

Organising for School Improvement at the Middle Tier

Studies on Temporary Organisation

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Abstract

This thesis explores local education authorities (LEAs) as translators and local organisers of a nationwide curriculum reform in Sweden. Of particular focus is an analysis of how LEAs in one municipality use the temporary organisation as an approach to local implementation. Data are extracted from semi-structured interviews and group interviews with representatives at various levels of a temporary project organisation. Communications by the Swedish National Agency for Education that aim to direct local municipalities are analysed together with documents produced in the municipal administration. Digitally taped observations are also conducted, from which selected parts are transcribed and directly integrated into the analysis.

Four results become important to emphasise. Firstly, regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive directives in the National Agency's communications generated a local translation process of assimilation, loose coupling and transformation. The lack of regulative directives, such as on divisions of labour, decision-making, mandates and developmental roles, reduced the potential for LEAs to become an influential actor in organising the local implementation. Secondly, regarding the design of temporary organisations, the theoretical concepts of time, task, team and transition and the balance between techno- and socio-structure qualities within these concepts is important to consider. Thirdly, leaders of improvement efforts who work in a temporary organisation must pay attention to sense-making processes and, in particular, to elements of pragmatic task interpretation and complexity reduction to maintain a more open-ended and innovative work process. Fourthly, the concepts of boundary objects (closed and open-ended) and brokering (non-formal and formal) provide a point of departure for understanding knowledge transfer between temporary and permanent school organisations.

The overall results imply that institutionalised logic and understandings within this organisational field impinge on the work process of the temporary organisation in focus. That is, former ideas about LEAs' functions and position in the education system and constricted viewpoints concerning school improvement prevail. This phenomenon affects LEAs' translations, their design work, the sense-making process and the knowledge transfer links. These results are important to reflect on, particularly if temporary organisations should have an innovative purpose and serve as a catalyst for local school improvement.

Included Papers

Paper 1

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Contents

Förord.....	13
Introducing the Research Problem	17
<i>Aim and Research Questions</i>	21
<i>Structure of the Thesis</i>	21
The Organisational Field of Education.....	23
<i>School Organisations</i>	25
<i>Development and Change in Organisations</i>	26
<i>Temporary Organisation</i>	29
Previous Research on LEAs and the Swedish Education System	31
Methods and Data	37
<i>Context of the Empirical Studies</i>	37
<i>Pre-Study</i>	40
<i>Interview Studies</i>	41
<i>Document Study</i>	43
<i>Recorded Observations</i>	44
<i>Methodological Overview</i>	46
<i>Use of Theory, Coding and Analysis</i>	46
<i>Quality Measures</i>	51
<i>Ethical Concerns</i>	52
Main Findings.....	55
<i>Summaries of the Four Papers</i>	55
Discussion and Conclusions	61
<i>The Issue of Knowledge Transfer</i>	61
<i>Making Sense in a Temporary Organisation</i>	62
<i>A Matter of Design</i>	64
<i>State Directives and Middle-Tier Translation</i>	65
<i>LEAs, Temporary Organisations and the Organisational Field of Education</i>	66
<i>Critical Perspectives – Some Reflections</i>	68
Directions for Further Research.....	71
References	73
Sammanfattning på svenska	81
Appendix	89
<i>Appendix A: List of interviews</i>	89
<i>Appendix B: List of documents</i>	90
<i>Appendix C: List of observations</i>	91
<i>Appendix D: Interview guides</i>	92

Figures and tables

Figure 1: Outline of Swedish school system governance.....	20
Table 1: Overview of the methods in each paper	46
Figure 2: Analysis instrument paper 2.....	48

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Förord

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1

Introducing the Research Problem

In recent decades, decentralisation and deregulation movements have been visible in the organisational field of education in both Sweden (Lundahl, 2002a, 2002b, 2005) and many other countries in the western world (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; Pont *et al.*, 2008). These forms of governance rest heavily on local politicians and educational administrators' ability to plan for and organise implementations at the central municipal level. In other words, the need for local education authorities (LEAs) as middle tiers to explore and develop organisations that could support innovative improvement in local schools has increased. Such organisations could obviously have various designs, purposes and goals. This thesis studies a specific type of organisation – *the temporary organisation* – as an example of local school improvement initiated by LEAs to support the implementation of a new nationwide curriculum in Sweden launched in the 2010/2011 academic year. This thesis strives to contribute to on-going discussions that explore the prospects for LEAs and their role at the intermediary level of education systems, for middle-level organisations and for the forms and functions of temporary organisations as an approach to school improvement.

The term LEA is linked to various understandings in different settings (Murillo, 2000). In Anglo-Saxon and Nordic-Scandinavian countries, the term generally relates to an extensive organisational authority in education that is typically sited at the local municipal, regional or provincial level. In the United States, the term school district level has a comparable meaning. However, a common feature of LEAs is that they constitute a political and administrative unit with various mandates, roles and possibilities to engage in improvement work. In this thesis, LEAs are studied from the perspective of superintendents, development leaders, administrators, schools district leaders and certain

INTRODUCING THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

principals who form an administrative domain and not primarily from the perspective of local school politicians.

From a historical point of view, observing the reshaped position of LEAs in Sweden in recent decades is important. Despite attempts since the 1970s to move decision making and power to the local municipal level, not until 1991 was such decentralisation truly realised when municipalities overtook the chieftaincy of schools from the government (Wahlström, 2002). Inspired by New Public Management-ideas, the school system was also opened to private or 'independent' actors with the intention that these performers, together with public stakeholders, should constitute a school market. A new model for funding between state and local governments was also launched in 1993 (Blossing, 2004). In this school voucher system, municipalities are allocated a standard amount for all of their commitments. In the next step, each municipality is free to decide the allocation to local schools for each student. Municipalities became responsible for the organisation of school activities, facilities, equipment, materials and different groups of staff. That municipalities and local political representatives had the overall responsibility for improving and evaluating school activities was also declared.

At that time, most municipalities in Sweden further developed current structures by forming a local organisation with a board for education, which constitutes their 'political domain' (e.g. Borgert, 1992; Cregård, 2001). Under this level is the 'administrative domain' comprised of superintendents, development leaders and administrators at the central municipal level. These two domains together form an arena for local policy making (Holmgren *et al.*, 2013). One could also pay attention to the level under the political and administrative domain, which Cregård (2001) terms the 'performer level'. This level, which is directed by the administrative level, is comprised of principals, teachers and other groups of staff in the local schools. This method of leading and organising education at the municipal level still exists in Sweden, with some variances. In turn, private actors for independent schools decide whether or not to co-operate with LEAs. Worth emphasising is finally that, despite recentralisation programmes in recent years, including expanded state directives and external inspections (e.g. Rönnberg, 2011; 2012), accountability is to a large extent still allocated to LEAs and to local school principals in the municipalities (Johansson, *et al.*, 2013).

INTRODUCING THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

However, describing and understanding this municipal independence are lacking in clarity. For instance, arguably, the Swedish education system is still characterised by a rather unclear political management structure despite a more active and operating state in later years (Jarl & Pierre, 2012). These uncertainties affect the occupation and obligations of LEAs and their superintends. Also pointed out is the fact that even if a school is formally a politically governed institution obligated to implement governmental intentions, an inherent ambiguity exists in this mission partly caused by decentralisation reforms. On this matter, Berg (2011) clarified that LEAs must convert state assignments to specific duties in executive organisations. Berg concluded that an important prerequisite for this system to work is a well-developed capacity in municipal administrations sited between national and local school levels.

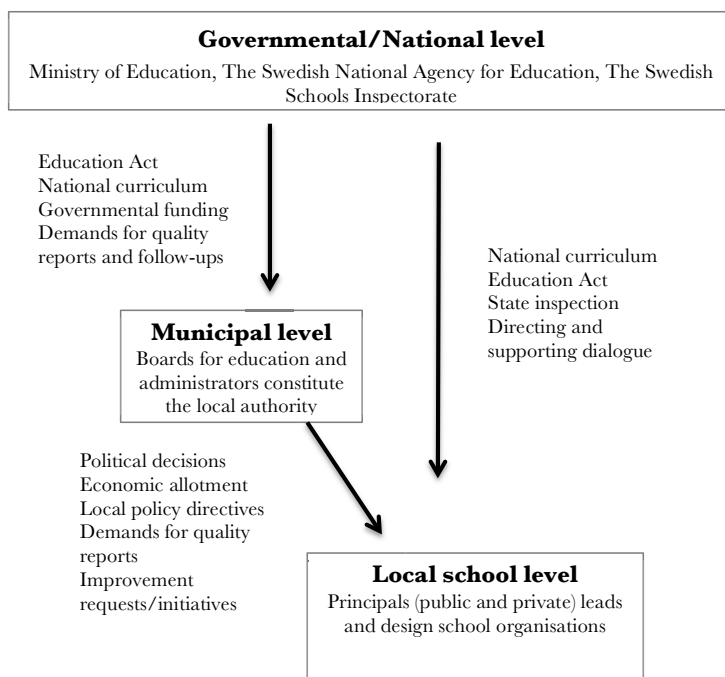
Hence, the role and function of LEAs in the Swedish education system and what is actually known about their middle-level location is worthy of reflection. Internationally, it has been argued that further attention should be drawn to LEAs and to the intermediary level of education systems because school districts are seldom a premier focus in educational research (Spillane, 1996). However, when reviewing the current body of literature, Hopkins *et al.* (2010) stressed that middle-tier intermediaries have a key position in school improvement at the local level. Likewise, Campbell and Murillo (2005, p. 78) pointed out that principals consider local authorities to be important because they provide ‘a range of important practical functions, including service provision, school improvement advice and resourcing, as well as strategic direction and oversight’. Lastly, Fullan (2005) argued that middle tiers can translate, communicate and reframe central policy guidelines to local needs and settings.

In the Swedish example, arguably, the somewhat unclear governance structures previously sketched generated a certain framework and starting point for LEAs with respect to taking on improvement initiatives (see also Figure 1). For example, the claim could be made that LEAs in the current system could take a step back and draw on the intensified dialogue between state agencies and local schools (also subsequently discussed in section 3). At the same time, political representatives and administrators at the central municipal level could also interpret the unclear governance structures by arguing that they – as heads of the local authority – still must organise and lead improvement work at the municipal level. This thesis focuses on one such ex-

INTRODUCING THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

ample in which the municipality decides to shape a separate temporary organisation for improvement to support and complement state initiatives in implementing a new nationwide curriculum.

Figure 1: Outline of Swedish school system governance.



Shaping a separate organisational unit to operate on improvement issues for a limited period provides opportunities but also has important challenges. Therefore, this thesis studies the temporary organisation as an example of how to plan and organise for school improvement through an empirical case in a Swedish municipality. This thesis focuses on a community-wide collaboration project created by LEAs in conjunction with the launch of the Lgr11 curriculum reform in the 2010/2011 academic year (also subsequently detailed). Directed by a central management group, skilled and engaged principals and teachers from the entire municipality met in subject groups on the assignment to interpret and work with the new curriculum. The purpose of this temporary organisation was not to replace an implementation process at the individual school level led by principals. Rather, the aim was to develop knowledge and materials that other schools in the mu-

INTRODUCING THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

nicipality could benefit from and, in that way, fuel the implementation.

Aim and Research Questions

Against this background, *the overall aim of this thesis is to explore LEAs as translators and local organisers of nationwide curriculum reform in the Swedish context. Of particular importance is analysing how LEAs use the temporary organisation as an approach to local implementation.* This focus is selected because it broadens the understanding of LEAs, their translations of state agencies' communications and the temporary organisation as an approach to implementing school reform in a decentralised and deregulated education system. To operationalise this aim, four research questions are posed:

- *What directives are communicated by the Swedish National Agency for Education in organising the Lgr11 curriculum reform and how do LEAs at the central municipal level translate and respond to such communications?*
- *What are the intentions of LEAs in designing a temporary organisation to implement a new curriculum reform and how can these intentions be understood?*
- *How is sense-making shaped in temporary school organisations and how does sense-making impact the improvement work?*
- *How does knowledge transfer occur between temporary and permanent school organisations and what problems might affect the transfer process?*

Structure of the Thesis

This thesis contains an introductory chapter and four sub studies. The sub studies are presented in four separated papers. This introductory chapter is divided into seven sections. Section 2 presents the concept of organisational fields and shows how the educational system constitutes such a field. Section 2 also pays attention to schools as organisations and outlines broader movements within the research field of School Effectiveness and School Improvement. Development and change in schools and other organisations is discussed as well. Lastly, organisations with a permanent and a temporary character are focused on and linked to the school context. Section 3 reviews a selection of former research that focused on LEAs and the central municipal level in the Swedish education system. This selection did not claim

INTRODUCING THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

to present a complete picture of LEAs and school improvement within the Swedish education system. Rather, it was used to provide the background for introducing the sub studies in a broader context. Section 4 outlines the methodology of the thesis. Section 5 summarises the four papers, which are presented in the following order: *State policy directives and middle-tier translation in a Swedish example*; *Designing temporary systems – exploring local school improvement intentions in the Swedish context*; *Sense-making in a temporary school organization: implementing a new curriculum in a Swedish municipality*; and *Knowledge transfer in school-to-school collaborations: the position of boundary objects and brokers*. Section 6 discusses the main findings of the four papers, both separately and interrelated to each other, and provides conclusions. Finally, section 7 sets the direction for further research.

2

The Organisational Field of Education

Explicating different levels of analysis in social sciences and organisation studies is important. Scott (2001, 2008) sketched such a framework and paid specific attention to the concept of ‘organisational fields’. Scott (1994a, p. 71) clarified that, by definition, an organisational field encompasses ‘communities of organisations that participate in the same meaning systems, and are defined by similar symbolic processes’. According to Scott (1994b), such a community of organisations forms a common meaning system because participants interact more frequently and faithfully with one another than with actors outside the field. Scott (2008) also showed that the education system constitutes an example of an organisational field, not the least because school organisations are interconnected to one another and to other organisations, such as districts offices, political boards, teachers unions and parent–teacher associations.

According to Scott (2001, 2008), an organisational field is built up by three pillars or elements that together explain the relationship between institutions and social organisations. In greater detail, the ‘regulative’ pillar concerns aspects of institutions that refer to laws and rules that together regulate and constrain organisational behaviour. Laws and rules are associated with regulatory activities, such as rule setting, monitoring, inspecting and sanctioning, to influence future behaviour. These activities could be clearly formalised but sometimes occur informally through silent mechanisms, such as shaming and shunning activities.

The ‘normative’ pillar comprises elements that constrain and empower behaviour through systems of values and norms. Scott declared that values are to be understood as conceptions of the preferred and the desirable. In turn, actions and interpretations can be compared and assessed according to these notions. Scott (2008, p. 54) clarified

THE ORGANISATIONAL FIELD OF EDUCATION

the concept that norms ‘specify how things should be done; they define legitimate means to pursue valued ends’. Thus, the normative pillar constrains organisational behaviour but also enables social actions and balancing responsibilities, privileges, duties, licenses and mandates.

The ‘cultural-cognitive’ pillar involves aspects that form shared conceptions of social reality and a frame through which meaning is made. Following Scott (2008), these thoughts and identifications are often deeply embedded in the life of organisations. Concerning legitimacy, Scott emphasises the power from cultural-cognitive elements because they primarily rest on preconscious and shared taken-for-granted understandings. However, even if shared cultural understandings tend to work in a homogenising direction (isomorphism), Scott also pointed out that it is important to recognise that cultural conceptions often vary and, consequently, could also have heterogenising effects.

Scott (2001) detailed this broader framework by highlighting a number of components. For example, regulations, norms, myths, values and formal and informal expectations are claimed to structuralise an organisational field. This process enhances internal stability and contributes to institutionalising practices. Scott *et al.* (2000) also listed components that undergird organisational fields, including actors, logic and governance arrangements. In later work, Hoffmann and Ventresca (2002) added the components of intermediary institutions and local sense-making activities. Jooste and Scott (2009, p. 14) stressed that ‘these components both constrain and enable action within fields, and thereby shape the behaviour and characteristics of organisational participants’.

This thesis uses work on organisational fields to frame the four papers. This theoretical starting point is applied because it verifies that schools are organisations and shows that these organisations are interconnected to other organisations at the local, regional and national agency levels. Thus, such theoretical points of departure appear proper in studying LEAs and middle-level organisations located between the state and the local school level. However, worth noting is that a shifting closeness occurs between this broader framework of Scott and the theoretical lenses of the four papers. The proximity to Scott is more obvious in the first paper, which also used Scott (2001, 2008) as a theoretical point of departure. In the ending discussion section, Scott’s work is more evident in the latter parts.

School Organisations

Importantly, note that the perspective offered by Scott and colleagues underlines the concept that schools and school systems are built of organisations. Such a take-off point has received rather little attention in educational research in Sweden. In clarifying why organisational perspectives have had a minor position in Sweden, Ekholm (1995) pointed out that the Swedish school system was very centralised up until the 1990s and, within such a system, research on individual school organisations or local improvement was not prioritised. This reason also explains why the interest in understanding the local school organisation has been stronger in decentralised education systems, such as in the United States, the United Kingdom and The Netherlands.

The interest in describing and examining schools as organisations has a background in social psychology. The work of Lewin (1947) emphasises the influence of the organisation on the behaviour of its members (see also Morgan, 2006). In the 1960s, strategies for development and change in organisations were developed in the private business sector, such as the Organisational Development (OD) perspective (Hall & Hord, 1987). One leading concept was to move beyond individual members in organisations because the nature of the group was considered a key factor in its development. On the basis of these notions, the OD perspective was later refined and adapted to education and school organisations (e.g. Sarason, 1971, 1996; Schmuck & Runkel, 1994; Schmuck *et al.*, 1977). A front figure in this work was Matthew Miles (1967; 1975), who introduced and operationalised the concept of 'organisational health'. In doing so, Miles provided a framework for clarifying the relationship between organisational conditions and the quality of education.

In subsequent decades, this pioneering work was further developed, most clearly within the field of School Effectiveness and School Improvement. In outlining the different phases of this field, Hopkins *et al.* (2014) illustrated that the first phase in the 1980s paid significant attention to organisational culture and its impact on school performance. In the following phases in the 1990s and early 2000s, action research and research initiatives at the local school level were the focus, in addition to management and leadership issues. Approaches for school improvements and building capacity for student learning were

THE ORGANISATIONAL FIELD OF EDUCATION

also prioritised themes. Hopkins *et al.* (2014) completed their review by showing that, in recent years, a shift occurred from improving the individual school organisation towards more systematic improvements focusing on the district, regional and national level.

Even within the field of School Effectiveness and School Improvement, noting somewhat different traditions and research focuses is relevant (e.g. Dalin, 2005). Regarding ‘School Development’, this tradition builds on a structural perspective from which significant interest has been directed towards educational reform and implementation work. With respect to the School Effectiveness tradition, which also has a structural perspective, identifying (causal) mechanisms for effective teaching and student achievement is significantly emphasised. In the third and final tradition of School Improvement, the starting point is taken from a humanistic perspective that focuses on organisational development from theories found in social psychology. This thesis and its sub studies are mainly positioned within the first and third traditions, although no sharp boundaries exist between the different perspectives. Regarding the phases of the research field previously summarised, one can also note that this thesis addresses improvement issues at the school district level even if the individual school organisation remains important.

To summarise, that improvement and change are key factors in school organisations and a central theme for this thesis becomes clear. However, that systematic school improvement is far from a straight-forward process should be emphasised. Therefore, the next subsection aims to outline some starting points for understanding development and change in schools and other organisations, in addition to the difficulties that may arise.

Development and Change in Organisations

Linked to the work on organisational fields, a number of interrelated positions exist for understanding and studying improvement and change. Weick (1976; 1980) argued that educational organisations are to be understood as ‘loosely coupled systems’, indicating that these organisations are not as tightly knit compared with other organisations, such as industries or bureaucratic entities. Hence, according to Weick, processes, activities and individuals are loosely connected within the organisation. This loose connection leads to the conclusion that considerable room exists for self-determination in educational organi-

THE ORGANISATIONAL FIELD OF EDUCATION

sations, which affects how objectives are formulated, how activities are arranged and how goals are evaluated in such organisations.

The element of structure is actualised in the work of Dalin (1994, 1998, 2005). Dalin adapted the organisational profiles elaborated on by the St. Gallen group, which focuses on the concepts of techno-structure and socio-structure in organisations. Techno-structure relates to classical organisation and management theory. Instead, socio-structure further relates to humanistic perspectives in which motivation and culture are key fundamentals for developing and changing organisations. An organisation has a strong techno-structure when it is issue-oriented and has highly formalised structures. A strong socio-structure is more characterised by the opposite conditions and is strongly person-oriented and highly symbol-oriented. Dalin pointed out that managers of school organisations need to consider and balance the techno-structure and the socio-structure. The issue of socio- and techno-structure is also connected to the concept of organisational fields and to the elements highlighted by Scott and colleagues. For instance, norms, values, logic and formal/informal expectations in an organisation arguably influence the understanding of techno- and socio-structure qualities, in addition to how to balance these qualities. This phenomenon may become even more evident in the case of LEAs forming a middle-level organisation, in which the components of intermediary institutions and local sense-making activities frame the work process.

The issue of development and change could also be studied from a cultural position. This starting point is observable in both organisation theory more broadly (Pettigrew, 1979; Schein, 2004) and the school improvement literature (Berg, 1995; Dalin, *et al.*, 1993; Hargreaves, 1994). Berg (1999) viewed the school culture as a central component to school improvement because it provides a common frame for what is legitimate within the organisation. This often unspoken frame may differ from formally stated goals and directives at the state level or from official development plans set by the local principal. Hence, a link to the pillars of Scott (2008) also exists, and particularly to normative and cultural-cognitive elements embedded in the local organisation. In sorting different cultural forms, Hargreaves (1992) claimed that cooperation, systematic evaluation and collective learning and governing structures – characteristic of the ‘collaborative school culture’ – are uncommon in school organisations. Even if important changes occurred in recent decades, Hargreaves and Fullan (2012)

THE ORGANISATIONAL FIELD OF EDUCATION

pointed out in later work that schools around the globe must still consider these school culture issues and must challenge the limiting structures in organisations to achieve an effective and sustainable improvement process.

Weick (1995) and Weick *et al.* (2005) provided a third position for understanding development and change in organisations through the concept of ‘sense-making’. From a cognitive starting point, sense-making is understood as a retrospective process in which members of organisations strive to understand themselves and their actions. Weick (1995) claimed that people in organisations tend to work on autopilot if the work is going smoothly. If something interrupts the day-to-day work, people switch from autopilot to a conscious process when attempting to handle the situation. Thus, Weick *et al.* (2005) stressed that sense-making tends to arise when the expected state differs from the present state and no obvious way exists to participate and act. By that, a clear link also exists between sense-making and educational change because old interpretations are to be challenged and transformed. Weick (1995) declared that sense-making is a pragmatic procedure wherein organisation members individually and collectively reduce complexity to make sense of new circumstances. Weick stressed that sense-making is not solely an information interpretation process. Instead, sense-making could be compared to a continuous interaction process between information interpretation and a coherent knowledge structure. That said, that interconnections exist between the work of Weick and the broader theoretical perspective of the theses offered by Scott (2001, 2008), Scott *et al.* (2000) and Hoffmann and Ventresca (2002) becomes clear – most evidently because theorists use the sense-making concept and highlight local sense-making activities.

Thus, considering how to combine stabilising elements in organisations with innovation, development and learning becomes important (cf. Ellström, 2002; 2004). In fact, school organisations stand out as stable organisations because they are shaped to provide education and to be the workplace for teachers and principals in the foreseeable future. Therefore, from an organisational perspective, one could claim that these organisations are to be understood as permanent and, by that, constitute the main platform for school development and change at the local municipal level.

Temporary Organisation

One option to engaging in development work in a permanent organisation that involves each member of the organisation is to shape a separate and temporary unit for a limited period. In the next step, the work performed in such a unit could, at best, influence and fuel the everyday work in the permanent organisation. This dividing line between permanent and temporary organisational forms was previously introduced (e.g. Modig, 2009; Sahlin-Andersson & Söderholm, 2002). Additionally, numerous concepts elaborated on the temporal organisational form as the highpoint, such as project organisations (Hobday, 2000; Sydow *et al.*, 2004), matrix organisations (Arvidsson, 2009; Knight, 1976) and networking (Borgatti & Foster, 2003; Brass *et al.*, 2004).

In this thesis, the concept of a temporary organisation has a central position. This term was originally presented in the work of Miles (1964), who stated that a main advantage to designing temporary organisations, such as in schools, is the opportunity to gather skilled members to accomplish particular tasks important to the organisation. Miles stressed that the potential in the temporary organisation form is in the opportunity to shape a more person- and symbol-oriented organisation characterised by a motivating learning culture. In turn, such a culture can inspire and stimulate learning in the permanent school organisation.

Temporary organisations are found at different levels within the organisational field of education. Temporary project groups are created at state agencies to formulate and implement government directives. At central and local municipal administration levels, principals and teachers participate in special projects and in less structured networks. However, in both the work of Miles and broader organisational theory, challenges in shaping temporary organisations were stressed. For instance, issues of knowledge transfer that focus on how to link permanent and temporary organisations were given attention because the knowledge and material produced in temporary organisations must somehow reach permanent organisations (e.g. Jacobsson *et al.*, 2013; Lundin & Söderholm, 1995; Tuomi-Gröhn & Engeström, 2003; Star & Griesemer, 1989). These former studies make clear that the difficulties with transfers become particularly obvious when transferring learning outcomes because actors outside temporary organisations are often excluded from the meaning-making process leading up to the final results.

THE ORGANISATIONAL FIELD OF EDUCATION

Although temporary organisational forms are quite common in schools, the issue of transfer received less attention in educational research. As declared, this subject is the focus of one of the papers in this thesis that uses the concepts of 'boundary objects' and 'brokers', as elucidated in Wenger (1998). These concepts, separately and combined, offer a theoretical lens if both products and learning outcomes are to be transferred from temporary organisations, as in the present study. This focus also connects to the overall theoretical perspectives of this thesis because transfer becomes crucial to understanding how organisational fields are developed and how organisations (permanent and temporary) are linked to one another.

One further challenge for temporary organisations in becoming a platform for learning and improvement, as underscored by Saunders and Ahuja (2006), is that the interest in building relationships might be modest – participants tend to put prior focus on the tasks assigned because they know they will soon return to their everyday contexts. In addition, Bakker (2010) pointed out that we need to learn more about how social interaction is shaped in temporary groups because the present image provides few details about these processes.

Broadening the current image of LEAs and for temporary organisations within the organisational field of education appears to be needed, which is linked to these observations and to the theoretical discussion on development and change. To accomplish this objective, this thesis focuses on LEAs and middle-level organisations through four themes presented in the four sub studies. The first theme focuses on the National Agency's directives to LEAs in a nationwide curriculum reform and how the LEAs translated the ideas communicated. The second theme centres on the intentions behind a temporary project organisation designed by LEAs to support a local implementation process. To attain an enhanced understanding of how social interaction is shaped in temporary organisations, the third theme focuses on how teachers and principals make sense of the work process. The fourth and final theme aims to expand the understanding of knowledge transfer between temporary and permanent organisations, particularly within the field of education.

3

Previous Research on LEAs and the Swedish Education System

Within a historical perspective, the Swedish education system has undergone major changes since the 1950s – from ideas on strong centralisation and state regulation to decentralisation, deregulation and – in recent years – recentralisation. In fact, Sweden had one of the most centralised school systems in the Western World during the entire post-war period (Liljequist, 2008), despite the SIA investigation (SOU, 1974:53) and other state inset programmes in the 1970s and 1980s that intended to empower school improvement at the local municipal level. Therefore, the reconstruction of the Swedish education system in the 1990s could be understood from various viewpoints. The financial crises in Sweden led to a situation in which the Swedish government had to reduce bureaucracy to cut costs in the entire public sector, such as by limiting state agencies' involvements at the local municipal level and by reducing middle-level activities (Nytell, 2006; SOU 2014:5). The Swedish National Audit Office (1998) also showed that cost price per pupil was reduced by 19 per cent between 1992 and 1996. New political and ideological ideas influenced by New Public Management also gained broader acceptance. Political representatives, from the left to the right so to say, became more responsive to market solutions in the public sector.

Furthermore, aside from these economic and political explanations, the governmental desire existed to move decision making to the municipalities and to the individual school level. The powerful National Board of Education (Skolöverstyrelsen) was replaced with a new agency in 1991, The Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket). The former agency directed LEAs and superintendents in detail, and not solely regarding teaching and learning but also administratively. A

PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON LEAS AND THE SWEDISH EDUCATION SYSTEM

new governance model developed from three cornerstones (decentralisation, management by objectives, evaluation and inspection) was also established (Jacobsson & Sahlin-Andersson, 1995). Within such a model, local actors possess the freedom to structure their operations and actions to accomplish objectives set at the central state level. The newly founded National Agency for Education received instructions to control the municipalities 'just enough' (*lagomstyrning* in Swedish) – not in detail – and instead protect the local freedom. These instructions gave LEAs more power but also more responsibility to set directions for leading and influencing improvement work in the local school organisations.

Even if the 1990s stand out as a historical dividing line, the desire to increase municipal independence and stimulate local school improvement is, as noted, observable even before the economic cutbacks and the new political influences. For example, different types of organisations were already tested at the central municipal level in the 1980s because local actors were gradually provided with more acting space (Nihlfors, 2003). State inset programmes and in-service training were also launched to stimulate improvement work in local school districts. However, the findings indicated that the effects of these efforts were modest, primarily because of a lack of district coordination and systematisation (Sandström & Ekholm, 1984; Ekholm, 1989). Ekholm *et al.* (1987) concluded that, despite the in-service training in which models for school evaluation had a prominent position, only a few school districts evaluated and developed their work using a systematic approach.

Nihlfors (2003) focused on the position of the superintendent, which in the Swedish setting is a position that is subordinate to a municipal committee or a board responsible for education. Superintendents were introduced in the 1950s as a central position in the municipal administration to ensure equity between municipalities and to lead school boards in forming a local policy-making arena. Superintendents were also sanctioned in the Education Acts up to the 1990s; however, at that time, requests of superintendents and other obligatory requirements were erased in the new political directives (Government bill 1990/91:18). Instead, the new Education Act and the Curriculum Lpo94 gave local politicians and educational managers advanced acting space to build an organisation to operate and administrate education.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON LEAS AND THE SWEDISH EDUCATION SYSTEM

However, politicians at the national level still pictured some kind of arena sited between local schools and politicians to operate the new school system (Berg, 1992). Likewise, even though the office of the superintendent was deleted from the Swedish legislation in the 1990s, most municipalities still have a municipal officer in their administration to perform the work of the superintendent – even if job descriptions vary (Nihlfors *et al.*, 2013). These superintendents organise and lead principals (and, in some cases, district leaders) in a type of management group. These management groups are primarily expected to constitute a forum for long-term decisions with respect to municipal education. In a survey study, Svedberg and Weinholz (2014) targeted superintendents' and principals' beliefs regarding the main purpose of these management group meetings. Notably, the superintendents' and principals' opinions on the purpose of the management team meetings and on the issues given prior focus were weakly consistent. In contrast to principals' opinions, the superintendents believed that information dissemination is given limited space and that leadership issues are instead prioritised at the meetings. Equally interesting to note is that both superintendents and principals expressed a desire for leadership issues, school development and pedagogy to be given more space at the expense of other practical issues.

Retrospectively, LEAs and single principals in Sweden have arguably struggled to understand and operate within the transformed educational landscape (e.g. The Swedish National Audit Office, 2004; 2011). Equally, one could claim that the 'municipalization reform' was to be implemented in a situation in which neither municipalities nor teachers possessed the readiness and ability to handle the new responsibilities and assignments (SOU 2014:5). The Swedish government did not provide sufficient support to LEAs, principals or teachers. Viewed against this background, the recentralisation and reregulation trends mentioned in the introduction – including extended dialogues directly between state agencies and principals in the local schools – become logical. One example that illustrates these re-shaped relationships between the government and local schools – and the new 'political winds' – is the shutdown of the short-lived National Agency for School Improvement (Myndigheten för skolutveckling), which operated between 2003 and 2008 and had the overall assignment of supporting local school improvements in pre-schools, schools and adult education (SOU: 2007:101). The founding of The Swedish Schools Inspectorate

PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON LEAs AND THE SWEDISH EDUCATION SYSTEM

(Skolinspektionen) in 2008, whose main obligations include inspecting and controlling schools' work and considering requests for starting new private schools, also confirms this argument.

Detailed instructions and a more managing and controlling government become important when stressing that municipal school actors in Sweden do not seem completely negative to stronger state governance. In contrast, Ek (2012) indicated that municipalities in Sweden have not only exhibited a susceptibility to state inspection but have also internalised 'an inspection logic' and a culture in which inspections are normalised and viewed as meaningful and useful. These findings are noteworthy when viewed from the work of De Wolf and Janssens (2007), who reviewed former studies on the effects and side effects of control mechanisms in education. One of the overall results showed that whether increased state control and inspections have positive causal effects on the quality of schools is unclear. These findings are important to consider within the Swedish setting in which LEAs and local schools put high hopes on external inspections and straight-down dialogue to increase state involvement to accomplish lasting school improvement.

Consequently, where does this situation lead us regarding the position of LEAs, superintendents and their administrators with respect to improving local schools in Sweden? Once again, paying attention to two tendencies that point in somewhat contrasting directions is important. On the one hand, one could argue that the straightforward dialogue between state agencies and local schools marginalises the role of LEAs and superintendents in favour of principals and teachers in local schools. Supported by formulations in the current Education Act, LEAs could as well argue that principals in local schools actually are accountable for school activities regardless of the local chieftainship. On the other hand, LEAs and superintendents still possess the acting space and assignment to organise for implementation and school improvement to advance school quality. In this matter, the management groups sited at an administrative level between local politicians and local school principals are still considered influential; therefore, the municipal hierarchy appears to stand strong.

However, given the historical picture previously outlined, questions could be raised regarding the preparedness and expertise of LEAs, superintendents, administrators and other groups of staffs at the central municipal level to handle the complexity of this situation. Alterna-

PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON LEAS AND THE SWEDISH EDUCATION SYSTEM

tively, whether these actors received proper conditions, mandates and a clear role to operate at the middle tier to balance government intentions and the understandings and needs in the local schools could be questioned. Lastly, one could also reflect on whether increased inspection and controls and fewer middle-level arrangements between the government level and local municipalities are the best recipe from a school improvement perspective.

4

Methods and Data

Context of the Empirical Studies

In an early stage of this dissertation work, this research project focused on assessment and marking from an organisational perspective. On the basis of this focus, I began to search for one or several municipalities with which to collaborate. After a while, I attended a conference and contacted the studied municipality through a former colleague. The municipality stood out as important to study because it decided to build a separate and temporary organisation to implement the new curriculum and marking system. During the work process, the research focus somewhat shifted. Accordingly, the organisation came to the fore and the assessment and marking are now in the background. The main reason for the shift is primarily linked to conscious choices and considerations on the basis of my own research interests; however, the shift is also linked to empirical discoveries obtained from early fieldwork.

At the time of the studies, the medium-sized Swedish municipality had approximately 75,000 inhabitants. The board for pre-school and compulsory school formed a decision-making agency, and the education administration formed an operative and administrative unit. This latter unit, which is responsible for implementing and fulfilling political decisions, is led by a superintendent supported by administrative staff and school developers operating at the central municipal level. As noted, these administrators – the superintendent and school developers – together with a certain project group (subsequently detailed) are the main focus of this thesis. Twenty-four public schools and two independent ‘free schools’ provide education to approximately 10,000 pupils between the ages of six and sixteen. Several public schools are organised with children from pre-school to school year nine. Other schools are separated into two sections, one for children from pre-

METHODS AND DATA

school to school year five and the other section for children from school years six to nine. All public schools are organised in six districts (skoldistrikt), each having one school district leader. Three of the districts are run as independent units, meaning that they work more independently from LEAs and the central administration. This independence results in greater autonomy but also less cooperation with the other units throughout the municipality.

One overall intention of designing a temporary project organisation was to support and fuel the implementation of the new Lgr11 curriculum in the 2010/2011 academic year. The project continued in the subsequent academic years but less intensely, and was formally completed in May 2013. In addition to the opportunity to develop a broader knowledge base in the municipality around the new curriculum, more specific instructions were also voiced. For example, that the 'central content' in each teaching subject should be given prior attention was declared. Issues related to assessment and marking should also be given high priority because a new marking system was implemented for teachers and principals to interpret. A central pedagogic development group (CPDG) consisting of school developers, school district leaders and a selection of principals was assigned the job to lead the implementation organisation. This group was closely linked to political administrators and the superintendent during the entire work period.

As an initial step, teachers in the local schools were recommended by their principals to represent their schools. The management group, the CPDG, then selected teachers. In the next step, a temporary project organisation was established in which central subject groups (CSGs) with approximately four to eight teachers held a central position. In the CSGs, teachers from the entire municipality worked with specific tasks assigned by the CPDG and political representatives. As an outcome, approximately 100 to 120 teachers representing all teaching subjects in the Swedish compulsory school were gathered systematically during these academic years. Teachers and principals met every week or every two weeks at the beginning of the 2010/2011 academic year and meetings ran for approximately 90 minutes. During the rest of this academic year, the CSGs met about every two weeks. In the middle of the subsequent academic years, meeting frequency was reduced to half-day events every six weeks. This decision was approved by principals and teachers in the CSGs.

METHODS AND DATA

Regarding limitations, the empirical studies focused on the Physical Education, Social Sciences and Mathematics teaching subjects. Because a stronger emphasis was initially placed on assessment and marking, I had the ambition to cover both practical and theoretical school subjects in addition to covering school subjects with different knowledge traditions. The selection of CSGs and local schools was also linked to practical concerns because meetings and interviews with several schools were not only matched with each other but also with the CSG gatherings. In retrospective, reflecting on whether the selection of CSGs and local schools was different and had a clearer focus on organisation from the beginning is worthwhile. Most likely, another starting point provided additional options and perspectives for studying the temporary organisation in a school context. At the same time, the unintended choice to study different teaching subjects and CSG groups in the temporary organisation should be noted as being important for the findings of the papers. For example, practical teaching subjects generate a somewhat different framework with respect to sense-making or knowledge transfer issues. Hence, the selection of teaching subjects, CSGs and local schools adds important nuances, although no deliberate intention on this concept existed from the beginning.

To summarise, the conclusion can be reached that the empirical studies of this thesis are carried out in a municipality that selected a well-elaborated strategy to organise the implementation of the new curriculum compared with many other municipalities in Sweden. In fact, few municipalities in Sweden have both the economy and a common desire to build large-scale collaboration projects, such as temporary organisations between schools; therefore, the selected municipality constitutes a positive and atypical example. For instance, participating teachers and principals were assigned to work with improvement in their duties financed by the central administration in the municipality during the first year. Nevertheless, the municipality and the research focus provide an opportunity to study LEAs, their translations of the state agency's communications and temporary organisation as an approach to implementing school reforms in a decentralised and deregulated education system. In other words, we can learn much from a positive and atypical example even if the example has limitations regarding generalizability, comparability and so on.

METHODS AND DATA

Pre-Study

The research design includes a pre-study, which was conducted in the spring of 2011. One overall intention of using this approach was to attain an improved image for the empirical case and to identify the object of knowledge. An additional aspect was to find a sample matching the (preliminary) aim and research questions for this thesis. Furthermore, my intention was to establish relationships and to plan for and strategize on the following fieldwork. The pre-study was accomplished in the same municipality as the main study. This approach could be motivated from at least two viewpoints. Firstly, far-reaching collaboration projects between schools are, as discussed, uncommon in the Swedish education context; therefore, few equal or matching examples existed to study. Secondly, because qualitative analysis in this thesis is understood as an on-going activity starting in the initial phases of the research project, the upcoming studies strived to further develop the initial analyses and preliminary themes, categories and indicators (cf. Janesick, 1994).

The pre-study included five observations and three interviews. Two observations were carried out in different CSG meetings and three observations were of different subject groups in the local schools. Regarding the CSG meetings, these observations were important to obtaining a more detailed understanding of the work in the temporary organisation, such as meeting structures, goals, how participants experienced the work process and so on. The subject groups observed in the local schools had at least one teacher in the CSGs. These observations provided insights into how and whether teachers in the local schools understood the work performed in the temporary organisation. These observations could also provide further information on how and whether teachers in the CSGs used the materials and knowledge developed in the temporary organisation. For all observations, meeting participants were informed about the research project and the nearby study. Field notes were taken, but I asked no direct questions of the participants. In addition, three interviews with principals and teachers in different positions of the temporary organisation were completed, transcribed verbatim and analysed. These interviews were not included in the main study because they primarily aimed to increase the understanding of the object of knowledge, in addition to formulating well-defined interview questions.

METHODS AND DATA

Interview Studies

The main data are derived from eighteen ($n=18$) individual interviews and three focus group interviews ($n=3$) conducted from October 2011 to April 2013 (see appendix A). Each interview lasted approximately 50 to 90 minutes and was subsequently transcribed verbatim. Pronunciations, pauses, body language and so on were not taken into account. Semi-structured interview guides were designed for informants of each level of the temporary organisation (the CPDG, the CSGs and subject groups in local schools) and aimed to establish conversations and dialogues between researcher and respondents (see appendix D). The interview guides worked as ‘maps’ or ‘frames’ for both the individual and the focus group interviews (see Kvale, 2009).

Regarding the selection of respondents for the individual interviews, all eight members in the CPDG unit together with the superintendent were included. These participants were interviewed in an initial stage of the research project. Their inclusion was motivated in that they constitute LEAs in the sub studies and operate at the central municipal level. These middle-level actors translate and reframe the stated policy ideas and, in turn, implement these ideas in a temporary organisation. By interviewing these players, I obtained a closer view of the implementation work and the improvements organised at the middle tier. Thus, contrasting these results and understandings through additional interviews and taped recorded observations became important (also subsequently discussed).

Ten CSG teachers representing Physical Education, Social Sciences and Mathematics were also interviewed. No notable problems arose from the schools and from meeting these teachers. Similarly, no difficulties occurred in getting the CSG teachers to share their experiences and thoughts on the temporary project organisation. Eight interviews were conducted in the local schools in the everyday context of the CSG teachers, and two interviews were conducted at the university.

Focus group interviews with subject group teachers in the three local schools were also completed. As shown, these subject groups had at least one representative in the CSGs. One main ambition of this approach was to capture the shared and diverse experiences and thoughts of the temporary organisation (cf. Blaikie, 2009). A modified interview guide directed the dialogues in these interviews (see appendix D). In contrast to the individual interviews with the CSG teachers, some teachers were quite reserved in the beginning of the interviews. That is, they asked on whose behalf the research was carried out, and

METHODS AND DATA

whether the municipal administration had assigned me to evaluate the collaboration project. Thus, pointing out that the research project was designed without involvement of LEAs or other professionals in the political administration, and that they were not given access to empirical data, became important. Related to previous observations, that subject groups and the local schools had somewhat dissimilar understandings of the temporary project organisation became clear. Therefore, in one of the focus group interviews, I had to ask more direct and leading questions because the informants, except for the CSG teacher, had a very unclear notion of the collaboration project. For instance, if informants expressed that they found the temporary organisation and the CSG teachers useful, they had to clarify in what way and why. Likewise, if informants had a negative image and claimed that the work of the temporary organisation had a weaker effect, then the interviewees had to explain in the local school interviews what they wanted instead and how this could strengthen implementation at the local school.

Certain aspects need to be emphasised and further discussed. Concerning the relationship between the individual and the focus group interviews, members of the CPDG and in CSGs obviously had a generally broader and deepened understanding of the temporary project organisation compared with members of the subject groups in the local schools. However, a comparison of the individual and the focus group interviews disclosed important perspectives and understandings of the temporary organisation. As noted, in some of the focus group interviews, I steered and directed the conversations to a large extent, which naturally affected the outcomes of the interviews. The theoretical concepts and ideas that structured the interviews were also quite likely unknown for the interviewees; therefore, the risk is that they are ascribed opinions and perspectives with which they might not really agree. To limit this risk, I strived to be sensitive to informants' thoughts and opinions and engaged in dialogue with them to lead the conversation forward.

Finally, of interest is a reflection on time planning and the schedule developed for the interviews. By starting at the top of the project – with the CPDG and the superintendent – I briefly attained an understanding of the intentions and goals of the temporary organisation, and of the improvement work engaged in more broadly in the municipality. Three members of the CPDG also left their assignments or received new occupations outside the municipality in the later phases

METHODS AND DATA

of the research project. These changes could have resulted in a situation in which a number of important individuals who designed and implemented the temporary organisation were missing from the interviews. At the same time, by starting at the ‘top’, I had the preconception that probably impinged on the interviews with the CSGs and the local school teachers. If the interviews had been conducted in reverse order, then more opportunities would have existed to ask additional questions to the CPDG and the superintendent, not the least regarding the design of the temporary organisation that is the particular focus of paper 2.

Document Study

Empirical data were also derived from documents formulated by the National Agency for Education (see Appendix B). This agency received the assignment from the Ministry of Education to organise and lead the implementation of the Lgr11 curriculum reform and to work with local municipalities. To accomplish this assignment, certain project groups were established at the agency. The documentation from these project group meetings is the focus of the analysis. The project groups also produced documents to guide local municipalities and single schools in the implementation process. These documents were also of certain interest for the study. By studying these documents, the analysis strived to detect leading ideas (cf. Bergström & Boréus, 2000) in the state agency’s communications on how the implementation of the curriculum reform should be organised by LEAs and local school principals. A request was made to the archivist in charge at the agency to deliver this documentation by e-mail. These documents fall under the principle of public access to official records and were sent to me in PDF files a few weeks later. After a selection process, the number of documents used in the analysis was reduced to twelve ($n=12$).

Attention was also paid to documents formulated by the board for education in the local municipality and to the documented dialogues leading up to the decision to shape a temporary project organisation. Documents produced by the management group – the CPDG – were also studied. These documents, which also fall under the principle of public access to official records, were obtained from the municipality’s central administration. From twenty documents, four ($n=4$) of them were directly included in the analysis because they explicitly provided details about the temporary project organisation.

METHODS AND DATA

Regarding the selection of documents, whether all relevant documentation from the selected period was included in the study is difficult to verify. I did not verify the documents attained from the Agency for Education and the municipal administration. Therefore, the risk exists that further documentation of relevance might be available for the analysis. Also worth noting is that, on several occasions, I attempted to interview the officers who were part of the project groups at the state agency to complement the document study. However, the current head of the section, who also participated in the work process in several of the project groups, clarified that she could not spare her colleagues during working hours because of a heavy work load.

Recorded Observations

Data were also gained from audio-recorded observations of meetings at different levels of the temporary organisation. These observations were used to expand the understanding of the temporary organisation's work process, its main outcomes and how this work was linked to and understood in the local schools. In total, thirteen ($n=13$) observations were conducted between August 2011 and April 2012, six from gatherings with the CSGs and seven from gatherings with subjects groups in the local schools (see appendix C). As noted, the CSGs initially met once a week or every two weeks for approximately 90 minutes. Meeting frequency was reduced over time. At the end of the project, the CSGs met approximately every six weeks at half-day events. Even if the observations had an inductive approach, a number of themes or 'foreshadowed questions' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007) were formulated to frame the observations. At the gatherings, I put a voice recorder in the middle of the table to tape participants' voices. I generally took a retracted position that was close to a 'complete observer position' (see Cohen, *et al.*, 2007) and only interjected questions and comments if needed. I also answered direct questions asked by teachers and principals. I took field notes to register and later follow up on themes and questions exposed in the observations. Of certain interest was capturing participants' experiences, interpretations and opinions of the work process and recalling critical incidents that for some reason took the work of the temporary organisation in a new direction.

The CSG meetings had a similar structure and no notable differences existed in content and form. The gatherings usually started with

METHODS AND DATA

casual conversation and then participants attempted to catch up on the work from last time and continue the work process. One additional common feature was that members seemed quite comfortable with and were positive about having a researcher at the meetings. This comfort might be linked to the careful sample of participants made by the CPDG. Thus, participating teachers and principals were likely positive to collaboration, to school improvement and to practice research. Still, it should be stressed that no guarantee existed that certain participants preferred to work without my presence at the meetings. The fact that an external person was present at the gatherings and recorded the discussions and dialogues most likely affected the work process.

Observations that focused on subject groups in the local schools took a similar approach and were carried out from the same premises and objectives as the CSG observations. However, some distinctions could be important to highlight. In the same way as in the pre-study, I had to ask more questions of meeting participants about their opinions and thoughts on the temporary organisation. At the same time, members of the groups asked me numerous questions, primarily about the findings of the research project to date. One further difference was that meetings had more of a social function because pedagogical issues were mixed with matters of a more personal nature. The subject group meeting also had quite a loose character and was less focused on improvement work than the CSGs. Finally, that the subjects groups in the local schools quite frequently had a critically and bantering manner in picturing the temporary project organisation could be stressed. The reasons behind this manner could only be speculated on; a lack of understanding may have existed on how the temporary organisation actually was supposed to work, how it was developed, who was asked to be involved and so forth. One further possible explanation is that the temporary organisation was a project initiated from and operated at the central municipal level, which might provoke resistance because teachers could sense that they have less influence and power to affect the project's direction.

Lastly, worth noting is that the observation data were primarily used to identify important topics and issues for up-coming interviews. By that, these data were primarily viewed as a secondary source, even if selected parts from the recorded material were transcribed and used directly in the analysis work – but solely in papers 3 and 4.

Methodological Overview

Table 1: Overview of the methods in each paper

Methods	Paper 1	Paper 2	Paper 3	Paper 4
Interviews	X	X	X	X
Document study	X			
Recorded observations			X	X

Use of Theory, Coding and Analysis

The four sub studies and the analysis are linked to inductive and deductive approaches, although with an emphasis on the latter type of analytical position. The theoretical frameworks, the coding and the analysis procedures of the separate papers are subsequently outlined. This section ends with a broader discussion and critical remarks.

Paper 1

In the first paper, organisational sociology (Scott, 2001, 2008) and the framework of three pillars (regulative, normative, cultural-cognitive) were used as a point of departure to analyse the National Agency's directives on how to organise the implementation of the new curriculum. The analysis also applied the deductive categories of 'assimilation', 'loose coupling' and 'transformation', as elaborated on in Andersson (2011), to explore LEAs' local translations and responses to the state agency's communications (see also Akrich *et al.*, 2002; Latour & Wolgar, 1986; Sahlin & Wedlin, 2008). The main motive for this theoretical framework was to broaden the current understanding for policy translations and for educational reform in a decentralised education system. Another reason for integrating the work of Andersson and others was to address former criticisms of the neo-institutional

METHODS AND DATA

perspective by emphasising that a one-sided macro-level focus tends to reduce the role of single actions and actors in organisations (e.g. Christensen *et al.*, 1997; Hirsch, 1997).

The analysis was performed in two steps with the assistance of the Atlas.ti 6.2 software tool. In the first step, the National Agency's communications were categorised and coded with a lens built on Scott's (2001, 2008) regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive elements to accomplish a more categorical, analytic and systematic coding process (cf. Gibbs, 2007). The second step explored how municipal level LEAs translated and responded to the Agency's regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive directives transferred by certain carriers. The categories of assimilation, loose coupling and transformation were applied to code and analyse the municipal documents and interview transcripts. This information was then used to classify the ideas assimilated, which led to loose coupling and transformative reactions.

Paper 2

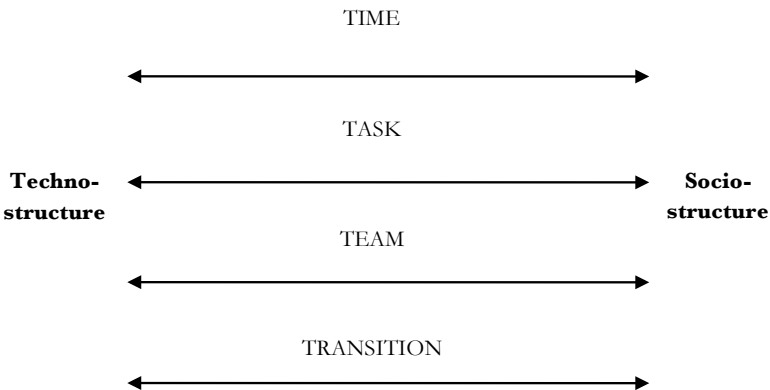
In paper 2, temporary organisation theory (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995) was combined with theories that focus on the socio- and techno-structure qualities of school organisations (Dalin, 1994, 1998, 2005). Integrating these theoretical perspectives is relevant because this paper aims to explore the intentions in the design work performed by the CPDG, in addition to developing a take-off point to examine temporary organisations in a school context. Lundin and Söderholm (1995) elaborated on the theoretical base of temporary organisations by emphasising the concepts of 'time', 'task', 'team' and 'transition', which they claim are crucial for understanding the forms and functions of temporary organisations. To complement these concepts developed within broader organisational theory, Dalin's work (1994, 1998, 2005) on organisational profiles that focused on techno- and socio-structure qualities in school organisations was integrated. Techno-structure relates to classical organisation and management theory. In contrast, socio-structure is from a humanistic perspective through which motivation and culture are crucial fundamentals for understanding and developing organisations. The theoretical starting points offered by Lundin and Söderholm and Dalin were combined into an analysis instrument (see Figure 2).

As a first step in the analytical work, transcripts from individual interviews with the CPDG management group were openly reviewed and organised using qualitative data analysis software (Atlas.ti 6.2.) to

METHODS AND DATA

detect central patterns and broader themes. For instance, these themes drew attention to the background of the municipal collaboration and how the notion of temporary project organisation was coined from the beginning – before the actual design work and the specific intentions were worked out. The next step of the analysis applied the analysis instrument developed using the concepts of time, task, team and transition, combined with the socio- and techno-structure qualities of organisations. The analytical concepts of Lundin and Söderholm were used to explore four qualities of the temporary organisation established in the local municipality. Additionally, using the analysis instrument also makes it possible to study whether the socio- or techno-structure qualities within each dimension were emphasised in the design work. In a third step, mapping out the overall characteristics of the temporary organisation's design and analysing the balance between techno- and socio-structure also became possible.

Figure 2: Analysis instrument paper 2.



Paper 3

In the third paper, the theoretical works of Weick (1976; 1995) and Weick *et al.* (2005) on 'sense-making' in organisations were used to elucidate how participants in the CSGs understood and navigated the work process of the temporary project organisation. Given the background and focus of this sub study, namely that teachers and principals in the CSGs were requested to work with other colleagues from different schools aside their everyday contexts, they had to make sense of the temporary organisation as such, in addition to the tasks assigned from the CPDG. One potential way to analyse this process was to

METHODS AND DATA

make use of the work of Weick and Weick *et al.* and, more precisely, how broader elements of pragmatic task interpretation, complexity reduction and the establishment of coherent knowledge structures form sense-making processes in temporary organisations.

Qualitative data analysis software (Atlas.ti. 6.2) was used to, first, divide interview transcripts and a selection of recorded observations into two overall codes that noted the major disruptions in the work process of the temporary organisation. This approach follows the contention by Weick (1995) and Weick *et al.* (2005) that disruption tends to trigger and activate sense-making processes. From these two codes, the next step in the analysis aimed to establish a narrower understanding of these disruptions and how the CSGs made sense of the work process. More defined codes that were consistent with Weick's three elements were applied to detect the central characteristics of the sense-making process and to distinguish divergences, such as between the CSGs and the CPDG or among groups of CSG teachers representing different teaching subjects. Thus, indicators for pragmatic task interpretation, complexity reduction and the establishment of coherent knowledge structures in sense-making processes directed the analysis work.

Paper 4

In paper 4, a framework that noted the community of practice theory (Wenger, 1998; 2009; Wenger, *et al.*, 2002) and the components of 'boundary objects' and 'brokering' was applied to analyse knowledge transfer among the CSGs and the subject groups in the local schools. As previously mentioned, the issue of knowledge transfer between temporary and permanent organisations is well known but still quite unexplored within the field of education. Accordingly, in this paper, finding a theoretical point of departure that more broadly matched the characteristics of temporary school organisations was essential, and it had to correspond with an empirical study in which both materials and knowledge were to be transferred. Hence, the concepts of boundary objects and brokering were used as wider theoretical categories to constitute a starting point for the analytical work. These two components in the influential theoretical work of Wenger (1998; 2009) have been given surprisingly little attention in previous research.

The analysis focused on audio-recorded observations of CSG meetings and on to interview transcripts with representatives from the CSGs, the CPDG and the municipal superintendent. In the first step,

METHODS AND DATA

transcribed interviews and selected parts of the observations were studied and examined openly to recognise broader patterns and themes and to detect contradictions and outliers (cf. Miles & Huberman, 1994). In the second step, empirical data were categorised and coded in accordance with the two transfer concepts of boundary objects and brokering to reveal the knowledge transfer links between the temporary project organisation and the local schools. In the third and final step, the boundary objects and brokering functions detected in the second phase were examined inductively to detect different types/classes/usages of boundary objects and brokers for transfer and to examine how (or whether) they were combined.

Discussion

A few remarks need to be made on the theoretical frameworks of the analysis. Elaborating on proper frameworks for the four papers has been challenging at times. Hence, emphasising the concept that the theoretical frameworks have been constructed and reconstructed over time is important to imply that different theories have been tested, complemented and sometimes replaced. However, probing and testing various theories during the work process should not be mistaken for an eclectic approach. Rather, the approach should be understood as an attempt to match the focus of the four papers and, as far as possible, be sensitive to the empirical results. The selection of theories could also be linked to my research focus and position within the research field of School Effectiveness and School Improvement, and the different historical phases outlined.

Accordingly, the theoretical starting points were selected because they support different types of analyses at different levels of the education system. To analyse directives in the state agency's communications and the translations of LEAs at the central municipal level, a point of departure in neo-institutionalism and translation theories appeared proper. Similarly, to obtain analytical perspectives on the design work performed and the intentions of the CPDG, combining the broader organisational theory on the temporary organisation with the theory that specifically seeks to understand school organisations seemed reasonable. Likewise, to explore how participants of the temporary organisation made sense in their work process, organisational sociology targeting cognitive aspects of the lives in organisations matched the focus of this paper. Finally, a constructionist framework built up by the concepts of boundary objects and brokering could pro-

METHODS AND DATA

vide a powerful perspective for analysing the difficulties of transfers between permanent and temporary units in a school context.

Nevertheless, commenting on the relationship and balance between deductive and inductive theoretical starting points becomes important. As shown, the analysis and its codes, categories and sub categories are driven by theory, which places boundaries or limitations on 'empirical discoveries'. Although the main argument for this approach caused limitations, it developed a convincing interplay between the theory and the empirical data – an important criterion in developing standards for qualitative research (e.g. Lamont & White, 2005). In parallel, the ambition exists to work close to the empirical data by integrating interviews, observation transcripts and first-hand documents. For example, in paper 3, sense-making processes were noted as having various forms and characteristics in different types of organisations, even if the theoretical framework applied was developed by certain elements or constants. This phenomenon permitted empirical stories and deductions of how participants of this particular temporary organisation made sense of the improvement work within a specific context. Likewise, in paper 4, the second and third steps of the analysis were performed in a more inductive fashion. Thus, clarifying the type of boundary objects established to carry out the transfer and to explore their character became largely an empirical question. As well, no pre-specified categories existed for the brokering function or how such players should act to enhance the knowledge transfer between the CSGs and the local schools.

Quality Measures

Given the previously described methodological considerations, the research design contained a number of actions to ensure and improve quality, which are subsequently detailed. To start with, the work operated in the temporary project organisation and the subject groups in the local schools was systematically studied during a two-year period. The findings from the initial pre-study and the first observations were used to improve the interview questions and analyses instruments. The field was studied for a longer period, which also lowered the risk of coincidences and drawing conclusions linked to a specific episode or a particular location. At the same time, during this period, I developed personal ties to administrators at the central municipal level and to principals and teachers in the CSGs and the local schools. From the

METHODS AND DATA

first contact, the municipality was also very positive to my work and expressed the benefits of having someone from the ‘outside’ follow the implementation organisation. Consequently, even if clear benefits exist to gaining access to a field for a long and consistent period, one cannot ignore the findings that could be impinged on by the personal relationships established despite methodological considerations.

One further measure concerns the possibility of verifying and repeating the results of the four sub studies (e.g. Silverman, 2010; Stake, 1994). As shown, entire interviews were transcribed verbatim (in Swedish) together with selected parts from the audio-recorded observations. Additionally, all documents in the analysis fall under the principle of public access to official records in Sweden. This access also improves the picture of the empirical data, of the quality in the analytical work and whether the results and conclusions are convincing.

The thesis and the four sub studies noted triangulating principles as an attempt to strengthen the analysis and findings. By combining interviews, observations and documents, the methodological triangulation provided complementing perspectives on the occupation of LEAs and the temporary project organisation in the municipality. This approach also enabled a comparison and contrast of the different types of data by exploring the relationship between what members of the CPDG and the CSGs said and what they actually did in the ‘lived’ organisations (Atkinson & Coffey, 2002). However, with the exception of paper 1, an imbalance existed in the analysis between the different methods used. A critical observation was that the interviews were given a rather prominent position compared with the documents and observations. Above all, the data from the recorded observations could have been used to a larger extent. In retrospective, the main reason for this imbalance is that the data samples were guided by the aims and research questions of the different papers; therefore, no clear benefits existed to translating and integrating the additional data. Still, this process is recognised as possibly having affected the outcomes of the triangulation.

Ethical Concerns

The research project and the fieldwork was guided by the directives set for research in humanities and social sciences as elaborated on in the 1990s by The Swedish Research Council, which were updated and integrated into more general guidelines in 2011. As an initial step,

METHODS AND DATA

information on the research project was sent to administrators and development leaders in the municipality. They responded positively to this request and asked me to make an oral presentation to clarify my research plan and the overall intentions. On the basis of this presentation, we began a discussion on a focus and design that could benefit all parties. As shown, a selection of CSGs and principals/local schools were contacted and asked whether they wanted to participate. After a discussion with central administrators and school developers, three CSGs and three local schools were chosen. Information on the research project and its terms was then provided in both written and oral form to these groups. Because the groups received little information about the research project and their own participation, clarifying the premises for participation became important. In this step, how the results were to be presented and published was also declared.

Moreover, obtaining participants' agreement and informing them about the possible risks to participation were critical (see Kvale, 2009). After the participants agreed to participate, they were told that they could withdraw their participation at any time, could refuse to answer certain questions, and so on. No obvious tensions or disagreements were noticed during the fieldwork and data collection. The observations were performed as planned and the interviewees attempted to answer my questions in a straightforward manner. However, such indications should not be viewed as a guarantee that the participants felt entirely comfortable or that they shared their sincere thoughts on particular issues at all times. For example, consider that the municipality expressed ambitions to be at the lead in Sweden. To fulfil this ambition, they established a temporary project organisation to implement the new curriculum. In such a culture or spirit, for principals and teachers to turn down participation in a research project or to share their inner thoughts about such a project may not be easy; obviously, they do not want to appear as reactionaries who oppose improvement and change. In turn, this situation could create a too positive picture of the work of the temporary organisation. However, an aspect that partly weighs up or disproves such risks is that the empirical studies revealed rather critical opinions about the improvement project and the improvement work accomplished. Equally important to stress is that the analysis and the four sub studies often take a critical standpoint in picturing the improvement work and its outcomes.

Regarding aspects of confidentiality, the empirical data were obtained, stored and presented in a manner that protected anonymity.

METHODS AND DATA

During the entire process, fictional names were used in all documents, such as conference and research papers, and in oral presentations. Dictums or quotes that might risk exposing true identities were continuously removed. Nevertheless, I emphasised that the risk always exists that external readers can recognise the constituted research field or gain access to the empirical material despite such actions being taken.

This discussion leads to a fourth and final directive worth reflecting on, namely, who owns the rights to use the information and collected data. To meet this criterion, following the research guidelines at The Centre for Education Science and Teacher Research at The University of Gothenburg, empirical data were solely used for research purposes and not for commercial or other non-academic purposes. Consequently, no claims were made to use the material in other contexts and for additional purposes.

5

Main Findings

Summaries of the Four Papers

Paper 1: Nordholm, D. (forthcoming). State policy directives and middle-tier translation in a Swedish example. Manuscript under review.

This paper analyses how the Swedish National Agency for Education directed the launch of the nationwide Lgr11 curriculum reform, and how LEAs in one local municipality responded to and translated the state agency's communications. With a starting point in the decentralisation and deregulation programmes in Sweden in the 1970s, the paper argues that the need to develop an organisation at the central municipal level that could support reform implementation and educational change has increased. As shown, most municipalities today have a board for education that, together with its superintendent, administrators and school developers form an organisation for local policy making. One important function of these middle tier intermediaries is to translate and operationalise state agencies' directives in education reforms.

The results show that the National Agency's communications are primarily directed at LEAs by expressing both normative and cultural-cognitive and also regulative recommendations. However, regulative directives were rather few and broadly formulated, providing only some details on LEAs' obligations at the central municipal level when organising a local implementation. In the local translation process, LEAs in the focused municipality initiated a work process comprising elements of assimilation, loose coupling and – to some extent – transformation. However, they did not convey their translations to local politicians and principals in the local schools. These findings indicate

MAIN FINDINGS

that the lack of detailed regulative directives, such as for divisions of labour, decision making, mandates for LEAs and local improvement roles, reduced the potential of LEAs to become influential players that support the progress of the curriculum reform. This article also claims that LEAs must accomplish middle-tier translations while holding features of loose coupling and, in particular, transformation to become a catalyst for school system improvement.

Paper 2: Nordholm, D. & Blossing, U. (2014). Designing temporary systems – exploring local school improvement intentions in the Swedish context. *Journal of Educational Change*, Vol. 15, No. 1, 57-75.

In this paper, attention is drawn to the temporary organisation as a model to organise improvement work and to the intentions and design work of LEAs in the focused municipality. In recent decades, LEAs, school leaders and teachers in Sweden have accepted increasing responsibility for taking action in their organisations and for development work at the local municipal level. However, even if the decentralisation programmes have been pushed quite far from an international perspective, at the same time input and control from the state level might be underlined as being significant. Observing these parallel and somewhat contrasting movements makes it interesting to study how LEAs in Sweden organised for school improvement in 2012. To do so, this paper explores the ‘intentions’ behind a specific improvement model interpreted as a temporary organisation designed by LEAs at the central municipal level.

The results show that techno-structural qualities dominated the design work of the temporary organisation as observed from the four concepts of time, task, team and transition – despite the CPDGs’ broader intentions. The analysis revealed that techno-structure elements remained predominant and more legitimate, particularly in the latter phases of the improvement work. This imbalance indicates a lack of knowledge about the features and functions of the temporary organisation and, above all, about how learning in the educational field is fostered through the socio-structure of groups and organisations.

The empirical results prove that both techno- and socio-structure qualities of organisations should be considered carefully to capitalise on the true potential of temporary organisations. In particular, socio-structural qualities should be considered to promote the innovative

MAIN FINDINGS

and learning functions of temporary organisations. From a theoretical point of view, the four concepts of time, task, team and transition, and the need to balance techno- and socio-structural qualities within these concepts might constitute a valuable starting point and analysis instrument in understanding the prospects for local school improvement in a temporary organisation.

Paper 3: Nordholm, D. (2015). Sense-making in a Temporary Organization: Implementing a New Curriculum in a Swedish Municipality. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. 59, No. 5, 531–545.

This paper analyses sense-making processes in the municipality-led temporary project organisation established in response to the introduction of a new curriculum and a new marking system in Sweden in the 2011/2012 academic year. Historically, the notion of using temporary organisations, in which teachers and principals are expected to participate above and beyond their everyday duties, was realised in Sweden earlier, such as through certain inset programmes in the 1980s. As noted, these approaches spring from broader theories on organisation development (OD) and, more precisely, by the work of Matthew Miles (1964), who saw temporary organisation as a potential platform on which teachers interact and accomplish important tasks. At best, such a constellation could shape a motivating learning culture, which could inspire and stimulate the work in permanent school organisations.

The findings show that, generally, teachers and principals tended to interpret the directives from the project group (CPDG) in a pragmatic manner throughout the work process of the temporary organisation. For instance, creating and distributing assessment matrices were interpreted as important and meaningful jobs because teacher colleagues could use them directly. A frequently applied strategy to reduce complexity was to adopt and sometimes even reproduce state policy documents and supportive material formulated by the National Agency for Education. This strategy rendered in a work process characterised by instrumental and pragmatic task solving because doing so made sense to the members and assisted them in establishing coherent knowledge structures. This approach contrasted with the directives and hopes stated by the CPDG in shaping an inspiring learning culture that could generate an expanded and advanced competence in the municipality. However, these intentions were not initially clearly

MAIN FINDINGS

expressed and the CPDG subsequently failed to redirect the work of the temporary organisation in a more innovative direction.

The findings of this paper imply that we need to pay further attention to sense-making when shaping temporary organisations or other forms of improvement projects between schools because sense-making clearly affects the work process. In addition, this paper proposes that the nature of the task – in this particular case, implementing a new nationwide curriculum and marking system – in turn impinges on the sense-making process. Given the history of temporary organisations in Sweden and the efforts to initiate school improvement at the local level, that local actors still tend to lean heavily on state recommendations and directorial guidelines is interesting to note.

Paper 4: Nordholm, D. (2015). Knowledge Transfer in School-to-School Collaborations: the Position of Boundary Objects and Brokers. Manuscript accepted for publication in *Education Inquiry*.

This paper focuses on the transfer issue and the link between the temporary project organisation and the local schools. The interest in school-to-school collaborations has increased in recent years within the field of School Effectiveness and School Improvement, primarily because such designs have been shown to constitute a valuable platform for professional development and change. At the same time, the theoretical underpinning for such collaboration projects is arguably limited and fragmented. Linked to former findings – both internationally and in Sweden – the issue of transfer in particular appears to require further investigation to expand the knowledge base for temporary collaborations. In doing so, this paper analyses how ideas for improvement in the temporary organisation are transferred to the local schools.

The concepts of boundary objects and brokering, and the duality between those two concepts, are used to examine transfer processes between the temporary project organisation and the local schools. Regarding boundary objects, which are linked to the dimension of reification of learning communities, the results revealed that objects having a ‘closed’ character constituted through the main transfer links. That is, these types of objects require less discussion in the local schools, in contrast to objects with an ‘open-ended’ character that could constitute a starting point for further development work. With respect to brokering, which instead relates to the dimension of partici-

MAIN FINDINGS

pation of learning communities, the findings show that ‘non-formal’ brokers seldom took action or indicated an awareness for leading the work process from the temporary organisation to the local schools. Importantly, between times, non-formal brokers were also met with resistance when they attempted to transfer and implement the ideas developed in the temporary organisation. In the few cases in which participants of the temporary organisation attained the position of acting as ‘formal’ brokers, positive effects were shown from leading and inspiring development work.

This paper argues that the concepts of boundary objects and brokers could constitute a useful starting point for understanding and navigating the knowledge transfer process between temporary and permanent school organisations. Beyond a close design of these separate concepts, the empirical findings suggest that managers of improvement work must also successfully combine boundary objects and brokering. In such design work, paying attention to boundary objects with a more open-ended character and through the formal brokering function becomes particularly important for underpinning a transfer process that considers dimensions of participation and the reification of learning communities.

6

Discussion and Conclusions

In this section, the main results are discussed and evaluated. The discussion draws on the results of the four papers in reverse order to the summaries in the former section. Thus, this discussion starts with the details of the temporary organisation and gradually expands to discuss the position of LEAs as translators of the National Agency's communications. Empirical and theoretical implications are continuously provided in the text. This section also seeks to raise a line of argument that links and integrates the results of the sub studies to one another. The work on organisational fields is applied to integrate the findings of this discussion. This section ends with a critical reflection of some of the results attained.

The Issue of Knowledge Transfer

In the discussion on the question of how knowledge transfer occurs between temporary and permanent school organisations and the problems that might affect this process, the concepts of boundary objects and brokering – in addition to the duality between those two concepts – clearly provide valuable theoretical and practical perspectives. As shown, boundary objects with a rather closed character, together with non-formal brokering, established the main links for transfer between the CSGs and the local schools. The temporary project organisation developed a few boundary objects of an open-ended character, and few formal brokers were appointed to translate and lead the improvement work in the local schools. This fact, which could be viewed as a result of both conscious and unconscious actions, also had a number of consequences.

Generally, a mismatch occurs between the intentions of the temporary project organisation and the knowledge transfer links. Aside from

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

completing visible products, such as assessment matrices and templates, the CPDG expressed notions of building a collective competency in the municipality and developing learning dialogues between schools. Put another way, the CPDG declared ideas holding both socio- and techno-structure qualities; however, these ideas were not considered in the design work and, in particular, with respect to the transfer. The transfer of such innovative qualities would also have required open-ended boundary objects and additional types of brokering. Accordingly, the results demonstrate that boundary objects with a more open-ended character and formal brokering have a central position for the transfer of more advanced learning processes between temporary and permanent school organisations.

From another point of view, sense-making also impinges on the knowledge transfer process. That is, a reduction in complexity and pragmatic task interpretation do not solely affect the work process of the temporary organisation but also notions of how to transfer results to the local schools. The CSGs imagined that the temporary project organisation should accomplish and deliver ‘completed’ products; therefore, these products were also understood as the main transfer links. Teachers and principals in the local schools also shared these understandings and expectations. Therefore, a reasonable argument is that sense-making also influences ideas for how transfers occur and what these processes should contain.

Altogether, these findings show that the issue of transfer is complex but also often overlooked. Likewise, a transfer clearly does not occur automatically between temporary and permanent organisations; instead, school improvement designers must carefully plan for this dimension. These findings become important to consider because temporary organisations are common in and between school organisations. By starting with the concepts of boundary object and brokering, educational leaders could attain a useful starting point for planning and navigating transfer processes.

Making Sense in a Temporary Organisation

A work process characterised by pragmatic task solving and complexity reduction was detected in the analysis by considering the issue of how sense-making is shaped in temporary school organisations and how it affects the improvement work. By noticing these components, the analysis revealed that sense-making affects the work process of a

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

temporary organisation. In the present study, this process was guided by a request to make sense of the temporary organisation as such, in addition to interpreting and accomplishing the tasks assigned by the CPDG.

Additionally, one can also distinguish common points in the results from the four sub studies. Perhaps most clearly, for socio-structure elements to gain acceptance in a process of pragmatic task interpretation and complexity reduction is more difficult. In the current study, this difficulty was perhaps even more evident when the management group of the CPDG initially had more of a techno-structure focus. When they attempted to redirect the work process towards a more open-ended socio-structure, they were also met with resistance because members of the CSGs already started their sense-making process. One lesson to be learned from these empirical findings is that clearly stating the purpose of a temporary project organisation from the outset is essential, as is being sensitive to how participants make sense as the work process takes form. This awareness is particularly important if ambitions are to accomplish more complex tasks with open-ended aims.

From a somewhat broader perspective, the sense-making process could also be linked to the National Agency's policy directives, which is the primary focus of paper 1. In the analysis, an expectation and a request for regulative and detailed normative ideas at the local municipal level could be proposed to exist in the sense-making process of the temporary organisation. Equally, members of the CSGs had greater difficulties in operating open formulations on networking and performing a broader development process. For example, one of the CSGs even copied formulations in the advisory documents provided by the National Agency for Education. This action is partly notable because the conditions for taking action and exploring new ideas ought to be good in the temporary project organisation within a comparable perspective in terms of expertise and dedication.

Therefore, what is the essence of these results regarding sense-making and the temporary organisation? What makes teachers and principals eager to seek a direction in which the work of the temporary organisation is concentrated on visible products and shows clear results, despite encouragement and redirecting instructions from the CPDG? Why cannot the participants simply appreciate the opportunity to meet colleagues from other schools in the municipality and together interpret and discuss the new curriculum in a more open pro-

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

cess? One straightforward answer might be that Sweden still does not have such a collaborative tradition. When such an opportunity arises, one becomes eager to show that the temporary organisation actually has results. Another potential explanation from a neo-institutional perspective is that old expectations prevail regarding state governance and the relationship between state agencies and LEAs. Although more than two decades have passed since municipalities were assigned the leadership of schools, local expectations still exist of receiving clear instructions and guidance from the state authorities to make sense of the improvement work. Therefore, a need is claimed to still exist to expand the local competency to organise and implement school improvement work.

A Matter of Design

Interesting results should be noted regarding issues of design and the intentions of LEAs to create a temporary project organisation. The dominance of techno-structural qualities is somewhat notable because the designers in the CPDG also expressed other intentions. However, to match these intentions, they must more closely consider socio-structural qualities to take advantage of the more innovative and exploratory potential that temporary organisation forms can foster. Another key finding is that both techno- and socio-structure qualities are important in designing a temporary organisation to structure and capitalise on true improvement potential. Lastly, the theoretical framework and the analysis instrument elaborated on could also provide an advanced understanding of the forms and function of the temporary organisation among both researchers and school practitioners.

These results indicate the importance of a careful design of temporary organisations in a school context. As noted, linked to the issue of sense-making attempts were made to change course as the implementation work started; however, the CPDG's new intentions shown in papers 2 and 3 could not be fulfilled. This mismatch indicates a lack of knowledge about the premises and features of temporary organisations. In defence of the CPDG, they were not given the best conditions in which to carry out their design work. For instance, directives and assignments were renegotiated every semester, which reduced opportunities for long-term planning. Confusion also occurred over the management group's mandate from local school politicians, which affected opportunities to make decisions and set directions for the

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

temporary organisation. The basic conditions for the design work could be questioned even with respect to the transfer. For example, political representatives were unwilling to give CSG members formal roles as brokers. Although a bit simplified, the transfer was instead expected to occur spontaneously and automatically.

That said, some parallels could be made to the different directives communicated by the National Agency in the implementation process of the Lgr11 curriculum reform. As shown, implementing and fulfilling the regulative directives created no notable problems for LEAs in the municipality of focus. Rather, the normative and cultural-cognitive ideas on how the implementation should be organised created problems – and is how the design of the temporary organisation was actualised. For the National Agency to express sketchier ideas on local key persons and networking and then to assume that LEAs at the central municipal level – with some support – could translate these normative and cultural-cognitive ideas into a local development organisation to carry out an effective implementation process may not be enough. Regarding this matter, regulative directives on mandates and roles could have supported and strengthened LEAs and their design work at the central municipal level. In conclusion, even if the LEAs in the present study developed a local implementation organisation that was far more detailed and well planned than those of other municipalities in Sweden, shortcomings in the design work were still obvious.

State Directives and Middle-Tier Translation

On the question of the directives that were communicated by the Agency for Education in organising the Lgr11 curriculum reform and how LEAs at the central municipal level translated and responded to these communications, emphasising a number of findings is relevant. To recapitulate, LEAs translated the agency's regulative directives into local conditions in a straightforward assimilation process. The local translation of normative communications was more difficult for LEAs because it triggered processes of loose coupling and transformation. Additionally, the translations of cultural-cognitive directives involved challenging elements of loose coupling and transformation as well. Perhaps most importantly, difficulties in the local translation work became obvious because LEAs did not convey their translations to local school politicians and principals in local schools. Regarding this

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

matter, the lack of sharper regulative directives that clarify roles, mandates and obligations arguably reduced the potential for LEAs to become influential actors in organising local implementations.

These findings verify the conclusions of papers 2 and 3 that indicated that the temporary project organisation had broader intentions and scopes. However, the management group failed to design an organisation that fully corresponded to their local translations. Therefore, one could suggest that a relationship also exists between state policy directives and the design of temporary organisations established to carry out educational reform. More specifically, translations of normative and cultural-cognitive directives demand a design that seriously considers socio-structural qualities, not the least with respect to transferring outcomes from the temporary organisation. In addition, agency directives could also affect sense-making and knowledge transfer. As shown, translations of regulative and more detailed normative elements generally made sense to the CSGs and the subject groups in the local schools. In reverse, translations of less detailed normative and cultural-cognitive ideas leading to loose coupling and transformations did not. The latter types of translations were also more difficult to transfer because they demand a design that pays attention to the brokering function and open-ended boundary objects.

These findings demonstrate the challenges of translating the National Agency's directives in curriculum reforms into a local implementation organisation. Reflecting on the degree to which state agencies are aware in that they in fact communicate different directives and the challenges this causes LEAs is worthwhile. The results in this thesis also show that LEAs at the intermediate level of the education system could end up in a vacuum in which valuable ideas for school improvement are spread neither up nor down the school system. This finding proves the need for system support that enables the clarification and strengthening of mandates and roles for LEAs.

LEAs, Temporary Organisations and the Organisational Field of Education

Given the previous discussion, inquiring into the characteristics of the organisational field of education in Sweden in 2015 is important. Additionally, how does this field frame and direct LEAs as translators and local organisers of the state agency's communications in a nationwide curriculum reform? Lastly, how does this field affect the understanding

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

of a temporary project organisation created at the central municipal level to support and catalyse the implementation of the curriculum at the local school level?

To begin, paying attention to the relationship between the different pillars or elements described by Scott (2001, 2008) and their relative strength is worthwhile. As shown, the National Agency for Education communicated a mix of regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive elements as a consequence of previous decentralisation and deregulation programmes. However, where LEAs end up in such a governance model and their position and roles are unclear. Regulative and (detailed) normative expectations have a prominent position in this organisational field – not the least in the local school organisations – with respect to translating and implementing educational reforms. Viewed from Scott (2001, 2008), this prominence may be related to institutionalised notions of the relationship among the government, LEAs and local schools. Correspondingly, the argument could be made that LEAs have not succeeded in becoming an exploratory and innovative arena at the middle tier that translates state agencies' communications to the local schools. The difficulties in balancing techno- and socio-structure qualities in the design of the temporary organisation support such a statement. At the same time, one should yet again maintain that LEAs have not been given clear assignments and mandates – regulative directives – to take on such a role. This issue might also explain the desire for expanded dialogue directly between state agencies and local schools, combined with increased external control and inspection.

As Hoffmann and Ventresca (2002) highlighted, paying attention to local sense-making activities also becomes important. That is, even if an organisational field encompasses communities of organisations that participate in the same meaning system and are defined by similar symbolic processes, emphasising that parallel sense-making processes are on-going is central. This emphasis leads to the fact that organisations within the same field are developed in both homogenising and heterogenising directions (cf. Jooste & Scott, 2009). Most clearly, the expectations and understandings among local politicians, the CSGs and principals and teachers in the local schools somewhat differed from the translations and intentions expressed by the CPDG. Hence, one challenge is to link various sense-making activities within the organisational field of education, not solely between organisations at the local municipal level but also between municipal and state agency

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

organisations. An important part of this work is to involve municipal actors in educational reform by providing insights into the interpretations made at the ministry and the state agency levels. Of course, doing so presupposes that proper expertise and knowledge exist on organising and implementing local school improvement at the state agency level.

Finally, reflecting on the temporary organisation and the outcome of such collaborations within the organisational field of education in Sweden is also relevant. The results obtained in this thesis indicate that the broader logic, values and norms shown in the organisational field also seep into the temporary project organisation. Although the intentions of the management group are for the temporary organisation to become a 'protected zone' in which more far-reaching discussions about school improvement are prioritised, such thoughts did not match the logic and values of the surrounding school organisations and their meaning-making processes. Instead, institutionalised and rationalistic preconceptions about the temporary organisation prevailed. Linked to the concept of governance arrangements (Scott *et al.*, 2000) is the argument that, without a proper understanding and support, the temporary organisation and its work process tend to emphasise pragmatic task solving and show clear results. With such a focus, less space is given to work on the implementation in a more explorative manner, which could in turn establish new ways of thinking about teaching and learning.

Critical Perspectives – Some Reflections

Some notable and perhaps somewhat contradictory results have emerged in the different papers that require reflection. For instance, whether a potential conflict exists between formal brokering and the emphasis on well-developed socio-structures is worth highlighting because organisational structures are less formalised and more person-oriented in a true socio-structure. Ideally, transfer should arguably occur more 'naturally' in a flow between the temporary organisation and the local schools. If such an occurrence is the case, brokering would not have to include a formal role with a certain mandate. However, perhaps the temporary organisation faces its greatest challenge in this link. Supported by results shown in previous research, the findings of this thesis clearly indicate difficulties with informal brokering and that the knowledge transfer of improvement work operated in a tem-

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

porary organisation does not occur automatically. Therefore, formal brokers may be an appropriate alternative after all, even if they lead to limitations in accomplishing and transferring socio-structure qualities fostered as more open-ended learning processes.

Reflecting on the relationship between brokering and sense-making activities in the local schools is also important. For example, how do formal brokers affect the ability of local schoolteachers and principals to develop their own understanding on the basis of local conditions? Does a possible contradiction exist in striving to achieve more open learning processes with lesser complexity reduction in combination with formal brokers who have the task of leading local sense-making processes? With informal brokering, a reasonable assumption is that discussions might be conducted on a more equal level to provide openings for new ideas and bottom-up approaches. However, an argument for still appointing formal brokers is that, without this function, maintaining some kind of complex sense-making process at all seems difficult. The findings also indicate that formal brokers can make better use of their embodied knowledge compared with informal brokers, thus helping to translate the different types of boundary objects.

Finally, I must also consider whether the theoretical perspectives applied in the sub studies provide plausible or realistic points of departure. For instance, is it reasonable to assume that LEAs at the central municipal level have the skills and knowledge to design a temporary organisation in which the understandings of socio-structure qualities are clearly visible? Likewise, is it reasonable to assume that designers and participators of such an organisation should be able to limit the influence of pragmatic task interpretation in addition to operate a work process characterised by trifling complexity reduction? The answer to questions of such character must be no. That recognised, these theoretical starting points could still open up potential ways of thinking about educational reforming and curriculum implementation in general and temporary organisations in particular. This reasoning also becomes my main motive for using these starting points.

7

Directions for Further Research

The findings of this thesis have added important pieces to the understanding of LEAs and their position as translators and local organisers of the nationwide Lgr11 curriculum reform in Sweden. Likewise, the results have broadened the understanding of temporary organisation as an approach to local implementation and school improvement. Nevertheless, a need clearly exists for further studies within this knowledge field. In this final section, I point out findings and ideas to set the direction for such studies.

Firstly, I still believe that a need exists to obtain a more thorough understanding of the role and functions of LEAs in the Swedish education system and how middle-level intermediaries build organisations for local implementation and school improvement. The studied municipality constitutes a positive and atypical example, which places some limitations on the conclusions of this thesis. However, a lingering feeling is that LEAs as an administrative domain tend to act in ‘no man’s land’ at the intermediate level and are not truly linked with government agencies, local school politicians and school principals in local schools. Still, we do not know with certainty that this situation occurs. For this purpose, quantitative studies seem to be an appropriate starting point. Using such broader analyses, a narrower sample can be developed to obtain a more detailed understanding of different classifications and categories.

Furthermore, that we also need to accumulate and systematise previous results regarding temporary organisations within the field of education also becomes clear. As shown, temporary organisations can have numerous designs and functions and can operate at different levels. These organisations can be connected to an individual school organisation and can also link several organisations together, as in the present study. This situation provides a complex image at the mo-

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

ment, which makes it difficult to identify what we actually know to date about the types and characteristics of temporary organisations in educational research. Thus, mapping and schematising the former results to a type of typology could provide a useful starting point for engaging in improvement work in temporary organisations at different levels of the education system.

Finally, continuing to study the issue of knowledge transfer between temporary and permanent organisations in both organisation studies and – in particular – educational research becomes important. The results of this thesis, together with the previous findings, indicate the critical nature of this aspect in the construction of temporary organisations. Even so, we have only started to explore this critical link. One way forward using the results of this thesis could be to add further studies that focus on the issue of transfer to identify other sub-categories of boundary objects and additional forms of brokering. Another potential way forward could be to explore other theoretical frameworks to complement or contrast the findings of this thesis.

8

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9

Sammanfattning på svenska

Utifrån ett historiskt perspektiv har det svenska skolsystemet genomgått stora förändringar under efterkrigstiden. Detta blir tydligt om man väljer att förstå skolsystemet som ett ”organisatoriskt fält” där organisationer på olika nivåer inom ett visst område innesluts av samma regulativa, normativa och kulturellt-kognitiva ramverk. Fram till 1990-talet hade Sverige ett av de mest centraliserade skolsystemen i Västvärlden, trots utbildningsreformer från 1970-talet och framåt med intentioner att skolförbättring också måste organiseras och drivas på kommunal nivå. Under 1990-talet valde de flesta kommuner i Sverige att bygga en lokal organisation där en politisk nämnd har det yttersta ansvaret för skola och utbildning. Nedanför den politiska nivån finns sedan en administrativ nivå bestående av skolchef, administratörer samt utvecklingsledare. Under den politiska och administrativa nivån återfinns slutligen utförarnivån med rektorer, lärare och andra personalgrupper i de lokala skolorna.

Ett centralt uppdrag för den kommunala skolorganisationen har varit att organisera reformer och skolförbättring på lokal nivå. Med facit i hand har det visat sig att lokala skolmyndigheter många gånger saknat beredskapen och förmågan att axla detta uppdrag, samtidigt som det funnits tveksamheter kring den statliga stödapparat som kommunerna har haft tillgång till. Värt att notera är emellertid att staten under senare år har blivit mer närvarande på den kommunala nivån; exempelvis genom mer inspektion och direkta dialoger mellan skolmyndigheter och de lokala skolorna. Detta har liknats vid en återcentralisering där staten ger allt tydligare riktlinjer till kommunerna kring hur de lokala skolorna ska utföra sitt uppdrag.

Det blir dock viktigt att lägga märke till två parallella strömningar i det svenska skolsystemet när det gäller lokala skolmyndigheters roll att leda och organisera för reformer och skolförbättring. Å ena sidan

SAMMANFATTNING PÅ SVENSKA

skulle man kunna hävda att en tilltagande statlig närvaro på kommunal nivå tenderar att marginalisera lokala skolmyndigheter. Utifrån gällande skollag kan man även lägga märke till att rektorer och skolledare kan förhålla sig tämligen självständigt till lokala skolmyndigheter förutsatt att de följer skollagen. Å andra sidan kan man i samma styrdokument utläsa att lokala skolmyndigheter fortfarande har ett tydligt förbättringsuppdrag, vilket bland annat visas i kraven på att genomföra ett systematiskt kvalitetsarbete. Därmed kan man slå fast att lokala skolmyndigheter i Sverige, till skillnad från internationella tendenser, fortfarande har en inflytelserik position i det svenska skolsystemet.

Internationell forskning har visat att lokala skolmyndigheter kan ha en viktig funktion genom att strukturera upp och stödja skolförbättring på lokal skolnivå. I det svenska exemplet blir det emellertid något oklart hur lokala skolmyndigheter ska tänka kring sådana förbättringsinitiativ då olika handlingsalternativ ter sig legitima. Som en följd av de senaste årens utveckling skulle lokala skolpolitiker, skolchefer och administratörer kunna ta ett litet steg tillbaka och i högre grad förlita sig på de intensifierade dialogerna mellan statliga skolmyndigheter och lokal skolnivå. Lokala skolmyndigheter skulle dock kunna tolka rådande styrsystem annorlunda och komma fram till att de i egenskap av kommunala huvudmän fortfarande måste organisera och leda förbättringsarbete.

Den här avhandlingen fokuserar ett sådant exempel där studerad kommun bestämmer sig för att bygga en *temporär organisation* – detta för att komplettera statliga initiativ vid implementeringen av läroplansreformen Lgr11, vilken lanserades under läsåret 2010/2011. Lokala skolmyndigheter studeras utifrån skolchef, utvecklingsledare, skoladministratörer på central kommunal nivå, skoldistriktsledare, samt ett antal rektorer med ett kommunövergripande skolutvecklingsuppdrag. Intervjuer genomfördes med anställda inom den kommunala skolförvaltningen, med lärare och rektorer i den temporära organisationen som upprättades mellan kommunens skolor, samt med lärare och rektorer i de lokala skolorna. Dokumentation från Skolverkets projektgrupper med ansvar för implementeringen av Lgr11 analyserades också tillsammans med dokument utarbetade på central kommunal nivå. Bandade observationer av möten i den temporära organisationen, samt vid ämnesträffar i de lokala skolorna ingick också i det empiriska materialet.

SAMMANFATTNING PÅ SVENSKA

Avhandlingen analyserar lokala skolmyndigheter och översättningar av statliga riktlinjer i en landsomfattande och obligatorisk läroplansreform, samt hur direktiv omsätts i ett lokalt implementeringsarbete. Ett särskilt fokus är att analysera hur lokala skolmyndigheter använder sig av en temporär organisation för att genomföra en lokal implementeringsprocess. Avhandlingen är uppbyggd kring fyra forskningsfrågor, vilka besvaras i fyra delstudier:

- *Vilka statliga riktlinjer tillämpas i läroplansreformen Lgr11 och hur översätter lokala skolmyndigheter på central kommunal nivå de direktiv som kommuniceras?*
- *Vilka intentioner har lokala skolmyndigheter med en temporär organisation vid implementeringen av en ny läroplan och hur kan dessa intentioner förstås?*
- *Hur sker meningsskapande i temporära organisationer och hur påverkar meningskapande arbetsprocessen?*
- *Hur sker kunskapsöverföring mellan temporära och permanenta skolorganisationer och vilka problem kan påverka överföringsprocessen?*

Avhandlingen består av en introduktion och fyra artiklar. Inledningsvis ges en presentation av avhandlingens syfte och det vetenskapliga problemet i fokus. Sedan följer en genomgång av avhandlingens teoretiska utgångspunkter, samt en bakgrund till forskning av skolor som organisationer. Detta avsnitt behandlar även förändring och utveckling i organisationer, samt permanent och temporär organisering. I nästkommande kapitel presenteras ett för avhandlingen relevant urval av tidigare forskning kring lokala skolmyndigheter från ett svenskt perspektiv. Efterföljande kapitel beskriver forskningsdesign och de teoretiska utgångspunkterna för delstudierna. Därefter presenteras och diskuteras avhandlingens samlade resultat. Utifrån dessa resultat ges slutligen förslag på fortsatt forskning. I den här svenska sammanfattningen summeras resultaten från de fyra delstudierna under separata underrubriker. I ett avslutande avsnitt diskuteras de övergripande resultaten från de olika artiklarna.

Artikel 1

Den första artikeln analyserar hur Skolverket styrde implementeringen av läroplansreformen Lgr11 och hur lokala skolmyndigheter i en kommun tolkade och agerade utifrån myndighetens direktiv. Lokala skolmyndigheter studeras utifrån skolchef, utvecklingsledare, skoladministratörer, skoldistriktsledare, samt ett antal rektorer med ett

SAMMANFATTNING PÅ SVENSKA

övergripande skolutvecklingsuppdrag, vilka tillsammans bildar en styrgrupp (CPDG) med ansvaret att leda den lokala implementeringen.

Resultaten visar inledningsvis att det på statlig nivå finns en hel del styrning trots de decentraliseringsreformer som genomförts. Utöver ”hårdare” direktiv uttryckta i lagar, regler och ett institutionellt ramverk tillämpar Skolverket också ”mjukare” direktiv, vilka uttrycks som normativa och kulturellt-kognitiva idéer. Ett annat viktigt resultat är att lokala skolmyndigheter i studerat fall med utgångspunkt i dessa riktlinjer lyckas initiera en arbetsprocess som kännetecknas av ”assimilering”, ”frikoppling” och i viss mån också ”omvandling” där etablerade strukturer och förhållanden i den lokala organisationen beaktas och utmanas. I nästa steg lyckades de emellertid inte länka sina översättningar till lokala skolpolitiker samt till rektorer i de lokala skolorna. Artikeln argumenterar för att lokala skolmyndigheter skulle kunna bli stärkta av ett tydligare regulativt ramverk i vilket deras roll, position och mandat vid implementering av skolreformer klargörs.

Artikeln visar också att statliga myndigheter och andra policyutformare måste bli mer medvetna om innehållet i de riktlinjer som praktiseras och kommuniceras till lokala skolmyndigheter och rektorer. Lika viktigt blir det att överväga hur lokala skolmyndigheter översätter och omvandlar kommunicerade direktiv, samt vilket stöd de kan behöva i detta arbete. Slutligen blir det viktigt att begrunda hur lokala skolmyndigheter ska (eller kan) agera vid läroplansimplementering och lokal skolförbättring.

Artikel 2

I den andra artikeln studeras temporära organisationer som en modell för lokalt skolförbättringsarbete. Av särskilt fokus är att analysera lokala skolmyndigheters intentioner med en temporär organisation designad för att implementera den nya läroplanen.

Resultaten från delstudien visar att techno-strukturella kvaliteter var mest framträdande i designen av den temporära organisationen sett utifrån elementen tid, arbetsuppgifter, team och överföring – detta trots att lokala skolmyndigheter även uttryckte mer långtgående ambitioner med den temporära organisationen. Analysen visar även att de techno-strukturella kvaliteterna förblev dominerande och mer legitima i den temporära organisationen, speciellt i de senare faserna av implementeringsarbetet. Denna obalans indikerar en brist på kunskap vad gäller potentialen med temporär organisering och framför allt att

SAMMANFATTNING PÅ SVENSKA

en design som beaktar socio-strukturella kvaliteter kan understödja lärande i de permanenta skolorganisationerna.

Mer generellt visar artikeln att både techno- och socio-strukturella kvaliteter måste beaktas i designen av temporära organisationer. I synnerhet bör socio-strukturella kvaliteter övervägas noga för att främja mer öppna och innovativa lärprocesser. Det analysinstrument som utarbetats i artikeln uppbyggt kring de fyra elementen tid, arbetsuppgifter, team och överföring kan utgöra viktiga hörnstenar i ett sådant designarbete och därmed fungera som ett verktyg för lokal skolförbättring.

Artikel 3

Den tredje artikeln studerar meningsskapande i temporära organisationer och hur meningsskapande påverkar arbetet i en temporär organisation. Med utgångspunkt i tidigare forskning hävdar artikeln att vi fortfarande måste erhålla en vidare förståelse för hur aktörer förstår och navigerar arbetsprocessen i en temporär skolorganisation där de förväntas arbeta med speciella arbetsuppgifter vid sidan av sin ordinarie kontext under en begränsad tidsperiod.

Delstudien visar att lärare och rektorer tenderar att tolka direktiv från projektgruppen (CPDG) på ett pragmatiskt sätt under arbetsprocessen i den temporära organisationen. Att skapa och distribuera bedömningsmatriser ses exempelvis som en viktig och betydelsefull uppgift – detta eftersom dokumenten kan användas direkt av kollegor i de lokala skolorna. En ytterligare strategi för att reducera komplexitet är att ta hjälp av och emellanåt även reproducera statliga policydokument och Skolverkets stödmaterial. Sammantaget resulterar detta i en instrumentell och pragmatisk arbetsprocess. Ett sådant fokus blir meningsfullt eftersom det underbygger sammanhängande kunskapsstrukturer. Detta fokus kontrasterar dock projektgruppens direktiv och förhoppningarna om att den temporära organisationen också ska kännetecknas av en inspirerande lärandekultur där en vidgad och mer avancerad kompetens skapas. Dessa avsikter var emellertid inte klart uttryckta i början av arbetsprocessen, och när projektgruppen försöker styra arbetet i en sådan riktning misslyckades detta, vilket skulle kunna förstås utifrån att en mer öppen arbetsprocess i detta skede blir för komplex och därmed inte meningsfull.

Artikeln konstaterar att meningsskapande påverkar utfallet i temporära organisationer och andra former av förbättringsprojekt mellan skolor. Omvänt hävdar artikeln att den temporära organisations-

SAMMANFATTNING PÅ SVENSKA

formen i sig också påverkar meningsskapandet. Ett tredje resultat är slutligen att karaktären på arbetsuppgifter påverkar meningsskapande i en temporär organisation.

Artikel 4

Den fjärde och sista artikeln fokuserar frågan om kunskapsöverföring och kopplingen mellan temporära och permanenta skolorganisationer. Mer specifikt analyserar artikeln hur idéer och produkter i den temporära organisationen i studerad kommun överförs till de lokala skolorna. För att analysera denna process tillämpas de teoretiska koncepten ”gränsobjekt” och ”förmedlare”.

När det gäller gränsobjekt visar delstudien att objekt med ”sluten” karaktär utgör de huvudsakliga länkarna för kunskapsöverföring mellan den temporära organisationen och de lokala skolorna. Denna typ av objekt fordrar inga utförligare diskussioner eller bearbetning i de lokala skolorna. En annan typ av gränsobjekt som visas i analysen har en mer ”öppen” karaktär och fungerar snarare som en utgångspunkt för ett fortsatt förbättringsarbete i en lokal process. Dessa öppna objekt är tämligen ovanliga och därmed få till antalet jämfört med de slutna objekten. När det gäller förmedling visar resultaten att ”informella” förmedlare utan ett uttalat mandat har svårt att sprida och praktisera kunskap och erfarenheter från den temporära organisationen. Samtidigt uttrycker förmedlarna en omedvetenhet kring att en uttalad roll skulle kunna understödja kunskapsöverföring. Ett annat viktigt resultat är att vissa informella förmedlare möts med motstånd i sina permanenta organisationer när de försöker överföra idéer och kunskap från den temporära organisationen. I de fåtal fall där deltagare i den temporära organisationen ges ett uttalat mandat att agera ”formella” förmedlare blir utfallet annorlunda när det gäller överföring och möjligheter att leda förbättringsarbete i den lokala skolan.

Artikeln konstaterar att begreppen gränsobjekt och förmedlare kan utgöra en teoretisk utgångspunkt för att förstå och navigera överföringsprocesser mellan temporära och permanenta skolorganisationer. Förutom en design som noga beaktar dessa koncept var för sig visar studien även att ledare av temporära organisationer måste kunna kombinera gränsobjekt och förmedling för att överföra kontextrelaterad kunskap. För att uppnå en sådan överföringsprocess i vilken både ”deltagande” och ”reifikation” beaktas blir det av särskild vikt att uppmärksamma öppna gränsobjekt och formella förmedlare.

SAMMANFATTNING PÅ SVENSKA

Slutsatser

Sammanfattningsvis visar avhandlingen att lokala skolmyndigheter placerade mellan statliga myndigheter och kommunala skolor kan ha en central roll vid genomförandet av nationella utbildningsreformer. I studerad kommun visas detta genom att lokala skolmyndigheter på den administrativa nivån översätter statliga riktlinjer och omsätter erhållna direktiv till ett lokalt implementeringsarbete – mer specifikt till en temporär organisation. Resultaten visar dock att lokala skolmyndigheter inte riktigt greppar potentialen och/eller hanterar de utmaningar som temporära organisationer medför. Avhandlingen visar också att den projektgrupp som får uppdraget att leda det lokala implementeringsarbetet i nästa steg inte lyckades förmedla sina översättningar, varken till lokala skolpolitiker eller till rektorer i de lokala skolorna. Dessa resultat visar att lokala skolmyndigheter riskerar att hamna i ett vakuum i det decentraliserade svenska skolsystemet om de inte får en tydlig roll att driva förbättringsarbete.

När det gäller lokala skolmyndigheter och det organisatoriska fält som det svenska skolsystemet utgör synliggör avhandlingens resultat institutionaliserade föreställningar om staten, dess myndigheter, lokala skolmyndigheter och de lokala skolorna. Oklart blir emellertid var lokala skolmyndigheter hamnar i rådande system, samt vilken roll och vilket mandat de får. Mot bakgrund av detta ter sig en återcentralisering ibland lockande i vilken stat och lokala skolor förs närmare varandra. Ett fullgott alternativ skulle emellertid kunna vara att vidareutveckla lokala skolmyndigheters roll och mandat och i detta tydliggöra vilken funktion de ska ha när det kommer till reformer och skolförbättring.

10

Appendix

Appendix A: List of interviews

CPDG

Interviews:

111011
111013
111026
111028
111028
111130
111111
111121

CSGs

Interviews Physical education:

120127
120131
120411
120510

Interviews Social sciences:

1. 120116
2. 120220
3. 120317
4. 120320

Interviews Mathematics:

120117
120514

APPENDIX

Focus group interviews

Physical education school A 130424

Social sciences school B 130130

Mathematics school C 120912

Appendix B: List of documents

Documents formulated by the National Agency for Education

Swedish National Agency for Education (2009). Project meeting, Implementation group, memo notes, Stockholm, 31 March.

Swedish National Agency for Education (2009). Document, Sammanställning av minnesanteckningar, seminarium 25 feb. Stockholm, 25 February.

Swedish National Agency for Education (2009). Document, Genomförandeorganisation, Stockholm, 31 March.

Swedish National Agency for Education (2010). *Projektplan, Arbetsgrupper-Implementeringen Skola 2011*, Stockholm, 16 March.

Swedish National Agency for Education (2010). *Redovisning av uppdrag till Statens skolverk avseende implementeringen av skolreformer m.m. Dnr U2010/259/S*, Swedish National Agency for Education, Stockholm.

Swedish National Agency for Education (2010). *Regionala utvecklingscentras medverkan i implementeringen av läroplanerna för de obligatoriska skolformerna, samt förskolan*. Intresseförfrågan om uppdrag, Stockholm, 26 October.

Swedish National Agency for Education (2010). *Skola i Förändring. Om reformerna i den obligatoriska skolan*, Swedish National Agency for Education, Stockholm.

Swedish National Agency for Education (2010). *Skolverket styr och stödjer för en bättre skola*, Swedish National Agency for Education, Stockholm.

Swedish National Agency for Education (2010). *Utvärdering av implementeringsarbetet*. PM, Stockholm, 12 September.

Swedish National Agency for Education (2010). *Överenskommelse om utvärdering av implementeringsarbetet*, memo notes, Stockholm, 22 November.

Swedish National Agency for Education (2011). Project meeting Skola 2011, memo notes, Stockholm, 18 January.

Swedish National Agency for Education (2011). Project meeting Skola 2011, memo notes, Stockholm, 7 September.

APPENDIX

Documents formulated by local education authorities and the CPDG

Administrative Document. (2009). *Så går vi vidare med likvärdig bedömning, IUP med skriftliga omdömen, och lokal pedagogisk planering LPP i samarbete med "A" och "B"*.

Administrative Document. (2011). *Reflektioner från samtal 2011-11-21. Frågeställningar och problematiseringar från samtalet*. 21 November.

Management group presentation. (2011). *Central Subject Groups*, "Municipality X", 16 October.

Management group protocol (2012). *Skriftliga omdömen, IUP och betyg och likvärdig bedömning som blev 'CSG'. En resa genom två läroplaner*. Presentation of the collaboration project, "Municipality X", 26 September.

Appendix C: List of observations

CSGs

Observations Physical education

111026

120425

Observations Social sciences

111130

120328

Observations Mathematics

111128

120229

Observations subject groups in the local schools

Observations Physical education school A

111124

Observations Social sciences school B

1. 111109

2. 120321

3. 120409

APPENDIX

Observations Mathematics school C

110831

110914

111013

Appendix D: Interview guides

Interview guide CPDG

Bakgrundsfrågor:

- Hur länge har du arbetat i kommunen och vilka pedagogiska uppgifter har du?
- Trivs du bra med dina arbetsuppgifter?
- Hur skulle du beskriva begreppet pedagogisk bedömning?

1. Berätta om processerna bakom modellen och hur den togs fram i kommunen.
2. Vad var det som gjorde att ni beslutade er för att skapa modellen? Fanns det specifika orsaker?
3. Har det funnits andra samarbeten/modeller i kommunen och hur ha de sett ut i sådana fall?
4. Hur gick resonemangen i de diskussioner som fördes? Hur tänkte ni?
5. Vad bestämdes till slut och varför blev det just det här upplägget?
6. Fanns det andra upplägg? Vilka var de i sådana och varför valdes de bort?
7. Fick ni input från något annat håll? Vilken slags input i sådana fall och vilka intryck tog ni av den?
8. Fanns det motsättningar i arbetet? Vad gällde de i sådana fall och hur kom de till uttryck?
9. Vilka var och är intentionerna bakom modellen med bedömning-sarbetet? Vad är det som ni vill uppnå i kommunen?
10. Vad ska de olika grupperna göra i huvudsak, samt vilka ska ingå i dem?
11. Vilket mandat har ni och hur ofta revideras era uppgifter/direktiv?
12. Vilket mandat har de andra grupperna kring sina arbetsuppgifter och vilka besluta kan de fatta?
13. Hur tänker ni er att de olika delarna i modellen ska samverka och kommunicera med varandra?
14. Vilka kunskaper behöver pedagogerna på de olika nivåerna ha för att modellen ska fungera?

APPENDIX

15. Vilka tidsramar har ni haft i ert arbete och hur ser de fortsatta förutsättningarna ut?
16. Hur utvärderar ni arbetet och modellen kring bedömning?
17. Hur har modellen ”landat” på skolorna? Finns det några skillnader och vad skulle dessa i sådana fall kunna bero på?
18. Hur har modellen ”landat” i de olika grupperna? Finns det några skillnader och vad skulle dessa i sådana fall kunna bero på?
19. Har ni gjort korrigeringar med tiden? Vilka i sådana fall och varför har de gjorts?
20. Vilka möjligheter och förtjänster ser ni med den modell som ni har skapat?
21. Vilka begränsningar och hinder ser ni med den modell som ni har skapat?
22. Finns det något som du vill tillägga eller förtydliga?

Interview guide CSGs

Bakgrundsfrågor:

- Hur länge har du arbetat i kommunen och vilka pedagogiska uppgifter har du?
- Trivs du bra på din skola och med dina arbetsuppgifter?
- Hur skulle du beskriva begreppet pedagogisk bedömning?

1. Berätta om hur CSG skapades.
2. Berätta om det arbete kring pedagogisk bedömning som sker i kommunen.
3. Vilka är de huvudsakliga arbetsuppgifterna som ni har arbetet med i CSG?
4. Hur har ni arbetat när ni har träffats? Hur har era ramar sett ut?
5. Hur ser kommunikationen och dialogen ut mellan er och projektgruppen?
6. Vad kan ni göra och besluta om? Hur ser ert mandat ut? Vad kan ni påverka?
7. Har det uppstått några motsättningar i ert arbete och i så fall vad har de gällt och hur har de kommit till uttryck?
8. Hur ser du på din roll och på de uppgifter som den rollen medför? Hur mottas t.ex. du och direktiv på din egen skola? Hur används du i organisationen?
9. Hur ser kommunikationen ut mellan er och ämnesgrupperna på skolan?

APPENDIX

10. Berätta något om ämnesgruppen/grupperna på din skola och hur arbetet kring pedagogisk bedömning sker där.
11. Görs det någon utvärdering av ert arbete?
12. Om du skulle försöka ringa in och sätta fingret på ert uppdrag och funktion? Vad ser du framför dig då?
13. Hur har arbetet gått hittills tycker du?
14. Vilka är vinsterna med att skapa den här typen av grupper tror du?
15. Vilka är begränsningarna/riskerna med att skapa den här typen av grupper tror du?
16. Vad har hänt med samarbetet om ett år tror du?
17. Finns det något som du vill tillägga eller förtydliga – något som vi borde ha tagit upp?

Interview guide focus group interviews

Bakgrundsfrågor:

- Hur länge har ni arbetat i kommunen och vilka pedagogiska uppgifter har ni?
- Trivs ni bra på den här skolan och med era arbetsuppgifter?
- Hur skulle ni beskriva begreppet pedagogisk bedömning?

1. Kan ni berätta om arbetet som skett på den här skolan under förra läsåret och under hösten med bedömning och betyg?
2. Kan ni berätta om ämnesgruppen/grupperna och hur arbetet med pedagogisk bedömning sker där?
3. *Hur* regelbundet träffas ni i ämnesgrupperna?
3. *Vad* samtalar man om när man träffas i ämnesgrupperna och hur ser samtalen ut?
4. Vilka uppgifter kring bedömning har ni jobbat med under förra läsåret och hösten? Vilka prioriteringar har gjorts?
5. *Vem* är det som sätter dagordningen för mötena och för vad som ska utföras?
6. Hur har ni arbetat med de nya styrdokumenterna (Lgr11, bedömningsmatriser/ elevexempel/kursplanerna, det centrala innehållet)?
7. Har de centrala dokumenterna omarbetats innan de lämnats ut till elever och föräldrar? Kan ni beskriva den processen?
8. Hur tycker ni att arbetet har gått? Vad har gått bra och vad har varit svårt?

APPENDIX

9. Hur har ni kommit fram till att ni ska inrikta arbetet mot de här sakerna? Vilka vägval har gjorts och hur har ni kommit fram till dessa? Hur har ni kommit överens?
10. Har det uppstått några motsättningar i ert arbete och i så fall vad har de gällt och hur har de kommit till uttryck?
12. Om ni skulle försöka ringa in och sätta fingret på ämneslagets funktion. Vad ser ni framför er då?
13. Finns det någon samverkan kring bedömning i andra sammanhang på skolan?
14. Kan ni berätta om det övergripande bedömningsarbetet som sker i kommunen med samarbetet mellan skolor? Hur ser er bild av samarbetet ut?
15. Hur får ni vetskap om det arbete som sker i dessa grupper?
16. Hur mottas/används de direktiv som skapas i samarbetet i ämnesgrupperna på skolorna?
17. Hur används CSG-personen i ämneslaget på skolan? Vilken roll får hon/han i ämnesgruppen?
18. Hur får ni tillgång till det material som de arbetar fram? Vad har ni använt?
19. Har ni kunnat dra nytta av samarbetet i kommunen? På vilket sätt i sådana fall?
20. Vilket material hade ni velat ha? Hur skulle detta ha hjälpt er i arbetet?
21. Finns det något som ni vill lägga till, förtydliga – något som är viktigt som vi borde ha tagit upp?

