Sensemaking and Power: Processes of Interaction in a High-Achieving Danish Public School

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Abstract

The modernization of governance and the marketization of the Danish public education sector since the 1980s, has resulted in changes both in the constitutive conditions and in the discursive understandings framing the purpose of the public education system for educational leaders, teachers, and social educators working in schools. We know less about how the neoliberal modernization processes affect the schools at a micro-processual sensemaking level and a relational power level. In this analytical perspective, there is a scientific need to understand how these organizing and sensemaking processes are conducted through the discursive construction of power relations in modernized, institutional settings, and how these processes affect the organizational understandings, professional identities and social relations of the members in a high-achieving Danish public school. I investigate leadership from a micro-analytical perspective, as inter-action processes centered around the creation of common understanding and the enactment of policy, and mobilize a theoretical understanding of leadership processes as social sensemaking constructions that are constituted, framed and transformed in a given context of discursive and institutional power. I argue that the members of the organization holding both formal and informal leadership positions construct under-standings through social power struggles in ambiguous and contradictory discursive orders. Further, these struggles create new power relations and democratic forms of leadership within a hidden power structure of a high-achieving Danish school owing to governance transitions in the Danish public education sector.

Keywords: educational leadership; governance; high-achieving school; sensemaking; power

Introduction

Since the 1980s, the constitutive conditions of the public welfare system in Denmark have changed. In these general changes, the Danish educational sector has been part of various public reform movements aimed at changing the financial models governing the schools

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by implementing forms of neo-liberal governance and accountability in the relation be-tween the state and the schools. These new conditions spawned by the use of governance and leadership technologies embedded in New Public Management rationales as eco-nomic, competitive, and market- oriented led to transitions in various ways. Both in the ways the members of the educational organizations relate to each other and how they construct their professional identities. But, also transitions in how they understand the aim and purpose of the public school system, seen in the battles between the discursive orders of democratic formation or formation of global, competitive learners (Moos, 2003; Moos, 2013; Moos, 2017).

The study aims to address leadership from a microanalytical perspective, to understand how leadership processes such as sensemaking and power constructs between principals and teachers are affected by the transformation processes. This approach will unfold the contextual and institutional conditions that are both constructed in, and constitutive of, leadership processes in a high-achieving school; further, it provides an opportunity to discuss the consequences of the modernization processes on the social identities, peda-gogical relations, and construction of sociality in the educational field.

This article will first elaborate on the theoretical understandings and the analytical methods used. Then I present the findings of an interaction analysis of discursive sense-making processes and the construction of power relations, based on three data excerpts and a descriptive analysis of the distribution of verbal contributions in the construction processes. Finally, the findings are discussed with concluding suggestions for further re-search.

Theory and method

I understand leadership as institutional sensemaking and power processes between sub-jects holding both formal and informal leadership positions in the organization. Theoret-ically, I investigate the subject field from a microanalytical perspective focusing on the sensemaking processes (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005) as interactions between the principal and the teachers, based on interaction analysis (Jordan & Henderson, 1995), and critical discourse analysis (Norman, 1992; Foucault, 1983). This methodological ap-proach to analyzing the social organizing of interactions will enlighten the meanings and rationales that are subject to the interactions, the patterns that exist in the social organizing of the interactions as sensemaking processes, and the creation of common understanding.

In this study of conversational interactions, the development of common understand-ing is understood in terms of sensemaking processes (Weick, 1995). Sensemaking pro-cesses occur at the intersubjective level following the developmental structure in the turn-taking system as a continuous elaboration of a common understanding (Fairclough, 2015; Jordan & Henderson, 1995). The study of the interaction builds on an understanding of the meaning of sequentiality, where the single account or utterance in the spoken text gets it's significant meaning from its position in the sequence. It is in the system of the turn-

taking, the understanding of the utterance is displayed, and the analysis is therefore based on exemplary data excerpts to make the turn-taking analytically approachable. Furthermore, the socially constructed meanings, discursive actions, utterances, and accounts are essentially situated in an institutional activity that the interactants construct together. This activity is generally understood as a discourse type or a conversational genre (Fairclough, 2015).

I also refine my analysis with theoretical concepts from the theory of relational and discursive power (Norman, 1992), elaborating the social construction of common understanding or meanings through the sequential turn-taking system as a process of organizing (Weick et al., 2005) and the creation of social, relational power structures. This analytical focus investigates how the hegemonic truth about the organizational reality and the positioning of the subject are constructed in a spoken text through plausible accounts from the participants. It also shows how the discursive orders framing the sensemaking processes are constituted by, and constitutive of, the meanings created by disguising, marginalizing, or excluding alternative forms of knowledge, as ways of relating and interacting (Norman, 1992; Foucault, 1983).

The subject field

The subject field of the analysis is an institutional leadership situation, a coherent 45 meeting of 45 minutes, in a high-achieving Danish public school. In this situation, the participants, the principal, a classroom teacher, a fellow teacher (Ditte), and the coordinator of the resource center at the school (Marianne), create common understanding through sensemaking and discursive power struggles while enacting the policy frame of inclusion. The interaction-situation is part of 15 hours of digitally-recorded, audio-based observation data using the analytical ethnographic method of "shadowing" (Czarniawska-Joerges, 2007) as part of an international study of leadership and governance in academically high-achieving schools (Storgaard, work in progress).

The leadership situation is purposefully chosen as subject to qualitative interaction analysis because it is centered on discursive negotiation and problem-solving with participation from different organizational levels holding both formal and informal leadership positions. Selecting this problem situation creates a scientific opportunity to understand the interaction as an institutional sensemaking and power process between leaders and employees. Then, the situation was transcribed to a text as emic, qualitative data based on spoken interaction *in situ*, through a process inspired by the Jefferson's notations system (Jordan & Henderson, 1995). Transforming audio-based interaction data into a written text demands a detailed transcription process that includes information of participants' non-verbal actions, interruptions of accounts, pauses in the conversation, and the expressive way, in which the utterances have been put by the participants. In this process exclamation marks and italics, have been used when the interactants stress certain accounts. Question marks have been used instead of an upward arrow-sign, when interactants finish accounts with an upward tone of voice. Further, a bracketed information has been given,

when the interactants are speaking in a low tone of voice, in cases of laughter, verbal signs of acknowledgment, or silence or interruption as responding accounts. Furthermore, contextual information from the observation protocol and informant interviews frame the empirical data, as the situation is understood as part of the wider institutional context. All names used are fictive.

Analytical findings

I will now elaborate on the findings from the interaction analysis, based on the above mentioned analytical repertoire. This presents the findings of the sensemaking processes, consisting of the plot of the overall leadership process as organizing processes within a contextually defined situation.

Leadership interaction in an institutional and situational context

The leadership situation takes place in a high-achieving Danish public school with 600 students at elementary and lower secondary levels. The school has 50 employees, including teachers, social educators, and service related staff. The school has been high-achieving for several years, with performance results from a socioeconomic perspective as one of the best academic performing schools in Denmark.

The municipality that governs the school has a governance tradition of decentralization, with leadership and management traditions inspired by New Public Management. This organizational form of governance is constituted by performance-management-based relations between leaders and employees, decentralization of discretionary authority to self-managing employees, the classroom teachers and self-steering teams. Competition and academic results are the main rationales of truth in the construction of the social reality. The competitive and economic governance of this municipality strongly emphasizes inclusion as a pedagogical school strategy.

The meeting is initiated by the autonomous and self-managing classroom teacher, who coordinates and is accountable for the work in grade three. For some time, she and her team of colleagues have experienced serious difficulties with the behavior of the students and the general learning environment in the class. As prescribed by the organizational culture at the school, the classroom teacher has compiled a four-page written description of the learning needs of the students and the difficulties she and her colleagues are experiencing. In this document, she describes the students individually, and she enacts and selects an understanding of the problem as extensive, with 11 students with specific needs. For a long period of time, she has also been cooperating and communicating with the municipality's pedagogical psychological specialist (PPR) about specific students in grade three. She has now invited the principal, a team colleague, the coordinator of the resource center (the internal special needs unit at the school), and a special needs teacher from the resource center. They all meet at the principal's office on the basis of the classroom teacher's written account, which has been emailed to the participants before the

meeting. Marianne, the coordinator of the resource center, is late for the meeting, so the following data excerpt takes place before the beginning of the formal meeting.

Data excerpt A: Discursive limitations of the subject positions

The principal (P) sits at the meeting table with the written description submitted by the classroom teacher (CT) in front of him. When the classroom teacher and her female colleague (T1) enter the principal's office, they place themselves at the meeting table opposite facing the principal. They start their interaction in a tense atmosphere with the construction of the discursive order of the meeting:

1. P: I have said no to coffee for you, so?

2. CT: I don't like it anyway, so that is no problem

3. P: No? And Ditte she didn't need it

4. T1: No

5. P: Then we will follow (*interruption*)

6. CT: Marianne and Annette will also be coming (*speaks in a low tone*)

7. P: Eh? Yes, *good*! *Yes*, this I have noticed, that she has answered!

8. CT: Yes, but it is because afterwards we thought that it would be a good idea to invite Annette to the meeting (*speaks in a low tone*)

9. P: Yes, yes, *excellent*! (*ironical tone*)

10. CT: In a future perspective?

11. P: Silent (*8 seconds of silence*)

The principal is not answering the question, but instead turning papers in the description, that is placed at the table in front of him. He is taking a sip of his coffee. There are sounds from the school-yard and children playing outside the window.

The foregoing data excerpt may be understood as a sensemaking processes between the classroom teacher and the principal, where the identity of the female classroom teacher is negotiated. The classroom teacher, as a self-managing professional, is going through a discursive process that constitutes her in a new and less autonomous identity and subject position. The classroom teacher is the initiator of a formal meeting with participants from several levels in the organization including the principal. The content of the meeting is based on a written document, in which she has defined the understanding of the problem by the use of a discursive bureaucracy-technology. She is enacting her own subject position in the formal organization with proactive discretionary leadership

competencies within a subject position as equal to the principal. In data excerpt A, the subject positioning between the principal and her as equals, is negotiated through discursive power formations. These negotiation processes set limitations on the purpose of the meeting, the professional relations, and the subject positions available.

Discursive positioning

The first limitation of the subject positioning appears in line 1, where the principal by announcing that he has not ordered coffee for the meeting, is making it clear that this is not a meeting with the purpose of establishing positive social relations between equal partners. Serving coffee is customary at meetings in Danish schools, and it is used to make the participants connect with one another in a social manner to diminish the notion of power distances. Here, the principal's conversational opening account may be seen as a rejection of the classroom teacher's autonomy and independent room for making decisions by denying her the opportunity to make a choice. The classroom teacher is now participating in the sensemaking process as a social struggle over the subject position and her professional identity.

In line 2 she enacts a discursive defense of her professional identity as powerful and having discretionary authority. She enacts this position by indicating, that the denial of the opportunity to make a choice is of no importance to her. The classroom teacher then continues participating in the sensemaking process as a power struggle by interrupting the principal, halting his continuing the meeting, in line 5. Afterwards, in line 6, she tells the principal about whom she has invited to the meeting. As a rhetorical strategy, she is now using a low and suppressed tone of voice to signal a non-powerful and unequal subject position in the organizational hierarchy. The principal responds to this information by an account signaling incomprehension in line 7: "eh?" This type of account may be understood as a repair through enacting a *hearing problem* (Svennevig, 2008). It is enacted, when there is a problem of acceptability in the discursive contribution as social action. With this repair, the principal indicates, that there is a mistake, and he questions the classroom teacher's right to perform this action. In this kind of repair, the interlocutor is positioned as having the responsibility for the misunderstanding. The enactment of a hearing problem can therefore be understood as a social positioning process, where the social acceptability of proactive acts of inviting other members of the organization is questioned.

In the same line, the principal makes a second attempt of repair by explicating, that this information has already been drawn to his attention when he received the digital invitation to the meeting. He then limits the classroom teacher discursively by asking for an explication of her discretionary decision-making according to her inviting people.

In line 8, the classroom teacher responds to the principal`s demand for an explanation, by explaining, why she independently invited the coordinator of the resource center. Here, she again uses a low suppressed tone of voice. In line 9, the principal responds to this

explanation enacting a harsh tone of voice by saying "*excellent*!" Using the rhetorical strategy of evaluating the explanation of the classroom teacher as annoying, this positions the classroom teacher as an organizational member not holding the legitimate power to invite people to formal meetings.

From equal to unequal

At the end of this foregoing sequence, the principal dismisses the subject position of the classroom teacher as an equal creator of future problem-solving strategies. This is seen in line 10, where the classroom teacher gives an account that is oriented towards her developing future organizational understandings and initiatives. This selection and enactment is not reflected by the principal, as he meets her account with silence. This form of rhetorical action, where an account is not responded to, may be understood as a human account of reality not being co-constructed. The subjective understanding of reality that is enacted by the classroom teacher to be reflected in the conversational interaction, is not co-reflected. Therefore, it does not become hegemonic or convincing. In this sequence, it is possible to understand the principal's lack of response to the classroom teacher orienting to the future as a positioning process. Further, it can be interpreted as a rejection of her enactment of a professional identity and subject position as an equal, powerful, and discretionary competent decision maker.

In this part of the meeting, the classroom teacher's professional identity as equal, powerful, discretionary competent, is part of a sensemaking process that may be characterized as a positioning-process and a social struggle of power. The principal uses discursive power-formation by constraining the content of the meeting and discursively enacting the purpose of the meeting as not being between socially and equally professional partners. In the discursive power-formation, he uses rhetorical strategies like silence (line 10), a demand for explication (line 7), and an ironical tone of voice (line 9). He also enacts an evaluation (line 7) of the discretionary competencies of the classroom teacher, with respect to her enactment of a position with power to initiate a meeting and define the organizational future. In this process, the classroom teacher goes from holding a subject position that gives her a professional identity as powerful and equal to the principal, to a professional identity being less powerful and unequal. As a sensemaking process in the pre-entry of the meeting before the formal meeting begins, this may be understood as a primary identification of what subject positions will be available for the participants in the discursive order of this type of meeting. Summing up, this is not a sensemaking process between equal subject positions constituted in the form of participatory sociality. Rather, it is a meeting constituted in a discursive order of negotiation or a battle between unequal participants.

The meeting has now been in progress for approximately 20 minutes. The following presents an exemplary negotiated sensemaking regarding the hegemonic understanding of the extent of the pedagogical problem under discussion. It is one of several accounts of the understanding of reality, enacted and selected by the principal and negotiated in

sensemaking processes between the principal, the classroom teacher and her colleagues and the coordinator of the resource center. At this point in the meeting, the principal and the classroom teacher are contributing, whereas the coordinator of the resource center and the other teachers are silently observing.

Data excerpt B: Negotiating the hegemonic problem-understanding

118. P: Yes. Then we must meet again in some time to see if there is an effect on this, because you can say it can be part of it, but we have to find out, now when we mentioned Christopher, but eh, it was just because I was curious about this one thing that is sort of given not to be included here at the school, which is not so good, but in reality I think that maybe it, a lot of it will be solved if we could fix, and I am very much aware of, that we don't fix, eh the challenges of Simon and Mike, because as I just read through this, then this is more ordinary, this is more ordinary things

119. CT: Yes

120. P: Like in any class also to defuse the dramatization that you should have 11 children with specific needs we do not have that here!

121. CT: Yes yes, but then we just haven't got the time, that we really should have had

122. P. Yes, this is what I mean, we *don't have* 11 children with specific needs. We have *two* maybe three, *definitely two*, Simon and Mike

123. CT: They are really *damn* complicated (*speaks with a low tone*)

The negotiation of the hegemonic understanding of the extent of the problem is discursively enacted by the principal, in line 118. Here he emphasizes that the understanding of the extent of the problem, defined by the classroom teacher in the written document, is not plausible. Here he labels the primary content of the written description and problem definition as *more ordinary*. Afterwards, the principal labels the classroom teacher's understanding as a *dramatization*, and he finishes this discursive enactment by using a declarative style. Here, he discursively rejects the classroom teacher's understanding of the problem, in line 120, by saying, "we do not have that here!" Furthermore, the account is made in a relational style through the use of the pronoun *we*, to exclude the understanding from the common organizational understanding. This creates a conversational conflict. The classroom teacher now makes an account, in line 121, where she argues, and emphasizes, that the problem is of an extent that leaves her too little time for teaching. As a response to this understanding, the principal re-emphasizes his understanding and rejects the problem understanding in line 122. This is done by reducing the problem using an imperative and saying, "we *don't have* 11 children with specific needs*" with a spoken emphasis on "*don't have*". In line 122, he discursively reformulates the understanding of the problem by selecting it to include two students primarily. This conflictual negotiation

process finishes with the classroom teacher in a powerless subject position. She discursively submits to the principal's reduction of the problem situation by noting (in line 123), that these two students are really complicated and time-consuming, emphasized with mild swearing and a low suppressed tone of voice.

Strategic subject positioning

The preceding data excerpts may be understood as a social struggle and negotiation about defining the hegemonic understanding of the problem. In this interaction, the principal enacts a subject position, in which he is powerful. The rhetorical strategies he uses include labelling, as a way of undermining the trustworthiness of the understanding of the problem as extensive. In this labeling process, the understanding of the problem is discursively described as dramatizing (line 120), which may be interpreted as a false creation in a sensemaking process. This positions the owner of this understanding of the problem, the classroom teacher, in a position as a drama-queen, which first rejects her understanding of the problem as extensive. Next it places her in a subject position where she is not a legitimate contributor in defining the hegemonic organizational problem understanding. As a drama-queen, her subject position is of someone who strategically exaggerates to manipulate the truth.

In the social struggle and negotiation process, we once again see the classroom teacher present her problem-understanding in line 121, but introduced with an acknowledgment of the principal's understanding of the problem as dramatized. This acknowledgment is seen in her agreeing with, and connecting to, the principal`s account by saying, "yes, yes", instead of addressing, and possibly escalating the conflict on the basis of being positioned as a drama-queen who dramatizes situations. Instead, in this account, the classroom teacher partly couples her understanding to the principal's account and accepts the description of her statement being a deliberate exaggeration, even though she still selects and enacts an understanding of the problem as problematic. This mutual acknowledgment is also what characterizes the end of this sequence. Here, we see the principal acknowledging the classroom teacher's acknowledgment of the problematic situation and it's description as being dramatized. Further, he reemphasizes the extent of the problem in a declarative mode using imperatives as a rhetorical strategy. The classroom teacher responds by retreating from this conversational struggle by accepting the problem now reduced from eleven to two students. She addresses this by holding on to the understanding of the problem as complicated, even though the common hegemonic understanding is now less extensive.

In this data excerpt, the social struggle surrounding the hegemonic understanding of the problem, can be understood as constituted in a battle as the primary discursive order. As a discursive order, the battle establishes subject positions of combatants in a war, where there is a demand for strategic thinking. It seems as if both combatants in the battle over the hegemonic understanding of the future, the principal and the classroom teacher,

are aware of the strategic dimension or the subject positioning involving strategic dimensions. This notion of the awareness of the strategic dimensions between the two is seen in the teacher's discursive acknowledgment and acceptance, and by her not addressing the principal's labeling of her definition of the problem as dramatizing.

Through the two sensemaking and power processes elaborated in data excerpts A and B, the hegemonic understanding of the problem has been redefined and reduced through the use of discursive power. This has constructed the subject positions in an organizational hierarchy with the principal as powerful and the classroom teacher as less powerful and subordinate. The negotiation is also constituted within a discursive order that acknowledges both the classroom teacher and the principal as strategic subject positions within the discursive order of the battle.

In the ongoing sensemaking processes presented in data excerpt C, the professional relations are constrained and redirected in a discursive redistribution of power. In this process, the coordinator of the resource center (CR) and the principal are the primary contributors. The classroom teacher and her colleague silently listen as if the classroom teacher, in particular, has abandoned the conversational struggle. In the conversation, the coordinator and the principal, placed at the same side of the meeting table, seem to be on the same side holding identical understandings, with the classroom teacher and her colleague at the other side of the table, both physically and metaphorically.

Data excerpt C: Constraining the social relations

243. CR: So there we somehow have to be firm and say that, but, but it is in fact what we see here, and it is just as important what you can see in everyday life as what you can find in an examination

244. P: No no, it is *far more* important! You can say that our understanding which is practical and experience-based, eh, we have to remember, when PPR comes, they don't come with specific knowledge about the child. We have all the specific knowledge about the child, I mean, all the specific knowledge about the child. Eh, and they are only advising, and they are in reality only an advisory to me and not to any of you *at all,* the practice is another thing, I know, but this is not the way it is eh, it is according to how the decisions must be. All work that must be done according to Simon, Mike, and others, *it is basically us* who does this. There isn't, there won't come anyone from outside to save us, or do anything that will solve this, it is only us who sit around the table and maybe Susanne too that can make a difference in the lives of Simon and Mike. There won't come anyone, and they won't come with good advice, to be frank, it is a rarity, just because they come with carrots or a box to sit in, that it helps *anything at all.* My experience is that it *doesn't help at all,* they just become better at describing them (*CT: laughter*) but just in a minute, just in a minute, they have made a WISC that shows that Mike has an IQ of 70 or something

else, but it hasn't helped Mike to be in the class at all. And the task for us is that Mike must be in the class

245. CR: You can say that when Birgitta or Hanne come, they bring a perspective that is *very, very* important, and when I sit in such meetings, I listen to their perspective, if the parents say something, I bring this along, the psychologist says something, but Birgitta has a psychological perspective, she mainly focusses on the child. She could come and say all of these children need an individual plan, you should fill in, that would, I would have to, my professionalism helps me, so that I can pull these perspectives apart, and be part of coupling them together to something that can be translated into this context. Because you have also been exposed to, then you should make a plan for them and then (*teachers acknowledging*) and that is not a realistic situation, what can be realistic in a classroom

During the principal's enactment and selection of understandings, the professional relations are redirected into a discursive order defined by organizational *introversion*. First by discursively labeling the external municipal relations (PPR) scientific and theoretical knowledge as *useless* in account 244. And then by enacting and selecting the experience-based knowledge from within the organization, held by the coordinator herself, as *useful* and *realistic* in account 243 and 245. The conversational interaction is constituted by the discourse-type *monologue*, and we see the coordinator of the resource center and the principal lecturing on the differences in the importance between the two forms of knowledge. The result is a discursive constraint on the organization's consultative relationships that limits the professional relationship between the classroom teacher and the municipality's pedagogical psychology specialist (PPR). This professional relationship is enacted as a useless and non-legitimate relationship, as the relationship between the coordinator of the resource center and the classroom teacher is enacted as a useful, legitimate relationship.

Part of this discursive redirection of the professional relationship from an extrovert to an introvert order, may be understood in connection to the socio-political order of inclusion, which is also emphasized in line 244. Here, the principal enacts and selects an understanding of the teacher's request for help, as a wish to be saved from someone outside the organization, which is now a non-legitimate extrovert relationship. In the conversational interaction, the principal finally labels the teachers as accountable for the saving of the students, but within the legitimate internal, organizational relations.

At the final ending of the meeting, the discretionary authority, that was initially held by the powerful, autonomous classroom teacher, is redirected and distributed by the principal to the coordinator of the resource center. She then redistributes it back to the classroom teacher, to be responsible for the next step in implementing the strategy, based on an extensively reduced, hegemonic problem understanding.

The power to contribute

The tendency to redistribute power and the hierarchical relations are also evident in the descriptive analysis of the balance of the contributions in the sensemaking processes. This analysis offers an understanding of how the verbal accounts are distributed between the main participants in the interaction. This perspective allows an informed hermeneutic interpretation of the weighting of the voices of the organizational members in the sensemaking process.

Circle diagram A: Distribution of contributions to sensemaking and organizing
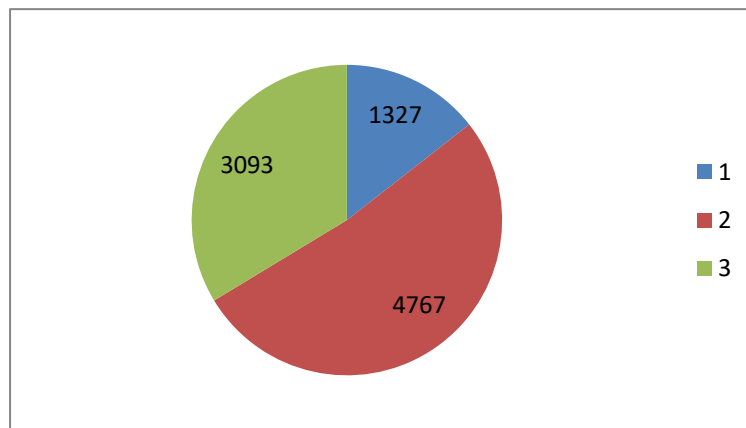
The number of spoken words per main participant in the conversational interaction.

(KL: Classroom teacher, SL: Principal, R: Coordinator of the Resource center)

In general, the principal made most of the contributions to the sensemaking processes in the creation of common understanding. The tendency was that the principal enacted more than half of the accounts in the conversational interaction, and the coordinator of the resource center also enacted a large number of the accounts. The classroom teacher, who is responsible for the daily instructional practices and pedagogical interventions in the classroom-, and who initiated the meeting in the first place, is the least enacting speaker. The classroom teacher participated least in the conversational interaction and contributed least to the development of the organizational understanding and the future solutions to the problem at hand. In this distribution of the opportunity to contribute to the construction of the social reality, the coordinator seems to have a rather extensive access to contribute. The coordinator may, therefore, be understood as holding a powerful informal leadership positon in the social hierarchy of this high-achieving school.

Through the micro-analysis of the social processes in discursive sensemaking and power processes, it has been clarified and elaborated, how sociality is created in a specific leadership situation in a high-achieving Danish public school. I will now discuss the findings as overall social patterns of leadership in the perspective of new governance-forms of the modernized, public organization.

Discussion

Leadership in public organizations has undergone constitutive changes since the 1980s, owing to the modernization of the public welfare system. These modernization processes have created changes in the possible influencing strategies and the constitution of the room for public leadership. In earlier, modern, public organizations, it was a question of formal leaders having *power over* employees in the public, bureaucratic organizations. In neo-liberal public organizations, in a competitive and market-oriented order, on the other hand, it is a question of how both the formal leaders and the informal leaders as classroom teachers obtain *power to* change the organization and the actions of employees (Pedersen, 2004). In these *power to* processes the leadership relations are a continuously constructed and negotiated leadership relation established by the leader, to strategically position herself on a legitimate platform, from which the leader is able to communicate and enact. Therefore, leadership as *power to* may be understood in terms of sensemaking-struggles, where the struggle defines the relations as loose-couplings and negotiation-relations around creating the leadership subject positions and roles. The purpose of these struggles is an attempt to make relevant partners accountable for their own development as part of the whole, on the basis of the mutual agreements and common understandings created

In the micro-analytical findings of the sensemaking processes, it becomes clear, that the room for leadership is both self-created and negotiated in a polyphone horizon of the future (Pedersen, 2004). The classroom teacher, as a *co-leading employee*, enacts and selects an autonomous and powerful subject position with the discretionary authority to define organizational understandings and collectively binding decisions. In this process, the institutionalized conditions of the self-constructed room for leadership, situate her in a subject position, where the role of the classroom teacher is strategic. What also becomes evident during the interaction analyses, is, that the strategic room for leadership, which constitutes the role of the classroom teacher in the first place, is strongly defined by the hidden power structure in the invisible hierarchies of the organization. This power structure has its roots in the original bureaucratic organization and its formal hierarchies, and, subsequently constitutes a contradictory social order for the co-leading employee.

Institutionalizing a room for leadership as self-created, negotiated, and polyphone leaves a surface understanding of the different meaning systems in the loosely-coupled organization (Weick, 1976) where all are positioned equally as co-constructors of the organizational reality. This gives a notion of democratization and the embedding of a shared and distributed leadership focus in the Danish public school (Moos, 2002). But, as seen in the micro-analysis of this specific leadership situation, the institutionalized conditions arising from the modernization of the public organizations, do not seem to create a democratic, shared form of leadership or an equally co-constructive form of leadership. Instead, they seem to position members of the organization in a discursive order of double-bind and contradictory expectations as an effect of the modern, hidden forms of power that govern subjects and societies in the dichotomy between individualization and totali-

zation (Foucault, 1983). It seems evident, that the constitution of the organizational member enacting the subject position as self-managing, powerful and autonomous, is embedding the hidden structures of power relations in an organizational hierarchy, which then creates a subject position defined by contradictory expectations. The contradictory expectation and social double-bind order seems to consist of the expectations, that the member will both be proactively and strategically self-directed. And, at the same time, passive and subordinate to the discretionary decisions and power-structure of the hidden organizational hierarchy. So, the constitutive conditions of modernized public organizations allow every organizational member in power to pursue self-leadership and autonomy. For example, the classroom teacher who positions herself as a powerful user of a bureaucratic discourse technology and a proactive leader in organizational problem-solving by inviting various members with different functions to the meeting. However, the sensemaking process repositions her as a non-legitimate contributor to the hegemonic understanding and generator of future interventions within former, formal structures from the bureaucratic forms of organization. Looking at the division of the primary enacting contributors in the meeting discussed above, the principal and the coordinator of the resource center are the main participants. This leaves the classroom teacher in a more passive subject position at the bottom of the organizational hierarchy, with the construction of the coordinator of the resource center in a powerful subject position. Therefore, the transformation of organizational hierarchies in modernized public organizations into more equal, co-constructivist, or network-based structures, or even democratic forms of leadership, may be regarded as a future possibility only. Instead, the modern forms of power that lie between individualization and totalization create new power relations and social identities through the discursive construction of differentiation as leadership distribution. In this perspective, the coordinator's role in a loosely coupled organization, becomes an institutionalized form of hidden power in a hierarchical power structure.

Conclusion

In establishing a scientific understanding of leadership processes in a high-achieving Danish public school, there a several elements that directs us to a discussion of leadership processes in the democratic, public institution. Specifically the contradictory, social orders within a restricted room of introversion, and the hidden, but existing, hierarchical power structure as they are materialized in the professional relations between principals and teachers. When debating this, an investigation of the rationales guiding the understanding of democratic leadership forms, would be fruitful. The argument for this is based in the empirical evidence of this study, that shows a tendency, for the construction of the social reality to include those who share the aims and understandings of the powerful in society. At the same time, it excludes those who do not share the aims and understandings, but pursue influence investing personal engagement, as they are expected to, as professionals in the neo-liberal governance-forms of the public organization.

The next point to be further investigated would be, how these centralized sensemaking processes constituted with an order of double-bind and contradictory communication, affect the democratic relationships between the teacher as formal classroom manager, and the students as possible co-leading employees? Further, does this leadership phenomenon exist primarily in the discursive orders of the Danish public education organizations? The findings of this micro-processual study of leadership have identified significant concerns that need to be addressed by future studies within educational research.

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