non-school environments (part two), and experience and reflections connected with educational leadership (part three). This structure makes it possible not only to present various theoretical aspects of the notion of educational leadership in question, but also to confront theory with practical solutions taking the form of “good practices”. The final shape of the book was considerably influenced by discussions that the editors of the book led at the University of Łódź that included the Faculty of Educational Sciences and the Faculty of Management with representatives of the Foundation for the Development of the Education System. The outcome of these discussions was the concept of the collective work taking into consideration various views and educational contexts.

The book editors assume that the coherent structure of the book will enable its readers to systematise knowledge in the field of educational leadership, and to become familiar with the most recent theories describing this kind of leadership and leadership practices in education. The book contains

both texts constructing and reconstructing various research approaches and texts describing the concepts of training educational leaders and supporting the functioning of schools and their local social surrounding.

Stefan M. Kwiatkowski and Joanna M. Michalak were interested in various solutions concerning creating new local leaders and helping the existing ones, strengthening the position which they occupy in their environments, and enriching leaders' competencies – knowledge, skills and psychophysical features – so that they would effectively influence changes in their schools and their immediate natural social environment. Goals which have guided the authors in creating this book are the following:

- initiating discussions on the theoretical and practical meaning of educational leadership in school and non-school environments,
- searching for methods of supporting the development of educational leaders in challenges faced by contemporary schools and local environments.

These goals provide an opportunity to create a basis for consideration by individuals interested in educational leadership, especially for school heads, teachers, parents, people employed in educational administration, representatives of local government and non-governmental organisations operating within the area of education, and students of pedagogy with various majors and specialisations. They particularly enhance the integration of the academic and the school environment around the subject matter of educational leadership.

*Przywódstwo edukacyjne w szkole i jej otoczeniu* [*Educational Leadership at the School and its Environment*] is another book devoted to leadership in the field of education and was published in 2011. It is a continuation of the above mentioned publications (*Przywódstwo w szkole* [Leadership at school] and *Przywódstwo edukacyjne w teorii i praktyce* [Educational Leadership in Theory and Practice]). Therefore, we can talk about a series of publications related to the category of educational leadership. Stefan M. Kwiatkowski, Joanna M. Michalak and Inetta Nowosad (2011), the editors of *Przywódstwo edukacyjne w szkole i jej otoczeniu* [*Educational Leadership at the School and its Environment*]) attempt to show that the school is best understood as an institution in the structure of the education system and the place where the interactions between the various school groups (principals, teachers, administrative staff, students and parents) occurred and as a result should be analysed. At the same time the relationships between schools and local educational authorities, and the institutions, which function in the school local

community should be taken into scientific consideration as well. In each of the school groups, the leaders of various kinds, as well in the school social environment, can be identified. At school, however, in contrast to its external environment, the conditions for shaping attitudes are conducive to the development of leadership abilities and can be intentionally created. The question of the desirability of such procedures, their boundaries, as well as forms and methods used arise in this context.

The book consists of three main parts:

1. Leadership Education – Developmental contexts
2. Leadership at school
3. Leadership in the school community

The first part is theoretical in its nature. It creates a kind of introduction into the issues of leadership, with particular emphasis on the characteristics of educational leadership. The starting point is the typologies of leadership. Some presented typologies belong to the long tradition of leadership, but some new typologies of leadership are presented – they result from the analysis of social and educational life. On such a background the various aspects of leadership, its conditions and the accompanying challenges are presented. Focus in this part of the book is a change in education, which can be treated as a result of educational leadership. In the second part of the book the research findings on leadership in schools are presented; theory is combined with the practice of leading and managing the school, as an educational institution. The authors stress the importance of leadership at the school - the role of leaders, but also the importance of cooperation and partnership for school development and shaping the organizational culture of the educational institution. There are also chapters devoted to the international and intercultural topics. Mainly, the authors raise the issues of educational projects in culturally diverse teams and their relationship to the issues of leadership. As a consequence of the approach taken in the book, as expressed in the title of the book, is the dedication of its third part to the issues of leadership in the external environment of the school. The key concept in this passage is the local community. The activity of local community is analyzed through the lenses of the schoolwork, and the educational achievements of all students.

Concluding, one can state that the considerations over the nature of leadership, its role in school development and the relationship between leadership and learning at school, which are discussed in the books and articles on educational leadership, may certainly become the sources of cognitive and practical inspirations for seeking effective pedagogical solutions. As well as,

this body of research brings concrete benefits to schools and constitutes a starting point for analyses and discussions about the desired leadership model in Polish educational reality.

## Popularization of the Issue of Educational Leadership

In response to increased demand among practitioners, educational policy-makers and the academia for discussion, exchange of views, analysis of good practices and the latest research findings over – putting it broadly – educational leadership, numerous activities are performed, e.g. organising conferences. At the national level, these activities are primarily organised by the National Association of Managerial Educational Staff (<http://www.oskko.edu.pl>) and by the Centre of the Development of Education. The activities of the former institution deserves special attention. It gathers around itself the heads of all kinds of educational institutions, educational inspectors and teachers from the whole of Poland in order to exchange experiences and work out good solutions for education. Nowadays the association aims at establishing standards for schools, and especially:

- organisational standards (e.g. standards for employing workers),
- financial standards,
- school management standards and the ones concerning principal's competences,
- scopes of competences of all who make up education in Poland.

Apart from work on these standards, the association finds it extremely important to build up the authority of teacher's occupation. The emergence of the professional ethics of principals and heads of educational institutions is viewed by its members as essential. For the sake of pupils and schools, the association constructs a group that exerts pressure on educational authorities, public opinion, and school's partners. In order to do this work it allies with other organisations and through supporting one another, the association run its publishing activities and initiates trainings concerning educational issues. It also establishes contacts with similar organisations, cooperates with universities and centres training managerial staff and leaders. The association is a partner of the journal "Dyrektor szkoły" ("Principal") issued by Managerial Educational Staff. This monthly journal is a compendium of knowledge about school management and also about educational leadership.

As far as the activities of the institutions of higher education are concerned, the 1st National Conference in the cycle Edukacja – Przywództwo – Zarządzanie [Education – Leadership – Management], in which also foreign researchers participated, must be viewed as a resounding success. Liderzy w Edukacji [Leaders in Education] was the theme of this conference (<http://liderzyw edukacji.uni.lodz.pl/>). It took place on 14–15 June 2010 in Łódź and was organised by the University of Łódź in cooperation with the Foundation for the Development of Educational System. The representatives of various ministries and non-governmental organisations, school and academic teachers, and businessmen participated in it. The purpose of the conference has been to become a meeting and discussion place for all interested in supporting the development of schools and local communities with the further goal of raising the quality of education and building a citizen society. During the conference the discussion of the significance of leadership in school conditions (on different levels) as well as outside schools started.

For the purpose of the conference, a book entitled *Przywództwo Edukacyjne w Teorii i Praktyce* [Educational Leadership in Theory and Practice] S.M. Kwiatkowski, J. Michalak (eds.) (2010) was published. At present, a post-conference book *Przywództwo edukacyjne w szkole i jej otoczeniu* [Educational leadership at school and in its environment] S.M. Kwiatkowski, J.M. Michalak, I. Nowosad (eds.), (2011) is being prepared for publication.

In order to popularise the issues of educational leadership, the conference was combined with the competition “Comenius leader. Leader in action”. The competition was organised by the foundation for the Development of Educational System – a national Agency of the European Commission Programme “Lifelong learning programme”. In this competition, the best educational practices were awarded. All the participants of activities financed by the programme were invited to participate, and those awarded in it demonstrated exceptional leadership skills and were able to motivate others with their own enthusiasm and inventiveness. The awards were officially given to the winners during the conference.

Apart from scientific debates typical of conferences, there is a lot of information about leadership appearing on websites. The following ones seem to be most interesting:

- <http://www.lideroswiaty.pl>
- <http://www.institutprzywodztwa.pl>
- <http://www.isnp.collegium.edu.pl/pl>
- <http://www.oskko.edu.pl>
- <http://www.institutlidera.pl>
- <http://www.nowiliderzy.pl>
- <http://www.ckl.pl>



## Conclusions

Leadership – as it is visible from the literature review presented above – still does not have a deserved place in the structure of notions important for education. It is worth stressing that leadership is most often associated with politics and it is situated in the context of authority and political duties. In popular opinion, politics, power and attributes associated with them avoid schools and their closest surroundings. However, this argument cannot justify the inadequate presence of the leadership in the texts that build up the canon of educational literature. One can suppose that their authors treat leadership as characteristic of sociology, psychology and management theory, and do not grant it a citizenship in the realm of educational sciences. However, in the last seven years some authors has tried to overcome this stereotype.

Polish schools need leaders: competent educational leaders equipped with knowledge and aware of their significance for a school and pupils. Therefore, there is a need to start the serious discussion of theoretical and practical meaning of educational leadership in and outside school in order to promote contemporary scientific thought on responsible educational leadership. The discussion should focus on such an issues as for example: theories and modern solutions in the area of educational leadership, building school's potential, leading the process of changes in school, changing role of the teacher, challenges of contemporary world and educational leadership, ethical aspects of educational leadership. Apart from this, there is a need to support leaders of educational development in facing contemporary world challenges for school and local communities, especially in establishing a platform for the exchange of thoughts and experience for all active in the field of education and strengthening local leaders and in searching for methods of educating and supporting educational leaders in ongoing development and for methods adequate to challenges that schools and local communities are currently facing.

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# CHAPTER 13 RESEARCH ON PRINCIPALS IN LATVIA

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## Introduction

When describing research on any issue in education in Latvia there are two situational aspects that need to be addressed: the general research traditions and understanding of concepts in the concrete area in education. Though the year 1991 is considered to be the turning point in all spheres of life in Latvia including education, real changes in research started later as it took several years to become aware what is happening in education, what has been learned from the experiences of other countries and even what is known about own experiences in Latvia. It is possible to distinguish the following periods in relation to research in education after gaining independence and breaking away from the Soviet Union in 1991:

- At first: hasty learning from experiences and theories of education from Western countries and their transfer to Latvia without any critical evaluation and relation to the background or situation in Latvia; complete denial of any positive aspects in soviet time education even those that were worth continuing or transforming; no interest towards doctoral studies; no significant research in education;
- The second stage was development of new doctoral programmes in education in general trying to implement new ideas but at the same time many aspects remaining based on previous soviet research traditions;
- Introduction of new approaches in doctoral programmes and research including development of new concepts, starting new traditions and opening different approaches to research in education. Alongside with this there appeared greater interest towards research and doctoral studies.

## Background

The background and the context are very important to understand developments and situations in education as a social science, especially in countries where crucial changes are taking place in a relatively short period of time. It is not possible to carry out any analysis only based on the researchers' under-

standing the situation in his/her own institution or even country or countries of similar developments and activities.

The issues of school principals and leadership greatly depend on the social political structure in the country and it refers to all aspects of the issues: theories, understanding of the essence of the concepts, practice and research.

In Latvia both concepts – school principals and leadership traditionally are not linked together. In this the influence of Soviet time pedagogical approaches and theories are still felt. During the soviet time these concepts were kept apart intentionally. School principals were selected from groups of talented teachers with „proper clean biographies” by the school boards in agreement with the communist party official institutions. At the same time it must be mentioned that any candidate to the post of a prospective school principal needed good professional pedagogical and personality qualifications, but, first of all, clearly expressed loyalty to the soviet regime. As these aspects of school principals were the only selection criteria, there was no special attention to special programmes for their education or leadership development. Thus, on the one hand there were no special programmes for education of school principals, but on the other hand there were professional development courses once a person started to work as a school principal. Such a phenomenon as leadership was not widely researched due to various predetermined demands in selection and appointment of school principals for the job. Leadership was not supposed to be discussed or researched as in such a strictly authoritarian country as was the Soviet Union leaders were trained in the communist party schools for special party officials and all higher administrators and managers in education were appointed. Leadership was considered important but only as far it was permitted within the allowed authoritarian frame. In fact, the issues of school principals and leadership were new to the education society and researchers in education and they became topical after 1991 alongside with democratization of the whole education system the school principals' selection procedures and roles changed. This process was influenced greatly by the experiences of western countries when Latavian educators of all levels started to be involved in international education projects and were meeting with experiences of educators and education in other countries.

In Latvia before 1991 there was a scientific research institute of pedagogy. Most experienced researchers were involved in the work of this institute and the research topics were many sided: history of schools and the development of the pedagogical thought in Latvia, theory and practice of communist upbringing, issues of didactics, content and methods of teaching/learning, psychology, economics and planning of education. All these research issues focused on children of school age. Research on education management, school development, school principals, and leadership development

did not begin until 1991. The first researchers' groups on education management, school development and school principals' work were formed within the framework of several international cooperation projects in education: two TEMPUS projects: „Updating of Teacher Training and Educational Debate in Latvia” 1993–1995, „Updating of In-Service Teacher Education in Universities of Latvia” 1994–1996, the two Nordic-Baltic projects „Curriculum Development and Teachers' Qualifications” and „Education Management in a Democratic Education Society” 1997–1999 as well as in a bilateral Danish – Latvian project „School Development” 1998–2000 in which alongside with practical workshops and seminars the above mentioned group of researchers on education management started development of new ideas of education management in Latvia that was later the beginning of a new Master's degree programme and a Doctoral programme in education management. This process was initiated and guided by Prof. O. Zids, who then was Dean of the Faculty of Education and Psychology in the University of Latvia. For several years he was Rector of Liepaja University where he founded the Institute of Management and Leadership. At present O. Zids continues part time work in Liepaja University and is a Deputy of The Saeima (the Parliament) of the Republic of Latvia. He has more than 200 publications on issues of education and among them several on education management, school principals and leadership.

Until 1991 basically quantitative research in education was demanded. The research was supposed to involve large numbers of respondents to produce quantified and generalizable conclusions. It was important to carry out statistical analysis. This bias toward quantitative research has left an impact even on today's research in education and other social sciences. Another typical feature was the demand for experiments that deal with measurable phenomena and include, as a rule, a control group and an experimental group. The pre-test and post-test examinations (the so called experiments) were compared and the conclusions drawn about the effectiveness of the experiment. The validity and reliability was proved mainly by the involvement of large numbers of participants and respondents. Though documentary and historical research was quite popular and advisable, especially about ideologically correct topics, such research as action research, case studies, observation, interviews were not used in educational research.

In general, qualitative elements in research were considered non-scientific. Research in education was not interdisciplinary: pedagogy was separated from psychology, philosophy, sociology and each dissertation was worked out in a structurally limited area. It must be admitted that the change processes in post-soviet countries is a unique situation and it is not possible to find similar contexts in other countries.

## Situation in educational research in 2000–2010

In Latvia, research is part of university staffs' daily work. The most active institutions in the field of education management and education leadership are the Faculty of Education, Psychology and Arts in the University of Latvia, Riga Pedagogy and Education Management Academy and Liepaja University. These are institutions that regularly organize national and international conferences, publish collections of scientific papers, offer doctoral study programmes. There is a tendency to establish research institutions within the universities as functional units. In the University of Latvia it is the Education Research institute, in Liepaja University the Institute of Management and Leadership. At the same time these institutions do not have staff of their own that would be carrying out research work. The basic work of the staff is to lecture in various programmes and the research work is the minor part of their workload. In Latvia there are no specified research institutions. There are various research activities existing in Latvia at present:

- research carried out when working on doctoral dissertations;
- special research projects financed by the National Academy of Sciences and other funds;
- articles published in national and international journals describing individual and group research on education management and various related problems;
- empirical research and descriptions of experiences by school principals themselves that are published in booklets. The latter usually is based on the master degree thesis the school principals have written on completing their studies, that usually include a research part on a topical issue in their work as school principals (Kopmane, P. & Petermane, L. (1999), Krucinina M. & Magdalenoka, I. (2001), Vilkaste, A. (2003)
- theoretical books on various issues on school management that are mainly based on other sources, but cannot be considered as results of research (Builis, A. 1993). Beginning with the end of 1990's the number of researchers and doctoral students has increased considerably. The period of changes in economic, social, cultural life greatly influenced developments in education. On the one hand, serious research was urgently needed, on the other hand it was difficult to carry out research in social sciences in general and education in particular as the change process was very fast and did not allow step-by-step planning and work, the results and conclusions sometimes became outdated even before the research process was



finished. This situation discouraged many researchers. Nevertheless, years 2008–2010 can be considered as a more active period in research in education, the number of completed dissertations is gradually growing.

Doctoral study programmes can be offered only by universities. Though Doctoral studies in pedagogy are implemented in five universities, the doctoral programme in education management is offered only in the University of Latvia. The defence of all dissertations in pedagogy and education management are accepted only in the University of Latvia and Daugavpils University.

Though the interest towards education management can be considered rather active and the number of doctoral students is growing even if there are only one – two state financed places each year. The other students have to pay their own fees. However, there are few students who are interested in doing research on school principals or leadership issues.

As a result, there are rather few dissertations that focus on researching the work of school principals. The greater part of them are dedicated to various issues of school management, school development, effective schools and the principals' work is only partly touched upon.

The changes in the country after 1991 in general and in education in particular initiated changes in concepts, terminology and interpretation of the existing words and terms. At the same time new approaches and terms were introduced, such as education management instead of the school management – a previously used term with a very narrow meaning, school as a learning organization, school development that means much more than quantitative aspects e.g. the number of pupils, successful graduates, staff, the size of the school building, etc.

In Latvia doctoral degrees are awarded in a concrete science according to branches/areas of sciences that have been strictly classified by the Latvia Academy of Sciences. It limits the topics of dissertations to the framework of one branch of the sciences only and does not favour interdisciplinary research.

Until late 1990's the existing school management was under pedagogy. As a result of several international projects Latvia was part of, new experiences in partner countries were opened and it helped to develop new approaches and new master and doctoral programmes among them the doctoral programme in education management. For the time being education management is not a completely independent branch of science, but is included in the science of management where the other subbranches are business management and public administration. Alongside with the establishing of educa-

tion management as a subbranch of management it acquired a definition characteristic to the Latvian context: „a sub-branch of science which investigates the processes of accepting decisions by the institutions of the education system (national, regional, local governmental, non-governmental, as well as international organizations), the functions of these institutions, their structure, the informative basis for making management decisions, effective activities and their evaluation, relations to education customers and consumers” (Classification of sciences and their sub-branches of the Republic of Latvia).

A common feature of research in education in general in Latvia is that the research topic/problems are rooted in real needs of education and is expected to offer possible solutions.

## Dissertations on education management

One of the first dissertations on education management was worked out by Z. Ozola (2002) “The Development of the Structure and Management of Private Schools” Z. Ozola for many years was owner of a private school that she has founded. In this dissertation the narrow meaning of education management, i.e. school management is used. Among other issues a theoretical discussion of a management of a school and also the characteristics of the school principal are described. The aim of the research was to reveal the development and content of school management in the context of a private school. Z. Ozola had developed a theoretical discussion about demands to the school principal and compares the practices in various countries. She concluded is that the school principal was at the same time a pedagogical leader and an organizer of the work of the school. Z. Ozola described the functions of the school administration rather than the school principal and it is not clearly pointed out what is understood by the school administration. The theoretical discussion of this research is not very systemic and detailed. The dissertation, in fact, can relatively be called a case study how a private general education school was organized and what the roles of the school principal and the staff were in this process. As the school under discussion was one of the first private schools, there were some conclusions that can be of importance for other newly founded schools, especially the developmental stages that were pointed out and described, the way to establish relations and attitudes among various levels of the staff at school, the roles of the teamwork and quality evaluation of the process of work and development. The four stages of the content development model of the school was an important innovation for the context of Latvia. Z. Ozola also points out that an optimal model of cooperation as a basis for successful development inclu-

des four qualities of the school managers: the competence of interpersonal relations, the competence of the open system, the competence of inner processes and the competence of the defined goals. The competence of cooperation finds its reflection in the combination of the other three competences.

The dissertation worked out by D. Celma, "The Managers Responsibilities in the Transition process of Latvia's Primary and Secondary Schools" was defended in 2004 (Celma, D. 2004). D. Celma is an As. Prof. in Liepaja University (since 2006) and is Head of the Institute of Management and Leadership. Earlier D. Celma worked in the University of Latvia and has rich experience in school management as a result of her work in the School Board in one of rural regions. D. Celma has been involved in several international educational projects, e.g. "Development of Professional Competences of Education Leader Teams" (2006). D. Celma is a lecturer in school principals' further development programmes. D. Celma's dissertation is the first dissertation dealing with the activities of the school principal, his/her role when managing school as an organization in the processes of change from the previous authoritarian soviet education system to creating a democratic school in the new system. This dissertation is an interdisciplinary research work and it seeks to find answers to address questions about how to manage schools as educational institutions in the change process, what management style is most succesful in the change processes. One of the research tasks was to find concepts and approaches that would help the school principals cope with changes in education. In the research both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used including case study, the use of questionnaires, and qualitative analysis of the research results and their interpretation. The research hypothesis relating to the work of the school principal was that the work of the school principal during the change processes was effective if he/she understands the essence of changes and their role in the school development, implements continuous quality improvement and plans local and global activities in the teaching/learning process. Another assumption in the research was that the change process can take place if the school principal implements a democratic management style and the change is focussed on the teacher as the main change agent and the principal him/herself has the power of authority.

The main theoretical conclusions were that the change process in society created by economic, social and political forces is chaotic, but in education changes can be managed and their influence can be directed towards positive or negative developments. The school principal in this process has a significant role and it demands certain qualifications such as the ability to evaluate the influences of the outer environment, to develop a new under-

standing of the school as a learning organization that is able to change, to develop a new structure and management model, and to concentrate attention to the needs and relations among the staff. D. Celma supposed that there must be a new management model based on people's behaviour and that the manager's personal authority that finds reflection in his/her management style is a factor that positively motivates the teaching staff thus improving the overall teaching environment (Celma,2004.,p.27). The author's ideas about the staff understanding the changes in the aims of education, the shift from the vertical management structure to horizontal structures, involvement of the staff in decision making and the whole management process are new and very important for changes at schools and education in general towards starting democratization of education and the society in Latvia. The great number of the respondents (288 school principals and 1716 teachers) is a good basis for making more or less general conclusions about the situation in education in relation to schools, education management, the role of school principals in the change process and about specific theoretical approaches in education management in post-soviet countries. D. Celma's theoretical and empirical findings have raised a great number of issues that are important to manage the very change process in education in a situation when crucial changes are taking place in the society and the state in general, i.e. when the social structures of the state have changed.

Taking into consideration that the school principals so far have not had any special training for the job D. Celma's research describes, it is perhaps a surprise that there is quite a number of successful school managers but the idea of leadership remains untouched and for a change process the latter might be even more important than the responsibilities mentioned in the research and to improve the quality of education, there should be special professional education programmes for school principals as well as for other managers working on various levels of education.

As this is one of the first studies focused on education management, there are many questions the answers to which must be found in the specific context of post-soviet countries Though such findings may seem obvious in western countries research studies like D. Celma's are important steps in countries conceptualizing research on principals with the realities of Latvia's recent history and continuing challenges.

The Celma dissertation offers an insight in school principals' responsibilities and roles in a complex situation where changes are taking place not only in politics, economics, society and culture but also in all aspects of education: education in general, laws, regulations, theories on education, respon-

sibilities, roles, institutions, and management of education. All the changes are occurring very fast, seem chaotic and take place simultaneously. D. Celma (2006) has published the results of her theoretical and empirical research in the book "Manager and Management in Education." She analyzes the obtained results on the manager's personal influence, the management style, and the involvement of teachers in the process of changes. She also describes the manager's personal influence on the development of the institution by involving all staff in undertaking a shared responsibility for the process of changes and its result.

### Pre-service education programmes

Though in previous years pre-service education programmes for prospective school principals did not exist, some shorter and longer in-service courses were offered for those school principals who had started to work at schools. At present there is only one institution Riga Pedagogy and Education Management Higher School in which a first level professional study programme for school managers and in the Faculty of Education, Psychology and Arts in the University of Latvia a professional Master's degree programme are offered, but the number of students in the above mentioned programmes is not big as the state financed places are limited.

Judging from a number of school principals' publications on experiences in the new educational situation (in national newspapers and journals) it is obvious that many of them are skilled, successful capable of building effective teams and promoting educational changes. At the same time little attention was paid to the needs and problems of new school principals, the difficulties they have and the needed support and assistance. These publications are rather descriptions of experiences but not results of purposeful and systemic research.

Another dissertation has been worked out by A. Upenieks (2008). A. Upenieks has a rich experience in various institutions linked with education management and work of school principals: he has been an expert at Riga City Council and an educational project manager, lecturer in school principals' further education programmes, as lecturer on education management in the University of Latvia, Faculty of Education and Psychology. A. Upenieks has developed several programmes for the Master degree programmes in education management and for further education of education managers. A. Upenieks' dissertation examines new principals: "The Training and Adaptation of New principals of Education Institutions for Work in Education Institutions". Preliminary research by A. Upenieks has pointed out the priority needs for the research on school principals in order to work out research based materials:

- the standard/guidelines for the profession of education institution principals should be worked out;
- study programmes for school principals' education must be developed;
- an assistance system for the principals should be created – mentoring, expert consultations, consultative materials etc. (Viktare, 2003.,p.46)

The aim of A. Upenieks' research was to identify the problems of educating principals at the initial stage of their work, to design a conceptual model for education of school principals, and on the basis of the theoretical and empirical research work out recommendations for the procedure of recruiting principals and ensuring support and assistance during their adaptation period.

The theoretical conclusions were based on the comparative analysis of scientific literature, documents and experiences of various countries and Latvia. Case studies as well as opinion polls and expert evaluation were used to get empirical data involving a considerable number of respondents – 361 school principals ( out of 993 ), 20 participants in a further education programme, eight experts and four education managers at various education system levels. This might seem a small number for larger countries, but for Latvia as a country with only a little more than two million inhabitants the number of respondents is satisfactory. It is interesting that 99.4% of the respondents have higher pedagogical education, 23,5% are teachers of mathematics and physics, 271 were women and 87 men. This research includes modelling and methods of mathematical statistics – scales of measurement, frequency distribution, calculations of general tendencies of a variation of indicators, as well as conclusive statistical methods. The significance of the research lies in designing the conceptual model for the education of principals, defining the competences of principals in the new economic era under the circumstances of socio-political and economic changes and revealing the content of such concepts as “Education of principals of education institutions” and “Learners with extra needs”. A. Upenieks has defined three stages in the new principals work – adaptation, individualization and integration. He points out that adaptation as the most difficult period as it includes socialization. (Viktare, 2003, p.59) In the dissertation and a number of articles the researcher has pointed out groups of competences important in the new economic era, and namely, jurisprudence, communication, management, education and economics as well as a number of personal qualities. As a result of the empirical research it was found that 60.8% of principals knew little about the job when they agreed to take the posts. The main conclusions from the opinion poll on the principals education were as follows:

- there must be an education programme for all those who would apply for the job that is followed by systemic further education during the following years on the job;
- it is necessary to work out a handbook for education institution principals;
- the laws and regulations on the education system should be aligned with the needed changes in education and appointment of education institution principals.

On the basis of theoretical and empirical research A. Upenieks has worked out a system of recommendations for the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia, for the development of a model for education of principals, for regional education boards about the procedure for engaging education institution principals, for the applicants to the post of principals, and for the new education institution principals. Thus, the research may have a significant influence on various aspects in education management. At the same time though this was the first dissertation dealing with problems in education of education institution principals links with leadership, leaders and the place and role of these concepts in education management were not touched upon in the above mentioned research.

### Teamwork Principles

The dissertation “Teamwork Principles in the Management of Comprehensive Educational Schools” is research carried out by I. Lusena-Ezera (2011). I. Lusena-Ezera is a lecturer for Liepaja University. She was actively involved in further education programmes of school principals since 2006. In her doctoral thesis she explores the development and change of general education schools in Latvia where teamwork and school staff involvement in the management of general education schools is one of the main pre-conditions for the process of change to be successful. The author investigated how theoretical principles on teamwork, cooperation, communication and trust can be turned into practice in daily work. For this it is necessary that the school management and all staff not only understands and identifies it as basis of their everyday’s work on a theoretical level but also feel a need for mutual cooperation, communication and trust in each other in all activities. I. Ezera-Lusena explored how the team work principle is implemented in Latvian general education schools through the action of school principals directed towards creating an environment in which teamwork was possible. The author described the characteristics of a school principal as a leader and stated that only such a personality is able to create environment for team and teamwork development. It is important that the activities of the princi-

pal of the school are aimed at sustainable development and improvement of educational institutions as well as changing based on the demands created by changes.

I. Ezera-Lusena stated that in the process of rapid changes there are some key preconditions for successful implementation and advancement to a sustainable development of the school. Among the most important are a number of qualifications of the school principal:

- ability to organize teamwork;
- understanding of the need for mutual cooperation, communication and trust;
- demonstration of attitudes and behaviours the principal anticipates from the staff of the school;
- understanding of the environment of the school where the employees feel valued and supported, and are motivated to work better.

The research shows connection between team work principles that depend on the school principal, school staff involvement, the school culture and pupils' learning achievements, and their connection with the school type. The four major conclusions of her dissertation are as follows:

- a higher level of application of the teamwork principles can be achieved in an environment oriented at building a positive atmosphere at school;
- the interrelations between the school culture, involvement of the staff in school management, use of the teamwork principles, the personal relationships of the staff and their significance are determined by the school type;
- comprehensive application of the teamwork principles, involvement of the staff in the management of the school, the school culture, and involvement of the entire personnel in culture building and staff relationships are conditions required to ensure a sustainable school development;
- directing the activities of school principals towards the use of the teamwork principles (cooperation, trust and communication), and improvement of the school culture as part of the management of the educational institution influence the pupils' learning achievements.

Though the focus in the dissertation is on development of teamwork at schools and not particularly on the school principals qualifications and activities the contribution of this research on revealing the role of the school principals in the change process as well as the demands to their qualifications is significant as these aspects have not been previously discussed in any research.

School leadership was the main objective of I. Daiktere's (2011) doctoral thesis "School Head's Role in the Process of Developing School Culture of



Comprehensive Educational Institutions in Latvia". She works at the University of Latvia as a lecturer and a researcher. I. Daiktere was an active participant in school principals' further education programmes from 2005 to 2007 on School Culture and Communication in School Leadership. She has published 14 scientific articles on the issues of her research.

The doctoral thesis explores the role and activities of Latvian general education schools principals' daily work. The theoretical discussion of this research concentrates on exploring how leaders can influence the process of school culture formation and how to take part in it in a structured and purposeful way. On one hand school leaders can and even must take an active role in strategic planning of a school's future and its implementation. On the other hand, this approach has been criticized as manipulative and outdated as teamwork and participative leadership are claimed to be more modern and therefore more appropriate to school leadership.

A total of 357 school heads, 211 students, 152 teachers, 103 parents, 92 alumni and 78 technical staff members anonymously completed specially developed questionnaires about school culture. All the questions in the questionnaires were formulated in a way that the answers from different groups could be compared. They covered seven scales: general data about a respondent, human resource management, public relations and school image, various aspects of communication, school culture, the process of changes, roles and responsibilities of stakeholders. The five major conclusions of the empirical research are as follows:

1. General education full-time school principals in Latvia perceive themselves as a key persons in the process of school culture management.
2. General education full-time school principals in Latvia do not use human resource management techniques systematically.
3. For communication with the social community groups of schools, school principals prefer informal communication, using internal and external communication equally often and they seldom use electronic communication.
4. School principals select teachers and pupils' parents for communication with the main target group about the goals of the desired policy, but communication with the pupils' audience they delegate to teachers.
5. Mainly regional advertising is used for schools' public relations with society and creation of the school's image.

I. Daiktere's theoretical and empirical findings have raised issues regarding school principals' commitment to becoming leaders. All school principals in Latvia must have a diploma in education but not a specific one in leadership and management. Therefore, principals feel more comfortable in communi-

cation with the school's community and some aspects of public relations, at the same time showing no interest and competencies in human research management and induction. There is still insufficient amount of specific literature on school culture in Latvia.

The majority of researchers and lecturers in the field of education management are involved in individual research work results of which are published in scientific papers of universities, the most active of them being the University of Latvia, Riga Pedagogical and Education Management Academy, Liepaja University, Rezekne Higher School. At the same time the number of the articles remains small. The greater part of authors are those who have finished their dissertations as there is a demand in Latvia that the author of the dissertation must have minimum 3-4 articles published on the main findings and conclusions in internationally refereed journals. Thus, the names and themes of the publications are already mentioned above in the description of dissertations. Besides them the more significant authors are O. Zids and I. Muzis.

O. Zids in his publications is dealing with broad issues on educational policy, changes and educational management, but often touches upon school principals and leadership. In his publication "Changes in Education in Latvia and Total Quality Management System" (2001) O. Zids describes the results of the research in which 39 University lecturers and students of the education management programme were involved. The main conclusion is that these are the schools and school principals who carry out the real process of changes in education. This is especially true in those schools where the various levels of administration are actively involved in educational development and education management projects which are offered by the EU as well as countries such as Nordic countries – Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland. O. Zids mentions the benefits gained in the projects that have helped school principals promote the process of educational change. These include, theory, methodology and practical experience on how to work with projects at school level, evaluate the results, work in teams, and use results in the management of the process of changes (Zids, 2006, p.27). In another article „Dialectics of Educational Changes in Latvia ( in the context of education of school principals" (2006) O. Zids evaluates the existing system of education for school principals and proposes two models for school principal development. Model A includes acquiring of higher pedagogical education and further professional education, Model B emphasizes studies in a five year special professional study programme for education managers.

O. Zids is one of the few researchers who touches upon leadership issues. His article "Paradigms of Changes and Leadership in Education" is a theoretic-

tical discussion about various understandings and interpretations of managers and leaders. The main conclusion is that the management of changes is realized by a leader and not by a manager. Only a leader/manager can make it possible to achieve good results in the work of the institution, implement changes and give satisfaction and favour the development of every individual and the institution as a whole. ( Zids, 2006., p.13–14).

## Conclusion

Though about 20 years have passed since gaining independence, developments in education and educational research in Latvia are still rather complicated. First of all the background of previous experiences is still felt, at the same time rapid changes in economic, social and cultural life, and in education in particular, make it difficult to create a clear framework for research in education. The shift from what was learned and demanded in Soviet time to new ideas structures and cultures in education is slow and difficult. It takes change in understanding, learning new knowledge, new practices – theoretical, empirical, different research processes, new methodologies and, changes in the professionalism and personalities of the researchers themselves. Such dramatic changes cause objective and subjective difficulties for the researchers and influences the quality and outcomes of the research. For example, there continues to be confusion about such concepts as school management and education management. Further, leadership in relation to school principals has not received much research. Notwithstanding these limitations studies on leadership are growing as well as their quality, and especially the fact that, on one hand, research topics have been created by educational practices and problems, and on the other hand the research outcomes in the majority of cases can be implemented in education is very significant for education situation in Latvia. A weakness in the research work in education in general including research on school principals and leadership is that it is rather fragmented and not systemic as there are too many problems that need to be explored and too few researchers. Education offers a lot of challenges and opportunities at this stage of changes and development.

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# CHAPTER 14 RESEARCH ON PRINCIPALS: FUTURE PERSPECTIVES AND WHAT'S MISSING?

Olof Johansson & Paul V. Bredeson

## Introduction

Over the past decade 2000–2010 there has been a significant increase in research studies on school principals across the northern European community. This volume was designed to provide a comprehensive overview of this research orientation—its content, research designs, major findings, as well as our conclusions and recommendations for advancing research on school principals. In Part I of this volume, Helene Ärlestig and Olof Johansson provided an overview of current research studies by describing a broad national framework for research on school principals in Sweden. In Part II the Swedish research overviews – from section I are summarized in English and after that chapter scholars from Norway – Jorunn Møller, Denmark – Lejf Moos, Finland – Mika Risku & Pekka Kanervio, Iceland – Börkur Hansen, England – Christopher Day, Germany – Stephan Huber, Poland – Joanna Michalak, and Latvia – Dainuvite Blūma and Ineta Daiktere review research on school leadership and the principalship from the past decade in each of their respective countries<sup>1</sup>. Stephan Huber's review of research also includes research from three other German speaking countries- Austria, Liechtenstein, and Switzerland. We would like to thank all the authors that have made research from their countries available for us to read in English! Probably this is the first time some of this research is presented to a wider audience. Next we consider factors that have contributed to research on principals in these countries over the past decade.

To begin, the European community as well as other countries around the globe has witnessed massive social, economic, and political changes that have stimulated policymakers and citizens to more closely examine the goals and purposes of their educational systems as they address daunting challenges brought about by these changes early in the 21st century. Such forces as globalization, increased economic competition within and among nations, increased migration, social networking and advances in technology,

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<sup>1</sup> In this chapter we only refer to authors from this research overview so there is no reference list attached.

dramatic political changes in Eastern Europe at the end of the 20th century, international comparisons using measures of student attainments, PISA, for example, and increased demands for good student outcomes and for accountability have intensified the work of educational professionals, especially school principals. These demands have led to careful analyses of the leadership roles, responsibilities, relationships, and work of school principals related to their effectiveness in meeting the challenges through the quality of education provided in their schools.

Unlike in Australia, Canada, and the United States where scholarship on school principals is well established in universities, education agencies, and research centers, the research efforts described in this volume indicate that in some countries the scholars are in the early stages of defining and setting a coordinated agenda for examining principals' work. There is great potential in European scholars sharing their research on principals, notwithstanding important differences in educational structures, cultures, histories, and local contexts. In the next section we identify major themes that cut across research on principals in the countries represented in this volume. Based on these reviews of research, in the final section we offer our recommendations for advancing research on school principals within the European community. We end by echoing Christopher Day's assessment of research on school leadership in England, we believe research on school principals is "alive and well" as presented in this volume. Our hope is that this volume describing research on principals from 2000–2010 will clarify the need for continuing excellent and well founded research and support the future development and direction of this research and help to address the formidable challenges confronting school leaders, teachers, students, communities, and policymakers.

## Research on Principals – Major Themes

In this section we identify major themes that cut across the summaries of research on principals in different national studies, cultures and contexts. While there are important differences in research foci and findings on principals in each of the respective countries represented in this volume, our purpose here is to highlight common trends and to indicate where research findings suggest that scholars have shared interests and thus might collaborate in cross-national research projects in the coming decade. In addition, our discussion of cross-cutting themes helps to highlight existing strengths in contemporary research on principals as well as indicate important areas currently not examined thereby giving direction to future research efforts in the field. This can be done despite or maybe because of the differences between the systems and their governing forms.

## An Emerging Field of Study

From 2000–2010 there have been notable increases in research on principals across the European community as represented in greater numbers of theses, dissertations, research reports, and publications. Notwithstanding the rate of growth in research on principals across various countries, the evidence provided in the summaries of research indicates this is still an emerging field of study in the countries in this volume. While there has been increased interest in and focus on the work and role(s) of school principals, in most countries scholarship on school principals remains quite limited. Indeed, studies of school principals represent a rather new field of scholarship in universities. The reasons for the paucity of research are varied depending on the country. Joanna Michalak (Poland) and Dainuvite Blūma and Ineta Daiktere (Latvia) describe how the political, social, and educational legacy of the Soviet era over the past half century resulted in leadership and the principalship being separated conceptually and in practice. Leadership traditionally was being associated with authoritarian government controls and thus there were few salient questions for research. Principals were primarily appointed with the approval of the Communist Party, thus party loyalty was a more critical selection criterion than managerial skills and pedagogical expertise. Under this system there was little interest in research on school principals. Stephan Huber notes that in German speaking countries (Germany, Austria, Liechtenstein, and Switzerland) historically there has not been much research on school leadership. What studies there were tended to be linked to research on education policy issues and school development projects. With a primary focus on other issues, the examination of principals' work and their leadership in schools tended to be tangential. Huber suggests that to establish legitimacy as a field of study within universities, researchers has yet to build a compelling case that school leadership and the work of principals is distinct from public administration for example.

Our authors suggest a number of reasons for the increased interest in research on school principals. For example, changes in national education policies often times decentralizing education systems, a steady wave of educational reform initiatives, increasingly challenging school environments, the effects of globalization, and rising demands for accountability have complicated and intensified the work of school principals and the staffs they lead. In Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, and Iceland Jorunn Møller, Helene Årlestig & Olof Johansson, Leif Moos, Mika Risku & Pekka Kanervio, and Börkur Hansen describe the impact of external forces affecting schools and principals as well as the powerful internal dynamics of educational systems that have created new demands on principals. Thus, researchers in universi-

ties and state agencies have begun to examine more closely than in previous decades the work of school principals and its relationship to national policy goals and accountability for student outcomes both in terms of academic and social development. In England, where there is a longer history of research on school heads, and where a National College for School Leadership was established by the Labor government in 2001 research on principals got extra push forward through this new organization. Christopher Day attributes the persisting and current surge of research on principals over the past decade to the twin demands of greater school effectiveness and improvement coupled with greater recognition of the importance of social justice and equity in the education system. In Sweden the National Agency for Education devolved the responsibilities for principal training to ten selected organizations in 1976. At a second time in 1993/94 only six organizations was given the programme and around 1998 a third reorganization was made and the training was moved into the universities and eight universities were selected. The fourth reorganization was done around 2009 and only six universities was declared to have the competence needed for the new programme. All the four reorganization have been linked to changes in the definition of the National Head Master Training Programme. The creation of principal development centers was accompanied by increased numbers of principal trainers, some of them doctoral students. In these cases, there were research projects, papers, theses and doctoral dissertations completed. But still there is a call for more research at the principal training centres today. We find in this overview, research to report from the principal training Centres of Umeå, Uppsala and Karlstad.

### **Intensification of Principals' Work**

In the 1990s education reforms rippled across various countries coupled with the devolution of authority to local municipalities and schools. Another major shift accompanying these reforms was in the training and on-going professional development of school principals which moved from The National Agency for Education to local development centers at universities. Coupled with these changes in national policies were increased calls for accountability for measurable student learning outcomes in the context of demanding educational environments. All of these demands are precipitated by increasingly diverse student cohorts, rising social conflicts in schools and communities, curricular changes requiring the use of new technologies, and demands for new knowledge and skills for the 21st century citizens. Together they have intensified the work of school principals and raised questions about the continuing effectiveness of traditional educational systems. In general, job descriptions for principals had been ill-defined and not clearly described in legislation or policy documents. Given the historic lack



of research on the work of principals, as well as the qualities, strategies and skills all principals need to take on responsibilities for the array of education challenges, it is not surprising that principals themselves as well as policy makers and researchers found the lack of clarity and research evidence disturbing. As a result, greater emphasis on the role of principals in meeting these demands stimulated growth of research on school principals and at the same time the policy demands on principals increased.

### Obstacles to Principals' Instructional Leadership

Though there are a few exceptions, for example work in England by Christopher Day and through researchers commissioned by the National College of School Leadership, research on principals as instructional leaders reported in this volume is very limited. The reviews suggest several explanations. First, there is no consensus among researchers on just what the concept of instructional leadership means. It continues to be debated and operationalized differently depending on the researcher; this is true even in well-established leadership preparation programs and research centers in North American universities and in Australia. In the descriptive studies of principals' work, most school leaders have experience as teachers and bring their pedagogical experiences and expertise with them to the job. Nonetheless, Jorunn Møller explains in her review of research studies in Norway that the concept of instructional leadership receives little attention. Principals in Norway she shows do not believe that intervention in the classroom practices of teachers is one of their primary responsibilities. A discussion on this topic is valid also for Sweden. And then, as in all Scandinavian countries the discussion are under the heading of pedagogical leadership. In a sense this is a counter narrative to the Australian, UK and North American emphases on different forms of accountability in which principals are charged with ever increasing demands for supervision and merit based awards for teacher performance and student learning outcomes. Yet there are some indications of changes reported in one study in Norway where the findings describe important differences between veteran and new principals. In the reported study, new principals were found to accept accountability for learning outcomes and discourse about professional practices as an important dimension of their leadership work. Veteran principals (55 years and older), in contrast, tended to see their responsibilities more on the managerial aspects of school organization and its effectiveness.

Another reason that the concept of instructional leadership has only limited traction in the research and in principals' work is anchored in powerful norms of professional autonomy of teachers and principals. Principals believe that it is the teachers' responsibility to exercise peda-

gogical expertise to create appropriate conditions for learning for all students to succeed in their classrooms. Notwithstanding principals' efforts to enhance educational quality and learning outcomes in their schools, strong norms of professional autonomy inhibit principals from supervisory practices that intrude on classroom instructional decision making and practices.

### **Legacies shaping Education and the Work of Principals**

The unique history, structure, culture, policy environment, and context of the public system of education in each of the countries reviewed in this volume have shaped the role of school principals. Accordingly, research on principals necessarily reflects these legacies. Though much can be learned from cross-national studies, examining the work of principals within each national, regional, and local context fills an important niche in this field of study. We can learn from international studies, however, simple translation, application, and transfer of the research designs, survey instruments, and research findings on principals in one setting into another are not sufficient, nor appropriate. Context matters and we quote Stephan Huber:

There are obvious contextual differences in terms of leadership such as the extent of autonomy school leaders have within the educational system, their appointment and selection criteria, while less immediately obvious cultural differences make it even less likely that one could simply import findings from one context to the other without at least some adaptation.

For example, in the United States where public education is under the constitutional authority of state governments, a decentralized public education system with a strong tradition of local control represents a major difference in context from European countries where national education agencies predominate. Also, as we described earlier in this summary, the experiences of policymakers and educational professionals in countries formerly under the control of the Soviet Union (Poland and Latvia) have spent the past two decades trying to untangle the legacy of Soviet era structures and policies that shaped public education and the work of school principals. As reported by Joanna Michalak (Poland) and Dainuvite Blūma and Ineta Daiktere (Latvia), research on how these dramatic shifts in governance, management, and control structures affect principals is beginning to emerge. The results from these studies could probably bring more understanding to the complex relations in a school and the function of the principal in relation to great changes in the political system for governing schools.

## Research Design and Methods

The research on principals reported in this volume is primarily qualitative and descriptive in nature. Case studies, survey research with interviews and written questionnaires, life history, action research, and observational studies are the favored methodological strategies. Descriptive studies on principals are important because they establish a baseline of data in the form of taxonomies, and classification systems as a springboard for developing research agendas and projects that examine the work of school principals. These studies also provide insight for developing survey protocols for larger mixed methods studies and projects and suggest hypotheses to be tested using quantitative methods. While these descriptive studies provide useful insights from principals' and teachers' perspectives, current research designs as well as their size and scope too often limit researchers' ability to address a number of questions about the relationship between principal leadership and instructional practices, school improvement and goal setting, student learning outcomes—academic and social, accountability, and resources allocation to name a few.

In this volume, there are only a limited number of researchers in each country whose research focuses on school principals. In many cases, they are the pioneers in this field of study. Collaborative research efforts exist, yet the most studies are carried out by individual researchers. This is especially true for doctoral theses and these tend to be one-off studies and only some of the new researchers continue to publish in the field as shown for Sweden in this volume (chapter 5).

Given that the majority of studies are qualitative in design, it should not be surprising that there are few large-scale studies using quantitative research designs reported in these summaries of research. Though there are rich data sources of government data on resources, expenditures, educational inputs, and learning outcomes, few researchers have used quantitative methods and large national or international data sets to address fundamental questions on the relationship of principal practice to teachers' instructional practices, school climate and culture, work place environments, the efficacy of policy initiatives, and school outcomes. The lack of large scale studies using rigorous quantitative designs can also be explained by a lack of national funding for such studies and by individual researcher preferences for qualitative research design or a mixture of both. Assembling research teams, setting a research agenda on principals, creating longitudinal research designs, and carrying out and reporting findings from these inquiries are resource hungry and require more than individual researcher interest. It requires investment by national agencies in stabilizing research centers and

providing support to teams dedicated to do this research. To date, such research is greatly underfunded.

### **Little Attention to Principal Recruitment, Preparation, Selection, and Socialization**

There is scant evidence in this review that researchers have paid attention to important policy agendas in understanding quality issues in relation to how principals are recruited, prepared, selected, and then socialized into their formal leadership roles in schools. Pre-service preparation and in-service development of principals traditionally has been primarily the responsibility of national education agencies and local municipalities. In Sweden, for example, once a principal has been hired in a local municipality, he/she is required to participate in a multi-year, university-based professional development program that equips principals with knowledge, skills, and tools to carry out their work successfully. Most important, these programs provide time for critical reflection on daily leadership practices and their outcomes. To date, research on the efficacy of these training programs is limited and there is not an extant body of research on principal recruitment, selection, and socialization. The exception in this volume is research reported on the work in the National College of School Leadership initiative in England.

### **Research on Principals: A Cascade Effect**

There is little doubt that the intensification of principals' work and greater emphasis on the importance of the principal's leadership role has stimulated significant transitions in principals' work in schools. In a highly dynamic social and political environment with increased pressure to redesign schools and professional practices in ways that best serve the needs of students and communities, the traditional roles of principals are in transition—being reshaped, redefined, and re-negotiated. Here again context is an important factor and how principals manage these external policy changes is an important quality marker on the principal. Research from Norway suggests that work role transitions tend to affect principals differently depending on their career stage. For example, as reported by Jorunn Møller, that the veterans, in contrast to newly appointed heads, appeared less influenced by the obligations to administrative work. It looked like their basic beliefs drove their actions despite the turmoil of what was going on other places. It is as if they want to retain the kind of psychological rewards they have got as teachers. It could be framed as 'keep in touch with the kids'. The mid-career and early career principals on the other hand tell stories about establishing professional accountability. Some are also welcoming managerial accountability, but

they too want to retain the kind of psychological rewards they have got as teachers. The newly appointed school principals, on the other hand, did not know anything else but a climate of accountability. They seem to take it for granted, they welcome it, and relate it to being a professional. The discourses of leadership and accountability at municipal level have changed, but at school level managerial accountability has more a status of “anticipated future”. In Sweden – chapter 5 – we see little research about accountability and few studies on student outcomes but many studies describing the complex work of principals in a complex steering system. As principals re-negotiate and establish new professional work roles, they will need significant support from policymakers, teachers, and the communities they serve. Resources of time, money, and opportunity for professional development to acquire new knowledge and skills will be critical as principals develop new leadership identities.

## Recommendations for Advancing Research on Principals

Based on the summaries presented in this volume and our analysis of them, we use the themes that cut across research on principals to offer our suggestions for advancing studies on school leadership as a legitimate field of study within the European community. In addition, our hope is that these recommendations for further research are helpful guideposts for inquiry in each of the respective countries. We recognize that research in each country is at a different stage of development, some areas of study just emerging while others have a longer and richer history of inquiry on principals. Accordingly, local and national contexts as well as the present body of research on school principals will determine next steps for advancing individual and collaborative research projects. Lastly, we believe this collection of summaries on research on principals from 2000–2010 provides fruitful directions for cross-national research projects.

Our recommendations are grounded in research informed assumptions. First, we believe the leadership role(s) of school principals will continue to be central to school development, improvement, organizational capacity building, and student learning outcomes in the future. After accounting for the quality of teacher instructional practices, school leadership is viewed as the second most important contributor to student development and learning outcomes. The mix of decentralization and centralization of education

policies and governance has intensified the daily work of principals and demands on them for skillful management and transformational leadership will continue unchanged for some time. Given the centrality of principals to educational outcomes regardless of national/local contexts, research on principals and their work will clearly continue in the future. Continuing interest in research on principals will naturally yield more studies—masters papers, doctoral theses, and array of various publications in scholarly and practitioner journals. For example, the growth of principal development centers with increasing numbers of masters and doctoral students in study and in training and development will supply fresh ideas and researchers in the field. However, it is important that there is a strategic overview which can lay foci for research, so that structure will replace the more incremental approach. The foci identified in this review either as promising or missing are described below. But, there is no silver bullet, no right answers expected from these studies suggesting prescriptive behaviors for school leaders. Research findings will inform leadership practices in schools in that they can be interpreted and applied uniquely within differing local, historical, cultural, and structural contexts. We will offer suggestions for advancing research on school principals based on evidence from this research overview. Some research topics are missing in the descriptions of research; others have clearly been described as areas with very few research publications. Next, we list key areas to advance research on school principals.

- **Important educational challenges in order to inform policy makers.** This kind of research can be commissioned from governments and consists of both the kind of research overview presented here but also targeted research on important policy questions.
- **Implementation processes in relation to national policy on the local governing structures.** It's also clear from our data that we have too few studies that discuss the process from law and policy down to the school level. What happens on the way and what characterizes the local governing structures that create good implementation results on the school level with improved student outcomes.
- **Effects of national policy on changes processes on the local school level.** What if any effect do the decisions on the national level have on the practical work on the school level and how long time does it take before effects of new policies can be seen and measured in student outcomes.
- **Effects of international testing schemes on student outcomes.** Many politicians argue that we need more basic education with a focus on academic learning in order to remain at the top of OECD's PISA tables – a development that even the opposition today argues for. But are they right in their belief that striving for a top ranking in OECD's PISA-studies con-

tributes to and creates better schools for all students? These international measurements and statistics have contributed to school systems in which all policy makers demand accountability from the schools. And accountability on the policy level means school improvement on the school level. Of course the question is always how to create better school or/and better school district. And what 'better' means will determine the nature of new demands on schools. In all countries, they are expected to evaluate more, analyze their goal fulfillment and compare their effectiveness with other schools not only in their own school district but also in the country and internationally. How this trend affects the local school and the student outcome need to be analyzed much more.

- **Effects on change processes in local schools in relation to the local governing structures.** Principal effectiveness in high and low performing schools is important to study in order to understand what factors and relations that contributes to under-performing, so called "cruising schools". Schools are part of a larger central and local governing system, in which there is a shared responsibility between different system levels. The state governs the schools and the actors on local levels implement the policies. Projects need to examine how local structures and cultures affect the performance of schools where the students have results clearly lower than expected. By studying cruising schools in this manner new knowledge about the steering and leadership processes related to school outcomes can be developed.
- **Principals and their decision making in relation to school governance.** We know very little about how principals make decisions, how they record and document their decisions, and what information they have or collect before they make decisions. Many times school principals just lead by acting and take decisions as they go around in the school. The processes around principals' decision making and its relation to school governance would be an important field to know more about.
- **Principal's strategic decision making in relation to school improvement.** Strategic decision making is a very vital part of systematic quality work in schools. There is very little research on this topic at present. Principals many times act in what researchers might define as strategic decision making. However, the principal generally does not document the decisions. Studies of how variation in principals strategic decision making processes affect systematic quality evaluations and school improvement processes would be very welcome.
- **Principal's leadership in multicultural and challenging environment.** How do principals in successful integrated schools that produce good student outcome for all act, make decisions, lead and govern their schools?

- **Leadership in relation to social and democratic values, bullying and student outcomes.** We need more research on how principals can work to prevent obstacles to our democratic values. Why does bullying in some schools become a large problem while it in other schools it remains on a very low but still unacceptable level? How do principals think and how important is the democratic training that should be present in all schools for the well-being of the school? Finally, how is that linked to student outcomes?
- **Effects of principal training programs.** Both principal training programs and in-service training are not analyzed in relation to the effect they have on the principals' way of running his/her school. We don't know for example if courses in capacity building lead to different role behaviors of the principal. There is a need for studies of different training programs and their effects. Studies would benefit from having a comparative design and be carried out with different countries.
- **Effects of the relation between principals and teachers on improved student outcomes.** We discuss very often the principal and his/her role in student outcomes and at the same time we know that the teachers are most important factor for students success. But we know very little from research on the relationship between the principal and the teachers and its impact on student learning and development outcomes. Can the principal through building support and high expectations for the school have an effect on the way teachers work with students and also on student outcomes?
- **Effects of school leaders behavior on schools results analyzed with an organizational lens.** In this research overview there are almost no studies that look on schools with a clear organizational lens. Looking at schools as organizations and explaining principals' behavior in organizational terms would be an improvement to the field. And this is also a field that could gain a lot by having a comparative design with different countries.

The research focus we have presented above highlight the need for large-scale mixed methods research projects within and across the countries represented in this volume. A large part of the studies reported in the summaries are one-off studies completed by masters and doctoral students. Notwithstanding the value of various individual research studies, coordinated research provides coherence as well as helpful conceptual, theoretical, and methodological frameworks to connect individual studies. Launching large scale research studies might also stimulate greater use of mixed methods in examination of principals' work and its connection to school and student development.



At present, there is a paucity of quantitative studies on principals. Qualitative methods can provide rich descriptions and details about principals and their work. Yet within the academy and in many cases within existing political environments, quantitative studies are more appropriate for addressing critical questions, they will enhance the legitimacy of this emerging field of study, and such studies will provide useful data for policymakers and practitioners. Quantitative designs and methods will also provide frameworks for addressing questions regarding the effects of principal leadership on their school and the student outcomes, relationships between principal behaviors and tasks they find important and teacher practices, school culture, organizational trust, and the development of schools and the professional capacities.

To support large scale studies, especially those with longitudinal designs, there is a need for greater, in country and between countries, funding. In most countries, our reviewers have reported lack of sufficient resources to support research on principals. It is likely that the greatest percentage of financial support will come from special research councils but also commissioned research grants from government and municipal agencies should be most welcome. Thus, making a compelling case to policymakers at all levels is crucial to garnering additional funding to support research on principals.

Studies on school principals will also benefit from cross/multi-disciplinary perspectives. Such traditional academic disciplines as political science, history, sociology, psychology, and pedagogy, to name a few, have the potential of opening up new and fruitful areas of research on principals.

In some countries, there are notable voids in research on principals. Still in other countries, there has been only modest interest in particular areas of scholarship. We recommend that scholars begin to address these issues to enrich and widen the scope of their inquiries. Four areas have been identified in the research summaries. They include: 1) instructional leadership for improved teaching and learning, 2) principal recruitment, preparation, selection, and induction, 3) role transition, change leadership and 4) more explicit connections between principal leadership and various outcomes variables, e.g., school development, organizational change, capacity building, and student learning outcomes. It is also obvious from the data collected that context matters. Sharing conceptual frameworks, methods, and data collection tools are important ways to broaden inquiry within each of these countries and share insights on the principals and their professional work. At the same time, research must always keep a disciplined perspective that provides a bifocal lens simultaneously selecting what can be gleaned from cross-national studies while appreciating important differences in national and local context.

Our final recommendation builds on the previous one. While we understand a general hesitance to fully embrace decades of scholarship on school leadership in North America, Australia and England for fear of being overly influenced by its content, methods, and contexts, we believe that ignoring this extensive body of research on principals is short-sighted and likely to result in efforts to reinvent the proverbial wheel in scholarship on school principals. Learning from other researchers is important as the field of study emerges within the European context. Researchers can be sensitive and attentive to history, culture, and current contexts for educational policy and simultaneously learn from rich bodies of earlier and present research and compare findings from different countries and contexts.

Den föreliggande forskningsöversikten är en av de rapporter inom Vetenskapsrådets rapportserie som tagits fram i samarbete med Skolverket. Skolverket ska stödja skolhuvudmän, rektorer och lärare i deras utbildningsverksamhet och bidra till att förbättra deras förutsättningar att arbeta med utveckling av verksamheterna för ökad måluppfyllelse. I detta arbete sprider Skolverket kunskap om forskningsresultat som är av särskilt intresse för utbildning och undervisning. Skolverket har finansierat framtagandet av denna rapport. Det övergripande målet för översikten är att presentera och diskutera aktuell svensk och europeisk forskning om rektors ledarskap.

De slutsatser och reflektioner som presenteras är för författarnas egna. Översikten har tagits fram av ett flertal internationella forskare. Projektet har letts av professor Olof Johansson vid Umeå universitet.

Granskningen av rapporten är genomförd genom peer-review.

*Skolverket*



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