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Promises of Reflexivity

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# Promises of Reflexivity

## Managing and Researching Inclusive Schools

**Helene Ratner**

Doctoral School of Organisation
and Management Studies

PhD Series 24.2012

# Promises of Reflexivity

## Managing and Researching Inclusive Schools

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Readers familiar with actor-network theory know that the construction of knowledge involves purification: the deletion of various forms of contingencies and influences that do not look strictly scientific, to make the distilled end result knowledge. While qualitative social science, and especially the disciplines of Science and Technology Studies (STS) and social anthropology with which I engage, have a different aesthetic for purification than the natural sciences, writing this thesis nevertheless has involved the deletion important processes contributing to the work.

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A number of chapters have been or are in the process of being published, however in different formats, including their framings and conclusions, than the chapters presented here.

A different version of Chapter Five is:

”Skolelederen gennem ild og vand: når strategi og brandslukning mødes,” in (red. Malou Juelskjær, Hanne Knudsen, Justine Pors og Dorthe Staunæs) *Ledelse af Uddannelse: at Lede det Potentielle*, p. 27-53, Forlaget Samfundslitteratur, 2011.

A different version of Chapter Seven is:

“Screening Devices at School: The (Boundary) Work of Inclusion,” in STS Encounters, Vol 4, No 2: 111-144, 2011.

Excerpts of the empirical material that I analyze in Chapter Six have moreover been used in these two publications:

”Freuds divan vender tilbage: ledelse af affektivitet gennem komfortteknologier,” co-authored with Dorthe Staunæs and Malou Juelskjær, inTidsskrift for Arbejdsliv, Vol 12, No 3, 2010.

“Fleeting Visibilities: Managerial Assessments of Employees’ Self-management through Intense Interactions and Uncomfortable Emotions”, co-authored with Justine Grønbæk Pors, accepted with revisions for publication in International Journal of Management Concepts and Philosophy.

# Chapter One

## Five Ways of Reflexivity

### Introduction

In Denmark, the inclusion of students with special needs in the common school is currently one of the most important political agendas in the field of primary education. [1] The aim of the agenda of "inclusion" is to reduce the use of special needs education. Special needs education is not only questioned by policy makers but also by social scientists and disability rights activists who increasingly see it to affect segregation, dividing students into categories of "special" and "normal" (Tetler 2004:81-98, Jydebjerg and Hallberg 2006, Alenkær 2008, Local Government Denmark 2005b, Local Government Denmark 2004).

"Special needs" is a broad concept that includes physical disabilities, diagnoses such as autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), dyslexia, speech and hearing impairments, and norm-breaching behavior.[2] Before a student can be referred to special needs education, a special examination usually done by the school psychologist and a referral are required.[3] Special needs education covers a wide range of teaching forms, some undertaken by the common school and some undertaken by special schools or special recreational pedagogical services. Within the common school, special needs education ranges from additional classes for individual students (1-11 classes a week), over "single

[1] From now and on, I use "inclusion" as shorthand.

[2] I give a brief account of the historical development of Danish special needs education in Chapter Four.

[3] At the time of writing this thesis (April 2009-12). Recent legislation has granted the school manager the right to decide whether a student should be referred to special needs education.

integrated education" for students receiving at least 12 lessons of special needs education a week and separate "special classes," to "other special pedagogical support" (Danish Ministry of Finance 2010:12).[4]

Once rarely disputed and believed to service children whose problems could be diagnosed and ameliorated, special needs education is now seen as the problematic effect of a historically specific mindset and outlook (Tomlinson 1987:33-41, Thomas and Loxley 2001, Reid 2005:180). Critics of special needs education contest its dominant medico-diagnostical epistemology and claim that it is intertwined with cultural categories of "normalcy" and discriminating practices of exclusion (Andersen 2004, Kjær 2010, Egelund 2004:37-58). Enveloped by many different interests and normative agendas, including austerity measures, democratic visions of a diverse society, professional debates within pedagogy, and educational and disability politics, inclusion is far from a simple agenda or goal. However, *reflexivity*, as I will illustrate, is seen as one of the most important means to reach it.

"Reflexivity" – in five ways – is also the means through which I will thematize inclusion in this introductory chapter. *First*, I specify how pedagogical scholars and policy makers present reflexivity as the key method to make schools inclusive through having managers and teachers question how their current categories and practices effect exclusion. On this basis, I pose my research question and situate my study in Science and Technology Studies (STS). *Second,* I review how scholars in the field of Critical Management Studies have approached the concept

[4] At the time of the study. As I elaborate in Chapter Nine, these definitions are currently undergoing legally binding changes in order to reduce the number of referrals to special needs education.

of the "reflective practitioner" as an expression of a specific form of power or discipline. I elucidate how my own STS-approach both draws on these studies but also differs in important ways. I, *third*, examine how inclusion can be understood as a reflexive turning back upon existing knowledge practices of special needs education, usually referred to as "integration." *Fourth*, inclusion and reflexivity are not just "empirical phenomena" but also shaped by social science, including the social science research done at my home institution, Copenhagen Business School. This, I argue, renders the phenomenon of inclusion reflexive in the sense that questions regarding how the researcher is implicated in the researched become acute. *Fifth*, I consider the so-called reflexivity debates within STS and anthropology to further reflect on these entanglements. I conclude the chapter outlining the details of the empirical studies conducted and with a chapter overview.

### Reflexivity I: Including Students with Special Needs

The goal of inclusion unites politicians across different party colors. Both former liberal Minister of Education, Tina Nedergaard, and current center-left coalition have made inclusion a priority in the development of the Danish public school, and a wide range of national and local policy initiatives has over the past ten years been launched to further inclusion (Lauritsen 2011, Socialdemokratiet and SF 2010, Local Government Denmark 2004, Danish Ministry of Education 2000:1-106, Danish Ministry of Education 2003b). Even the Ministry of Finance has granted the area special attention as special needs education has turned out to be a heavy drain on municipal budgets (Danish Ministry of Finance 2010, Houlberg 2010:6-9). In the 2010 annual financial agreement between Local Government

Denmark[5] and the Danish Government inclusion figured as one of the top means for preventing further budget overruns (Danish Government and Local Government Denmark 2010). Moreover, it appears that the political call for inclusion has already successfully travelled to most Danish municipalities and welfare institutions in forms ranging from declarations of intent to politically decided inclusion strategies (Jydebjerg and Hallberg 2006). It is thus not an overstatement to claim that the agenda of inclusion has successfully enrolled a large collective of Danish actors across institutional and geographical boundaries.

While "inclusion" can mean many things, most scholars describe it as a break with an earlier "paradigm of integration," which is associated with the concept of "special needs education" (Mittler 2000, Thomas, Walker and Webb 1997).[6] Take as an example Danish psychologist Rasmus Alenkær's distinction between the two views: "in the integration view of human nature, some are more 'normal' than others. In the inclusive view of human nature, no one is more normal than others. Everybody is special" (2009:20).[7] With integration, the "needs," and the problem, is located within the student. For instance a diagnosis of ADHD will be followed by intervention focused on remedying related needs and, if possible, re-integrating the student in the common school. Instead of focusing on the *individual student*

[5] Local Government Denmark is an interest group and member authority of all 98 Danish municipalities and is the representative for municipalities in the annual budget negotiations with the Danish government. It is also the broker of new policy initiatives within the different welfare areas that municipalities are responsible for.

[6] In Danish, a similar distinction is at play, although the Danish terms are used differently. "Inklusion" and "rummelighed" are both used to account for the paradigm of inclusion (Andersen 2004). However, some scholars differentiate between the two, depicting "rummelighed" as the paradigm of integration (Alenkær 2008, Dyson 2009:89-104).

[7] This quotation, as with all other quotations from Danish publications in the thesis, has been translated to English by the author.

with special needs, the inclusive view of human nature moves the focus to the practices and traditions of the *school* (Alenkær 2009). This amounts to a difference between *making students fit* existing practices and *changing practices* for all students to benefit from. Alenkær's statement moreover illustrates the radicalism of inclusion. By claiming everybody to be "special," Alenkær cancels the idea of special needs as regarding a minority. This renders the concept of inclusion *infinite* (cf. Hansen 2012:89-98) as practices in principle can be accommodated to provide for all students as long as their diversity is taken into account.

Naming and describing integration as a *paradigm* separate from inclusion produces a new valuation of diagnoses of special needs. Rather than being considered a *help* they are now seen as a problematic practice that contributes to marginalization. Following, inclusion entails way more than retaining students with special needs in the common school; it also entails thoroughly rethinking the concept of "special needs" and questioning the specific problem-solution constellations associated with practices of integration.

Although at present inclusion has gained a strong (at least rhetorical) momentum, it is not a new policy agenda. It appears in legislation on special needs education as far back as 1990 (Danish Ministry of Education 1990:3), and "to be included" was acknowledged as a human right when Denmark signed the UNESCO Salamanca Statement in 1994 (UNESCO 1994). However, despite iterated affirmations of the vision of inclusion, national statistical surveys have repeatedly discovered that the number of students referred to special pedagogical services, and thereby segregated from common education, has grown (Danish Ministry of Education 1997, Danish Ministry of Education 2006, Ministry of Finance 2010). This (re-)discovery has produced both democratic and economic concerns. A

democratic concern, for example, is whether our concept of what is "normal" is steadily becoming more and more narrow as some municipalities today refer up to 25% of their students to special needs education (Andersen 2004:6). In the area of cost control, an expenditure survey showed that the expenses of special needs education amounted to 12% of the total costs of the public school in 2008, twice the ratio of 1995 (Danish Ministry of Finance 2010). At stake are both what is an appropriate distribution of funds between the domains of "normal" and "special" education, and also the very notions of "special" and "normal."

***Calls for Reflexivity and School Management***

It is common for Danish researchers in the area of special needs education to characterize this discrepancy between the *real* and *ideal* of inclusion as a paradox: in spite of inclusion summoning more and more political support over the years, segregation is still on the rise, making it obvious that moral support for inclusion is far from sufficient to stem the tide (Tetler 2004:81-98, Andersen 2009:157-181). Policy makers and researchers alike thus repeatedly call for a change of "school culture" and "local practices," which are considered to be conservative and a hindering factor in realizing a higher rate of inclusion (Tetler 2004:81-98, Alenkær 2008, Local Government Denmark 2004, Danish Ministry of Education 2003b, Booth and Ainscow 2002, Dyson 2009:89-104, Langager 2004:99-126, Carrington 1999:257-268).

In response to this, much managerial, pedagogical, and policy literature presents reflexivity as *the* solution (e.g. Alenkær 2008, Andersen 2009:157-181, Dyson 2009:89-104, Ainscow 2009). The Danish Ministry of Education, for instance, calls for school managers and teachers to adapt to a new inclusive "educational paradigm" through "continuous reflection over their own practice and the school's

role in society" (Danish Ministry of Education 2003b:111). The aim of this approach is to "confront frozen pedagogical traditions and positions" (Danish Ministry of Education 2003b:7). This strategy appears to have spread. Municipalities, who are responsible for setting local political goals for schools, now report aiming at "cultural change" through reflexively questioning existing "concepts, patterns of thinking, and attitudes towards children" (Jydebjerg and Hallberg 2006). In that regard, reflexivity is imbued with a sense of optimism. Obtaining more self-awareness is seen to improve the possibility for creating inclusive school cultures.

Awareness of practice is understood in two respects: The first is that teachers should reflect on the unintended *effects* their practices generate in terms of marginalization or exclusion. The second regards reflecting on what is considered to *constitute* their practices; much of this literature operates with a conception where practice is understood as an effect of non-conscious factors such as attitude, culture, and presuppositions (Alenkær 2008, Kjær 2010, Qvortrup and Qvortrup 2006a). The belief is moreover that practice can be changed if it is reflected upon. Assumed to provide a vantage point from which to gain superior insights (cf. Lynch 2000:26-54), reflexivity and explication appear to constitute a medium through which new potentials can be realized. Such articulations, however, imply that instead of always-already being reflexive (cf. Lynch 2000:26-54, Garfinkel 1967), reflexivity should be *added* to especially teachers' practices.

This kind of reflexivity, and the cultural change that it is supposed to create, presumably does not come about by itself but needs management. When advocating better inclusion, scholars articulate the importance of *school*

*managers*[8] to facilitate this cultural change (Alenkær 2009, Ainscow 1991, Riehl 2000:55-81, Tetler 2004:81-98). For example, in a review of inclusion and educational leadership studies, educational scholar Carolyn Riehl concludes that managers are crucial as they "typically have additional power in defining situations and their meanings" and can "foster new understandings and beliefs about diversity and inclusive practice" (Riehl 2000:60-61). Another key international inclusion scholar, Alan Dyson, states that school management is "of the utmost importance when it comes to developing inclusive strategies, practices, norms, and values" (Dyson 2009:89, see also Dyson, Howes and Roberts 2002). When the achievement of inclusion is deemed contingent upon "cultural change," and management is considered central in the construction and negotiation of organizational cultures, school managers become tasked with facilitating teachers' reflexivity and with changing existing practices through changing how teachers ascribe meaning to them.[9]

***School Management in Denmark***

The Danish public school system consists of a bureaucratic and hierarchical structure led by the Danish Ministry of Education, which via legislation provides the overall goals and instructions for the content of teaching. Then, local

[8] I use the term school manager instead of school leader, head teacher or principal. Medium sized Danish schools (educating children from grade 0-10) usually employ a management team of four.

[9] The greater hope vested in school managers is not a unique phenomenon reserved to the agenda of inclusion but appears both in the growing body of general educational leadership literature, declared a "global industry" (Bush 2008:271-288, Gunter 1997, Webb, Vulliamy, Sarja and Hamalainen 2006:407-432), and across public sector institutions (Pedersen and Hartley 2008:327).

government (municipalities) holds the responsibility for the organization and spending of schools within their geographical area. The individual schools are controlled by their own management team. The Primary Education Act frames the tasks of school management and asserts that the school manager is responsible for the administrative and pedagogical management of the school, accountable for the operation of the school to the democratically elected local school board, with representatives from parents, teachers, and management, and the politically elected municipal board (Danish Parliament 2006). These boards decide the specific objectives and frames for school management.

Like the rest of the public sector, the organization of schools and division of tasks and responsibilities between municipal and institutional governance has evolved in a tension between centralization and decentralization (Pedersen and Hartley 2008:327, Pors 2011). Public sector institutions face challenges of adapting to a political environment of surveillance and accountability as well as a growing tension between managerialism and professionalism (du Gay 1996, Clarke and Newman 1997). On one side, decentralization is emphasized with buzzwords such as autonomy and self-sustaining units. In accordance with this, the Danish public school is based on a governance model with local responsibility and decision competence within nationally determined goals and frames. On the other side, schools are "governed at a distance" (Rose 1996a:37-64) through quantitative performance monitoring systems.[10] One interesting aspect in relation to inclusion

[10] These produce information about individual schools' test scores, grade point averages, teachers' sickness absence, students' illegal absenteeism, hours spent on teaching and resources allocated to special priority areas such as special education or Danish as a second language. They are used, among other things, for annual conversations between the local municipality and the school manager to assess whether they conform to agreements in contracts and whether the school should give specific areas certain attention. This is far from the only technology of

is how municipalities to a still greater extent define the pedagogical choice of certain inclusive pedagogies rather than leaving that responsibility to schools.

A recent publication from the Danish school management union (Skolelederne, then "Lederforeningen") further divides school management into four responsibilities. Formal responsibilities of the management team include professional leadership (interpretation and realization of the central legislation and municipal educational political goals in the school's pedagogical practice), administration (managing budgets, personal administration, and effective use of resources), human resource management (managing the organizational culture, including teachers' motivation, values, and attitudes), and strategic leadership (responsible for creating a vision, mission, development goals and a sense of unity) (Lederforeningen 2003). As such, when actors pushing the agenda of inclusion call for school managers to focus on the school's "culture" and "values," they draw on existing notions of good school management.

What is expected of school managers with the call for facilitating more reflexivity, however, is not just that they carry out certain tasks or set new criteria for success. Rather, reflexivity posits that they facilitate teachers' self-management[11] in a certain way: to stand *outside* their practices, to realize how they take cultural

---

governance (see Pors 2011 for a comprehensive analysis of the historical development of school governance).

[11] The term "self-management" is widely used and generally means that employees are required to "think, feel and act in ways that contribute to the realization and improvement of the individual worker, but only insofar as they concomitantly anticipate and contribute to the various needs of the organization" (Lopdrup-Hjorth, Gudmand-Høyer, Bramming and Pedersen 2011:97). Especially the so-called Critical Management Studies have explored the self-management as a "way of governing the behavior of workers through their self-understanding and identity" (Lopdrup-Hjorth, Gudmand-Høyer, Bramming and Pedersen 2011:98). I discuss how I position the thesis in relation to this literature later in this chapter.

categories for granted, and to see how personal attitudes and other ways of ascribing meaning to situations constitute practices that need questioning. Reflexivity, in this context, entails a double movement of reflection: first, teachers are to look inside themselves, to produce an image similar to a mirror's reflection. Changing this image through a questioning of assumptions, in turn, is expected to reflect back on their practices, which presumably become more inclusive as a result.

### Towards a Research Question

Management and reflexivity are thus important dimensions in contemporary political and scholarly formulations of the goal of inclusive schools, with managers being the "who," in terms of managing teachers, and reflexivity the "how." In this thesis, I explore these particular aspects of inclusion through ethnography at two schools, guided by the following overarching research question: ***how does reflexivity matter in managing inclusion?*** My interest in managers does not indicate that I believe that they are the sole most important factor for promulgating inclusion. As other scholars have argued, "management" does not only reside with "managers" but emerges also through architecture, teacher teams, legislation and municipal frameworks, and mundane technologies of knowing and accounting such as municipal performance indicators (Pors 2009, Juelskjær, Knudsen, Pors and Staunæs 2011, Pors 2011, Knudsen 2010, Staunæs, Juelskjær and Ratner 2010:25-40, Andersen 2008:33-68, Villadsen 2008:9-31). I am choosing to examine "managers" because they have been the focus of policy makers and scholars. I find it important to explore, through ethnographic studies, the pervasive belief that managers and reflexivity can achieve inclusion.

Asking how reflexivity *matters* has implications for what reflexivity can be. The Oxford English Dictionary defines "matter" as "relating to a material substance or matter" and as "relating to significance or import" (Oxford English Dictionary). Reflexivity is commonly assumed to be a cognitive property, related to human thinking (Qvortrup and Qvortrup 2006a, Schön 1991, Sørensen, Hounsgaard, Andersen and Ryberg 2008). However, mattering directs the attention towards *non-human* aspects of reflexivity, such as architecture, technologies, discourse, and politics. This means that the idea of humans being reflexive by virtue of their humanity is radically challenged. The second meaning of mattering involves "importance and significance." This directs attention towards the meanings that are ascribed to reflexivity, the particular ways in which existing practices (of integration) are made problematic through the term, and how they are translated once prevalent notions of reflexivity enter organizational practices.

That matter contains both these definitions suggests that we cannot understand the importance of reflexivity and the meanings "it" is attributed without exploring the particular objects, circumstances, and practices in which it is performed. As such I am interested in the qualitative aspects of the managerial ambitions and practices that proliferate around reflexivity. To explore this aspect of reflexivity and inclusion I draw my inspiration from scholars in social anthropology and STS in general and actor-network theory (ANT) in particular.[12] The discussions here

[12] ANT emerged from theoretical debates within STS about how to study science empirically without considering nature and society as two distinct spheres (Callon 1986:196-223, Latour 2006). Although there are important differences between them, Bruno Latour, Michel Callon, and John Law are generally considered to be the originators of ANT. There are also important differences between ANT and the so-called post-ANT (Law and Hassard 1999, Gad and Bruun Jensen 2010:55-80). I engage with both ANT and post-ANT discussions throughout the thesis but use ANT as shorthand for the present purpose.

emphasize that the ongoing construction and performance of our society is a heterogeneous, distributed, multiple, and unfinished process involving all kinds of *actants*, including discourses, humans, and non-humans such as objects, documents, and technologies (e.g. Callon 1986:196-223, Mol 2002). I present ANT in detail in Chapter Two.

### Reflexivity II: Critical Accounts of Reflexivity

In order to place my own approach in a broader field of study, I will now discuss how other scholars have approached the idea that practices can be changed through practitioners' reflexivity. There are many different, often contradictory definitions of reflexivity, mostly related to what should be the object of reflection and how reflexivity should be deployed (Day 1993:pp. 83-93, Fendler 2003:16-25, Krol 1997:96-97, Smyth 1992:267-300, Zeichner 1992:161-173). Across these different conceptualizations, however, is also the consensus that reflexivity can be used to organize the social. As I will discuss below, this belief renders reflexivity either a powerful tool for bringing about social change or a dangerous tool in the hands of presumably suppressive forces such as "capitalism" or "the State." What slides to the background is to what extent reflexivity has those effects in practice.

Both in education and in general managerial literature, there has been a growth in prescriptive "how-to" literature on reflexivity (e.g. Ryberg 2006:21-51, Schein 2004, Sørensen, Hounsgaard, Andersen and Ryberg 2008, Qvortrup and Qvortrup 2006a, Qvortrup and Qvortrup 2006b,). This literature advances that (presumably) human attributes of organizations such as culture, well-being, and personal competencies are the most important aspects of any organization and thus to a greater extent should become an object of managerial attention. Much of the literature promoting reflexivity refers back to organizational psychologist Donald

Schön's seminal work, *The Reflective Practitioner* (1983). By reflecting on practice, Schön claims that practitioners can deal with complex matters such as their "tacit knowledge" (cf. Polanyi 1966), and reflexivity is depicted as a place from which to organize the change of these at will. I discuss Schön's empowering notion of reflection and its reappearance across pedagogical and managerial literatures in Chapter Four. Here I focus on the works of scholars rather critical to the idea of reflexivity.

Instead of taking promises of emancipation at face value, a scholarship, which can be broadly characterized as "Critical Management Studies" links reflexivity to new forms of dominance (Costea, Crump and Amiridis 2008:662, Thrift 1997:29-57). Drawing on neo-Foucauldian notions of power and governmentality, these approaches generally characterize reflection as a form of discipline. The philosopher Michel Foucault is particularly interested in the contingent, historical conditions shaping the modern experience of power and takes our (contemporary) belief in the free individual as an effect of – and closely interrelated with – "advanced liberal states" (Rose 1996a:37). Rather than asking how reflexivity can change practice, studies that draw on Foucault's later works explore how "regulation of public conduct [is linked] with the subjective emotional and intellectual capacities and techniques of individuals, and the ethical regimes through which they govern their lives" (Rose 1996b:38). This approach thus emphasizes how the governing and shaping of individuals take place through disciplining individuals' self-management, or the conduct of their conduct. Such studies are often inspired from Foucault's notion of "technologies of the self," defined as technologies allowing "individuals to decide and transform themselves through operations regarding their own body and soul" (Foucault 1997:225). With Foucault, power is thus not considered to be *outside* of social relations but rather

constitutive thereof and his analyses inspire historical and contemporary explorations of contingent assumptions and ideas that constitute modern experience.

Many Foucault-inspired scholars link the growing emergence of reflexive technologies to neo-liberal governmental apparatuses and reveal their "true" identity as a form of power or discipline, emphasizing their suppressing and exploitative effects (Erlandson 2005:661-670, Fejes 2008:243-250, Fendler 2003:16-25, Gilbert 2001:199-205, Rolfe and Gardner 2006:593-600, Zembylas 2007:57-72). Reflexivity is analyzed as a sophisticated tool for control, which installs dominant ideologies and power relations within the subject where "value rationalities (...) are channeled into new reflexive practices of internalized control and self-discipline" (Sage, Dainty and Brookes 2010:543). As a form of power, reflexivity is described as even more permeating and pervasive than traditional discipline and surveillance as it provides "employees...with the skills that enable them to regulate themselves in the absence of managerial gaze" (Ogbor in Sage, Dainty and Brookes 2010:543).

The epochal example in Critical Management Studies is organizational anthropologist Gideon Kunda who explores a high tech corporation's attempts to foster commitment by "engineering" its "culture" through the employees' mindsets (Kunda 1992). He analyzes this as an attempt at "normative control," defined as "the attempt to elicit and direct the required efforts of members by controlling the underlying experiences, thoughts, and feelings that guide their actions" (Kunda 1992:11). Coming to a similar conclusion, human geographer Nigel Thrift depicts reflexivity as a "new form of managerialism" that "engages the hearts and minds of the workforce" (1997:38). In his account, reflexivity is related to new ways of exploiting the labor force, by producing adaptable subjects

who can harvest the ever-emerging new potentialities of a fast changing world. The consequences of this new "managerialism," according to Thrift, are "uncomfortable" and include "effects that can be measured out in terms of pain, heartbreak, and shattered lives" but "new kinds of resistance and subversion" nevertheless remain (Thrift 1997:50).

Within critical educational studies, one finds similar analyses. Educational scholar Peter Erlandson, for instance, explores Schön's trope of reflection as a "technology of self" (cf. Foucault 2000), deployed to make productive and knowable subjects (Erlandson 2005:663). Reflection, in his account, is a "discursive tool for self-regulation and self-production [where] teachers are gradually disciplined to judge and normalize their everyday practice with tools not from their own practices but from those of their discursive captors" (Erlandson 2005:669). Technologies of reflection discipline the teacher to reinterpret "her body as a transparent intellectually manageable object that is to make her knowing, more professional, more 'reflective', more efficient and therefore more beneficial (in economic terms) and at the same time more docile (in political terms)" (Erlandson 2005:662, 667, see also Fendler 2003:16-25).

Danish sociologist Justine Grønbæk Pors similarly analyzes reflection, in the context of a ministerial school evaluation campaign, as "governing from within," which most teachers fail to recognize as a form of control (Pors 2009). She argues that "the campaign invites the teacher to transform herself to a reflective and resistance-cancelling teacher striving to perform" and "to control…her inner self" (Pors 2009:17). In Pors' view, the campaign's power resides *exactly* in its articulation of reflection. By re-articulating reflection, considered to be a strict pedagogical method, in new discursive constellations aiming at change, development, and political goals, the Ministry of Education engages in a "more

encompassing and cunning form of management (…) which through vague values and ideas tries to influence teachers' perceptions of selves and identity" (Pors 2009:7).

In many of these accounts, technologies of reflexivity are approached with suspicion, understood primarily to be a modality of control and exploitation. Thus, it is not surprising that reflexivity has been accused of reproducing existing modes of power and dominance, indeed for being "another 'iron cage' that serves to entrap … [teachers] and bolster the New Right ideology of radical interventionism" (Smyth 1992:270). What is presented as "mere" reflexivity is *really* a form of subjugation, which works exactly because it is veiled as an innocent pedagogical technology. Such analyses seem to assume an a priori distinction between "the State" and "the pedagogical community" where the former exerts dominance and the latter is a locus for better and more liberated ethics. Such a distinction, however, seems to be quite far away from Foucault's original conception of the State (Dean and Villadsen 2012).

While generally skeptical about reflexivity, some scholars still maintain that it has some potential to liberate. Educational scholar John Smyth, for instance, depicts the failure of reflexivity as a problem of being capitalized by "corporate managerialism, increased centralism, and the instrumentalist and technicist approaches" and asks "under what conditions can truly critical, reconstructive versions of reflective teaching be practiced?" (Smyth 1992:269, 293). In a similar search for "true" reflexivity, another educational scholar, William Bigelow, calls for more reflexivity on how schooling reproduces social and economic inequalities (Bigelow 1990:437-48). As a final example, in response to the introduction of new reflexive technologies into higher education institutions, anthropologist Susan Wright writes, "We were attracted by 'warm' words we hold dear, only to find

that, through them, we became involved in auditing ourselves and implementing procedures which might have deleterious effects on our teaching and conditions of work" (Wright 2004:35). As an alternative to these externally imposed reflexive technologies, she suggests a "political reflexivity," which "aims to make the anthropologist an analyst…to uncover the detailed ways in which boundaries, hierarchies and power relations operated in the institution" (Wright 2004:40).[13] Distinctions between reflexivity as a form of control and as a form of empowerment thus regard how "liberated" reflexivity is from powerful centers.

***Agnosticism***

Engaging with STS and anthropology, my approach is both a continuation of these accounts of reflexivity but also differs from them. Of course, the various calls for reflexivity to make schools inclusive cannot be dissected from emerging forms of knowledge and governance. In Chapter Four, I analyze a series of documents and events that, I argue, have made the political agenda of inclusion possible, and I explore how these documents articulate reflexivity. This chapter shares a Foucaultian interest in how governing and knowledge affect one another, and it analyzes how these documents produce the idea of a "reflexive self."

I also think, however, that there is a tendency in the Critical Management Studies to consider power and government as *dangerous* and *exploitative* (see Dean and Villadsen 2012 for a critique of "state phobic" tendencies in governmentality analyses undertaken by "Foucault's heirs"). The discovery that "warm words" entail "deleterious effects" (Wright 2004:35), that reflexivity is an internalization

[13] Here we are quite far away from Foucault and somewhat closer to Bourdieu's notion of reflexivity (Bourdieu 2004:168).

of "the managerial gaze" (Sage, Dainty and Brookes 2010:543), along with depictions of government as "discursive captors" (Erlandson 2005:669) and as exerting "more encompassing and cunning forms of power" (Pors 2009:7) certainly entertain negative overtones. However, as I discuss later in this chapter, social science cannot consider itself external to such promotion of reflexivity. The power-knowledge nexus of inclusion and reflexivity does not emerge from "the State" as such but implicates a wide range of actors, including from social science.

Where the studies mentioned above typically ask which forms of dominance new discourses and technologies entail, they rarely attend to the *practical emergences* and *translations* of these ideas (cf. Derksen, Vikkelsø and Beaulieu 2012, Law 1994). Even if the above scholars would probably agree that *institutional practices* differ from *political intentions*, and that implementation involves translation, they nevertheless leave the reader with a sensibility of power as dangerous, especially when exercised by the State. ANT and ethnography, in turn, are all about studying *effects*. This entails careful attention to not only how the idea of reflexivity is formatted into e.g. "technologies of the self" but also how these are used and translated in practice. Technologies of self, with STS then, "do not contain an essence independent of the nexus of social actions of which they are part" (Grint and Woolgar 1997:10, see also Suchman 1987). If we understand reflexivity as a set of expectations travelling in various, predominantly written formats from policy, consultancies, and research, their coming into being always happens in particular interactions where they become entangled with other emerging matters of concern. Asking how reflexivity matters allows me to study such emergence.

As I will elaborate in Chapter Two, ANT's principle of symmetry does not only give up a-priori distinctions between the social and material or science and society. It also entails a normative agnosticism, in the sense of refusing to decide

whether a phenomenon is "good" or "bad." This means that I will not address the general question of whether reflexivity is "empowering" or "exploitative," nor attempt to identify the "right" form of reflexivity. Such questions, in my opinion, miss important aspects of reflexivity. The emphasis on reflexivity as a medium to make schools inclusive constitutes a possibility to explore how the school is put at stake when the existing practices become a theme and a problem for management. Doing ethnography of managerial practices enables fleshing out how reflexivity matters in its concrete, mundane, and particular manifestations and expressions, as opposed to answering the research question through the somewhat critical registers that I have just depicted.

A final comment on the implications of agnosticism is warranted. While it is an analytic choice to study reflexivity ethnographically, the concept of reflexivity has had much purchase, not only among policy makers and researchers advocating inclusion but also in academic debates. Generally, the term is used to imply some kind of self-reference or turning back on oneself (Lynch 2000:26-54). In qualitative social science, reflexivity has been used to account for as different phenomena as modernity (Beck, Giddens and Lash 1994), the relationship between expert and lay knowledge (Mesny 1998:159-178), methodology (Van Maanen 1988), sociality (Garfinkel 1967), and epistemology (Woolgar and Ashmore 1988:1-11, Ashmore 1989, Clifford and Marcus 1986). In that regard, there is a plethora of different meanings and discussions attached to it, raising the question of what, if anything binds them together other than use of the term. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to engage with them all (for two overviews, see Ashmore 1989, Lynch 2000:26-54).

Many of these scholars distinguish between the concepts reflection and reflexivity (e.g. Beck 1998, Woolgar 1988:14-36). In his well-known conceptualization of

"reflexive modernity" sociologist Ulrich Beck, whose diagnosis I will discuss below, associates "reflection" with the enlightenment ideal of more self-control and knowledge. The term "reflexivity," in contrast, is a pan-individual concept regarding how modern knowledge reorganizes "society" towards greater uncertainty and "self-generated risks and dangers" (Beck 1998:97). As may have come to the reader's attention, I do not employ such distinctions. While the articulations of reflexivity in my empirical setting certainly resemble Beck's definition of *reflection*, given the belief that individuals can improve their practices if they *think critically* about their assumptions, I refrain from using this definition. If I define already here what reflexivity is, e.g. by contrasting reflection with reflexivity or by defining it as questioning tacit assumptions, this puts a-priori limits to which forms of reflexivity I can find in my empirical material.

Agnosticism, instead, entails deliberately keeping the term open to explore how reflexivity *matters*, both in terms of how "it" comes about through heterogeneous distributions, and how significance emerges in concrete situations. It is an empirical question which components assemble reflexivity, and "cognitive" properties such as thinking or belief, in contrast with Beck's definition, may not necessarily reside with the individual (Day in Pedersen 2007:147). Indeed, as I elaborate in Chapter Three, the idea of reflexivity comes in many different manifestations of verbal, textual, and material character.

### Reflexivity III: Knowledge Practices Turning Back on Themselves

Reflexivity is not just a method through which individuals can know and change their practices such as the conglomerate of policy and pedagogical literature prescribes. The mobilization of inclusion as a new welfare model for managing populations can be understood as the reflexive version of "integration" in a way

that resembles Beck's diagnosis of a reflexive modernity (Beck 1998, Beck 1994). To Beck, reflexive modernity entails a "fully fleshed modernity" where knowledge turns back on itself, in the sense of producing uncertainty and risk rather than certainty or predictability. As he writes: "the more modern a society becomes, the more unintended consequences it produces, and as these become known and acknowledged, they call the foundations of industrial modernization into question" (Beck 1998:90). As inclusion entails describing "integration" as a set of historically contingent assumptions and knowledge practices, it is reflexive in the sense of being a response to, and a turning back on, the, now, explicated assumptions and unintended effects of the knowledge practices of integration.

While Beck's diagnosis can pinpoint inclusion as the reflexive version of integration, it is not without its problems. A central problem is that his before-mentioned distinction between reflection, pertaining to the individual, and reflexivity, a property of society, reifies the distinction between the individual and society rather than questioning it (Wright 2004:38). With ANT, the "individual" and "society" are not a-priori categories but rather concepts to be challenged through notions of distribution, hybridization, and assemblage. As ANT scholar Bruno Latour reminds us, what is usually described as purely "social" or "human" is but a purified version of a hybridized assemblage (Latour 2006). Moreover, Latour questions the epistemological status of Beck's claim (Latour 2003:35-48). While he agrees that uncertainty and controversies surrounding knowledge claims have become more prevalent over time, Latour suggests that Beck confuses a "change in interpretation" with a "change in substances" (Latour 2003:4).[14] In

[14] Latour's argument in the present article should be understood in the context of *We have never been modern* (1991) where he claims that the dualistic separation between society and nature, on which modernity is premised, is a false interpretation (which takes much work to keep alive)

other words, the world is not necessarily a more risky place than earlier. Instead, there is an understanding that this is the case, which causes the emergence of controversies to a greater extent than earlier.

Ironically, Beck, with his well-known notion of *The Risk Society*, may even contribute to this change in interpretation. This raises the question of how social science, instead of studying controversies, is entangled with their generation. This indicates another ramification of reflexivity, pointing back to social science and how its artifacts of knowledge, such as critiques and concepts, have migrated to and been taken up by the practices that were once its object of study (cf. Merton 1968 [1949], Giddens 1987). This suggests that the reflexive turning back on integration was made possible, in part, by critical sociologists who explicated the historical dynamics of domination embedded in the power-knowledge regime of special needs education (e.g. Tomlinson 1987:33-41, Skrtic 1991:148-206).

Much qualitative social science research on inclusion has made the schools' and practitioners' "culture" an object of study in order to make explicit how existing practices, assumptions, and routines in fact are responsible for the (social) construction of the phenomenon "students with special needs" (e.g. Tomlinson 1987:33-41, Langager 2004:99-126, Carrington 1999:257-268, Skrtic 1991:148-206). When current policy documents problematize practices with similar terms and call for cultural change, school practitioners are expected to reiterate the analytical work of social science and change their practices upon "discovering" that they are shaped by cultural constructions. Inclusion, thus, is not only a reflexive version of integration but also reflects the sociological critiques that

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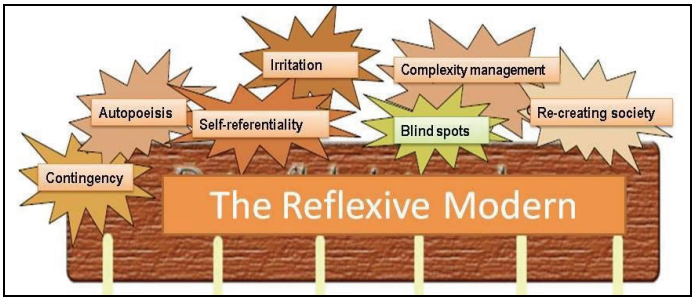
with specific historical roots. If we have never been modern, then, Beck's thesis of a modernizations' first and second coming are premised on a distinction between nature and culture, which was not there in the first place.

named "integration" and opened up new ways of imagining population management.

### Reflexivity IV: Entangled with Social Science

Social science has played a big part in constituting the emergence of inclusion in more than one way. Apart from the reappearance of sociological critiques of special needs education in policy documents, sociological concepts, including that of reflexivity, have become mundane resources in school managers' practices, deployed to manage organizational "cultures."[15] Without exception, the school managers I have engaged with often discussed various "cultural" elements counteracting the goal of inclusion. They did not only draw upon versions of social theory provided by managerial theories such as cultural management (Schein 2004), systemic management (Hornstrup, Loehr-Petersen, Vinther, Madsen and Johansen 2005), or appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider and Srivastva 1987:129-169). They also mixed these with concepts from sociologists such as Niklas Luhmann and Ulrich Beck. The picture below illustrates how concepts from both Beck and Luhmann are used in a management document at one of the schools I studied.

[15] In a discussion about the relocation and reification of traditionally anthropological concepts, social anthropologist Marilyn Strathern ironically notes that "the nice thing about culture is that everyone has it" (Strathern 1995:153-176). While managing organizations' "culture" is a relatively old phenomenon (Kunda 1992, Morgan 1997:485), organizational culture has only fairly recently become articulated as a management responsibility in Danish schools (Qvortrup and Qvortrup 2006a, Lederforeningen 2003). It is curious how the concept of "culture" gains still more popularity outside the discipline of anthropology, even though anthropology has made the concept object of criticism and deconstruction since the 1980s (Liep and Olwig 1994:7).




**An excerpt from the document titled *The School's Theoretical Foundation*.**

In explaining the picture, this school's managers described their management tasks in terms of *interrupting* teachers' "realities" in order to facilitate self-reflexivity and change towards inclusion. One described it as necessary to communicate the *hyper complex status of society* to teachers: both the very local and broader political contexts change and this calls for reflexivity as they need to be *adaptable*. Another manager explained complexity management in terms of working with flexible teaching preparation, considered essential in much inclusion pedagogy (e.g. Alenkær 2008), and how it is difficult for some teachers to manage *the contingency* because there are so many choices to be made; a teacher quit at this school because "she couldn't handle the contingency." The management team explained that in order to become aware of their *blind spots*, they strategically used different perspectives on reality. Sentences such as "we as managers try to meta-reflect on the teachers' reflexivity" or "we aim to be a learning organization of second order" frequently surfaced in conversations throughout my fieldwork.

In some sense, studying reflexivity in the context of school management and inclusion is then almost by definition a reflexive endeavor. Both the sociological critiques of integration, paving way for inclusion, and the vocabulary used by school managers to organize inclusive practices, are reflexive versions of social

science, in the sense that they bounce back concepts such as "social construction," "practice," and "culture" which entertain a certain familiarity with sociological and anthropological modalities of theorizing (Riles 2000:18).[16] Reflexivity thus *also* points to the encounter with familiar social science epistemologies and concepts, however in a different form. As anthropologist George Marcus writes, ethnographers currently find "reflexive subjects" with a "pre-existing ethnographic consciousness or curiosity" (Holmes and Marcus 2008:82, see also Isaac 2009:400). In this sense, I studied school managers who were already studying their organizational culture, using familiar analytical resources.

My object of study is thus thoroughly entwined with social science, which has contributed with both a critical-analytical repertoire for the reflexive turning back on the knowledge practices of integration and a language that can be appropriated to imagine a social change towards inclusion. Indeed, it has been argued that the emergence of reflexivity as a prescriptive means of ensuring quality and change in organizations is closely related to the emergence of social constructivism as an alternative to a positivist epistemology (Sage, Dainty and Brookes 2010:541). There is an important anthropological discussion about how to deal with such reflexive encounters (Riles 2000, Holmes and Marcus 2008:81-101, Marcus 2007:1127-1145, Maurer 2005, Strathern 1995:153-176), with which I will engage in Chapter Two.

[16] There is, of course, a somewhat banal explanation for that, related to career trajectories and dissemination strategies employed by social scientists.

### Reflexivity V: Reflexivity Debates in Anthropology and STS

Of course, having reflexivity as an "empirical" object does not imply that one should partake in the reflexivity debates in anthropology and STS of the 1980s. As will become clear, these debates and the advocates for inclusion have very different matters of concern and understandings of reflexivity when they call for *more* reflexivity. That said, the reflexivity debates in STS and anthropological raise questions about the relationship between the researcher and the researched, which are highly relevant to researching reflexivity in the context of inclusion, given how social science here is involved in constituting my object of study.

In anthropology and STS, the reflexivity debates primarily were a critique of representationalism.[17] The debates questioned the status of social scientific descriptions (how do authors achieve representational effects?) and the relationship between the observer and observed (how are they similar and with what authority can observers speak about the observed?). Most well-known, perhaps, is the "writing culture" debate within anthropology, which questioned academic authority (Clifford and Marcus 1986, Geertz 1988), and, inspired by this, the reflexivity debate within STS, which advocated symmetric application of relativism to observer and observed (Woolgar and Ashmore 1988:1-11, Ashmore 1989).

The classic anthropological figure of the fieldworker with a privileged access to truth was questioned in the mid-1980s (Clifford and Marcus 1986).

[17] There are many different positions in the "reflexive turn" and I cannot account for all of them here. Most of them involve different kinds of textual experiments. These include multi-vocality, dialogical discourse, multiple authorships, collages, pastiche and other ways of making "explicit the participatory nature of fieldwork" (see Geertz 1988 and Strathern 2004 for two overviews).

Anthropologists recognized that their representational effects were achieved through narrative tropes and that they in some sense were engaged in activities similar to the people they studied: interpreting how "other" people make interpretations. Roland Barthes (in Knuuttila 2002) proposed that ethnographic authority is established through a plethora of details and extensive descriptions, creating the "effect of the real," while Clifford Geertz suggested that it comes from an aesthetic of "being there"; that is, to convey in "prose the impression that …[anthropologists] have had close-in contact with far-out lives" (Geertz 1988:6). The critiques of representation resulted in fierce debates about the purpose of anthropology. Geertz, for instance, wrote that reflexivity produces fears of "corrosive relativism in which everything is but a more or less clever expression of opinion" (Geertz 1988:2, 3). The "empirical" and anthropological knowledge both lost their innocence. Marilyn Strathern summed up the overall lesson as producing the general understanding that "reality can be grasped [only] ... through a medium that already has a form of its own" (Strathern 2004:7).

Within STS, a similar debate emerged, also in the mid-1980s.[18] Social studies of science had shown how the construction of facts in the natural sciences was a mundane, messy, and contingent effort (Latour and Woolgar 1986). This argument countered earlier attempts in the history of philosophy of science to define science conceptually, as independent of its practical circumstances. The reflexivity debates accused the practice studies of science for viewing their own descriptions as neutral, resulting in a criticism of asymmetry in the application of relativism

[18] Although the STS advocates for reflexivity are inspired by the anthropological debate (Woolgar 1988:14-36), there are also important differences. Put briefly, anthropology was coming to terms with its discipline in a post-colonial context (Fabian 1983) where STS questioned its claims of *realistic* descriptions of *relative* natural sciences.

(Woolgar 1988:14-36). This brought about much ironic commentary on how STS-researchers achieve representational effects through writing and how they, in doing so, exempted themselves from the principles of contingency and relativism, which they applied to others (Woolgar and Ashmore 1988:1-11, Ashmore 1989).

Reflexivity produced a heightened attention to the textual and narrative devices and the sheer (im)possibility of representation. What was questioned, both within anthropology and STS, was the style of writing, accused of enacting a "realist genre" or an authoritative voice through, for instance, the royal "we" (Clifford and Marcus 1986, Woolgar 1988:28).[19] Not surprisingly, the adequate response was also found within writing strategies, such as literary experiments to "disrupt the apprehension of texts as 'objective' accounts" (Woolgar 1988:30). By questioning the very operation of reference and description, reflexivity became a question of prose, of how the author was made present or absent in the text. The response, new literary styles, was intended to disturb the narrative style of realism and make explicit the contingent, paradoxical, and dialogical aspects of the construction of knowledge.

Not everybody in the STS community agreed that reflexivity was important. In a response to the reflexivity program, Latour, for instance, worried that sociological texts became "uninteresting" and unreadable and called for STS researchers to stop piling "layer upon layer of self-consciousness to no avail" (Latour 1988:170).[20] Somewhat ironically, the literary styles have moreover been accused

[19] It has been noted that the fierce criticism of past anthropologists' (assumed) representational and objective accounts may be somewhat exaggerated and thus not as warranted as reflexivists claimed (Strathern 2004:20).

[20] A related critique addresses the alleged irony that the literary experiments' intentions of opening for plural interpretations often had the opposite effect: "The more experimental a text becomes, the more difficult to interpret it becomes" (Knuuttila 2002:26). Moreover, ethno-

of remaining in the representational paradigm they criticize. As STS-scholars Casper Bruun Jensen and Geoffrey Bowker write in a retrospective commentary on the reflexivity program that "what was needed in order to overcome representational naivety were texts that represented more adequately their own representational inadequacies" (Jensen and Bowker subm.:1-25, see also Callon and Latour 1992:343-369).[21]

***New Implications***

Although the reflexivity debates in anthropology and STS in the 1980s regard the status of observer vis-á-vis the observed, the discussions to a large extent remained within academic circles, criticizing "soft positivism" (Holmes and Marcus 2008:81-101). Just as anthropology and STS scholars advocate a critical distance to their own representational activities, contemporary advocates of inclusion call for teachers to question their practices. Yet, to these advocates, the insight that teachers' practices rely on constructed and contingent categories does

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methodologist Michael Lynch has suggested that reflexivity is generally used by academics to criticize others and claims there to be no inherent advantages to "being reflexive" (Lynch 2000:42). From the moment of writing, one cannot determine what counts as reflexivity at the moment of textual consumption. As an alternative, Lynch, somewhat oddly, offers Harold Garfinkel's concept of "constitutive reflexivity," which refers to how sociality constitutes itself recursively. Drawing on Garfinkel's conception enables him to claim that reflexivity "is an unavoidable feature of the way actions ... are performed" (Lynch 2000:26) with the consequence that there is no such thing as "unreflexive" actions. There is an important difference, in my opinion, between a practice that claims to be reflexive and one that does not, even if they are both reflexive in Garfinkel's ethnomethdological sense. I elaborate on this difference in Chapter Three.

[21] Similar critiques surfaced in anthropology where reflexivists were accused of devoting more attention to the writing and introspection than the people who were studied (Geertz 1988:3). Reflexive texts have been accused of being "an unhealthy self-absorption—timewasting at best, hypochondriacal at worst" and a "self-contratulatory, narcissistic decadence" (Maurer 2005:11, Geertz 1988:1, Sangren in Strathern 2004:10, see also Holbraad and Pedersen 2009:389).

not give rise to epistemological angst regarding how the world can be *known* or *represented*. Rather, it installs the imperative *to change* the world: once practices are considered to be an effect of socially constructed categories of normalcy and special needs, they can be replaced with more inclusive concepts of normalcy. Reflexivity thus holds very different implications for advocates of inclusion than for academics in the 1980s.

While the current Danish political debate about inclusive schools and the 1980s reflexive programs in anthropology and STS belong to times and collectives quite far apart from one another, there are concrete links between the school managers I studied and my own institution, Department of Management, Politics, and Philosophy (MPP) at Copenhagen Business School. Through the production of texts and educations, my own institution, which holds "relevance" and "business in society" as key values, is a contributor to contemporary understandings among municipal administrators and school managers of how their practices are socially constructed.

As I already described, my fieldwork among school managers was characterized by various encounters with sociological theory in my empirical data. Moreover, at both schools, the managers knew of my academic colleagues' work and had seen them at various educational events.[22] My colleagues' books would be stacked on one school manager's desk who at one point was disappointed to learn that my talk at MPP's "Knowledge Club for School Managers," of which he was an active member, had been cancelled. At the other school, the manager engaged me in

[22] I found references to my colleagues, for instance, when reading through the managers' educational assignments. For a larger sample than my visit to two schools with a total of 8 managers, Marie Ryberg (2009:1-43) makes a similar discovery from analyzing the contents of 60 assignments for a provider of diploma degrees in management.

debates about a colleague's interpretation of Luhmann's *Social Systems* and participated in a public event reviewing an edited collection containing a chapter I had written about school management (Ratner 2011:27-52). When commenting on the overall anthology, the school manager phrased its contributions as helping her achieve a "standby" position and "a reflexive distance from everyday life." By this, she described reflexivity as a place from where to contemplate the practices one is usually too absorbed in to think about, that this book made them known in new ways.

Situations like these repeatedly emerged throughout my fieldwork. Sociological theories, ideals of reflexivity, and even my own ideas were not resources to be mobilized from the outside for analysis but also became part of the "empirical." The school managers turned out to be simultaneously my subjects and my audience. And I, in turn, would emerge both as someone studying them and as someone providing knowledge which they could assess and perhaps turn into managerial use. The interesting reflexive question, in my case, is not about the impossibility of accurate representation. Rather, it regards the encounter with artifacts of social science, broadly speaking, and my colleagues' work specifically.

The confluence of my own institution with the schools I studied suggests that the boundary between research and practice in this setting is rather porous. This takes the academic reflexivity program in a new direction. Rather than textual attempts of leveling the (presumably false) difference and distance between observer and observed, as Woolgar suggested (Woolgar 1988:14-36), this distance has already collapsed through concrete points of knowledge exchange. At stake in my study is a permutative relation where both school managers and I turn each other's' practices and knowledge into objects of incorporation and re-contextualization. From the onset, my study entails, as Maurer expresses it, "a practice of lateral

reading and writing, neither descriptive nor explanatory, but repetitive, multiplicative, and/or accelerative" (Maurer 2005:7). In the field, I met familiar concepts and analyses in new entanglements, raising questions of the *performativity* of social science in school management.

The concepts of "performativity" and "performative" have become rather popular in the social sciences and humanities, even if they origin in somewhat different academic discussions (du Gay 2010:171). Generally, the terms are used to highlight "processes that produce ontological effects" (Butler 2010:147). The implication is that ideas or concepts of the world, rather than *describe,* contribute to *create* their empirical objects. The critiques of special needs education have, for instance, illustrated how categories of special needs are performative in *producing* students with special needs (as opposed to *describing* students that a-priori have special needs). Performativity moves the focus from representational accuracy to the *effects* of certain theories and categories, in terms of the realities they help bring into being (Butler 2010:147-161, Callon 2010:163-169, MacKenzie 2003:831-868).

In the context of this thesis, performativity regards how social science vocabularies produce effects, such as the questioning of special needs and the idea that organizations have socially constructed cultures. As it is not the study of how e.g. economic or mathematical theories perform the economy (MacKenzie 2003:831-868, MacKenzie 2007:54-86, Callon 2008:29-56) but rather how theories from sociology and anthropology perform special needs education as problematic and inclusion as a new objective, it is a reflexive kind of performativity, pointing back to my own disciplinary background (cf. Isaac 2009:416).

By asking how reflexivity matters, my thesis explores the performativity of social science, which has given birth to the idea that school practices can be made inclusive through reflexivity. This can be seen as a prescription of performativity: if we think differently about the world, it will have *real effects* in our practices. The reflexive performativity entails analyzing a phenomenon that I cannot objectify as a distant and exotic object, but in which I am implicated in a profound way. The reflexive task is not to mirror or represent the impossibility of representation in my text. Instead, the lateral relationship raises questions of how to study practices that already analyze themselves through familiar concepts (Riles 2000, Maurer 2005). I discuss this extensively in Chapter Two where I visit current debates in anthropology and STS about the relationship between "the empirical" and "the conceptual."

### Specifications

The thesis is primarily based on fieldwork undertaken August 2009-December 2010 at two schools with so-called "inclusion profiles." For both schools, this involves having as a goal to include students with special needs and thereby reduce the number of referrals to special needs education (both within the school, in special needs education classes, and at special schools). One school participates in a municipal "inclusion project," which offers teachers training in inclusive pedagogies and has municipal consultants advising the school. The other school has by its own initiative profiled itself as an "inclusion school" since its establishment in 2000. The main method of the study was "shadowing" school managers throughout their daily practices (Czarniawska 2008:4-20).

Both schools are of medium to large size in a Danish context. In 2009, the average Danish school held 377 students (Hornbek 2009). The average size is currently

growing, however, due to many school mergers. Each school employs between 40-80 teachers and pedagogues and educate between 340-470 students from the kindergarten class to the 9th grade (aged five to 16). Both schools employ four school managers. One of the schools under study divides up the responsibility between the overall school manager (principal or headmaster), an administration manager, a pedagogical manager, and a deputy. In practice, however, they overlap in many of the daily tasks, and in the analysis I refer to them all as "managers," with exception of the main manager, who I refer to as the "school manager." At the other school, apart from the main manager, the other three were responsible for different year groups divided by age. I refer to the two schools throughout the thesis using the pseudonyms "Fjelde" and "Saxby."

Saxby and Fjelde are located in urban housing sectors where social marginalization and forced removals of children from home show up prominently in statistics. While located in two different regions of Denmark, both are characterized by low scores in the so-called welfare index, a statistical investigation mapping the best and worst off Danish parishes in terms of income, employment participation rate, education, life time, health, and demography (Juul 2010). Statistically, students from such backgrounds receive significantly more special needs education than students from educated and economically well-off families, even if "disadvantaged parents may not exert as much effective pressure for examinations of their children" as better resourced parents (Bækgaard and Jakobsen 2011:13). The schools I have studied are thus *statistically* considered to be at risk for excluding a large share of their students to special needs education. I present the two schools and discuss their status as cases in detail in Chapter Three.

While students with reading and writing difficulties constitute the main cause of referrals on a national level, so-called AKT students with "general learning

difficulties," often due to "socially or environmentally conditioned difficulties," are the ones mostly referred to special schools (Danish Ministry of Finance 2010:11-16). AKT stands for behavior ("adfærd"), contact ("kontakt"), and well-being ("trivsel"). It is a fairly recent "category" from the late 1990s, developed to intervene with students whose the well-being and norm-breaching behavior raise concerns even if they do not hold a diagnosis (Danish Ministry of Education 2000:1-106, Danish Evaluation Institute 2010:1-38). Several schools employ an "AKT-councilor," a teacher who holds special expertise with such students, and this teacher is both to initiate preventive measures to avoid referring "AKT-students" to special needs education and to help shape the specific special needs education initiative if the student is referred to such. Municipals report of AKT-students as being especially challenging to include, and students in this category have received special attention, as they are deemed to have the potential to be included if teachers change their practices (e.g. Danish Ministry of Finance 2010). At the schools I studied, the students who generate much concern and are classified as "AKT-children" and often also have files with the social services department. While the focus of the thesis remains on reflexivity, most of the incidents I describe regard students who have been classified as having "AKT-problems."

In addition to sharing their position in the Danish welfare index, both schools are characterized by a high concentration (more than 80 %) of ethnic minorities, including families from Turkey, Somalia, the Middle East, and Pakistan. It is increasingly debated that the school performance of students with such immigration backgrounds is worse than their ethnic Danish peers (e.g Egelund, Nielsen and Rangvid 2011:1-119). As this population is socio-economically disadvantaged compared to ethnic Danes, a higher percentage of students with an

ethnic minority background receive special needs education compared to their ethnically Danish peers (Bækgaard and Jakobsen 2011:16). If social background is taken into account in such statistics, however, fewer students with ethnic minority background are referred to special needs education (Bækgaard and Jakobsen 2011:16). There are different accounts of why this is the case. Some claim that it might be Danish teachers who make "culture" or "language barriers" explanatory factors instead of special needs (Jensen and Hansen 2006:24). Another explanation is that those students may already be frequently absent from class due to extraordinary language lessons. While these are not classified as special needs education, teachers may still consider this a relief in itself (Bækgaard and Jakobsen 2011:19). Finally, it has been suggested that parents of ethnic minority experience referrals as stigmatizing and thus do not encourage the schools to examine their children (Bækgaard and Jakobsen 2011:19). Gender is also an important factor as boys receive two and a half times more special needs education than girls (Bækgaard and Jakobsen 2011:16). As such, several complex issues of inequality, poverty as well as racial and gendered prejudice and discrimination have impact on how inclusion is managed (Staunæs 2004). Inclusion moreover involves many aspects other than managing teachers' reflexivity, such as pedagogical-psychological practices of diagnosis or specific diagnosis-related techniques and knowledge deployed in the classroom. Similarly, not only teachers are asked to change their practices through reflexivity but also various other professionals such as the psychologists and psychiatrists who diagnose and refer students with special needs to special education (Andersen 2009:157-181).

While such specifications form an important backdrop of the management of inclusion, my focus remains on how the idea of *reflexivity* is performed and I do not address these other issues explicitly in my thesis. Ironically, in order to study

inclusion and highlight the management of reflexivity, I have to *exclude* certain aspects, too, as it is impossible to take them all equally into account. This does not mean that I dismiss their importance. Indeed, my modest hope is that my study of reflexivity may contribute to understanding some of these other issues. Another limitation of the study has to do with my focus on managers. The study did not include talking to the implicated students or parents, and only to a limited extent involved teachers. Had I included these, very different accounts of the challenges related to reflexivity and inclusion would undoubtedly have emerged. For instance, there is something deeply interesting about how teachers through reflexivity are to include students with autism who challenge the very notion of self-reflexive humans (Reno in press:1-37). Finally, in this thesis many of the examples of students with special needs also have files with the social services and thus circulate in a complex network of welfare providers and databases across institutional boundaries. This aspect also remains outside the scope of the thesis.

### Chapter Overview

In Chapter Two, *Empirical and Theoretical Data: Lateral Relations and their Consequences*, I follow up on the question of how to study practices that already analyze themselves. To discuss the implications raised by encountering "the conceptual" in "the empirical," I debate the status of the "conceptual" for my so-called "informants," [23] in "post-reflexive" anthropology, and in ANT. Inspired by anthropologists Marilyn Strathern and Bill Maurer (Strathern 2004, Maurer 2005), I propose the concept of *Lateral Compatibility* to account for a relationship

[23] As Strathern notes, "people are more than respondents answering questions, they are informants in the fullest sense, in control of the information they offer" (Strathern 1999:7).

between researcher and researched that is characterized by partial (dis)-connections.

In Chapter Three, *Performative Data and Critical Choices*, I give an overview of the empirical material and introduce the two case schools and the methods used. I specifically engage with questions such as: How did particular conditions for doing fieldwork influence the methods and allow for an "ethnographic moment"? Which status do the two schools hold as "cases," and how has the analytic dynamic of "comparison" shaped the thesis? What counts as reflexivity in my empirical material, and how have I chosen the three examples I analyze? This chapter thus debates my *critical choices* that have shaped the study of inclusion and reflexivity.

In Chapter Four, *The Emergence of Inclusion and Promises of Reflexivity*, I explore how inclusion emerged as a policy agenda and how reflexivity came to be considered a resource in policy documents. I argue that the emergence of inclusion involves both a semantic shift, which can be dated back to at least 1993, where a new Primary Education Act was introduced, and the establishment of new expertise, mainly throughout the 2000s. I moreover illustrate how reflexivity in strategic management literature and in pedagogical theories operates through a conceptual dualism between "thinking" and "practice," representing of practice as rigid and standardized and in need of "reflexive interruptions." I conclude with a characterization of the promises reflexivity as constituting a *potentiality machine*. Reflexivity promises to organize cultural change through identifying the value of what has yet to come. The generation of value from reflecting critically on "practice" in order to change it can in principle go on infinitely.

The policy documents and theories about reflexivity analyzed in Chapter Four fabricate the idea that practice is separate from and can be changed through reflexivity, which can "interrupt" presumably outdated and standardized routines and mindsets. This assumption is in rather stark contrast to the practices that I studied, which I experienced as already characterized by "interruptions," in a different sense of the word. In Chapter Five, *Interruptions*, I analyze how a meeting is interrupted by an acute incident involving a "student with special needs." I conceptualize of this interruption, and its effects on managerial practices, through Latour's concepts of timing and spacing (Latour 1997:170-191). Characterizing the school as a *fragile center of interventions*, I conclude that managers spend much time dealing with problems that do not, officially, belong to the school but nevertheless interrupt the work necessary for maintaining boundaries and scales. Dis-entangling from these (interrupting) realities and events is often a laborious, hectic, and time-consuming effort and has implications for how reflexivity matters.

In Chapter Six, Seven, and Eight, I explore at different enactments of reflexivity, their entanglements with interruptions, and their effects on relations between managers, teachers, and students. As the idea of reflexivity does not have *one* form, I explore how reflexivity is enacted through respectively managerial expectations to – and assessments of – teachers in Chapter Six, through a social technology in Chapter Seven, and through a development process in Chapter Eight. Whereas the first two chapters analyze reflexivity in relation to *specific challenges* with including students who are deemed difficult or challenging, the last one regards how reflexivity is enacted by managers to affect the teachers' "general level of values."

In Chapter Six, *Inclusion as Exclusion: When Reflexivity Standardizes*, I analyze how reflexivity in the form of *general managerial expectations* to reflexive teachers can have standardizing effects. The expectation of reflexivity is enacted to hold teachers accountable in the *same* way across *different* situations. Through the concept of *information ecology* (Nardi and O'Day 1999), I propose that, for managers, conflicts between teachers and students are transformed into information about teachers' attitudes and willingness to question these reflexively. This expectation allows managers to encompass a wide range of "deviant" student behavior. However, simultaneously, teachers' assessments of the conflicts are excluded. Teachers' experience of the conflicts, and at times also the uncomfortable emotions involved, are thus "returned" to teachers, who are expected to handle their experience and request for "consequence" on their own.

In Chapter Seven, *Complexity Overload: Bracketing Reflexivity to Assemble the School*, I analyze how a social technology is used to make an action plan for an "aggressive student." I engage with the STS-inspired Social Studies of Finance concepts of *performativity*, *agencement,* and *overflowing* (Callon 2008:29-56, Callon 1999:181–195) to explore both how the social technology, the "SMTTE" is designed to distribute reflexive agency and how it fails to do so as the action plan inadvertently ends up interrupting other arrangements at the school. While the action plan both reconfigures the problem of an "aggressive student" and offers a preventive solution, it also effects the continuous displacement of complexity across different settlements. Attending to these takes up so much time that the SMTTE's procedures for reflexivity are bracketed.

In Chapter Eight, *Vision Impossible: Encounters between Abstracts and Concretes*, I explore a so-called vision-process where the managers attempt to make the teachers' attitudes more inclusive through having them reflect on the

schools' vision and its connections to their own practices. It proves rather difficult for the managers to generate reflexivity on a "level of values" as the teachers are mainly interested in debating problems related to including particularly "difficult" students. I analyze this as an encounter between different versions of the abstract and the concrete. Rather than helping teachers to bracket everyday challenges and conflicts in order to imagine a different future, the vision process is interrupted and the managers end up "doing the reflexivity" on behalf of the teachers. For the teachers, reflexivity is changed from a means to achieve inclusion to the goal of becoming reflexive. The chapter uses the mathematical figure of the *fractal* to illustrate how the conceptual dualism in reflexivity produces a complex process of planning.

In the concluding chapter, *The Politics of Reflexivity*, I discuss the implications of my analyses with a focus on the practical effects of the concept of reflexivity. Running through all analyses is an interest in the relationship between "practice" and "interruption." Reflexivity is considered to interrupt teachers' presuppositions and tacit knowledge, considered to be constitutive of their practices. Yet what the analyses make apparent is that practices are already continuously being interrupted in all kinds of ways, including by attempts to make reflexivity interrupt at a "cognitive level." Thus the ethnographic account provides an alternative image of practice and, following, a different account of the effects of reflexivity compared to how these are most commonly envisioned in pedagogical and management oriented literature. I argue that the rhetorical promises of reflexivity and the entailed dualism between reflexivity and practice not only simplify the relationship between practice and reflexivity, but also trivialize the complexity of problems and concerns which managers face.

I also discuss reflexivity's effects on accountability relations with a special attention to whether inclusion offers as solid a *political settlement* (cf. Brown 2010) as integration has. My analyses highlight how different socio-material enactments of reflexivity configure accountability relations between managers, teachers, and students through modalities of displacements. The different analyses do not add up to a whole, in the sense of contributing with one overall conclusion of how reflexivity matters. Rather, they illustrate how the idea of managing cultural change through reflexivity can effect and legitimize quite different and unexpected kinds of practices. These conclusions are followed with a discussion of the status of *the political* in STS through engaging in a debate with feminist cultural scholar Judith Butler and STS scholars Michel Callon and Annemarie Mol. I conclude the thesis with reflections on its findings in light of recent developments in inclusive policy.

# Chapter Two

## Empirical and Theoretical Data: Lateral Relations and their Consequences

> A rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo. The tree is filiation, but the rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance. The tree imposes the verb "to be," but the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, "and. . . and.. . and. . ." This conjunction carries enough force to shake and uproot the verb "to be." (Deleuze and Guattari 2004:27)

> Social sciences are not a reservoir of notions and entities from which we would draw our resources. They are part and parcel of the very activity we want to study, part of our problem, not of our solution. (Latour 1988:164)

> Theory does not express, translate or serve to apply practice: it is practice. (Deleuze 1999:vii)

### Introduction

If one takes as the starting point a standard dichotomy, the "conceptual" and the "empirical" are defined in mutual opposition, with the first belonging to the realm of ideas, and the other to a form of experience or experiment, based in the world (Jensen and Bowker subm.:1-25). This "ideal type" distinction has been the object of much critique, not at least in STS, which has depicted theories to be effects of relative and heterogeneous processes of construction rather than transcendent laws of nature, waiting to be discovered (Latour and Woolgar 1986). By studying the construction of knowledge and theories as heterogeneous and contingent practices, scholars from STS have thus for a long time argued against the usual compartmentalization of theory and the empirical into two different domains (e.g. Isaac 2009:397-424). More recently, scholars from the so-called "post-reflexive" or "lateral" relational anthropology have similarly questioned that distinction with a focus on similarities between anthropological and empirical modalities of

theorizing in order to problematize explanatory and critical forms of theorizing (Riles 2000, Maurer 2005, Miyazaki forthcoming, Holbraad 2004:1-27).

The purpose of this chapter is to specify my approach to studying reflexivity, taking into account the multiple ways in which social science is entangled with this thesis' "empirical object": the management of reflexivity to accomplish inclusion. Considering that practitioners already have theoretical accounts of their own practices ready at hand, and that they are used to discussing and explicating what they take for granted, they are in little need of social scientists explaining to them that categories and norms are constructed and relative (Riles 2000, Maurer 2005:51). When the field already pre-empts important analytic points, the position of theory as something distinct from the empirical is pressed. This raises the question of what "their theories" do to "my empirical" and "my conceptual." To respond to this question, I juxtapose debates in post-reflexive anthropology about how to regard "indigenous concepts" with ANT's program of studying theory as practice.

In the present text, a traditional review of such theoretical debates would perform the distinction between "theory" and "practice" in a rather unhelpful way given my "empirical data."[24] As a consequence, I begin the chapter by considering how the distinction between the conceptual and the empirical is used by the school managers I worked with. They often use the visual metaphor of "perspective" to describe theory, which is seen to create a *critical distance* to practice and hereby enable hidden assumptions to become explicit. This idea is relatively common sense in social science. In relation to my field sites, I identify an important

[24] I do not use the terms "practice" and "data" synonymously. Where "practice" is my object of study, the ethnographic artifacts of field notes, photos, and interviews constitute my "data."

expression of this idea in Danish sociologist Niels Åkerstrøm Andersen's "Analytical Strategies," which are inspired by Niklas Luhmann's system theory (Andersen 2003).[25] While many of the school managers frequently mention Luhmann, they primarily learn about his sociology from Danish interpreters such as Andersen, Lars Qvortrup, and Jens Rasmussen, whose literature they are introduced to at management diploma courses (Qvortrup and Qvortrup 2006a, Qvortrup and Qvortrup 2006b, Qvortrup 2008:87-114, Andersen 2004:241-267, Andersen and Thygesen 2004:8-29, Rasmussen 2007).

Andersen is one of the leading Danish interpreters of Luhmann, and his analytical strategies offer an apposite example of the form through which school managers become acquainted with social science concepts. He is also a close colleague of mine at the Department of Management, Politics and Philosophy. In that regard, Andersen's theoretical work exemplifies how my own institution is involved in parceling and circulating a *conceptual* form of reflexivity. Defining theory as a "program for observation," Andersen's depiction helps elucidate the idea that "theory" is analogous to "perspective." While Andersen is certainly not as optimistic as school managers about the capability to make social constructions an object of management, his analytical strategies do exemplify the idea and ideal that they can be explicated and questioned.

I discuss the implications of my encounter in the field with a version of CBS-packaged theory by comparing anthropologist Annelise Riles' "post-reflexive"

[25]The analytical strategy is a "meta perspective" that aims to provide a language for comparing and conditioning different perspectives (Andersen 2003:xii). Andersen's book presents four discursive analytical strategies through which he in different ways conceptualizes society as communication: Laclau, Foucault, Koselleck, and Luhmann. In the present discussion, I do not consider the individual strategies but rather how it establishes the relation between researcher, perspective, and data.

anthropology with ANT scholar Bruno Latour's notion of "infra-reflexivity." Both scholars consider the reflexive phenomenon of similarity between observer and observed, but they draw different conclusions. In her discussion of what anthropology has to say in a world saturated by comparable modalities of theorizing, Riles argues for abandoning conventional anthropological theory. Latour, in response to the STS reflexivity debate, proposes to abandon reflexive concerns altogether and continue to analyze how actors build networks. In my case, however, the solution is neither to collapse a "boundary" between "our" and "their" thinking, as Riles does, nor to ignore the implication of one's own theory in the constitution of the object of study, as Latour in this text alludes to. Instead, I argue that mixtures of the conceptual and empirical are a premise for any practice, including my own practice of researching, theorizing, and writing this thesis.

The last part of the chapter deals with the question of the status of the school managers' theories compared to my own grounding in STS. Rather than a question of "going beyond" theory, through e.g. collaboration or adopting "their" theory, I suggest an ANT-inspired modality of analyzing, which I name *lateral compatibility*. I will develop this notion through anthropologist Bill Maurer's "lateral" anthropology and Marilyn Strathern's idea of "compatibility" (Maurer 2005, Strathern 2004). Rather than considering the conceptual and empirical as two nodal points on a scale, as the notion of perspective invites to do, or a matter of replacing "my concepts" with "their concepts" as some anthropologists encourage (e.g. Holbraad 2007:189-225, see also Hansen 2011), lateral compatibility entails that knowledge has a rhizomic character: knowledge is a non-hierarchical assemblage with many entry points and cross-cutting relations that continue to form new connections from within. The notion of lateral compatibility can account for the many different relations between the school managers and

myself and allows to include their modalities of theorizing without "explaining them away" as practice.

### Glasses with Progressive Lenses

> Helene: Before beginning the fieldwork, it is important for me to know what you think about having someone tailgating you during your daily activities. I'm sure it will be annoying at times and that I will be in your way. What do you think about it? Do you have any particular concerns of which I should be aware?
>
> School manager: Not at all. I see it as a gift. You can enlighten our blind spots and help us reflect on our practice.
>
> Manager: I agree. It is a wonderful opportunity for us. Even though we try to reflect a lot, I am sure that there are things we don't see from our perspective, and you can offer a new perspective. You bring new theories in play, which we can learn from.
>
> From the first meeting with school managers at Fjelde school, a few months before beginning my fieldwork.

Getting access to Saxby and Fjelde schools was not a problem. Indeed, as my citations from the first meeting with Fjelde School's managers indicate, my wish to study school management was welcomed with the expectation that I could provide a new and enriching perspective on their managerial practice. At Saxby School, I was met with a similar expectation. At one point, the school manager of Saxby explained to me how switching between different theoretical perspectives helped her observe different aspects of reality. As she did so, she visualized this idea by walking around me, making her movements analogous to how theories offer different perspectives on the same phenomenon.

At both schools, perspectives are considered helpful in achieving critical distance to practice and thus a clear link forms to how they speak about reflexivity. The managers describe how they attempt to improve practice through "second order"

questioning of "what we take for granted." At Fjelde, the school manager refers to their managerial practice of changing perspectives as wearing "glasses with progressive lenses" ("briller med flydende overgang"). These characterizations of perspective illustrate a distinction between "theory" and "practice" in my empirical setting where perspectives are considered as independent and separate from "practice." Perspectives, however, are *both* articulated as residing in the individual, forming how he or she understands reality *and* as positions one can take through theory.

In order to explore this prevalent idea of theory as perspective, I will offer a brief account of sociologist Andersen's Luhmann-inspired idea of analytical strategies, which articulates ideas similar to those of the school managers. I found references to Andersen's work in the school managers' and managers' diploma projects, producing a situation akin to one anthropologist Bill Maurer describes, where his "bibliography could be said to be an expanded interview transcript, 'raw data'" (Maurer 2005:7). It is important to emphasize that Andersen is in no way their only theoretical inspiration. References to Andersen surface alongside references to classic managerial "how-to" guides such as Edgar Schein's template for managing organizational cultures (Schein 2004). The managers do not focus on whether different theories or concepts are epistemologically congruent.[26] They seem to regard them as a sample of different ideas that can be added in diploma theses and theoretical documents (such as the one I mentioned in Chapter One) to advocate more reflexivity. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to account in depth for all of them. However, Andersen's analytical strategies underline that "their"

[26] As Joel Isaac argues, "the question of performance in the history of the human sciences [involves not only theorists and their theories but also] but also elements of the theory itself—categories, classifications, descriptions [which] may be taken up into wider, non-scientific forms of social practice" (Isaac 2009:400).

theories are never just *there*, but emerge from elsewhere; in this case that elsewhere is (among other places) my own department.

"Analytical strategies" is the formulation of a vantage point from where one can compare different perspectives to render the empirical observable (Andersen 2003, Andersen 1999). Whereas "first order" observations do not question the perspective through which they observe and thereby ascribe meaning to reality, so-called second order perspectives ask "how the world comes into being as a direct result of the specific perspectives" (Andersen 2003:xii).[27] While any second order observation is simultaneously a first order observation, with its own blind spots, the aim is nevertheless to question and explicate first order observations. The empirical, then, will always be an effect of given observation. The conceptual (perspective) is to help make explicit how various (naturalized) distinctions and assumptions construct society. Such an endeavor is necessary to "obtain knowledge critically different from the already established system of meaning" (Andersen 2003:xii).

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[27] A central aspect of the analytical strategy is to guarantee a scholastic standard through systematic and explicit reflections on how we make use of theory: instead of "sloppy" and "inept" uses of theory, Andersen calls for an "analytical-strategic self-discipline" which is committed to a transparent conditioning of how we observe and categorize the empirical through perspectives (Andersen 2003:xiv). In an ironic commentary on "certain descendants of Kant," philosopher of science Isabelle Stengers comments on the cybernetic idea of observations constructing reality as follows: "I am thinking above all of the position of the Chilean biologist Umberto Maturana [highly influential of Luhmann's systems theory, which Andersen draws upon], which was largely inspired by his works on the perceptions of frogs. … it is easy for us to judge that the 'fly' perceived by the frog is only a fiction determined by his neuronal apparatus. By contrast, when the fly is digested, the biologist has to recognize that it is the chemical properties of its constituents… that are 'taken into account'… by the amphibian metabolism. One could say that the 'reality'…is closer to that of the digested fly than of the perceived fly" (Stengers 2000:173, n. 7).

The call for "second order analysis" is related to Andersen's definition of the empirical. First, he argues that the empirical has lost its "innocence" in the sense that it does no longer call for a particular perspective, that "we know that it is our 'eye' that makes the object appear in a particular way" (Andersen 2003:xv). Through "second order observations," however, one can make explicit how other perspectives observe and construct society.[28] Andersen describes this as a shift from an ontological to an epistemological mode of inquiry, which "de-ontologises its object" (Andersen 2003:xi).[29] By this, he means that the aim of applying a given perspective is to explicate assumptions that are taken for granted. The assumption here is the existence of a conceptual constant to which we can relate the empirical and that this constant can be exchanged at will (Strathern 2004:xxi, see also Gad 2005:5).[30] Obtaining a second order perspective thus rests on the operation of producing a distinction between the conceptual from the empirical through the choice of a "perspective."

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[28] The debate about whether observations of phenomena are relative to their linguistic or cultural construction is also central in STS, going back to Thomas Kuhn's concept of "paradigms" (Kuhn in Isaac 2009:401, for a critique, see Galison 1997).

[29] Andersen explains their difference accordingly: "ontology is concerned with the question of basic assumptions about the world and the being of the world; epistemology is concerned with the question of the basic assumptions about the precondition of cognition of the world" (Andersen 2003:xi). He positions this as a difference between "being" and "becoming"; a difference which Andersen further notes is especially important in our contemporary society, which changes so fast that our categories "appear to point to a former order of society that no longer exists" (Andersen 2003:ix). I will return to this distinction towards the end of this chapter where I discuss STS scholar Annemarie Mol's notion of multiple ontologies.

[30] Andersen's analytical strategy subscribes to the "death of the subject." There is no intentional, autonomous subject but only a fiction, emerging through communication. Yet, Andersen does make use of this fiction in his analytical strategy, which addresses a (fictional) subject who can strategically choose between different guiding distinctions and perspectives that determine how the world emerges. As my analyses will illustrate, it appears that this fiction has become reified in some managerial practices where "changing perspective" is considered key to achieving a change in practice (for a comment on the "power of fiction," see Stengers 2000:54, pp).

Arguably, there is a political hope related to make explicit "preconditions of cognition of the world" (Andersen 2003:xi). The act of explicating the constructed nature of a phenomenon questions its specific categorization or conceptualization. The insight that something could be otherwise entails a politics of imagining new ways of engaging with the world.[31] As sociologist of science Malcolm Ashmore notes, the "it could have been otherwise" dictum has become a main trade of social science (Ashmore 1994:158).

This positioning of the conceptual as of a different order than the empirical entails a certain politics, which resonates with school managers' "politics," yet to which they also ascribe new meanings. For instance, the school managers organize change initiatives as reflexive sessions to question how their social constructions and perspectives constitute their practices. I encountered empirical distinctions between perspectives and practice, which reminded me of my own training at Copenhagen Business School, where I was taught to divide the conceptual from the empirical by choosing a certain perspective.

Their version of "analytical strategies," the "progressive lens," is a recontextualized one, put to use with new assumptions and intents (Strathern 1995:153-176). Where Andersen's analytical strategy to some extent can be seen as a response to what anthropologist Marilyn Strathern characterizes as a "post-plural condition" (Strathern 2004), the school managers articulate theory in a

[31] There seems to be a democratic ideal, in the sense of allowing for a plurality rather than a singularity of conceptualizations or categorizations to emerge or remain. While Andersen questions the "taken for granted," STS sociologists such as John Law call for a STS to enact "a wide range of transportable realities. Its ontological politics should be heterodox" (Law 2004:9). In Law's version, "the political" is not a matter of explication but rather of enacting the multiplicity and heterogeneity as a way to counter unitary, singular representations of the world.

clearly pluralist language.[32] Whereas pluralism entails that more perspectives together offer a more complete picture of the whole, post-pluralism understands complexity to be a property of analysis and not of the world. The implication of the latter is that one can never encompass the whole. As Strathern writes, "the relativizing effect of knowing other perspectives exist gives the observer a constant sense that any one approach is only ever partial, that phenomena could be infinitely multiplied" (Strathern 2004:xiv). In school management books, in contrast, I found the well-known pluralist image of an elephant touched at different places by blind people: each person imagines the totality from the part he touches. Together, they generate a more complete and correct picture than each of them individually provides.

While the school managers' assumptions are arguably very different from those intended by Andersen, his meta-language nevertheless establishes the idea that one can construct a perspective one (deconstructive) loop above the object of study. The very idea of "perspective" and its imagery of "vision" produce a division between the conceptual and empirical. This division is reminiscent of philosopher Alfred Whitehead's famous characterization of the division between subject and the world as a "bifurcation of nature" (1920). Whitehead uses this term to describe how philosophy at one point came to understand the world as "made up of a substrate of *primary qualities* [what things really are] … on top of which subjects have simply added mere *secondary qualities* that exist only in our minds, imaginations and cultural accounts" (Latour 2004:208, emphasis in original). In a bifurcated world, the relation between the individual and the world is mediated by

[32] Pluralism is not to be mistaken for multiplicity although the terms are sometimes used as synonyms. By pluralism, I mean the assumption of a plurality of perspectives on a single reality. Multiplicity, in turn, suggests that the world itself is multiple, independent of perspectives (Law 2004:162).

perspectives. This exact philosophical moment seems quite prevalent among the managers at the schools I studied, accompanied by optimism related to the idea that perspective is something one *chooses*.

### Reflexivity Inside Out: Collapsing the Boundary?

Anthropologist Annelise Riles takes the situation of encountering familiar versions of social theory in her empirical data as an occasion to question the very form of anthropological reasoning, which she argues is replicated in her empirical material (2000). She describes this response as a post-reflexive, "inside out version" of the text- or self-examining reflexive movement of the 1980s (Riles 2000:20). Riles' idea is important in relation to my discussion as her "data," like my own, is characterized by people already understanding themselves through sociological and anthropological concepts.

In her study of a network of NGO's in Fiji, lobbying for women's rights at United Nations meetings, Riles find that her "informants" are already understanding and producing written artifacts representing their organization based on the sociological concept of the "network." As Riles had imagined that this exact concept would work as one of her primary analytic tools, the effect is analytic bewilderment. This form of "data," according to Riles, reduces "anthropological analysis…to restatement [and] to repetition" (Riles 2000:5). Or it affects an analytical collapse between theory and data: "everything that can be explained has already been explained indigenously; there seems to be no way to analyze the phenomenon beyond the explicit language it offers for itself" (Riles 2000:26). When the "network" simultaneously serves as an explanatory analytical device and as an empirical object, the classical purpose and auto-relevance of explanatory analysis is up for grabs.

While facing the same problem as Andersen, that of producing knowledge different from what already exists, she does not find "the conceptual" a fruitful avenue for doing so *precisely* because the very idea of doing so is already part of her informants' self-descriptions (Riles 2000:6). Indeed, she describes the two institutional practices, that of her own as an anthropologist and that of those she studies, as "parallels" (16), hence questioning the idea that anthropological theory can "discover" anything new.[33] Given her empirical material, she claims that there is no longer a conceptual outside from where to transform the data through analysis (Riles 2000:5). Instead of producing more "analytical distance," she explores in detail what is at stake analytically, academically, and practically with the network term.

*The Network Inside Out* is comprised of chapters that in different ways try "to render the familiar accessible ethnographically" (Riles 2000:6). Riles tackles the "parallelism" by questioning two classical features of anthropological analysis. First, she challenges the ethnographic fetish for empirical details and descriptions. When the ethnographic object is already known *and* describes itself, she writes, anthropology can no longer make something known simply through description: "what is needed is not greater detail but a selective erasure thereof," as she states (Riles 2000:20). This does not, however, mean that there are no ethnographic descriptions in her book. Indeed, it is full of descriptions of how the women negotiate UN documents and how they produce and design ways of conveying

[33] Riles does not understand the network in Fiji and the trajectory of anthropology as completely identical, emphasizing that "these are only partially familiar institutional practices" (2000:16) and that ethnography can elucidate "subtle variations in the assumptions and aesthetics of institutional knowledge" (Riles 2000:18). Despite this acknowledgement, Riles maintains the need of making the known data "analytically accessible," hence suggesting that the differences are too small to make a starting point for "conventional" analysis (Riles 2000:18).

information. Instead of making explicit different voices, narratives or perspectives as is common in "post-representational" anthropology, however, Riles devotes her attention to documents, their aesthetic form, and the concerns and practices evolving around their production.

The second feature of her analyses regards how she renders the ethnographic data accessible, given her argument that her empirical data seems to be simply "replicating" common anthropological theory. In several chapters, she deploys a method of juxtaposing two sets of "empirical data" where one functions as form to analyze the other as content and vice versa.

An example of such leveling of the conceptual and the empirical is her analysis of a UN document on women's rights. As a comparative device, she takes the same women's engagement in mat weaving to point to the similarities in how the production of both mats and documents can be understood as "collective, anonymous, and highly labor intensive exercises" (Riles 2000:73). Moreover, this analogy allows her to illustrate how documents and mats can both be understood simultaneously as objects in their own specificity and as part of a larger pattern of documents or mats. She analyzes what this implies for a women's right document, which is both attended to as a single entity with its own "platform for action," and as part of a network of other documents, negotiated at national, regional, and global levels (Riles 2000:79). The same goes for the mats, which individually exhibit detailed symbolism and also generate a different pattern when displayed alongside other mats. Doing so allows her to elucidate the specific characteristics of documents and mats, including the practices and aspirations they give rise to but also, by using data as theory, to question the role theory conventionally plays for analysis.

Riles' experiments with theorizing through data perform an elegant commentary on anthropological theory. I am less convinced, however, that her trajectory is always the appropriate consequence of finding the conceptual in the empirical. To discuss this, I will consider Riles' choice of metaphors carefully. "Parallelism" implies two identical lines that are similar in form but never meet, indicating that "her" and "their" knowledge trajectories are similar but without interaction between them. The implication is that indigenous knowledge cannot be taken seriously as data. As she writes, "anthropologists err where they take simulations of the artifacts of academic analysis… as indigenous signposts that phenomenological complexity, or social reality, stands behind them (as we understand to be the case of our own analysis)" (Riles 2000:20). Due to this she has to "*collapse* the distinction between argument and ethnography" (Riles 2000:20, my emphasis).[34] Collapse suggests a breakdown in structure; that the two lines formerly separated now lay on top of each other, indiscernible from one another. To claim a "collapse," however, entails that a boundary existed in the first place.

While a familiarity, not unlike the one described by Riles, certainly permeated my study, it does not imply a parallelism, replication, or a collapse. As already described, the school managers' and my trajectories are far from parallel in the

[34] In her introduction to an anthology about "documents," she makes a similar maneuver, questioning the very possibility for analysis when the object of analysis, bureaucratic practices, resembles the anthropological practice of gathering data and producing documents (Riles 2006:1-40). While she "collapses" the distinction in *The Network Inside Out* as a consequence of the similarities (Riles 2000:20), she describes this as already collapsed in the anthology (Riles 2006:3). While she may regard them as similar, or at least deriving out of similar issues of indistinction, I find the difference between "collapse" as an empirical event and as her analytical choice quite important. Finding the 'collapse' empirically implies finding the conceptual in the empirical in a form which mirrors her own analyzing practice, leaving her no choice to conduct analysis through conventional concepts. The other is a result of her decision.

sense that they never meet. There are plenty of intersections and encounters, allowing for dislocation and re-contextualization of theory. As the following chapters will illustrate, even "from within" there are many different understandings and practices performing reflexivity. Moreover, our trajectories are not similar as the term "parallel" implies. In contrast to Riles, I did not find a hardly noticeable transition phase between fieldwork and analysis. On the contrary, my surprise was spurred by the very opposite: *in spite of* our different practices, school managers found conceptual and analytical endeavors important. I will elaborate in detail on this contrast in the next chapter, characterizing it as an "ethnographic moment."

While I write in a context of producing a thesis, school managers are responsible for, among others, vulnerable children and stressed teachers who interrupt the document producing tasks they also have. It thus seems that the "replication" is more present in some management practices (such as school managers' written diploma projects) than others (such as making an action plan for a vulnerable child). Parallelism is one of the many possible forms that the relationship between the empirical and conceptual can take, but only at particular moments. At other moments, they travel and blend. "The conceptual" travels to "the empirical," for instance, when school managers are introduced to my colleagues' writing in municipal leadership courses. Back at the school, perhaps, these theories are taken up with new questions and practices. Or perhaps their diploma projects join the cemetery of forgotten documents, destined to neglected drawers and file cabinets. This traffic, of course, also goes the other way as the very practice of research involves turning empirical data, originating from other locations than academia, into theories. As Jensen and Bowker note, "conceptual-empirical mixtures…[are] unavoidable conditions of research" (Jensen and Bowker subm.:1-25). Practically,

these mixtures can take many forms and "may vary in degree and over time" (Jensen and Bowker subm.:1-25, see also Isaac 2009:397-424).

When Strathern writes that "home can recede infinitely" (Strathern 1987:16) she points to this exact observation: what in one situation may be familiar and seem "at home" may look unfamiliar in other instances or through a different modality of description. Claiming a collapse entails "impossible measurements of degrees of familiarity" (Strathern 1987:16) and the challenge is not necessarily one of going "beyond" theory.

### Infra-reflexivity and the Politics of Explanation

While Riles takes the encounter with anthropological theory in her field as an opportunity to experiment with anthropological modes of knowledge production, Latour does not find similarities between observers and observed problematic. In the following I discuss his notion of "infra-reflexivity" (Latour 1988:155-176), which entails a rather different reaction to reflexive encounters. While his 1988 paper is a direct response to the STS reflexivists' critique of representation and dedication to textual experimentation, his notion of infra-reflexivity also provides an interesting contrast to Riles' idea of "collapse." It is in this context I discuss his text below.

As I described in the previous chapter, the STS reflexivity program entails a (textual) response to the realization of a lack of difference between observer and observed when it comes to (contingent and relative) representational efforts; a realization that brings about endeavors to forefront the construction and relativity involved in writing (Woolgar and Ashmore 1988:1-11, Ashmore 1989, Woolgar 1988:14-36). By describing representation as entailing a "politics of explanation"

rather than accurate mirroring, however, Latour bypasses the reflexivists' paradox of representation. This politics forms a basis for the term infra-reflexivity, which forefronts how actors are always-already reflexive about their own practices, in no lack of additional reflexivity provided by the analyst.

ANT analyses of science have generally shown that objectivity is not discovered but is an effect of translated heterogeneous assemblages or networks (Latour 2005:118). In this view, the construction of knowledge does not rely on transcendental principles or strategic choice of perspectives. Rather, knowledge is an effect of mundane and practical manipulations entailing building networks[35] of documents and inscriptions (Latour and Woolgar 1986, see also Law 2004). The *ontological* implication, for Latour, is that translations and constructions *add* reality to the world rather than distort it through inaccurate representation (Latour 2004:205-229). Accordingly, translation is the premise of any representation. Rather than seeing texts as representations that mirror reality from the outside, they participate in constructing and bringing it into being through translation. The result is that representation ceases to be a matter of reference between text and world.

Latour instead proposes to understand representation as a "politics of explanation" (Latour 1997:vii-xx). Forming an explanation is about making connections between two separate elements: one, which needs to be explained, and another, which provides the explanation (Latour 1988:157). Strong explanations are required for exerting "action at a distance" as holding "information....that can be mobilized, transferred, accumulated...fills the gap...between the presence of ...[the one in need of explanation] and its absence" (Latour 1988:159). Information, in

[35] I define this term, along with other key ANT terms, in the following section.

other words, does not tell us what the world *is* but renders it knowable and, if associated to form an actor-network, also tangible. This "politics of explanation," of course, applies equally to the researcher and to those whom they study. The difference between the researcher and researched lies in the relations, the heterogeneous networks and hybrids they build in order to re-present. Just like researchers, the researched face their own challenges in building strong networks, which can anchor an explanation. Latour finds the latter kind of assemblage more interesting to write about.

By understanding representation as a (mundane) act of network-building, Latour asks how actors produce "the very separation between the 'outside world' and our 'interpretation' of what the world is like" (Latour 1988:160). Latour views the distinction between the conceptual and empirical as one of the practical tasks that actors engage in while constructing and maintaining networks. This extremely pragmatic view is related to his definition of "theory." Rather than understanding theory as abstract thinking, Latour depicts theory as a number of "higher-order" inscriptions that have been connected to a set of "lower order" inscriptions, which comprise what the higher-order inscriptions are a theory *of*. In that regard, theory allows one "to mobilize, manipulate, combine, rewrite, and tie together all the traces obtained through the ever-extending networks" and has a format which makes it highly mobile and separate from these lower order inscriptions (Latour 1987:241-242). Theories and concepts are thus understood as effects of specific practices and not as emerging from a different domain.

In this way, Latour bypasses the classic division between ontology and epistemology by disregarding both ontological realism and epistemological relativism. There are no perspectives on the world but only a series of engagements that make up the world; that we, for instance, have come to

characterize these as "perspectives" is thus an effect of specific actor-network. Latour refers to this theoretical hybrid of constructivism and ontology as "realistic constructivism" (Latour 2005:88-93)

Paraphrasing this insight to Riles' experience of collapse between ethnography and data, one could argue that the phenomenon of sociological theory traveling to the "empirical," becoming a source of infra-reflexivity, does not produce a reflexive problem on the sociologist's side. Whereas Riles tries to level the conceptual and the empirical by using empirical data as theory, Latour, through his notion of infra-reflexivity, claims the empirical versions of the conceptual to be the "more interesting stories" to tell, regarding them as integral to network building.[36]

To Latour, then, mixtures of the empirical and the conceptual do not constitute a problem per se, as they emerge out of hybrid practices and are separated as a result of (purifying) actor-networks. In contrast to Riles, their separation is not a starting point, and it does thus not make sense to talk about their encounter as a "collapse."[37] Similarly, when he proposes to make the study of infra-reflexivity

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[36] An encouragement which has not been met without dispute. Ashmore, for instance, writes: "Latour's tale of infrareflexivity is a romance; and I've seldom read a better one" (Ashmore 1989:60). It seems that for Ashmore to believe in this "romance," the paradox of self-reference needs to be dissolved. Latour, however, was never concerned with the problem of reference between word and world as there is no such thing as an unmediated world, only mediations and the politics of building the right network to hold an explanation.

[37] There are discipline-specific reasons for such a difference related to the historical status of the "Other" in anthropology vis-à-vis STS. The epistemological project of anthropology has been criticized for "inventing the human Other" (Fabian 1983, Pandian in Sarukkai 1997:1406), meaning that theorizing about man, collecting data to contrast different "cultures" produced an "inferior [Other] and was even understood in the paradigm of the native children as against the adult west" (Sarukkai 1997:1406). In this sense, anthropological knowledge is sometimes depicted as saying more about the anthropologist's epistemology than the "Other." Riles' experiment could thus be read as (partially) emerging out of such debates and as an attempt to

"the name of our game" (Latour 1988:172), he criticizes researchers' concerns with representation or theories for being irrelevant. If we follow Latour, then, finding sociological concepts of meta-reflexivity as the very source for actors' infra-reflexivity is simply the result of successful network-building across different institutions, which should be described through the informants' infra-reflexive language. As he writes elsewhere, "a good ANT account thus allows the concepts of the actors to be stronger than that of the analyst" (Latour 2005:30).

I take my main inspiration from Latour, understanding the school managers' uses of sociological theory as a form of infra-reflexivity, which in my case also happens to be an example of how social theories from my own institution are performative, as I discussed in Chapter One. At the same time, this choice needs further specification. One implication of Latour's claim to simply use the vocabulary of the researched is a bracketing of his own theoretical constructions (Ashmore 1989:60, Gad and Bruun Jensen 2010:55-80). Considering how Latour's own analyses draw on a quite sophisticated repertoire of concepts and theories emerging from other sources than the people he studies, simply characterizing his approach as infra-reflexivity cannot account for what ANT entails (Gad and Bruun Jensen 2010:55-80, Gad submitted:1-30, Strathern

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level the othering effect of explanatory theory by taking a different "theoretical" avenue. Together with Woolgar, Latour in contrast deliberately started out to analyze scientists as "savage minds" (Latour and Woolgar 1986:28) in order to describe "the most modern institution with a methodology normally reserved to studying the ones considered to be the least modern" (Latour, personal communication, May 2009). Where anthropology reflexively has worked with escaping processes of othering, the early laboratory studies of STS in contrast used othering as a deliberate strategy to remain empirically open to well-known cultural phenomena such as "knowledge" and "science."

1996a:517, Krarup and Blok 2011:42-63).[38] Moreover, the scientists that Latour has studied would hardly agree wholeheartedly that Latour described them using their own language, the Science Wars being an apt example of the controversies emerging in the wake of social studies of science with accusations of misunderstandings from both sides of the "trenches" (Latour 1999, Smith 2005). Claiming to simply engage with the empirical through infra-reflexivity, thus, hardly amounts to characterizing what it means to do ANT.

In the second part of this chapter I elucidate how I understand and draw upon ANT in the dissertation, by first, specifying ANT as a set of resources that bypasses the contrast between "infra" and "meta" languages. I account for this as "lateral compatibility," which allows me to, at last, to return to the question of which status "their" theories have in relation to ANT's conceptual resources.

## ANT

My interest in exploring how reflexivity matters in managing inclusion is not just a study of "their" infra-reflexive language but also draws upon "my own" infra-reflexive ANT and post-ANT resources. Framing this relation as two disconnected infra-reflexive languages, however, also entails imagining them as situated asymmetrically in relation to one another on a scale. Such a characterization may create concerns of a powerful anthropologist mis-representing the less powerful "voices" or "lived lives" behind the ethnography (See Jensen 2005 for a critical discussion of such concerns). ANT, in my opinion, entails accounting for how

[38] Latour is inconsistent about the status he grants actor network-theory, which he sometimes characterizes a method (Latour 1997), and at other times as involving concepts (see e.g. how he jumps between empiricism and conceptual reflections in the fictive dialogue with a PhD student in Latour 2005:141-158).

knowledge emerges *in-between* the researcher and researched and depends on *a compatible relationship* between "several infra-reflexive languages, including the researchers', which may change and transform" (Gad and Bruun Jensen 2010:10).

ANT offers an ontologically relativistic vocabulary for tracing the assemblage of human and non-human entities that make up "the social." Central is its principle of generalized symmetry (using the same vocabulary for explaining all phenomena) and free association (abandonment of distinctions between the natural and the social) (Callon 1986:196-223). ANT thus does not assign humans and non-humans a-priori asymmetric characteristics such as human intention or material causality. Instead, the purpose is to describe how humans and artifacts construct each other through their relations in heterogeneous assemblages or networks (Latour 2005:5). This entails a minimum concept of agency where an entity is only an *actant* if it influences the assemblage, or is seen to influence it (Latour 2005:63).

Hence, it is an empirical question whether a human or nonhuman is an actant, since this status is delegated from the network (Callon 1999:185). A *network* is the momentary association and *translation* of heterogeneous actants that have been stabilized to form a network (Callon 1986:196-223, Latour 1997). ANT in this sense expands constructivism to include not only semiotic signs but also material artifacts, which participate in constructing the world and translate each other in that process (Law 1999:3).[39]

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[39] The implication of reintroducing the nonhuman, natural and technical into the social is that "the empirical is everywhere" (Gad and Bruun Jensen 2010:74). With no empirical Other, this may have the consequence that ANT emerges as a final "grand" narrative (Lee and Brown 1994:772-790). Exactly because ANT does not offer any general guidelines for "cutting the network" (Strathern 1996a:517), it is important to delineate the critical choices that demarcate any study. I attend to this matter in Chapter Three.

Translation is thus a key concept of ANT as it emphasizes the inevitable transformation entailed in assembling networks and the ongoing work needed to maintain them (Latour 2005:143). Translation, or mediation, entails that both the actants and the network are transformed through the relations they enter with one another and as such, neither can be understood as entities that exist sui generis prior to the relation. ANT thus allows one to ask questions about how relations are formed between different entities, how those entities are constituted in the same movements, how durable the relations are, and which effects they bring about. When the object of study is "reflexivity," this implies that it remains an empirical question how reflexivity is brought about. Humans are not considered to be thinking, intentional subjects who can reflect by virtue of being human. Rather, reflexivity may be distributed *and* brought into being through different actants and practices.

***Post-ANT***

The growing popularity of ANT has affected the repeated, somewhat tedious re-discovery that the world is made of actor-networks and ANT, as a consequence, has lost some of its original conceptual novelty (Jensen and Bowker subm.:1-25, Beaulieu, Scharnhorst and Wouters 2007:672-692).[40] While this domestication may generate concerns that ANT has acquired the status of a static, singular conceptual perspective (Law 1999:1-15), I do not think that it implies the need to

[40]This concern was most famously expressed in a 1999 anthology (Law and Hassard 1999), where many of the intellectual personas in the ANT environment debated what could come "after" ANT. Latour, notoriously provocative, introduced his contribution with the statement: "there are four things that do not work with actor-network theory; the word actor, the word network, the word theory and the hyphen!" (Latour 1999:15), only to apologize taking the exact opposite position six years later (Latour 2005:9).

go “beyond” ANT as much as the need to reflect on how ANT interacts with the specific practices that one studies (Gad and Bruun Jensen 2010:74).

The lesson of ANT if turned reflexively back on ANT is that it undergoes multiplications and transformations as “it” is taken to new practices (Gad and Bruun Jensen 2010:57). Moreover, its concepts do not say anything substantially about the world but encourage the researcher to study *empirically* how worlds come into being. The principles of symmetry and agnosticism are a refusal to know in advance what makes up the practices that one researches. Rather than a consolidated meta-theory, I take ANT (and post-ANT) to be what it was from its outset: a set of highly interesting discussions that allows one to remain open and curious about how the world is continuously re-created and to participate in the making of this world through studying it.

The so-called post-ANT debates provide a particularly interesting avenue for doing so. These continue some of the fundamental analytical principles of ANT but take them in new directions. They do not perform as strictly an analytical program, in terms of studying how strong actor-networks get built or how powerful actors come to dominate (Latour and Woolgar 1986, Latour 1991:103-131, Latour 1983:141-170). Moreover, they involve new foci, for instance, multiplicity (Mol 2002), complexity (Mol and Law 2002:1-22), otherness, and topology (Law 2002:91-105, Law 2000:133-148), and new inspirations from anthropology (Gad and Bruun Jensen 2010:55-80, Jensen 2011:12). My analyses of school managers’ practices concern issues of complexity and disorder, issues especially debated in post-ANT. While I discuss these throughout the analyses, I here focus on STS scholar Annemarie Mol’s *empirical philosophy* as it both allows me to elucidate what I mean by “enactments of reflexivity” but also to

formulate where I differ from Mol's "praxiography," vis-à-vis my wish to take into consideration informants' modalities of abstraction.

Mol radicalizes the STS insight that objectivity is an effect of mundane, heterogeneous practices by generalizing this into an ontological claim regarding, not what reality is, but how realit*ies* "are brought into being, sustained, or allowed to wither away in common, day-to-day, sociomaterial practices" (Mol 2002:6). Rather than understanding ontology as a singular, given order of things with a plurality of interpretations and perspectives, ontology in Mol's account emerges as multiple, practical and (therefore) as political; as something *done*. Studying practices, Mol argues, is a way to avoid perspectivalism, which takes its object for granted and only explores different interpretations and ways of attributing meaning (Mol 2002:12 original emphasis). An implication of studying reflexivity as *practice* entails that "it" is multiple rather than singular.

Studying practices, in my opinion, does not necessarily mean that infra-reflexive theories need not be included. Mol's foregrounding of practices and critique of perspectivalism has been criticized for downplaying potential empirical interest in "thinking" or concepts (Jensen forthcoming, Strathern 2011:123-127). Interestingly, the school managers' subscribe to the perspectivalism, which Mol so heavily criticizes throughout her book.[41] Considering how the school managers I

[41] If we compare Mol's program of empirical philosophy to Andersen's analytical strategies, there are both radical differences but also peculiar similarities. While Andersen explores how a plurality of perspectives constructs the world differently, Mol replaces perspectives with socio-material practices, which also construct the world differently, and multiply it by virtue of this. Their move is similar: both are interested in a non-singular world. Their difference is central one, namely, how the world is plural or multiple. Where school managers, if they read their Danish Luhmann interpreters, locate multiplicity in perspectives, which observe the world, Mol locates it in practices, which enact the world. While they bracket different types of empirical material, they converge in their insistence on studying *only* perspectives or practices. Yet, Mol's

talked to emphasize the importance of considering perspectives, perspectives *do* exist in my empirical material. As Chapter Four will illustrate, the literature on inclusion and reflexivity is all about changing one's perspective. Moreover, the school managers make the teachers' perspectives an object of management. Theories also participate in the making up of the world and are part of those practices (Isaac 2009:397-424, Lezaun 2011:553-581). As Jensen notes, "it would be a shame to bifurcate nature in reverse by making everything part of the world except how we conceive of it" (Jensen forthcoming). Thus, I do attend to perspectives in the analyses, not as something, which I assume that managers hold but as performed in verbal utterances or managerial theories that are mobilized in the name of inclusion and reflexivity.

***Lateral Compatibility***

Earlier, with reference to Maurer (2005), I characterized my study as lateral to account for the multi-dimensional ways in which both artifacts of social science and my own department are implicated in this thesis' "empirical object." Defined as "situated at the side" (Oxford English Dictionary), Maurer uses *lateral* to depict his relationship to those he studies as a series of mutual entanglements and encounters, which cannot be reduced to the conventional distinction between *analyzing researchers* and *analyzed people* (Maurer 2005:36).

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praxiography could be described as a "perspective" on practice, and Andersen's observation could be described as a practice, thus the distinction between them could also be relativized. For some reason, neither Andersen nor Mol allows for a notion of multiplicity encompassing *both* perspectives and practices. As Strathern notes in a comment on Mol's theorizing, rather than breaking radically with the idea of perspectivalism "multiplicity is perspectivalism's critique of itself" (Strathern 2011:92)

Like Riles and me, Maurer encountered people busy analyzing their own practices and engaged in theoretical debates related to anthropology. Laterality thus entails a condition of *both* mutual entanglements *and* analogous analytical concerns. To Maurer, laterality is not just a premise for doing research but also affects his style of writing. He refers to his eclectic style of writing as "parawriting" (36), which is to "unsettl[e]…the very familiarity of [the] device [of ethnographic writing]." Throughout the book, he moreover displays the homogeneity between reflexivity debates of adequation and reference in anthropology and those taking place in his empirical material, around the value of money (Maurer 2005:13).

Exactly because Maurer's lateral project refrains from crystallizing clear analytic hooks, laterality should not be turned into a general analytical project of mimicking his choices.[42] When I characterize my own approach as lateral it is to account for the multiple ways in which I am already implicated in and with the field. In order to situate this with the previously discussed ANT resources, I will specify my own understanding (and translation) of "laterality" through anthropologist Marilyn Strathern's notion of "compatibility" (Strathern 2004). This will allow me to discuss the status of school managers' modalities of theorizing vis-à-vis ANT.

Strathern contrasts "compatibility" with "comparability" to characterize a specific kind of relationship between two parties that both are and are not part of one another (Strathern 2004:38).[43] *Compatibility* regards parties that are neither of the

[42] For a highly original example of another STS-scholar who found Maurer's notion of laterality interesting, see Birgitte Gorm Hansen who took his notion as an opportunity to experiment with applying theories (of larvae and symbiosis) of the biologists she researched to analyze their strategies for attracting research funding (Hansen 2011).

[43] She originally did so to characterize the ambivalent relationship between feminism and anthropology.

same kind, which would make them *comparable*, nor completely separate or encompassing of each other. In order to emphasize this difference, Strathern uses feminist historian of science Donna Haraway's well-known metaphor of the cyborg.[44] Haraway's cyborg evokes an image of a hybrid assemblage, contingent on an arrangement of bodily and machinic functions, various technical, nonhuman artifacts, concepts, and interests (Haraway 1991, Haraway 1995:175-194). As Strathern writes:

> The cyborg supposes what it could be like to make connections without assumptions of comparability. Thus might one suppose a relation between anthropology and feminism: were each a realization or extension of the capacity of the other, the relation would be of neither equality nor encompassment. It would be prosthetic, as between a person and a tool. Compatibility without comparability: each extends the other, but only from the other's position. What the extensions yield are different capacities. In this view, there is no subject-object relation between a person and a tool, only an expanded or realized capability. (Strathern 2004:38)

The type of connections made visible through the cyborg figure can both be seen as part of and not part of oneself. The cyborg relation of compatibility elicits "a perception of those social relationships as connections at once part and not part of her or himself" (Strathern 2004:40). The compatibility, which makes the relation work as an *extension*, makes the connection partial rather than complete. For Strathern, a relation does not only entail connections but also disconnections (Strathern 1996a:517, Strathern 1995). In my reading, compatibility, partial connections, and extensions of agency thus also involve partial disconnections and

[44] Haraway originally invoked the metaphor of the cyborg to offer a feminist vocabulary that did not resort to naturalism or essentialism but emphasized objectivity as situated and partial (Haraway 1991:150, Haraway 1995:175-194).

delimiting of agency even if this is not what she emphasizes in her discussion of Haraway.[45]

There is not just *one* partial connection but rather a ramifying relationship, involving also disconnections, between myself as a person with more intimate relations to the school managers I worked with, as someone from Copenhagen Business School, and as part of the collective of social science. As I described in the former chapter, reflexivity is branched out in non-hierarchical, cross-cutting relations to which there are many entry points. Where I take laterality to account for the rhizomic form of the relationship(s), compatibility depicts this relationship as one of mutual extensions, involving disconnections, without encompassment or sameness. Exactly by virtue of not being a question of comparisons, compatibility allows for many entry points as it constitutes more than simply a two-dimensional scale from which to elicit similarities and differences.[46] My conceptualization of laterality through *compatibility* rather than *comparability* has implications for how I formulate "my conceptualizing" (which hardly is "mine") versus "their" (and the same point can be made for them). I attend to this issue in the following.

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[45] As Strathern writes elsewhere, "language can work against the user of it [by making] other, unwanted, things appear as well" (Strathern 1999:18). Compatibility often evokes ideas of mutual tolerance and perfect fit where I wish to emphasize that compatibility also involves cuts and partial separations.

[46] It was originally STS-scholars Casper Bruun Jensen and Peter Lauritsen's paper Qualitative Research as Partial Connection that inspired me to read Strathern's Partial Connections to account for the relation between researcher and researched (Jensen and Lauritsen 2005:59-77). However, my emphasis is somewhat different from these authors. Also, I think the term "connection" evokes too much an image of one line or scale whereas laterality and compatibility allow for a rhizomic image of several entry points.

***Taking Thinking Seriously?***

A critique of STS has been that explaining everything as "practice" downplays the informants' own thinking and modalities of conceptualization, which are not taken sufficiently *seriously* (Miyazaki forthcoming, Holbraad 2004:1-27, Holbraad 2007:189-225, Hansen 2011, Strathern 2011:123-127, Henare, Holbraad and Wastell 2007). While the precise meaning of "taking seriously" is often less clear than the moral valence it entails (Candea 2011:147), important aspects involve considering informants as epistemic partners (Holmes and Marcus 2008:81-101) and avoiding a non-symmetrical conceptual colonization the informants' own conceptual work (Hansen 2011). Within ANT scholarship, there are also ideals of collaborative engagement, with for instance STS scholars Casper Bruun Jensen and Peter Lauritsen defining research as about "*exploring* common futures *with* practices…that would simultaneously add more agency to researcher *and* to practices" (Jensen and Lauritsen 2005:72, original emphasis). As noted, compatibility does not only involve commonality and relationships but also cuttings, difference, and partial separations. Through reflecting on a range of experiences from fieldwork, I will make precise how the notion of "compatibility" relates to these ambitions and why I think that it to some extent remains impossible to include the researched on equal terms, and what this implies for the aim of "taking seriously" informants.

While it is difficult to disagree with the humanistic overtones of collaboration, "taking seriously," and "adding agency," I also think it is important to be specific about the premises for collaboration and its limits, the partial separations entailed in compatible relations. Claiming or intending to collaborate is no guarantee that it will be experienced as such by both parties. In my case, negotiating "access to the field," obviously, was a dialogue about mutual expectations and analytical

interests (cf. Holmes and Marcus 2008:81-101). In return for being allowed to follow the managers, I would share my "findings" throughout and after finishing the thesis. They have also read and commented on drafts of the chapters throughout the process. I have written for their professional magazines and given talks at several municipal school management seminars.

During fieldwork, moments often occurred that *could* be characterized as collaboratory. The managers were curious as to how I had interpreted specific interactions, for instance, between teacher and manager or between teachers. Besides participating in these "on the spot analyses" of events, I also told them on a regular basis about particular aspects of my observations, which I found fascinating at the time. If I had made (or thought I had made) critical decisions about the framing of the thesis, I would discuss my ideas with them, and get their feedback. I also experienced, however, that sometimes, they would be more interested in giving me information about "what had happened" than engaging in conceptual work. In addition, I was often made more of an authority than I felt comfortable with, being asked to give my opinion about how they had performed the "manager role" in situations where I felt that I had little to contribute.[47]

If we take up Jensen and Lauritsen's idea of research as "adding agency," I wonder to what extent the practice of research simultaneously adds agency to the

[47] At one school, a manager asked me what I thought of their psychological profiles, i.e. to give a normative evaluation of their management personalities; a judgment which I felt was much outside both my competence and ethical mandate. Telling her this, she responded that at least, I must have formed some private opinions, which she was curious to learn about. I responded somewhat vaguely that at times, their personalities played really well together, but when pressed, they sometimes badmouthed each other, which made cooperation at critical times more difficult. "Collaboration" is not only a mutual "epistemic interest" (cf. Holmes and Marcus 2008:81-101), it seems, but also a matter of sharing "private opinions." This may not be surprising considering how they had shared their private opinions with me at several occasions during fieldwork.

researched and the researcher. “Adding agency” may mean different things to different actors and may happen through other means than “constructing the new” or “experimentation” (Jensen and Lauritsen 2005:72). In my own experience, I often suspected that, rather than participating in “articulating the new,” I reified *existing* imaginaries about social science as a source of (conceptual) reflexivity. This was one of the many ways in which I, involuntarily, participated in performing certain versions of social science. As social science concepts already partake in making up what counts as thinking in the school managerial practices I studied, this was not the classical question of hierarchy where the researcher *knows* reflexivity better than the practitioner but rather one of performativity.

I also had experiences of “adding agency” by legitimizing practices, which felt as a subtraction of agency on my side of the equation. The example I have in mind is a controversy between a school manager and an external consultant, who disagreed with the way in which the school manager conducted her dialogue with the rest of the staff, based on the results of a working environment questionnaire that had been circulated among the teachers and pedagogues. During this meeting, I sat in the background, taking notes. The school manager invoked me as an authority with valid knowledge about her management practice through “real research methods” as opposed to the “quantitative survey which can be manipulated to say anything” with the purpose of rejecting the consultant’s claims. At the time, I felt that I could not intervene even though I felt mis-represented.

So even if research is conditioned by mediations and being situated, “adding agency” can take many forms and does not necessarily end with “exploring

common futures" (Jensen and Lauritsen 2005:73).[48] In the field, the relationship between researcher and researcher undergoes changes in complex trajectories, including some from where agency cannot be added. My main hesitation, in other words, is that Jensen and Lauritsen's hope of adding agency constitutes a too limited way of imagining the many productive and unproductive ways in which the situated knowledge relation between researcher and researched comes about.[49]

The fact that both the school managers and I make use of theory does not make us similar in the sense that Riles proposes. As argued, there are important differences in what these concepts mean and the technicalities of how they are deployed. The Luhmann-inspired understanding of theory as a program for observation, circulating among school managers, is rather different from the practical and ontological notions of theory within ANT. I doubt that "taking seriously" their concepts necessarily means replacing ANT modalities of analysis with "their" conceptions (which, again, are never *just there* but also very present at my own institution). Indeed, one could also argue that "taking seriously" involves a critical discussion of their concepts, as they in fact asked for in expecting me to provide "new perspectives."

Anthropological writing inevitably involves that "indigenous reflection is incorporated as part of the data to be explained, and cannot itself be taken as the framing of it" (Strathern 1987:18). While the ethnographer may experiment with

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[48] This, of course, does not mean that it cannot remain an ambition of research. My point here is to refrain from describing the relationship between researcher and researched as only being about "collaboration," "adding agency," or exploring "common futures."

[49] For an example of how "idiotic behavior" of the researched brought about new insights about the relationship between science and public, see Horst and Michael (Forthcoming). In this case, knowledge emerged from a situation where many other things besides "exploring common futures" were at stake.

"epistemic" forms of collaboration to enrich the conceptual work, critical decisions ultimately rest with the ethnographer and the end product can only be a version, alongside the informants' own version(s). Strathern, again, may provide inspiration through her characterization of the relationship between researcher and researched. In a reflection on the limits of doing anthropology "at home," Strathern grants the anthropological knowledge two destinies: that of being received as an "augmentation," a much desired new layer of self-knowledge, or an "unnecessary mystification" of trivial practices, already known (Strathern 1987:17). Similarly, it is difficult to keep academia and the informants as audiences on equal terms (Strathern 1987:24).[50] Even if it remains an ambition, there is no guarantee that the anthropological text will be considered an enrichment as the destiny of a text is in the hands of the readers, not the writer (Grint and Woolgar 1997, Latour 1988:155-176).

While there have been moments of collaboration, during fieldwork, after-fieldwork telephone conversations, and when receiving commentary on my work, these moments cannot guarantee how this thesis will be received in its totality, or how its reception may change over time as it (hopefully) traverses through new readers' interpretations. Strathern notes that a premise of doing anthropology at

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[50] Thanks to Javier Lezaun for reminding me that in academia, one's published accounts of others' practices become part of an academic economy of credit and reward where other issues are at stake than the relation to the informants. Of course, claims to "take seriously" informants may be part of that academic economy. As Michael Carrithers also pointed out at the Anthropological Theory Debate, in Manchester, 2008, *Ontology is just another word for culture*, it is curious how claims of taking informants seriously are simultaneously some of the most abstract arguments in anthropological writing: "we have to take things, which are actually for the most part pretty un-abstracted, and abstract them into something which we then argue (…) is the highest 'real' thing. So you end up with a word like 'ontology' now being used, in a way to convince us that we've abstracted something out and it's the most real thing about what's actually happened" (Carrithers, Candea, Sykes and Holbraad 2008).

home is that "what starts as continuity may end with disjunction" (Strathern 1987:18). By this she refers to the condition that auto-anthropology, as the name also indicates, is bound to be reflexive in the sense of rendering "people's conception of themselves back to themselves" (Strathern 1987:18). This was also the expectation I was met with, in expectations of seeing their "blind spots" from a new "perspective." The disjunction which Strathern writes about is that this "rendering back" may not conform to a genre, which the informants recognize as appropriate. This uncertainty is entailed in "compatibility," exactly because the connection is only partial and *may* work as an extension but may also fail. In that regard, I am still waiting to see whether "promises of reflexivity" indeed are promises with respect to the future relationship, if it emerges, between this thesis and the people I have engaged with.

### Summing up

In this chapter, I have discussed which consequences to draw from finding "concepts" in the "empirical." I have done so by, first, elucidating what imaginary "their" conceptual gives rise to through a depiction of Andersen's analytical strategies, focusing on the idea of perspective, critical distance, and explication. I compared Riles' post-reflexive anthropology to Latour's notion of infra-reflexivity, arguing that Riles' collapsing of the difference between ethnography and data is not the right one in my case, as her metaphors assume a boundary that collapses. Latour, in turn, does not argue for any need to abandon conventional analysis but encourages describing actors' infra-reflexivity. While I situate this study within ANT, I have elucidated ANT as *lateral compatibility* rather than simply a study of infra-reflexivity.

A few concluding words on the implications of this chapter for the rest of the thesis are warranted. ANT is not just a study of actors' infra-reflexivity but a way for me to respond to an empirical phenomenon by remaining agnostic. There is, however, not one a-priori relationship between the conceptual and the empirical. Throughout the thesis I thus engage with different ANT concepts that emphasize slightly different aspects of *mattering*, allowing me to make use of a flexible and mobile concept of "theory." This entails flexibility in respect to how I draw on the conceptual resources from ANT, rather than deciding in advance on *one* guiding perspective (cf. Andersen 2003). I see ANT as a way of "bringing entities, human or abstract, into play with one another" (Strathern 2002:94). This means that the empirical also forms a "perspective" on the conceptual, in terms of challenging or modifying existing concepts, as I do in some of the chapters to follow. Moreover, as I will debate extensively in the next chapter, concepts are only one of many ways to elicit new contrasts and cannot be separated from the material practice of writing.

# Chapter Three

## Performative Data and Critical Choices

> Among scholars a special place is given to intellectual work, and again to the work it takes to understand that and thus to epistemological self-consciousness about ways of knowing. (Strathern 1999:14)

### Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss some important methodological and empirical conditions and choices for producing this thesis. A premise for any inquiry is that it partakes in constructing a particular version of reality, alongside the reality-composing work of informants and nonhuman actants (Maurer 2005, Latour and Woolgar 1986, Law 2004). When methods are no longer imagined to offer "more or less bankable guarantees," in terms of linking "in the best possible way with reality" (Law 2004:9-10), it becomes important to describe the specific conditions and critical choices circumscribing any study.[51]

In the following, I describe the assemblage of methods co-constituting the knowledge that this thesis constructs. I refer to Latour's definition of construction, here with reference to important moments and heterogeneous entities that enabled the mediations, or translations, involved in producing this thesis (Latour 2005:90-91). Without mediations, there would be no knowledge at all. Knowing, thus, can neither be reduced to a perspective in the "mind," nor to "society" revealing its

[51] While the mess and uncertainties in the production of knowledge in the hard sciences are deleted in order for facts to look like facts (Latour and Woolgar 1986), acknowledging exactly these aspects of research is often considered a virtue in qualitative social science (see e.g. Law 2004).

"facts" to the analyst. Instead, knowing is a specific kind of mediating engagement with a particular collective (Latour 1997:vii-xx).

The chapter proceeds as follows: after describing the "method assemblage" of the study, that is, the different ways in which I detected, amplified, and mediated data[52] (Law 2004:14), I describe some field-specific challenges. While it is important to acknowledge the reality-producing effects of methods, I find it equally important to discuss the reverse: how the practices we turn into empirical data also influence our methods, generating certain limits and possibilities. Next, I describe the important choices about research design, such as the decision to visit a second school. I present the two schools in detail and discuss how having two schools helped limit my study to asking how reflexivity matters in managerial practices related to inclusion. After this account, I discuss the schools' status as cases and the status of comparison in this thesis. Comparison is not just about including two field locations but permeates several of the thesis' analytic moves. Finally, I discuss how I made "reflexivity" an object of inquiry and how I decided the focus of the thesis' empirical chapters.

### Methods and Data

The five empirical chapters are based on fieldwork at two schools and a large sample of documents and books. The purpose of the study of written material was to explore how inclusion had been problematized and how reflexivity had come to

[52] While "data" may bring associations to a research imaginary of "data" waiting "out there" to be collected through methods, I draw on Marilyn Strathern's distinction between "data" and "information" (Strathern 1999:5-7): data is the empirical material (co-constructed in various ways) that has not yet become information in the sense of being meaningful to a particular academic argument. I return to this distinction later in the chapter

be seen as a means to achieve inclusion. It consists of policy documents primarily from the Danish Ministry of Education and Local Government Denmark, along with pedagogical and management literature. I have read all policy documents referring to inclusion that I could find[53] (including recommendations, reports, special initiatives, best practice examples, new legislation) since Denmark signed the Salamanca Statement in 1994. I have also read reports from Danish disability organizations and followed the news stream from the Danish Union of Teachers ("Danmarks Lærerforening") and Union of School Managers ("Skolelederforeningen"). Finally, I have read reports from national evaluation and accreditation institutions such as The Danish Evaluation Institute (EVA) and the Danish Evaluation Institute for Local Government (KREVI) which devote increasing attention to educational inclusion. Although not as extensively, I have also looked at how reflexivity emerged in other policy areas over the past 20 years, including policy aiming at "evaluation" and "professionalization of school leadership," which I describe in Chapter Four.

My sample of managerial literature has been selected by using the reference lists of the Saxby and Fjelde school managers' diploma theses and also includes the literature I found on their book shelves.[54] Pedagogical literature has been selected from their mentioning in reports of how municipalities currently work with "inclusion" (Jydebjerg and Hallberg 2006, Zobbe, Madsen, Feilberg, Sørensen and Ertmann 2011). I have read most of the Danish pedagogical publications on

[53] "All" meaning all I could access through searches on the websites of the Ministry of Education and Local Government Denmark. I also conducted a short interview with the consultant responsible for "inclusion" at Local Government Denmark to confirm that I had not missed out on any important publications or and initiatives.

[54] With the exception of Donald Schön's *The Reflective Practitioner* (1983), which I nevertheless include as it is a key referent in much of the other literature.

inclusion. Moreover, I have built a small archive comprising sociological and pedagogical academic literature on inclusion in English.

The empirical chapters are based on 36 days of fieldwork with the managers of Saxby School, spread over the period of August 2009-April 2010, and 11 days with Fjelde school's managers during two weeks in May 2010, plus a follow-up day in December 2010. I produced an average of 15 field note pages per day.[55] Spreading the fieldwork over the calendar year provided information about specific date-contingent events (such as welcoming new students to the school, writing up the annual quality assessment report, preparing the celebrations of the last school day, and planning the next school year before closing down for the summer). Throughout and after periods of fieldwork, I conducted 12 semi-structured interviews (Spradley 1979) with the school managers and 10 semi-structured interviews with the janitor and teachers, including union representatives, team coordinators, teachers with special qualifications relevant to inclusion (such as AKT competences) and teachers who were involved in incidents or processes that caught my attention during fieldwork. The interviews lasted an average of 1½ hours. I also recorded some of the many casual conversations I had with the managers while following their work(Spradley 1979:58), and have 30 short interviews where I follow-up on specific events or situations.

My engagements with the schools extended far beyond "being there" (cf. Geertz 1988). As STS-scholar Anne Beaulieu argues, "being there" is not necessarily the only or best way to study contemporary knowledge practices as much happens

[55] Simply writing up and organizing the field notes and interviews, transcription not included, took at least the same amount of time as writing them in the first place, at the location.

through other infrastructures, for instance, online forums or email (Beaulieu 2010:453-470). Instead of "co-location," she proposes the term "co-presence" to take into account that interaction with informants is not dependent on being at the same location but rather on being co-present, which can occur through various mediated forms of interaction. At both schools, I had access to intra-net forums as an observer, i.e. without the possibility of communicating myself. This lasted from August 2009-July 2010 at Saxby School and March 2010-July 2010 at Fjelde School. At Saxby School, I only had access to the managers' communication while I could also follow the teachers' and pedagogues' interactions at Fjelde School. In addition, I had regular phone conversations with the managers, also after the periods of fieldwork, and for a period of two months, the managers at Saxby school CC'ed me on their email correspondence. Finally, I received an abundance of documents from both schools, including official descriptions of the schools' theoretical foundations, quality reports, and communication with the municipality, the managers' diploma theses, and documents they had been working on during my fieldwork (minutes, action plans for students, bills, etc.).

***Shadowing***

My primary way of engaging the managers during fieldwork was by "shadowing" them. I followed them from their arrival in the morning, at 7.30, until they went home, around four or five in the afternoon. This choice of method draws upon the ANT dictum to "follow the actor" (Latour 2005), which in my case was managers[56]. This method originates in ethnographer Harry Wolcott's famous study

[56] As I will elaborate later in this chapter, my starting point was an interest in management while inclusion and reflexivity emerged as a result of following managers.

of a principal (Wolcott 2003). It has also been recommended as a process-oriented way of studying organizations (Czarniawska 2008:4-20). Organizational sociologist Barbara Czarniawska has argued that shadowing enables moving across domains that are usually seen as separate, and thus to follow the connections and disconnections between, for instance, human resource management and budgeting. Replicating managers' movements across different physical locations also allows studying how organizing and the making of "management" emerge in many other places than the organization they manage (Czarniawska 2008:4-20).

I followed the managers around the school, to class corridors, and the staff room, but also to municipal meetings and network meetings with other managers. While the study was not multi-sited in the sense of crossing national boundaries, following school managers certainly took me across multiple sites, inside and outside the school's property. While Czarniawska's term "shadowing" may connote being a "fly on the wall," in my case it clearly involved participation, as I also discussed in the previous chapter. The managers and I engaged in conversations throughout the day about what had just happened, what I had missed being absent another day, and my colleagues' publications, which they had read. Often, I posed clarifying questions, such as "what is at stake here?" and "what are your reasons for your actions?"[57]

An important concern to all parties was the ethics of having access to sensitive personal data about students, parents, and teachers. During fieldwork, I primarily

[57] Eventually I learned to record these conversations, with their consent, as it was rather difficult to take notes when engaged in conversation and I would have forgotten too many details for the evenings' write-up of field notes.

spoke to and observed adults, and only with their consent. Furthermore, if the managers estimated that a situation was sensitive, I did not ask the involved parties if I could observe their interactions. An agreement was made, for the sake of confidentiality, that I might change the gender, name, ethnicity, and age of the persons I describe, including the managers, and that I might make other small alterations of the "actual events." Apart from sending them my analyses for general commentary and their assessments on the risk disclosing sensitive data, as I described in Chapter Two, I also signed confidentiality agreements at both schools.

### *Performative Data*

> Contrary to an ethnographic imagination of methods as universal and data as particular, I understand the "method" to be no more general or particular than the "data" to which it is applied. (Riles 2000:191)

While it is important to describe the methods that help create the realities we analyze, "general" methods are also translated when "applied" in particular settings (cf. Riles 2000, Michael 2004:5-23). If reality is not waiting passively to be "represented," the interactions one studies have important implications for how methods can be performed in the first place. In this section, I focus on some particular conditions that framed my choice of methods and fieldwork experiences.

In Chapter Five, I analyze how interruptions characterize the managers' work. Most activities I observed were interrupted by acute conflicts or tasks that needed immediate attention. Besides making the managers move around on the school's property, the interruptions also influenced what they talked about and how they

spent their time in the office. For example, as I describe in Chapter Six, students sometimes enter the managers' offices to complain about teachers. Such visits make managers discuss particular teachers rather than the topic they had initially assembled to discuss. Last minute cancellations of meetings were regular at both schools. Meetings that took place occasionally generated comments from managers that there was a surplus of things to attend to and nobody had the overview or the time to accomplish all tasks at hand. Often, the managers would tell me that they had little time to reflect and prioritize.

These conditions for management also became the conditions for making observations. When following managers trying to solve conflicts around the school, I could not take notes and had to rely on memory until I had the chance to write down what had happened. Often, this was when I was at home in the evening. Numerous interrupted conversations left me with half-finished field notes, of which I could make little sense until I followed up. The hectic everyday life of managers also meant that interviews were often interrupted and cancelled. I also had to drop using a photo elicitation method, which involved equipping managers with cameras for documenting their work, which was to have made material, mundane, and visual aspects of management practices accessible (Bramming, Hansen, Bojesen and Olesen 2012, Warren 2002:224-245).[58] And like the managers, I was frustrated over the lack of time to establish an overview and

[58] At Saxby School, one manager actually put much effort into this exercise by taking pictures of himself in a gymnasium where he through different athletic positions exposed managerial virtues such as "reflection," "overview," and "dynamics." In a later interview, however, he describes these as ideals and expressed concerns that his everyday tasks rarely left time for such activities. Another manager hastily took many photos on behalf of himself and a fellow manager to talk about. At Fjelde School, the managers kept postponing the exercise and at last, I abandoned it. Of course, that this method was so difficult to organize is important information about their conditions for management.

prioritize what was important. Czarniawska's dictum that shadowing allows following the processes of organizing, became an experience of following the organizing properties of interruptions, leaving their traces in the form of fragmented field notes and a surplus of leads to follow. As in Riles' quote in the beginning of this section, shadowing is no general method but is shaped and co-constituted by the practices, which it is summoned to study.

### Critical Choices

Framing my thesis to focus on inclusion and reflexivity was not the starting point but a choice I made after doing fieldwork. My original research design aimed at exploring "strategic school leadership" by comparing expectations in "policy" with "practice." After visiting a few schools, I decided to do my study at Saxby School, which seemed apposite to my interest in investigating the growing expectations to leadership by contrasting them with a depiction of a rather different "reality." The management team at Saxby school had many new members, the school was going through a much contested merger, there were conflicts among the teachers, it had a seven digit deficit, and was located in a so-called "ghetto area"[59]. With 80 % of the students belonging to ethnic minorities,

[59] While "ghetto" may generate associations to American neighborhoods with a high crime rate, known from popular media such as *The Wire*, this is not the connotation I wish to establish here. The word "ghetto" acquired a political life in Denmark after the then liberal Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen's new year's speech in 2004, which was followed by a so-called "ghetto committee." In 2010, Rasmussen's successor, also liberal, Lars Løkke Rasmussen rearticulated the theme in his New Year speech and 11 months later a definition of "ghetto" was introduced in the Statute on Social Housing (Lov om almene boliger). A housing department is defined as a ghetto if 1. the percentage of immigrants and descendants from non-Western countries exceeds 50% or 2. The percentage of unemployed residents aged 18-64 (not counting residents undertaking education) exceeds 40% (Ministry of Social Affairs 2010:§61a).

many of them poor and with register at the social services department, highlighting potential issues of structural discrimination, I had found an El Dorado of managerial challenges, which would enable me to question the polished policy ideals of school leadership. In that regard, I very much saw Saxby School as an "extreme case" that, in the words of political scientist Bent Flyvbjerg, could "be well-suited for getting a point across in an especially dramatic way" (2006:229). Before embarking on fieldwork, I had thus already limited my study to explore school management. I was interested in learning about the emergence and the effects of managerial practices, and shadowing managers was a natural choice of method.

***An Anticipatory Approach***

In my experience, doing ethnography entails a strange combination of open-ended exploration and premature hopes of analytical closure. On the one hand, it is common to imagine that the research problem emerges through engagement with the field; through a study of informants' own political and epistemological processes of bounding and contextualizing (Marcus 1995:95-117, Candea 2009:25-46). On the other hand, it has also been acknowledged that this kind of openness risks producing an overload of data, creating anthropological anxieties of "indeterminacy," "incompleteness," and "arbitrariness" rather than a clear cut research problem (Strathern 1999:5-7, Candea 2009:33). Anthropologist Matei Candea criticizes the open-ended research strategy for producing the "paradox" that "the 'research design' must be a result of 'the ethnographic enquiry' – designed posterioiri – discovered in initially open-ended research" (Candea 2009:30). Instead, he recommends bounding the site and the object of study in

advance to avoid getting lost in the infinite magnitude of interesting emerging research problems.

Contrary to what one might hope for by following Candea's recommendation, my decision to study (and shadow) managers did not make it easy to frame the research design. The diversity of tasks, topics, and contexts in which school managers partake complicated this. My pre-decided "object" of inquiry turned out to be comprised of an excess of potential, overlapping management issues and did not provide an obvious vantage point from which to choose *what to study*.[60] Following school managers kept deferring the complexity of choosing "what to follow" to after fieldwork. I started each day by looking at their calendars, trying to get an overview. This disclosed a colorful mosaic of meetings, most of which had been booked a few days in advance, with teachers, with the school counselor team, with management team meetings, or with parents. Then there were the inter-institutional meetings, usually booked with longer notice, with the social services department and the school psychologist, municipal meetings that were either network meetings, project based meetings, or assessment meetings, and the managers' own educational activities. The principle of "following the actor" became difficult to adhere to with four managers at each school. Should I follow the managers to meetings in the municipality, to a meeting with a teacher team, sit

[60] Simply displacing the problem of context to the "field," to see how the school managers would problematize their own work, only amplified the sense of a surplus of contexts. As ethnomethodologist Lawrence Wieder reminds us, rather than a setting, "contexts" (or codes) are resources for people to account for their behaviors, which means that a context rarely stays the same (Wieder 1974:144-172).

with another manager and look at how she would file notifications on “vulnerable students” to the social service department?[61]

Staying with a manager in his or her office turned out to be more interesting than expected. The door was rarely closed and teachers, parents, and students came to the manager's offices, with problems, questions, laughs, gossip, documents, and concerns. During the energetic flow of conversations, it only took a few seconds to change the atmosphere from jolly joking to serious listening when stories were told about an unfortunate student, an inconsiderate parent, or a frustrated teacher. At both schools, the four managers went in and out of each other's offices, sharing stories and worries about the past and upcoming tasks. How did the conflict in the 5th year group end? How did it go with the teacher team meeting? Did they manage to change the schedule and plan structured teaching sessions for the most vulnerable students? Should they talk to a teacher about his difficulties in co-operation with the teacher team? How should they confront a teacher with the complaints they received about his abusive language in front of students?

Using the calendar as a guide to make decisions about who to follow became even more difficult when I learned that the managers were often not faithful to them. Sudden crises often summoned the managers to other places and changed their current prioritizations. Such incidents forced the managers to move around the school's property, to solve trouble at the playground, the neighbor's property, or in a class corridor. I made decisions at least on an hourly basis throughout fieldwork

[61] I imagine that similar difficulties emerge when the actor is a non-human if one understands an “actor” as a network with always more than one traces to follow (cf. Strathern 1996a:517)

about "who to follow" but with no explicit question in mind, only the sense that "this is interesting!"[62]

The ongoing movement between pre-determined bounding and exploratory openness comes down to a distinction between the starting point and end of analysis: it is impossible to know from the beginning the full range of factors that will be relevant to the analysis. The effect is that one collects a lot of "data" that has not yet become "information" for a specific research problem (Strathern 1999:5-7). While analytical and methodological choices and delimitations can be made in advance, it remains, in my experience, difficult to know from the start what will be important later in the process. Thus, it is rather impossible to account for all the choices, which I made during fieldwork. I made choices in a strange mixture of confusion, (changing) gut-feeling, coincidence, and excitement.

### Saxby and Fjelde Schools

One major decision warrants explanation: my choice to visit a second school. During my fieldwork at Saxby School, one thing continued to puzzle me: the hectic days of 'putting out fires' bore little relation to how the school managers described their work to me in a theoretical lingua full of references to Niklas Luhmann and theories based on social constructivism. Their self-descriptions, emphasizing reflexivity and thinking through perspectives, contrasted with their daily interactions where much effort was put into simply keeping up with a practice that continued to overwhelm them with unplanned incidents, accidents, demands, and surprises. It was difficult to see exactly which difference the

[62] To me, this open-endedness was not only associated with negative emotions and anxieties, as Candea laments, but also produced tremendous excitement and interest.

manifold references to "reflexivity" and sociological theories made. These theories, I thought, did not appear to be what was most important in this hectic everyday life.[63] I characterize this puzzlement as an "ethnographic moment," which Strathern defines as "a relation which joins the understood (what is analyzed at the moment of observation) to a need to understand (what is observed at the moment of analysis)" (Strathern 1999:12). An ethnographic moment, then, is not the "field's voice" breaking through to the ethnographer. It emerges in the encounter between field, observation, and analysis.

After half a year at Saxby School, I decided to visit a similar school to follow the "contrast" between a strange managerial celebration of social theory and what appeared to me as a chaotic practice. A friend introduced me to Fjelde School, which shares many characteristics with Saxby School, including its location in a disadvantaged, urban area and an explicit commitment to inclusion through making teachers' reflexivity an object of management.

I will not, however, claim that they are "representative" of schools working with inclusion in socially deprived areas. While they share some overall characteristics, there are also important differences. Fjelde School is built in 2000. The current manager influenced both the design of the architecture and the hiring of staff. Saxby School, on the other hand, is the result of a hastily carried out merger of three schools in 2008; a process that was resisted by the teaching staff, in the local community, and affected a replacement of the management team. Fjelde School defies national statistics with its high rate of students continuing in youth education. In the municipality, the school is highlighted as an exceptional school

[63] As the reflexivity debates in anthropology remind us (Fabian 1983, Sarukkai 1997:pp. 1406-1409), this surprise to some extent discloses more about my own expectations about the kind of work, which theory should do, than the managers'.

due to its constant focus on development and its cutting-edge work with social inclusion and the newest pedagogical ideas. Further, it enjoys positive representation in reports and media.

Saxby School has different conditions. After the merger, it inherited a deficit of four million DKK, leaving hardly any resources for pedagogical or organizational development. The school management team described their management task as extremely challenging as many teachers were against the merger before politicians decided that it would be realized. According to the managers, this has influenced the teachers' attitude to building up the new school. As I describe more carefully in Chapter Six, the managers also found it difficult to introduce inclusive pedagogical principles to the staff whereas Fjelde School has worked with this pedagogy from its birth. Due to much negative media attention during the merger and a local perception of the school as a "garbage can school," as one manager put it, parents to a larger extent choose to send their children to other schools. As a result, the school has lost approximately 1/3 of its students within 1 ½ years, increasing the economic pressure (in Denmark, the funding follows the student). When I met with administrators of Saxby's School's municipality, they likewise commented on how exceptional it was, but this time in relation to the challenging management tasks it faces, because of its economy, the negative media attention, the "children group," and the "teacher culture."

***Arbitrary Locations and Site-dependent Knowledge***

This retrospective framing of the research design might raise questions about to what extent my conclusions can be generalized and to what extent I describe the two schools as "ideal cases" for the study of inclusion. Limits to generalization are often considered to undermine the idea of case studies as a scientific method, a

critique that emerges from a natural scientific ideal of representation (Flyvbjerg 2006:224). An objection to my project might be that Saxby and Fjelde are not "representative" and that I should have studied schools working with the so-called "LP-model"[64] in middle class communities.[65]

However, such questions also assume that the ambition of research is to produce general, context-independent knowledge. Such a mode of questioning also assumes that we can learn about "wholes" by looking at "parts." As Strathern reminds us connecting parts to wholes is an analytic activity and such connections can at best be partial; there are always new possibilities of re-describing empirical material in order for them to become parts of different "wholes" (Strathern 2004, see also Huen 2009:149-169, Tsing 2010).

Instead of "ideal cases" which assume representativity, I characterize the two schools through Candea's notion of "arbitrary locations." In contrast to "ideal cases," an "arbitrary location" is:

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[64] The LP-model is one of the most popular technologies in Denmark to work with inclusion and pedagogical development, with the "L" signifying "learning environment" and the "P" signifying "pedagogical analysis." It is described as a "tool for development and cultural change in organizations" and its "results are based on scientific research" (University College Nordjylland, see also Hansen and Nordahl 2009). According to the Danish "LP-website," 82 municipalities, 554 schools, 110 public day care facilities, 220.874 students, and 29.418 employees work with this model (University College Nordjylland).

[65] Expectations about relations between a "particular location" and a "general issue" also go the other way. In the course of presenting my research to fellow scholars I have often faced questions of why it is not a thesis about the structural re-production of racial discrimination or categorizations, considering the majority of ethnic minorities in these schools. It seems that both this thesis' "locations" and "research problem" are part of always-already configured network of sociological research imaginaries, inviting for certain kinds of problematizations, places, and analysis (cf. Brown 2010).

> One with no overarching 'meaning' or 'consistency', … to remember that all these heterogeneous people, things and processes are 'thrown' together, and to question, in the evidence of their uneasy overlap in one geographical space, the completeness of the 'cultural formations' to which one might be tempted to think they 'belong'. (Candea 2009:37)

The concept of "arbitrary location" is an ontological statement about the field site. Instead of claiming that these sites are parts of particular wholes, "arbitrary location" assumes that there is no overall "context" that will provide an explanatory account. Of course, working with inclusion was an important managerial task at both schools I visited. But inclusion was not the only context and I could have chosen different framings and points of focus at both schools. Characterizing a site as arbitrary, underscores that the contextualizing move is an analytical one, which cuts through the many networks and issues in which the two schools take part.

Candea's idea of "arbitrary locations" invokes a different aesthetic than the classic idea of the "case study." The field sites are not seen as "parts" of larger "wholes." Instead, the arbitrary location serves "as 'control' for a broader abstract object of study" (Candea 2009:38).[66] If all locations to some extent are arbitrary, in the sense that they do not belong to one single, overarching "whole," research will always take place in "non-ideal" locations. This implies that any school manager who works with achieving inclusion through reflexivity is simultaneously involved in many other problems and concerns, which overlap and interfere with inclusion. The concept of arbitrary locations, however, does not entail a weakening of knowledge claims. At stake is not the classic case-dictum where findings from one case can be generalized and used to identify properties of other

[66] Thanks to anthropologist Nils Ole Bubandt for pointing out to me how "arbitrary location" partly alludes to a classic scientific ideal of "random sample."

schools. Rather, *no place* holds inclusion as the one, overarching meaning. That inclusion is entangled with other agendas and concerns is the premise for studying inclusion at *any location*.

Generating knowledge about reflexivity and inclusive school management, then, is not a question about generating context independent knowledge. It is exactly the virtue of having, not one, but many overlapping contexts, that makes these locations interesting places for my research interest. Of course, specific characteristics related to the location of the schools in socially disadvantaged areas are important factors contributing to the specific enactments of reflexivity that I analyze. But they are far from being the only factors and they do not have the status of "causes." Indeed, considering the differences I found between these two schools, one might argue that there are other equally important differences than that of social-economic status if one is to understand how reflexivity matters. As empirical philosopher Annemarie Mol puts it, in relation to health care: "I avoid assuming that what happens in a single hospital forms part of a larger system of medicine. (…) where is the standard way of understanding medicine as a system to be found? (…) And where are the surprises that come with finding 'variations'?" (Mol 2002:2). In relation to managing inclusion, there is no standard form of reflexivity either, only different "versions" or "enactments."

When I only claim to speak of the situations I analyze it is not to say that my analyses are irrelevant to other schools working with inclusion. Whether this is or will be the case, however, is not for me to decide but is in the hands of school managers who may read my thesis or learn about it through other means. The findings of this thesis, then, are "good examples" of how reflexivity matters in managerial practices that are busy accomplishing a range of different tasks, one of

which is including students. They may resonate with experiences at other locations but there is no guarantee of this.

### Comparisons

Comparisons are a central part of this thesis' method assemblage. Comparisons involve constructing scales through which differences and similarities appear. In some respects, comparison is not different from any other method: it entails an artificial set-up (in this case a scale), which allows for the emergence of differences. The more constructed something is, as Latour notes, the more "real" it becomes as constructions generate articulations (Latour 2004:205-229). In this section I want to elaborate on the productive effects of comparison, not only as effects of having two locations, but properties of "time" and "writing." Vis-à-vis my discussion in Chapter Two regarding how knowledge is constructed, analysis is not a result of a disembodied perspective *onto* something. Rather, perspective, or vision, is situated and distributed in a heterogeneous practice (cf. Haraway 1995:179). In my study, various comparative movements produced a range of such perspectives, locating them firmly in mundane practices of writing this thesis and not just in a choice of concepts.

Going to Fjelde School after my fieldwork at Saxby opened up for "comparisons" as my choice of a "similar site" with "similar pedagogical and theoretical commitments" provided an (artificial) scale from which I could elicit "variations" and "differences." This construction of a scale was an analytical choice emerging from the previously described "ethnographic moment." This bounding had the productive effect of narrowing the indeterminacy, which had characterized my fieldwork at Saxby School. At both schools, the managers' adherence to sociological theories, inclusive pedagogy, and an ideal of reflexivity were central

aspects of their self-descriptions. I also found that dealing with interruptions constituted a significant aspect of managerial tasks at both schools.

Inclusion was important as many of the interruptions, at both schools, usually were sparked by challenges teachers faced when working with "students with special needs."[67] The limitation of my study to inclusion allowed me to focus on the translations of the idea of reflexivity in relation to this topic. Having two locations, and a scale on which to make comparisons, had the epistemological effect that my "ethnographic moment" changed from a general puzzlement to an analytical object: reflexivity in relation to managing inclusion. This only became obvious to me after fieldwork when I could compare field notes between the two schools.

While the exercise of making comparisons enabled the analytical movements of limitation, organizing data, and eliciting details while avoiding an overload of information, this form of knowing, of course, also involves reification.[68] One potential side-effect of having done research in two schools is that my comparisons of reflexivity are read as signposts that a singular and homogenous form of reflexivity exists within each school. This is far from the case as comparisons can also be made within each school. As Strathern writes, "the more closely you look, the more detailed things are bound to become" (Strathern 2004:viii). Once I decided to look closely at the practices surrounding what

[67] That the "problems" were described as an effect of the students' "behavior" rather than "culture," "religion," or "ethnicity" became an important reason for me to frame my research in relation to "inclusion."

[68] Although reification is not considered a virtue in certain qualitative social science studies, it is impossible to avoid in a written account. As Strathern writes, "it is a cultural curiosity that reification is of course frequently attacked for its very obvious properties – for being an edifice of knowledge, and thus obviously artifice." (Strathern 1999:14)

managers referred to as "reflexivity," variations between and within each school became visible. In that sense, the complexity of reflexivity remains constant across "levels" of observation. What may appear to be a singularity and homogeneity in contrast between the different schools can also appear as multiple when compared to more enactments within each school.[69]

The knowledge I wish to produce through making comparisons is thus not of differences between "locations," "schools," or "managers." The two locations allow me to discuss different configurations of reflexivity to engage with a broader problematic: namely, what happens when schools are expected to question themselves in order to become inclusive through reflexivity? While policy imagines reflexivity as a means to achieving inclusion in specific ways, my analyses point to crucial translations of this endeavor. Besides discovering the hardly surprising difference between real and ideal, these differences generated their own analytical contrasts to be followed.

Reducing the comparative act to a question of different field locations and "enactments" is far too limited. The first 1 ½ years of working on this thesis were characterized by movements back and forth between the "field" and the "desk," where each offered "a perspective on the other" (cf. Strathern 1999:1). "Follow up" observations and interviews never failed to bring the effect that my interpretations of field data at the desk had failed to grasp other, equally important aspects that I needed to attend to. Such "encounters" have brought me to add new chapters and to rewrite old ones. In the final part of the doctoral process, during

[69] This is also the case with Annemarie Mol's exploration of how a disease is a multiple object (Mol 2002). While she distinguishes between different versions of arthrosclerosis by comparing its enactments in different medical spaces, STS scholar Nana Benjaminsen has illustrated how objects can also be multiple within the same space (Benjaminsen 2009).

the so-called "write up," the comparative effect between "field" and "desk" was replicated at the desk when I re-read old field notes and transcripts, which provided "new" perspectives on almost finished analyses, reminding me about important details that I had forgotten during writing.

Finally, new possibilities for comparisons emerged as new the different chapters were written. For instance, writing about policy documents in Chapter Four helped sharpen my own understanding of "practice." Writing that chapter, of course, enabled the expected comparisons between how reflexivity is imagined as a medium to achieve inclusive schools from different political and pedagogical centers and its enactments in concrete management practices. Similar effects were generated as I wrote the four ethnographic chapters. Each new chapter made new aspects in older chapters appear, resulting in reordering of boundaries, relevance, data, and conclusions. Lastly, but equally important, there is the important reiterative engagements with different literatures and people, who continued to provide interesting contrasts and inspirations for the development of arguments.

### Studying Reflexivity

Stating that I study "how reflexivity matters" is hardly enough to describe how this thesis came about. There are at least two aspects to consider. The first regards how I have looked for "reflexivity" in my empirical material: how did I "recognize" reflexivity when I went from "following managers" in the field to "following reflexivity" at the desk, looking through field notes, interviews, and documents? The second set of questions regards the particular enactments of reflexivity I analyze: which status do they hold and why did I choose these particular enactments?

As I discussed in Chapter One, reflexivity is a theoretically laden term used in different ways to explain the social. While I do engage with these debates in the thesis and find them important, they do not define how I "recognize" reflexivity in my empirical material. However, if I had to choose one guiding concept of reflexivity it could be the processual idea in ethnomethodology that sociality is re-created with every action (Garfinkel 1967). Yet, as an empirical concept, as will become clear in Chapter Four, reflexivity is articulated as a medium, which can *change* sociality. In contrast, Garfinkel's notion of reflexivity is used to account for the reiterative and auto-organizing aspects of sociality. To some extent, I *do* analyze the empirical concept of reflexivity through Garfinkel's notion of reflexivity, to see how any attempt to "escape" and "change" practice through "reflexivity" is reflexively constituted as a part of that practice. However, as the sentence also illustrates, such double usage of the term generates more confusion than clarity. When I use the word "reflexivity" in the analyses, it is thus first and foremost as an empirical concept, with reference to what does or does not *count as* reflexivity for the school managers. It is thus the study of a particular *idea* of reflexivity: how it is enacted and with which effects.

***Reflexivity as Enacted***

Reflexivity can be many different things, not only in the literature discussed in Chapter One but also in my empirical data. Reflexivity both takes the form of a verb, something one can *do* as in "reflecting"; the form of an object, a reification of the verb into something a school and teachers can "have" and which managers can work to "implement"; and as an adjective: something someone can *be* as in being a "reflexive person." Sometimes "reflexive" is described as something the school needs to become in order to better include students, and sometimes

reflexivity is depicted through a social technology to help to achieve this, or simply discussed as something "lacking." What individual managers recognize as reflexivity also changes. They might use the term to refer to specific practices of evaluating a teaching process or to how they have interpreted teachers' attitudes to students. It moreover does not seem to bother the managers that the theories they use to advocate more reflexivity have very different definitions.[70]

In addition, what is made *the object* of reflexivity differs. These objects range from the teachers' attitudes and practices over the school's "vision" and "values" to individual students' behavior and family conditions. Even reflexivity itself is occasionally turned into an object of the managers' reflexivity, for instance, if they worry that some of the teachers spend too much time being reflexive, rendering them unable to make a decision and "act." The managers at Fjelde School thematize this issue in their "Theoretical Foundation," which after pages of theory, many of them advocating reflexivity, presents a picture titled *The Nightmare of Reflexivity :-))*, depicting a man looking fairly miserable, alone in a barrel in the middle of the sea.

[70] For instance, in one of the school's documents, educational sociologist Lars Qvortrup's (Qvortrup and Qvortrup 2006b) Donald Schön-inspired (Schön 1991) notion of reflexivity, defining reflexivity to be related to thinking and transgressing cultural codes, is used to reiterate Ulrich Beck's notion of reflexivity (Beck 1998), which entertains the very opposite definition.

"The Nightmare of Reflexivity :-))" from Fjelde School's Theoretical Leadership Foundation

Given this situation, it is not surprising that an ongoing challenge in writing this thesis has been the changing status of the term. As STS scholar Casper Bruun Jensen notes in relation to a different research project, "there is something evidently troubling" in being unable to straightforwardly state what one is studying (Jensen 2010:20, Jensen 2004). Instead of choosing one form and ignoring the others, my strategy has been to not decide in advance what counts as reflexivity but explore the multiple, overlapping and sometimes contradictory ways in which "it" is enacted. By referring to the different examples as *enactments* of reflexivity, I intend emphasize that reflexivity is "done" (cf. Mol 2002).

Depicting reflexivity as different enactments is a specific way of asking how reflexivity matters. It entails tracing which actants are involved, what counts as reflexivity, how it is constituted, and which effects it brings about: which

possibilities, limitations, and accountability relations do these specific enactments of reflexivity encourage? In that regard, reflexivity cannot be dissected from the practices in which "it" emerges. And by emergence I do not only mean that school managers recognize something or someone as "reflexive" in a specific situation, but also that they sometimes evaluate that reflexivity is missing and as a direct consequence take certain actions. As Derrida reminds us, every absence also constitutes a presence when something becomes visible as an absence (Derrida 1982).

An effect of this fluidity of the object of study is that my chapters range from rather detailed descriptions of how documents are filled out, as in Chapter Seven and Eight, to comparisons of episodes where teachers' reflexivity is rendered visible through conflicts, as in Chapter Six. There is not *one* "micro" or "macro" scale for reflexivity and not *one* form. The enactments of reflexivity include both general managerial expectations in Chapter Six, a social technology in Chapter Seven, and as a principle guiding an organizational development process in Chapter Eight. The idea of reflexivity is enacted in very different kinds of managerial practice and with very different objectives and effects. My analyses both attend to how managerial practices enact the idea of reflexivity, for instance, by evoking the term, and which effects this has, for instance, in legitimizing certain decisions.

With "managerial practices" I refer to ANT's concept of "practice." As I described in the previous chapter, I take practice to be an on-going process of construction and maintenance, involving all kinds of heterogeneous actants, including the managers' actions, theories of practice that they have read (I describe some of them in Chapter Four), and more mundane entities such as a closed door or a phone call, as I discuss in Chapter Five. Following ANT's concept of translation,

the idea of reflexivity can neither be reduced to a cause or effect of managerial practices. It both *transforms* managerial practices, for instance by providing certain hopes and theories about how practice can be changed, and *is transformed* as "it" is enacted by and as part of managerial practices (cf. Latour 1997).

When selecting the different examples to analyze, it was important to allow for contrasts to emerge: these include different ways of disposing of complexity and the difference between "using" reflexivity in response to *particular* challenges, as in Chapter Six and Seven, and in response to organizing a *general* change, as in Chapter Eight. Comparing these enactments of reflexivity allows me to focus on the contrast between managerial strategies of detachment and attachment, highlighting two endpoints of a continuum of possible managerial interventions when teachers experience inclusion to be challenging. All enactments exemplify how reflexivity is involved in rather different managerial strategies for handling complexity. They also show departures from the *ideal version* of reflexivity I analyze in Chapter Four. These different enactments do not add up to an integrated whole of possible versions of reflexivity, but they do illustrate the variety in how the idea of reflexivity "behaves" when taken up in managerial practices.

### Summing up

In this chapter, I have discussed a range of empirical and methodological conditions and choices for the study of inclusive management and reflexivity. I have presented the two schools and the methods I have made use of, discussing the particular conditions shaping the "performance" of these methods and an important "ethnographic moment." I have discussed questions of generalization and representation, and highlighted comparison as an analytical, mundane move much more permeating than simply having two locations, as it is strongly situated

in practices of writing. Finally, I have discussed the principles guiding my "recognition" of reflexivity in the empirical material and accounted for my choice of different "enactments."

My choice of neither pre-defining what reflexivity should look like, nor concluding which of these practices is the "really" reflexive, underscores one important lesson from my fieldwork and analyses: there is a lot of uncertainty involved in enacting and defining the term. This thesis is a specific exploration and enactment of this uncertainty, alongside and through the efforts of school managers, to understand what it can mean to work with reflexivity.

# Chapter Four

## The Emergence of Inclusion and Promises of Reflexivity

### Introduction

In this chapter, I explore the emergence of the Danish policy of inclusive schools and the assumptions coming with the concept of reflexivity, which is articulated as a central method to accomplish inclusion in key policy documents. The knowledge practices of special needs education, referred to as "integration," are seen as fomenting exclusion, counter-intuitively resulting in a segregated society. This is explained as due to the primary focus of integration efforts on the diagnosis and referral of students to special needs education (Tomlinson 1987:33-41, Thomas and Loxley 2001). In turn, scholars and policy makers depict inclusion and reflexivity as a response to the unintended consequences of integration (Alenkær 2008, Thomas and Loxley 2001, Danish Ministry of Education 2003b). Inclusion, however, also constructs new objects of governance (cf. Rose 1996a:37-64). Where the philosophy underpinning integration locates special needs *in children*, an inclusive approach operates on the understanding that children with special needs are *the results* of institutional and pedagogical practices, categories, and cultures. This framing simultaneously turns *practice* into the main problem and object of intervention, and *teachers* into especially important objects of management as they become responsible for changing practice.

My strategy for exploring the establishment of the policy agenda of inclusion and its links to reflexivity is as follows. *First*, I account for the international academic literature on integration and inclusion in order to show how integration has hitherto been problematized. *Second*, I focus on the Danish development of inclusion as a policy agenda from the early 1990s and onwards, attending to both the rhetorical framing of inclusion and the establishment of new expertise. *Third,*

in order to understand how reflexivity emerged as a response to the perceived problems with "integration," I argue that it is not sufficient to examine *exclusively* policy documents and legislative changes directly related to inclusion. I therefore look into overlapping policy agendas where there are striking similarities in ideas of reflexivity, suggesting that policy makers drew on an already existing vocabulary of organizing cultural change through reflexivity. To explore the assumptions coming with the concept of reflexivity, I *fourth* examine Donald Schön's notion of *The Reflective Practitioner* (Schön 1991). Schön's work is an important reference in much managerial literature and even more so in pedagogical literature on inclusion. Schön's framing exhibits a dualistic conception between "practice" and "thinking." I discuss how this generates the idea that the most important resources for achieving inclusion exist as a potential within each individual teacher, only waiting to be realized through the reflexive questioning of his or her "tacit knowledge." I conclude with a depiction of reflexivity as a *potentiality machine* as the rhetoric on reflexivity generates an infinite movement towards realizing new potential from existing practices.

### Problematizing Integration

In June 1994, delegates from 92 countries and 25 international organizations met in Salamanca, Spain, at a UNESCO conference to further the agenda of "education for all" (UNESCO 1994). The resulting Salamanca Statement is considered an important event by the international community working to create equal educational opportunities (Evans, Lunt, Wedell and Dyson 1999).[71] The Statement

[71]This, of course, is not the first time that the concept of inclusion was articulated among policy makers. German sociologist Rudolf Stichweh has traced it back to a French publication in 1974 by René Lenoir, the then Secretary of State for Social Action (Stichweh 1997:123-136). In USA,

declares that all children should be granted equal access to common schools, which, in turn, should accommodate students with special needs through a pedagogy focused on the individual. Several scholars and advocates depict inclusive schooling as a radical "paradigm shift" requiring a "new ethics" that affirms all students as equal and acknowledging diversity as a resource (Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education 2008:1, Thomas and Loxley 2001, Danish Ministry of Education 2003b:111, Carrington 1999:257-268, Skrtic 1991:148-206, Ainscow 1995:63-77, Lipsky and Gartner 2005:45-55, Sebba and Sachdev 1997, Slee 2001:167-177, UNESCO 2000).

Since at least the mid-1980s, scholars from educational sociology critical of the "paradigm" of integration have asserted that notions of the "normal student" and the "student with special needs" are social constructs, as opposed to objectively discovered medical categories (e.g. Barton 1987, Oliver 1986:5-18, Skrtic 1991:148-206, Tomlinson 1987:33-41). Some critiques even depict the special needs education system as an "industry" engaged in a never-ending process of developing methods and tools for diagnosis, fuelling the *demand* for their expertise and special needs education (Fulcher 1989, Fuchs and Fuchs 2005:157-183, Slee 2001:167-177). The Danish scholar Jens Andersen for example proposes that "diagnoses are popular as they acquit … [teachers] from the heavy burdens of life" and asks whether "some of the current diagnoses make it too easy to escape life while the accountable are freed from responsibility" (Andersen 2009:171). Even if other scholars distance themselves from such descriptions, characterizing them as "conspiracy theories…[presupposing an]

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where the segregation of populations was problematized much earlier than Europe, a "common school movement" emerged in the second half of the 19th century (Riehl Spring 2000:55) and in the UK, policies towards mainstreaming have been in place since the early 1980s (Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education 2008:1).

intentionality in the system" (Thomas and Loxley 2001:5), it is nevertheless commonly acknowledged that practitioners' commitments – which are "presumably affected by attitude and belief" (Sebba and Sachdev 1997:47) – contribute to the production and maintenance of the category (and thus, exclusion of) students with special needs.

By characterizing her approach to special needs education as engaged in questioning "the part professionals and practitioners play in the social and cultural reproduction of a particular class in our society" (Tomlinson in Thomas and Loxley 2001:4), sociologist Sally Tomlinson, for example, casts the attitudes and assumptions of the teachers as an important cause of the construction of special needs. Special education scholars Gary Thomas and Thomas Loxley similarly claim practices of segregation and exclusion to be an effect of "certain kinds of mindsets and professional systems which accentuate rather than attenuate difference" (Thomas and Loxley 2001:46). By depicting commitment to medical diagnoses as a matter of "faith" in a scientific epistemology, which can accurately diagnose students, they suggest that this "faith" should be replaced: "Faith certainly remains in the seductive 'fix-its' of special needs education. Partly, this is because the mindset and methodology underpinning this faith – of diagnosis and supposed cure – have an enduring allure" (Thomas and Loxley 2001:44). The title of their best-selling book *Deconstructing Special Education and Constructing Inclusion* suggests that achieving inclusion is a matter of ("faith" in) "deconstruction" rather than in "scientific epistemology".

This problematizing of inclusion renders the pedagogical-psychological and medical practices of diagnosis controversial: they are no longer seen as objective knowledge but as embedded in contingent professional knowledge practices. Rather than a diagnosis of children (deemed to have special needs), inclusion

entails a "diagnosis" of special need *practices* and the various categories deemed to *construct* special needs. As I argued in Chapter One, inclusion can thus be seen as the reflexive version of integration – as a set of practices and a modality of knowing turned back on itself. To a great extent, the feasibility of this reflexive "turning back" has been enabled by scholars who explicated the historical contingent dynamics of discipline embedded in the power-knowledge regime of special needs education.

### The Danish Trajectory of Inclusion

A brief history of the special needs educational system will be helpful in understanding how the Danish policy agenda of inclusion emerged, as inclusion represents the aim to replace special needs education. It is outside the scope of the thesis to account in detail for this history and the following account is only intended to form a background for my subsequent analysis of how special needs education is problematized with inclusion.

The first segregation of students began in Copenhagen around 1900 with the so-called "protected classes" ("værneklasser"). In 1937, special needs education was introduced with the Primary Education Act, and in 1943, a government circular introduced categories such as "deficient in intelligence" and "visually impaired" (Egelund 2004:37-58, Danish Ministry of Finance 2010). By 1958, the establishment of special needs education had become a legal requirement, replacing the existing "special classes" ("særklasser"). Special needs education activities increased and by 1963, the quota of students had grown from around 1 % to 8 % (Egelund 2004:37-58, Danish Ministry of Finance 2010). During the 1960s, the first critiques of special needs education emerged. Critics questioned to what extent special needs education had any effect, and whether segregation rather than

helping students resulted in "deviant careers" (Egelund 2004:37-58, Danish Ministry of Finance 2010). In 1968, for example, a Danish report critical of special needs education concluded that "supportive learning environments" helped "special needs" students better than special "reading classes," suggesting that segregation was not needed to educate students with special needs (Tordrup 1968:172-201).

The 1970s involved a "fundamental shift" (Danish Ministry of Finance 2010:40), as the concept of special needs was expanded from primarily encompassing students diagnosed with physical handicaps and bad scholarly skills to include their general social and psychological functionality. For example, the Primary Education Act of 1975 defines special needs education as for "children whose development needs a special consideration or support," which brought about a further increase in referrals to special needs education (Danish Ministry of Finance 2010:40).[72]

Parallel to this development, alternative concepts also emerged. In the 1980s, a popular idea was the "single integration" of students with special needs, and schools experimented with including children with Down's Syndrome in ordinary classes (Danish Ministry of Education 2003a:14). In 1990, a new statuary for special needs education followed up on these tendencies and required teachers to involve the teaching principle of *flexibility* in teaching methods to retain more

[72] In the English literature, the widening of the concept was introduced in 1978 with the English "Warnoch report," which introduced the term "special needs education" to replace the term "special education." It advocated schools to offer special needs education to "all students who could not follow the ordinary teaching, regardless of the kind or cause of these difficulties" and estimated that approximately 20 % of all students needed this support. Depicting this report as an important moment facilitating the widespread special needs education in Denmark, the Danish Ministry of Finance in 2010 commented that "Denmark followed this development" (Danish Ministry of Finance 2010:40).

students with special needs in the common school (Danish Ministry of Education 1990). This was followed by the campaign *A School for All*, initiated by the Ministry of Education, Local Government Denmark, and Danish Union of Teachers in 1990-91. Even if the term of "inclusion" did not emerge before the 1990s with the Salamanca Statement, the idea certainly had precedents.

In the next section I focus on the emergence of the policy agenda of inclusion by looking at documents, primarily produced by the Danish Ministry of Education and Local Government Denmark. To understand how inclusion gained significance and momentum in Denmark, I propose that we need to consider two different periods. I *first* discuss how, in the early 1990s, inclusion emerged as part of a new pedagogical orientation of Danish education policy, and, *second*, how inclusion became a formalized agenda in the 2000s.

### *The 1993 Act*

While the Salamanca Statement from 1994 is internationally considered a very important event, it did not lead to direct changes in the Danish legislation. This may be because the Primary Education Act of 1993 had *already* required schools to organize teaching and methods to accommodate individual students' needs in accordance with pedagogical and organizational principles entailed in the Salamanca Statement (Danish Ministry of Education 2003a:14). The 1993 Act comprises the most comprehensive changes to the Primary Education Act since the establishment of "the comprehensive school" in the 1970s, and has been depicted as "a new beginning for organizing [the school]" (Danish Ministry of Education 2000:43). While only a small part of the Act speaks to special needs education (Danish Parliament 1993:§18), it serves as a key referent in many policy

papers on inclusion (e.g. Danish Ministry of Education 2003b:11, Danish Ministry of Education 2003a:14).

The 1993 Act introduced the principle of differentiation of teaching (also central in inclusive pedagogies, which I discuss later), the organization of teachers in teams, along with new accountability measures of evaluation and quality development. Looking back at the schools' development hitherto, the Danish Ministry of Education in 2000 describes these three changes as:

> (...) complex because they stressed that the operation of the school needed to ... take into account processes of involvement and cooperation which earlier were not necessary in the individual teacher's work. The students and their learning could no longer be reduced to a product of the individual teacher's work. The school had to see the children and the teaching in new perspectives and from new angles in order to organize the learning environment the best way. Teaching and learning as standardized activities existed under straightened circumstances after the '93 Act. (Danish Ministry of Education 2000:43).

As social anthropologists Cris Shore and Susan Wright have noted, the narrative reconstruction of the past as problematic is a common tactic to clear the way for new policies (Shore and Wright 1997:3).[73] The Ministry of Education's account entails a distancing from an (imagined) past organization of the school, which apparently did not take sufficiently account for processes of involvement or collegial cooperation, and in which teaching was too standardized. Teaching differentiation, evaluation, and team organization, on the other hand, are described as geared to make the school meet a "modern" society.

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[73] As Strathern reminds us, imagining society as "modern" versus "traditional" entails inventing "tradition as pre-modern," a term which "traditional" societies probably do not know themselves by (Strathern 1996b:40). This distinction entails imagining the "pre-modern" as a period with "unchallenged certainties" (Giddens in Strathern 1996b:41). A similar rhetoric (and imagination of the past) is found here.

While the pedagogical principles entailed in the 1993 Act are described in this hopeful, future-generating rhetoric (cf. Jensen 2005:241-267), the Ministry of Education also discovered that "traditional" forms of teaching were still dominant throughout the 1990s, and that the goal of attaining a more diverse student population through differentiation of teaching had not been reached. This resulted in new campaigns for differentiation of teaching and for turning the school into a "flexible organization" (Danish Ministry of Education 2003a:14, Danish Ministry of Education 2000). In 1997, the Ministry of Education moreover published a statistical survey of the number of students referred to special needs education in the period 1993-1995, the first extensive survey since 1989 (Danish Ministry of Education 1997).[74] This report highlights that the share of the total number of students referred to special needs education had grown from 12.6 % to 13.3 %, which was read as indicating that the schools had not sufficiently implemented the new pedagogical principles of flexible and individual teaching organization *despite* the 1993 Act and the Salamanca Statement (Danish Ministry of Finance 2010, Danish Ministry of Education 1997, Danish Ministry of Education 2003a:1-63).

As the pedagogical principles of flexibility and differentiation of the 1993 Act are considered key elements in the organization of inclusive schools (Alenkær 2009, Reid 2005:180), it is hardly surprising to find identical distinctions and calls for a break with "out-dated" pedagogical practices in policy documents on inclusion ten years later. In their 2003 publication, *The Inclusive School: From Idea to Action*,

[74] The Ministry of Education produces annual statistical information on the number of students receiving special needs education in the common schools. Since 2000/01 they have also been in charge of statistical data on students in the so-called extensive special needs education, which earlier resided with the then Association of County Councils (Amtrådsforeningen) (Danish Ministry of Education 2003a:17).

for example, the Danish Ministry of Education defines inclusion as "a confrontation with frozen pedagogical traditions and positions and a focus on reflexivity over the school's practice and quality thinking" (2003b:7). Similar rhetoric is deployed by Local Government Denmark, who in their campaigns *The Inclusive School* (2004) and *New Perspectives on the School* (2010) asserts that "an inclusive school says goodbye to leveling ("ligemageri") and standards and hello to seeing the individual child as part of the community and to making a difference" (Local Government Denmark 2004:4). These publications argue that inclusion is possible if only the principles of the 1993 Act are fully realized through focusing on "children's learning" and by organizing teaching flexibly: "Flexibility is a (...) characteristic of the inclusive school because flexibility creates the possibility to make a difference" (Local Government Denmark 2004:4). This break is even more strongly expressed by Danish special needs education scholar Niels Egelund who in a government sponsored publication formulates inclusion as a need to break with the mindset of "the industrial society" in order to accomplish inclusion. According to him, this entails rethinking class teaching:

> In *one* class there was a number of students from a year group and they had to be taught by *one* teacher who divided the lesson in examinations of the subject-matter from the former lesson (...), going through a new subject matter and an independent exercise. This was the school's answer to the assembly line of the industry. Effective, clean and easy to administer. (Egelund 2003:44, orginial emphasis)

The pedagogical principles introduced with the 1993 Act thus reappear in key policy documents on inclusion and provide a critique of "standardized" solutions

such as "one teacher," "one [homogeneous] class," and one "subject matter." [75] The way in which these policy documents problematize the present entails a teleological belief in a future organization of a *better* and *modern* school based on principles of pluralism, flexibility, and inclusion.

This problematizing of the school is important for understanding how *reflexivity* came to be considered a resource. The rhetoric produced with the 1993 Act and reiterated in various inclusion policy documents some ten years later suggests that changing practice entails changing teachers' *attitudes* and *mindsets*. Existing pedagogical ideals are consistently referred to as "standardized" and "traditional." Such articulations inevitably assume that teachers need to embrace the new ideals through "reflexivity" or "new perspectives" for their practice to change.

***The Condensation of Inclusion in the 2000s***

Throughout the 2000s, the political agenda of inclusion gradually became more tangible through a steady flow of policy documents from the Danish Ministry of Education and Local Government Denmark, further articulating the agenda of inclusion in future-oriented rhetoric. Inclusion, however, has not gained its current political status simply because bureaucrats have highlighted it in policy documents. The development also comprises new legislation, the enrolment of municipalities, and the construction of new institutions and expertise.

[75] Pors has depicted this increased focus on flexibility as a general paradigm of "innovation." This entails, that the school is encouraged to question organizational categories and to consider learning processes as its main objective (Pors 2011:266).

In 2000, the Parliament passed an amendment to the Primary Education Act, which changed the relationship between counties and municipalities[76] by increasing the municipalities' economic responsibility and by enforcing the rule that each student's special needs education should take place as close to his or her local community as possible (Jydebjerg and Hallberg 2006, Danish Ministry of Finance 2010). While the counties are responsible for special schools, the municipalities are responsible for the special needs education in the common school. The perception was that the economic incentive for municipals to retain students in the common school was inadequate (Danish Ministry of Finance 2010). The change in legislation thus involved new types of binding cooperation and raised the counties' tariffs considerably (from 163 DKK to 422 DKK per student per day) to create an economic incentive for inclusion.[77]

In the wake of this amendment, the Ministry of Education introduced the KVIS[78] program. With a "best practice" approach, the aim of KVIS was to develop knowledge and techniques for schools to become more inclusive. In 2002, the Parliament moreover reached an agreement, which asserts that the common school should become inclusive (Jydebjerg and Hallberg 2006:17). Despite these efforts, the mid-term evaluation of the KVIS program in 2003 showed that the frequency of referrals has not decreased and the program was subsequently extended to 2007 (Jydebjerg and Hallberg 2006, p. 18). Moreover, a new policy program was

[76] In 2000, the Danish administrative landscape consisted of 13 counties and 271 municipalities. In 2007, these were turned into five regions and 98 municipalities with a comprehensive "municipal reform."

[77] With the municipal reform in 2007, this decentralization from regional to municipal level was increased as the new five regions, replacing the old counties, only run six special schools for the most severely disabled (Danish Evaluation Institute 2009).

[78] KVIS stands for Kvalitet i Specialundervisningen (Quality in Special needs education).

launched in 2006 and granted six million Danish kroner to 22 municipalities who work with school development projects aiming at retaining students with special needs in the common school (see Zobbe, Madsen, Feilberg, Sørensen and Ertmann 2011 for the final report).

The emergence of inclusion as a policy area also involves the production of new knowledge. This includes increasing the sophistication of the statistical apparatus producing comparative data. Since 2006-07, schools have been obliged to notify the Ministry of Education's statistical center *UNI-C* about both planned and executed special needs education and categorize the cause initiating different types special needs education (Bækgaard and Jakobsen 2011:7).

Parallel to statistical knowledge aimed at knowing the population as a totality, new techniques and inspirational material were also developed. In the mid-2000s, Local Government Denmark became a large player in the production of "best practice" knowledge. In the wake of the aforementioned campaign, *The Inclusive School* (Local Government Denmark 2004), they produced new information and inspirational material for municipalities. These include a plethora of small development projects, conferences, a website about inclusion, and in 2009 an "inclusion network" involving 27 municipalities was initiated (Local Government Denmark 2011). If anything, such activities have only increased since then.[79] In 2008 Local Government Denmark also made inclusion an official goal of their policy (Local Government Denmark 2008).

Moreover, national and regional centers of evaluation and accreditation are increasingly engaging in producing reports that conclude that schools still have a

[79] An example of such a development is an action research program in collaboration with my own department at Copenhagen Business School.

long way to go in becoming inclusive and, following, *how-to* guides for becoming inclusive (e.g. Bækgaard and Jakobsen 2011:1-44, Danish Evaluation Institute 2010:1-38, Danish Evaluation Institute 2009). Another knowledge generating trajectory is the comparison of Scandinavian countries to one another. A recent ministerial report compared the Danish system of special needs education to those in Finland and Sweden. This comparison revealed that in both Sweden and Finland, significantly fewer students attend special needs education. This revelation adds to the perception that Danish schools can become more inclusive, in this case by learning from the "inclusive cultures" of their Scandinavian neighbors (Danish Ministry of Finance 2010:147).

New institutions with specialized expertise in inclusion have also emerged in the 2000s. In 2005, for instance, the National Centre for Knowledge about Inclusion and Exclusion was established, involving the Danish Ministry of Education and two Danish university colleges. The aim of the center is to, "systematically accumulate and develop knowledge related to practice in pedagogical, teaching-wise and social fields where children and youth are actors" (National Centre for Knowledge about Inclusion and Exclusion 2012). The establishment of such centers is seen as enabling the construction and accumulation of "systematic" and "rigorous" knowledge, as opposed to the dispersed experiences gained by individual municipal projects. Most of the eight Danish university colleges today offer education and produce expertise directed at furthering inclusion. Later in this chapter, I analyze some of the pedagogical expertise emerging from such institutions. As will become clear, the distinctions found in the international literature on inclusion, discussed in the beginning of this chapter, and in Danish policy documents reappear in this body of knowledge. Moreover, as I will argue, this body of knowledge accentuates the need for reflexivity.

Such institutions, together with a wide range of private consultancies, have responded to the political call for inclusion by creating a market for selling educational products. These educational "packages" extend the policy documents' rhetoric on inclusion to a high degree by offering development programs on how to change schools' cultures and teachers' mindsets. A report from the Equal Opportunities Centre for Disabled Persons, investigating how municipalities work with inclusion, concludes that most municipalities focus on "changing cultures" in their approach to inclusion: "There is generally much focus on changing concepts, ways of thinking, and view of children....[along with] creating a positive attitude to inclusion" (Jydebjerg and Hallberg 2006:28). The report also concludes that many municipalities approach the goal of inclusion by arranging "feature days, courses and supplementary training to teachers" (Jydebjerg and Hallberg 2006:28). As municipalities today are obliged to further inclusion, there is a growing demand for "reflexivity," which is today offered by a heterogeneous mix of private and public institutions.

Despite all these initiatives, statistical surveys continue to rediscover that the number of referrals to special needs education is on the rise. In 2006, a large survey covering the school years 1994-95 to 2004-05 shows an almost 57% rise in referrals of 6-16 year old students to the so-called "extensive special needs education" (Danish Ministry of Education 2006). This tendency was confirmed in 2010 (Danish Ministry of Finance 2010:47), and both the Ministry of Education and Local Government Denmark continue to prioritize inclusion highly. In their 2010 publication *New Perspectives on the Public School*, Local Government Denmark lists the reduction of referrals as one of the top priorities for the next five to ten years (Local Government Denmark 2010:2), with the explicit goal to reduce

the number of students with a case file with the Pedagogical Psychological Advice of 25% to 5% in 2020 (Local Government Denmark 2010:4)

The emergence and enrolment of these different actors underscores that the emergence of inclusion is not just a linguistic event and a matter of relabeling existing practices. Inclusion is not a free-floating idea but the result of a large heterogeneous network of policy makers, legislation, new institutions, scholars, management consultants, Scandinavian comparisons, websites, statistics, and reports who have successfully managed to "construct," "package," and "circulate" inclusion and reflexivity as respectively an objective and a means (Thrift 1997:41).

### Overlapping Agendas

In the following, I scrutinize how reflexivity has come to be seen as a medium to achieve inclusion by looking at contemporary and overlapping policy agendas in the 2000s. Parallel to the development towards the focus on inclusion, the Ministry of Education introduced policy initiatives to establish a "culture of evaluation" among teachers (Pors 2009), along with initiatives to make school managers more "professional" (Ratner 2009:1-63, Ratner 2011:27-52). As these coinciding initiatives present reflexivity as a means *to change practice*, I argue that they contribute to policy makers imagining reflexivity as an efficient medium to accomplish cultural change.

While I cannot point to any direct cross-references, I propose that reflexivity manifests itself as a certain matter of course as these other agendas contribute to perceiving reflexivity as a *generic* method of organizing cultural change. Indeed, the call for reflexivity in schools is not limited to Denmark, but appears to be part

of a larger international trend. For instance, school improvement studies claim that successful school development is contingent upon the management's ability to set up and maintain a "culture of inquiry and reflexivity, and a commitment to an ongoing self-review" (Preedy, Glatter and Wise 2003:11).

***Using Reflexivity to Build a "Culture of Evaluation"***

The 2000s have been characterized as the "formalization of the school" (Pors 2011) and as introducing a "wave of documentation and evaluation" (Danish Ministry of Education 2000:43). In this period, schools were required to become "professional" organizations by producing a number of official self-descriptions and to document "their daily efforts and their abilities to meet the goals, which the municipality or the schools themselves had set" (Danish Ministry of Education 2000:44).

The Danish Ministry of Education increased its focus on developing "quality" in schools by calling for a "culture of evaluation," another unrealized ideal of the 1993 Act.[80] The aim was to create stronger couplings between a (presumed autonomous) practice and (rational political) goals. Reflexivity was introduced as a means to this end (Pors 2009). Already in 1998, Local Government Denmark introduced the slogan of making teachers "researchers of their own practice" by introducing a range of methods and techniques to help teachers reflect critically upon their choices and practice (Local Government Denmark 1998). This initiative

[80] In her book, Evaluation from within, sociologist Justine Pors traces the new focus not only back to the 1993 Primary Education Act but also OECD who through rankings and reports such as the PISA contributes to the notion of a lack of quality within the Danish school system. For instance, in a report from 2004, OECD encourages the Danish school system to establish a "new culture in evaluation" in order for political goals to be translated into "real practices" (OECD in Pors 2009:6).

was followed up in 2007 when the Danish Ministry of Education launched an evaluation campaign framing reflexivity as a way of enabling a desired change through "articulating…tacit knowledge…and unconscious habits" (Pors 2011, see also Pors 2009, Local Government Denmark 1998, Local Government Denmark 2005a). Governing teaching practices, considered to be constituted by teachers' unconsidered presuppositions, is thus linked to their self-reflexivity, and different techniques of self-observance are introduced.

The extensive focus on reflexivity in relation to the agenda of establishing better evaluation overlaps with the ministry's increased focus on inclusion in the 2000s. It is thus highly likely that this body of knowledge has helped confirm certain beliefs about the merits of reflexivity. In Chapter Seven I analyze how a technology of evaluation and quality development, the SMTTE (Andersen 2000), is used to include an "aggressive" student at the school. The fact that reflexivity technologies of evaluation are used to include students illustrates that reflexivity is considered a suitable method, regardless of whether the challenge at hand is evaluation or inclusion.

***Development of the Profession of Public Management***

Inclusion moreover coincides with attempts to professionalize school management, also in the 2000s. There are clear links between the perception that managers are in need of becoming "professional" *and* the assumptions that managers are extremely important in generating inclusive school cultures, as I described in Chapter One (Riehl Spring 2000:55-81).

In Denmark, the majority of school managers have a teaching background. In the 2000s, different institutional actors began to question their competences and point

out the need to better prepare school managers for the strategic and human resource management functions of their jobs. After an evaluation of Danish school management, the Danish Institute of Evaluation recommended that a codex for "good school management" be developed with the purpose of "inspiring the individual school manager to reflect over, and develop, his own and his management colleagues' management behavior" (Danish Evaluation Institute 2006). In 2007, the professional body *The School Managers*[81] (Skolelederne) responded with such a codex, reporting, "the way [in which] school leadership is exercised... [often] is identified as the most important single factor in evaluation an ... institution's way of solving its tasks," articulating school management as a crucial aspect of improving schools (Skolelederne 2007).

Another important actor is the OECD in whose recent project *Improving School Leadership* Denmark participated. Their concluding report stated that "the [Danish] management culture is weak compared to the pedagogic culture which dominates... [Hence] the concept of strategic management must be developed and become related to management of an educational institution" (Danish Ministry of Education 2008). In response to this report, the Parliament earmarked DKK 8.5 million for the development of new management initiatives in schools. The Danish government's Quality Reform and the three party negotiations[82] in 2004 moreover contributed to making public management an important issue on the political agenda (Pedersen and Hartley 2008:327, Pedersen 2008:198-224). This reform

[81] Back then, it was "Skolernes Fællesrepræsentation," which later merged with "Skolelederne," their current name.

[82] The three party negotiations take place between the government, the municipal and regional employers and the main labor unions and regard the employees' working conditions, including topics such as education, working environment, wages and management.

resulted in the decision that all public managers should obtain at least a diploma degree in leadership, and funding for this purpose was allocated and new degrees of Public Governance on diploma and master level were established.

The effect of this decision is that most school managers today have attended or will attend management education. In these programs school managers are familiarized with managerial literature, much of which offers instructions on how to manage and change "culture" through reflexivity. These theories are easily disseminated as they are presented and circulated in different textual formats, granting them the "properties of being *mobile* but also *immutable,* presentable, readable and combinable" (Latour 1990:25, emphasis in original). In the next section, I look carefully into this literature and its *conceptual* apparatus. This is one way of engaging with "their" concepts, as I argued STS-researchers should do in Chapter Two. These concepts have *effects* in terms of how change is imagined and how change initiatives are organized.

### The Reflective Practitioner

Reflexivity has a long history in organizational learning, organizational culture, and strategic leadership literature (Argyris and Schön 1974, Schön 1991, Schein 2004). Much of the Danish managerial literature on reflexivity can be traced back to Donald Schön's seminal work *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action,* published in1983 and translated into Danish in 2000. Many of the leading Danish (school) management scholars draw on his work. These include the former dean of the Danish Pedagogical University, Lars Qvortrup, who combines Schön with Niklas Luhmann's system theory of communication and who has co-authored several books for practitioners with his wife, a school manager (Qvortrup and Qvortrup 2006a, Qvortrup and Qvortrup 2006b, Qvortrup 2008:87-

114). The works of associate professor in pedagogy at University of Southern Denmark Jørgen Gleerup are another example. Gleerup couples Schön's idea of the reflective practitioner with Edgar Schein's notion of organizational culture (Gleerup 2006:1-20, Gleerup 2008:26-53, Schein 2004). I found these books on the school managers' shelves, referenced in their diploma projects, and on reading lists from their educational programs. They illustrate that the hopes of reflexivity do not come from "the State" as such, but constitute a cross-cutting idea that is prevalent in educational university settings, private consultancies, and pedagogical theories.

In 1974, Chris Argyris and Donald Schön presented a cybernetic distinction between single and double-loop learning (cf. Bateson 1973). Single-loop learning is a simple reaction to stimuli, which does not question "the frame" of the reaction, understood as a mental construct of the world. Double-loop learning, on the other hand, means that the practitioner interrogates his or her "frame" through reflexivity and thereby empowers a strategic mode of learning (Argyris and Schön 1974, Day 1993:84). In Chapter Eight I analyze a managerial attempt to make the school *a learning organization*, a notion that the manager draws from this and similar distinctions.

In *The Reflective Practitioner*, Schön further developed the idea of reflecting on "frames" through his concept of "epistemology of practice." An "epistemology of practice" is an alternative to the "positivist" epistemology of technical-rational knowledge whose "prescriptive formulas" Schön describes as unable to match the complexity of practitioners' work (Schön 1991:14). Schön defines practice as "situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflict," which practitioners resolve through "tacit knowledge," "intuition," and "experience" (Schön 1991:42-49). "Reflection-in-action" is an ongoing and intuitional

orientation and adjustment of one's reaction to the situation in which it unfolds. It is considered superior to the spontaneous and presumably unconsidered "knowing-in-action." This notion of a complex practice, however, is later contrasted with "practice as routine," which needs "reflection-on-action":

> As a practice becomes more repetitive and routine, and as knowing-in-practice becomes increasingly tacit and spontaneous, the practitioner may miss important opportunities to think about what he is doing. (...) When this happens, the practitioner has 'overlearned' what he knows. (Schön 1991:61)

Practice, then, is *both* complex – rendering technical-rational knowledge unsuitable compared to reflection-in-action – *and* characterized by routines, which renders it potentially dangerous for rather opposite reasons: its repetitive nature, which turns the practitioner into a kind of "practice dope." Through reflection-on-action, however, the practitioner "can surface and criticize the tacit understandings … and can make new sense of the situations of uncertainty or uniqueness which he may allow himself to experience" (Schön 1991:68). Apparently, the "uncertainty" and "uniqueness" of practice are not immediately available to the practitioner as practice is filtered and mediated by "tacit knowledge" (cf. Polanyi 1966). If this tacit knowledge is not questioned (and thus made explicit), Schön argues, we end up with "unreflective practitioners" who are "limited and destructive" as they do not learn from the "feedback" inherent to practice (Schön 1991:290).

In particular, the idea of *reflection-on-practice* has been taken up by the aforementioned Danish management books. They speak of the need to "make choices in a hitherto explicated form" (Sørensen, Hounsgaard, Andersen and Ryberg 2008:9), to question "cognitive diagrams" (Qvortrup and Qvortrup 2006a:110), and to generate an "I-transcendence where one establishes an entirely

new understanding of self- and environment" (Gleerup 2008:40). Through reflexivity, management can develop from "simple management over complex management to hyper-complex management" (Qvortrup and Qvortrup 2006a:47). Hyper-complex management can "go behind customs [and] has the analytical ability to see through what 'usually' implies for the organization...and entails that one can take a bird's-eye view of one's organization" (Qvortrup and Qvortrup 2006a:49). Birgit Ryberg, another popular author in Danish school management literature, similarly describes how "reflexivity is triggered by a disturbance that creates imbalance and keeps us from continuing the immediate thinking" (Ryberg 2006:23). Finally, Qvortrup references sociologist Niklas Luhmann's notion of structural coupling when he claims that learning processes "often are activated by disturbances or irritations from the environment" (Qvortrup 2008:111).

Schön's idea of reflection as a vehicle for changing our mental frames or tacit knowledge is based on the idea "that every teacher carries (socially and personally) constructed 'theories' or 'philosophies' in mind" (Van Manen 1995:43). This conception of practice has a long history in the humanities and social sciences and has affinities to terms such as "tradition," "culture," "paradigm," "framework," and "spectacles behind the eyes" (Turner 1994:2, 11). Such terms also proliferate, and are used synonymously, in the previously analyzed policy documents. Despite their different epistemological histories, these terms generally assume that people's actions are caused by "conventions…without explicit agreement" prior to conscious reasoning (Turner 1994:11, 29). While such constitutive aspects of practice in social theory are *generally* considered outside the reach of human intentionality (Turner 1994:144), Schön's conception of reflection posits that one *can* engage with these. In that regard, there are clear

affinities to the idea of theory as *perspective*, which an individual holds and can choose voluntarily, as I elucidated in Chapter Two.

In the next section, I explore how this conception of practice reappears in pedagogical literature on inclusion. Given how "modern" management has been articulated as a matter of "managing learning…under conditions of changeability" (Sørensen, Hounsgaard, Andersen and Ryberg 2008), similarities between management literature and the pedagogical literature, which by their very nature regard learning, are not that surprising. Indeed, when management becomes a matter of facilitating learning (through reflexivity), methods of management can easily overlap with methods of inclusive pedagogy.

### Inclusive Pedagogical Theory

It is difficult *not* to come across the term "reflexivity" in pedagogical literature (Smyth 1992:267-300). In Denmark, there is a burgeoning body of literature articulating self-reflexivity as the most important teacher skill, using terms such as "reflective intelligence" (Dale 1998), a "competence of reflexivity" (Qvortrup and Qvortrup 2006b), and "self-referential competence of existence" (Tønnes Hansen 2001). Many of these terms are inspired by Schön. Moreover, childhood ethnologist Björg Kjær refers to Schön's idea of the reflective practitioner as a "central identity marker" for welfare state professionals in general, and for pedagogic practitioners in particular (Kjær 2010).[83] While there are debates about how to differentiate between different "levels" or "types" of reflexivity, the

[83] Internationally, too, there are strong ties between reflexivity and pedagogy (see e.g. Artzt and Armour-Thomas 2002, Jason Margolis 2002:pp. 214-236, Tomlinson 1999:405-24, Zeichner 1992:161-173) to the extent, it has been argued, that more emphasis has been put on teachers' conscious thinking than practical training (Tomlinson 1999:96).

general aim for teachers is to understand the relationship between their presuppositions and practice.

In the next section, I explore some specific conceptualizations of reflexivity and practice in popular pedagogical theories commonly associated with inclusion. I have selected these from reports on how Danish municipalities implement the policy of inclusion through educating teachers in inclusive theories (Jydebjerg and Hallberg 2006:9, 27, Zobbe, Madsen, Feilberg, Sørensen and Ertmann 2011:90). While it is not an exhaustive review, it does allow for understanding how practice and reflexivity are conceptualized in a wide range of pedagogical literature.

I have divided the theories in two "pools": the first I analyze as individualizing and pluralizing students through different "styles." I present *The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (Gardner 1983) and *The Theory of Many Learning Styles* (Dunn, Dunn and Price 1984, Dunn and Dunn 1978).[84] In the second pool, I focus on literature by leading Danish inclusion specialists who have either contributed to government publications or offer educational packages on inclusion to schools and municipalities. Among others, I examine Niels Egelund, Rasmus Alenkær, and Jens Andersen who have published extensively on the subject.[85] Their theorizing to a great extent draws upon social constructivism and they take a starting point in a relational[86] understanding of the interaction between students and teachers. A

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[84] While these theorieswere developed in the late 1970s/early 1980s in USA, they have only started to become "mainstream" in Denmark in the last decade.

[85] Niels Egelund is one of the most cited Danish scholars in matters of education and he sits on various ministerial boards. Jens Andersen is employed at a University College that offers education and consultancy in the area of inclusion, and Rasmus Alenkær was is a private consultant with more than 200 lectures to municipalities and schools in 2011 (http://www.alenkaer.dk/).

[86] By "relational" I mean a theorizing that privileges relations over the student's identity.

relational approach is rather common in Danish municipalities' work with inclusion and has been summarized as, "assigning importance to how the student's individual difficulties emerge from the structure in society and interaction between persons" (Zobbe, Madsen, Feilberg, Sørensen and Ertmann 2011:90).[87] I argue that while the first pool focuses strongly on individual differences, the second conceptualization further radicalizes the focus on "difference." [88]

***Individualizing Students***

In his influential book, *Learning Styles and Inclusion*, educational psychologist Gavin Reid proposes that "learning styles" are key to achieving inclusion: "In the climate of inclusion an understanding of how children learn, and of learning styles, is not only desirable, but essential" (Reid 2005:ix-x). In a review, he includes both the theories of "Many Learning Styles" and "Multiple Intelligences."[89] Roughly speaking, these pedagogies begin with the notion that teachers should appreciate the individual needs and potentials of students rather than applying a "one size fits all" pedagogy. These pedagogies thus mesh well with calls for differentiation of teaching and flexible organization of schools – two

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[87] Indeed, thematizing teachers' "appreciative attitudes" and relations to students as management objects seems to be a general tendency in educational management (Staunæs 2011:229).

[88] Besides the ones I discuss, pedagogical and motivational theories and models such as Marte Meo, KASA, the LP-model, Hundeides 8 samspilstemaer, appreciative inquiry, pedagogical functional linguistic, and cooperative learning are also common in Danish municipalities' inclusion educational programs (Zobbe, Madsen, Feilberg, Sørensen and Ertmann 2011:88).

[89] It is important to note that there are many different (and overlapping) versions of learning styles and multiple intelligences. More than 100 different instruments have been designed to identify learning styles (Reid 2005:51). Similarly, Gardner states that there are "several hundreds different interpretations of what multiple intelligences theory is and how it can be applied in schools" (Gardner 2006:54).

terms that policy papers, as mentioned, keep restating. In these theories, diversity and plurality are not just biologically and psychologically founded theories of learning, but become related to achieving a democratic society. Indeed, many authors emphasize that these theories constitute important political values (Reid 2005:100, e.g. Gardner 2006:50).[90]

Rita and Kenneth Dunn developed the Learning Style Inventory, a questionnaire containing 104 items (the early version in 1978 had 228) designed to profile different learning style preferences. It is organized across environmental, emotional, sociological, physiological, and psychological domains (Reid 2005:62).The starting point for the theory is that everybody has their own individual learning style and that teachers can profit by taking each student's learning preference into account when teaching and testing (Dunn and Dunn 1978). The theory of multiple intelligences is developed by psychologist Howard Gardner in 1983 as a critique of the IQ test and its assumption of only one generic, analytical intelligence. Instead, Gardner identifies eight different intelligences: logical, mathematical, bodily/kinesthetic, verbal/linguistic, musical/rhythmic, visual/spatial, intrapersonal, interpersonal, and naturalistic, which are contrasted to the "one-dimensional" IQ test (Gardner 2006:48).[91]

Seeing children as *essentially* individual, plural, and different has effects on how teaching is conceptualized. According to Reid, the ability to include a diverse set of students ultimately comes down to the teacher's flexibility and ability to teach

[90] This notion of the student as an individual is also asserted with the Salamanca Statement, which shifts the vocabulary from "needs" to "rights" and entails an accentuated focus on the individual.

[91] Of course, one debate that has surfaced in the wake of such categorizations regards whether there are more than eight intelligences, for instance, an intelligence of humor (Gardner 2006:58).

in diverse manners. For instance, Multiple Intelligences is described as a theory that:

> ...recognizes the diversity of children and appreciates that ability and intelligence should not be dominated by language skills. This encourages teachers to be adaptable to ensure that all intelligences are catered for in the development of class materials and in the assessment of students' work. (Reid 2005:59)

In order for a teacher to appreciate students' differences, teachers need to "adapt" the media through which they teach and test. Accordingly, Reid summarizes teachers' most crucial question as: "How can I cater for the full range and diversity of learning styles in my class?" (Reid 2005:91). These pedagogical ideals promise that diverse students can be included if teachers differentiate their teaching according to students different learning styles. The focus on learning is also present in policy documents, with Local Government Denmark calling for "all actors in the school, from managers to students (...) to step into new learning spaces" (Local Government Denmark 2010:5). Teachers moreover need not only to reflect on whether their teaching practices exclude certain learning styles, but also on their cultural orientations and attitudes towards individual differences. Just as policy problematizes existing practices, the main obstacles to realizing these pedagogies are believed to reside in the "culture" and teachers' "lack of preparedness" (Reid 2005:100-106).

With the theories of different learning styles and intelligences, students are both individualized and essentialized in the sense that their individual styles precede the relation to the teacher. The teachers, in turn, have to be *willing* to reflect on how they in their practice can take into account each student's individual learning style. Insofar as people *do* have individual learning styles, one may also assume that

teachers have individual *teaching* styles. Instead of symmetrically applying the idea of individual differences to students *and* teachers, scholars make it a question of teachers' *willingness* to reflect on their practice. Reflexivity, apparently, *trumps* teachers' individual styles.

***Radicalizing Difference***

The second pool of theories examined here *radicalizes* the relationship between students, who constitute a collective of differences, and teachers, who are to accommodate these through reflexivity. In the following, I illustrate how this understanding permeates Danish scholars' characterization of inclusion to an extent where the object of intervention no longer is the student but becomes the teacher. This entails not only individualization, but *relativization* of the student, who is primarily discussed as an effect of teachers' attitudes, expectations, and (presumably standardized) practice.

In the introduction to his book The Inclusive School: A Joint Responsibility, psychologist Jens Andersen writes that inclusion primarily regards a teacher's "personality, philosophy of man, perception of normality, perception of deviation, professional universe, [and] explanations" (Andersen 2004:9). This idea is replicated in the 2006 Ministry of Education inclusion initiative, which highlights most important factors to achieve inclusion to be:

> … that the teacher is conscious about his or her co-constructive language, i.e., is attentive to how the student group is talked about, that the teacher has an appreciative approach to the students, i.e., focuses on the good things rather than fault finding (...) [and] that the teacher is able to evaluate the course of teaching (the pedagogical methods) (Zobbe, Madsen, Feilberg, Sørensen and Ertmann 2011:8-9).

The teachers' language and expectations emerge as co-constitutive causes of exclusion, as they are seen to affect how the "deviant" student emerges in the first place. In another ministerial publication, educational scholar Niels Egelund locates challenge in teachers' category of "difference":

> Before a student can get special needs education, something has happened. First, the teachers had to discover the difference (...). Then, in a recommendation form they have had to describe the student's difficulties and then the pedagogical psychological counseling[92] needed to diagnose the student after which they have recommended specific actions to the school's management team. (...) The question is if this process in many cases has not "gone awry" at this point, perhaps already gone awry at the time where the student by the teacher and perhaps the parents is seen as being "different." By looking differently at the difference much could have been saved and we had been closer to the objective of an inclusive school. (Egelund 2003:37).

With such critiques, it is not surprising to see that the means offered to achieve an inclusive school, at least in Denmark, are directed at new pedagogical ideas of how the teachers can work with their own expectations and how they can reorganize their teaching flexibly so the formerly "different" student no longer appears to be "different."

Psychologist Rasmus Alenkær, who authored and edited the book series *The Inclusive School* claims that teaching today is "relatively static and characterized

[92] Pedagogical Psychological Counseling (PPR) is an interdisciplinary organization consisting of psychologists, child physiotherapists, consultants with special expertise within reading, bilingualism, special needs education. Their role is to diagnose the students which are referred to them by teachers or school managers. PPR is located in and governed by municipalities and assist the schools in diagnosing students and developing special efforts. Their role and the way they collaborate with the individual schools are much debated in the shift towards inclusion. They have not been the focus of this thesis, however (For examples of how they are discussed, see Local Government Denmark 2010:28 Zobbe, Madsen, Feilberg, Sørensen and Ertmann 2011).

by routines" and suggests reflexivity as a method for teachers to question the assumption that, "certain students belong to the school while there are others who... do not" (Alenkær 2008:200). A "non-reflective practice" is defined as one where "one is not inquisitive and reflexively explorative to problems as such but work from the motto that practice must endure and that the students need to adapt to the school's norms and actions." (Alenkær 2008:200). In Alenkær's second book, he, hardly surprisingly, encourages "a process where one continuously relates reflexively to oneself and scrutinizes to how one meets the students" as opposed to "employing a rigid template" (Alenkær 2009:21).

Moreover, becoming a flexible school is seen as a matter of *will*. Scholars distinguish between "stuck" schools "afraid" of changing their teaching practices and "moving" schools that deliberately "seek to improve their responsiveness to their students" (Rosenholz in Thomas and Loxley 2001:92). Danish pedagogical scholar Jens Andersen emphasizes that in order for teachers to make their practices inclusive, they need to stop "defensive reactions" to difficult teaching situations and instead realize that "opportunities for development lie where routines stop" (Andersen 2004:8).

British Professor of Education Mel Ainscow[93] suggests that teachers may help observe each other's teaching to "irritate" "fundamental assumptions," which are seen to shape their teaching practice:

> Often, we see that this kind of developmental work [reflexivity in groups] leads to new ways of relating and a new creativity as existing fundamental assumptions are "irritated" and challenged. Because of these disturbances, the staff became aware of

[93] His work has been translated to Danish.

> new possibilities regarding participation and learning...The conclusion is that the development of an inclusive practice comes down to dialogue, reflexivity, evaluation, and change of the specific practice, in which inclusion is to take place. (Ainscow 2009:79-80)

If the problem is in "practice," and a teacher cannot create a distance to his or her practice alone, a colleague may help contemplate his or her practice and change it through "irritation." Such conceptualization of practice and how it should be changed exhibits links to Schön who considers "astonishment, surprise, puzzlement, and confusion" a way of confronting tacit knowledge (Schön 1991:290). Moreover, such conceptualization accentuates how practice is perceived as an effect of teachers' fundamental assumptions.

The problem may not *only* reside in the previously mentioned standardized forms of teaching, but is also in teachers' (misplaced) "tolerance" and "obliging understanding for those children who are worse off than so many others" (Langager 2004:112). The "seamy side" of this entails the risk of "circulating, self-perpetuating myths about the inevitable reproduction of social inheritage" (Langager 2004:112). Langager firmly locates the production of difference with the teacher by concluding, "it is the teachers' attitude and expectations that really determine where children and young persons end up in the social hierarchy within the school and the educational system" (2004:115), and that "the conditions of inclusion to a great extent depend on teachers' 'mental' expectations and attitudes" (2004:122). Teachers are thus expected to explicate these and to critically examine their constitutive effects on the production of difference.

Both the theories of many learning styles and the theories focusing on teachers' construction of difference deem that teachers' assumptions (and thus, practices) exclude students, either because they become blind to students' individual learning

styles or because teachers' expectations are the source of how students emerge as different. Both pools invite teachers to change their (limited) expectations and "standardized" practice through reflexivity.

Whereas the theories of many learning styles locate categories of difference in the students' individual *styles*, the second pool of theory turns students into a pure abstraction of difference, in the sense that they are seen as a reification of the teachers' attitudes and assumptions. This entails a *relativization* of the student whose behavior is considered an effect of teachers' attitudes. Such a relativization moreover *radicalizes* the tendency of making the teacher responsible.

When students are primarily described as an "effect" of teachers' expectations, a teacher who is finds a student's behavior worrying should not regard this as a sign of that student's special needs. Instead, the teacher should takes this as an invitation to reflect on how such a perception emerged and then "irritate" his or her presumably standardized practice, wrong attitude, and limited conception of normality. Curiously, this rhetoric swaps student for teacher as the object of intervention. Students' appearance becomes a mirror that reflects whether the teacher's practice is including or excluding. This conceptualization thus radicalizes the idea of *perspective,* as students' behavior mirrors the teacher's way of seeing them.

### Reflexivity as a Potentiality Machine

When scholars and policy makers continue to discover the gap between the expressed commitment to inclusion and the reality of a growing number of referrals to special needs education, they locate the challenge in "practice." This, I have argued, entails a conception of practice as constituted by teachers'

"untimely" tacit knowledge and unquestioned and standardized practices. With this conception of practice, reflexivity is seen to constitute "an outside" to practice where otherwise invisible elements such as attitudes or standardized reactions can become explicated and changed. The hope is that reflexivity can empower teachers to see how non-conscious elements are in fact constitutive of their practice, as well as how that practice excludes certain students. The "outside of practice," it seems, is also somehow outside oneself, or outside one's fundamental assumptions, standard reactions, and attitudes. Besides presenting teachers as generally non-reflective (except when asked deliberately to reflect), this also reproduces the distinction between thinking and practice *within* teachers. The theories demand that the teacher imagines him or herself as split in two, in an active and intentional subject and in passive, non-intentional presuppositions (cf. Foucault 2000, Foucault 1990). The teacher is to change his or her presuppositions, which can be explicated through reflexivity.

The dualism between thinking and practice may have an auto-organizing effect. As soon as the artifacts of reflexivity have been absorbed into practice, new reflexivity is needed to re-differentiate thinking from practice. As Marilyn Strathern notes in a discussion of audit: "…if the assumption is that much of what is invisible is what is simply not yet made visible, then there will always be more to learn about the organisation, further realities to uncover" (Strathern 2000:312). The very idea that practice can be observed through reflexivity, with the ambition of revealing something invisible, can potentially generate *infinite* new practices in need of reflexivity. Reflexivity places the potentiality *outside* of practices. In that way, the dualism posits change as a continual but never finished endeavor. Ideas of flexibility, plasticity, and change appeal to those advocating inclusion. When standards are seen as a threat to inclusion, a need for teachers to not only change

their existing practices, but also to keep afloat in constant flux and movement emerges. Through reflexivity, teachers can change themselves although this change becomes temporal and provisional (cf. Brown and Middleton 2005:710).

While inclusion is articulated as a response to the perception of an increasingly complex world of unintended consequences, it also introduces new certainties about how to engage with "practice." Regardless of what is seen to constitute and characterize "practice", reflexivity is presented as having the capacity to unravel existing practices and produce something different from what already exists. By producing an orientation to the future as something different, reflexivity is antithetical to the status quo. [94] In this way, it is extremely elastic and flexible: it provides a way to imagine the continuous extraction of new potentials. Considering this, reflexive turning back on existing knowledge can bring about certainty and not just uncertainty as Ulrich Beck suggests (cf. Beck 1994, Beck 1998). As Marilyn Strathern has written elsewhere, what characterizes the present moment is that there is more of everything: certainty and uncertainty alike (Strathern 1996b:37-52).

Let me elaborate on this sense of "certainty." It seems that reflexivity shares qualities with the anthropological concept of "relation," as described by Strathern

[94] These characteristics resemble philosopher Michel Serres' notion of the "blanc" (in French, blank and white) object (Serres 1991), which is characterized by its lack of determinacy, a constitutive non-identity. Using the metaphor of the joker or a domino, which in a game can take on any value, sociologists Kevin Hetherington and Nick Lee describe it as enabling continuity and change alike, of both creating and destroying social orders(Hetherington and Lee 2000:169-184). The same capabilities seem to be imagined through reflexivity. It is a foothold, a position from where to dissect oneself from one's practice in order to disrupt it or let it continue. Moreover, such an orientation towards the potential and the future seems to go much beyond the literature on reflexivity (for examples discussing respectively organizations, human resource management, educational leadership, and innovation paradigms in education see Andersen 2012:220, Costea, Crump and Amiridis 2008:661-685, Juelskjær, Knudsen, Pors and Staunæs 2011:13-26, Pors 2011, Staunæs 2011:227-247).

(1995). Exploring the history of the concept of "the relation" in anthropology, and especially in kinship studies, she summarizes its qualities as scale crossing in the sense that it "can be applied to any order," and "holographic" in the sense of "being an example of the field it occupies" (Strathern 1995:17). If we use Strathern's reckoning on *the relation*, reflexivity is not limited to a specific "domain." Rather, reflexivity is reiterated as *the* way to create connections to practice, whether from a policy, managerial, or pedagogical starting point. Further, as a "method," reflexivity is expected to produce an image of "practice." Finally, as is the case with the relation, "it requires other elements to complete it" (Strathern 1995:18). Reflexivity requires a "practice" and "attitudes," which simultaneously are constructed as pre-existing entities. If "reflexivity" indeed shares these qualities with the "relation," every act of reflexivity also recreates the distinction between "what is given and what is open to choice" (Strathern 1995:20), re-producing the ambiguity it is meant to explicate.

This modality of certainty, then, is a specific one. Paraphrasing STS scholars Steve Brown and David Middleton, reflexivity seems to be simultaneously the most powerful and fragile entity in managing inclusion (cf. Brown and Middleton 2005:708). Fragile because it is never quite there and powerful by the very same virtue: it can *always* emerge and change practice. Accordingly, I use the metaphor of a *machine* to characterize how reflexivity generates potentiality: its conceptual foundation allows for reflexivity to infinitely discover new potential outside what has already been actualized. The machine term moreover "signals that we are not in the realm of human volition, but are dealing with configurations of materiality and discourse, giving rise to intentional yet non-subjective processes" (Jensen 2007:94). The promise *of* reflexivity, to change practice, inadvertently also becomes a promise *for more* reflexivity.

### Summing up

In this chapter I have explored how the policy agenda of inclusion emerged and how reflexivity has been articulated as a medium to achieve inclusion in schools. I argue that the Primary Education Act of 1993 formulates a break with past pedagogical traditions and generates expectations to a future pedagogy where teaching is flexibly organized and differentiated to fit individual students' needs. Achieving this change is articulated as a matter of teachers' *willingness* to question their "standardized" teaching. Some ten years later, similar future generating distinctions are reiterated in policy documents on inclusion. The pedagogical ideas entailed in the 1993 Act both resemble those of inclusive pedagogies, which moreover suggest that the "new" pedagogical principles from 1993 have not been implemented in teachers' practices. Thus, teachers are encouraged to reflect on their practices in a similar manner.

I have explored the solidification of inclusion as an agenda of its own throughout the 2000s through the enrolment of *actants* such as Local Government Denmark, the generation of municipal "best practice" projects, specialized expertise and the production of knowledge at university colleges, more comprehensive statistical information, and Scandinavian comparisons. This has resulted in both more knowledge on inclusion (pedagogical expertise and the emergence of new social technologies) and the creation of a market for this expertise as municipalities have come to realize that they need help to change "school culture." I have moreover illustrated that reflexivity *generally* is a popular trope for organizing cultural change by looking at the coinciding ministerial campaign of evaluation and the development of the profession of school management. Both these policy agendas introduce school managers to reflexive technologies of evaluation and managerial

literature. These either draw explicitly on or resonate Schön's *Reflective Practitioner*.

I then moved on to carefully consider the conceptualizations of practice and reflexivity entailed in Schön's work, arguing that it conceptualizes "practice" as both complex and mediated by the "tacit knowledge" of practitioners. The very framing of the unintended consequences of special needs education calls for a response that can change people's "attitudes," "cultures," and "practices." Schön's concept of reflection offers a language for imagining a solution that takes such complexity into account: through reflection, the practitioner can confront and change his tacit knowledge and become a learning practitioner. Schön's dualism between thinking and practice reappears in much pedagogical literature, with which I concluded my exploration of reflexivity. Here I suggested that this literature increasingly attributes teachers and their tacit knowledge to be a central cause of increased segregation of students with special needs. I concluded the chapter depicting reflexivity as a *potentiality machine,* which continuously posits the possibility of changing practice towards the better.

While I have discussed differing conceptions of reflexivity and practice extensively, the main object of this thesis is how the idea of reflexivity matters in managers' practices. This entails a shift from the teleological world of policy documents and managerial and pedagogical literature to the mess and ambiguity of the managerial practices I studied. As the following analyses will show, the conceptions of inclusion and reflexivity, with which the managers were more than familiar, inform the way managers understand and value reflexivity; thus, they have *effects*. These effects are what I attend to in the remainder of the thesis.

# Chapter Five

## Interruptions

> This place is, like, it's vibrating. On the surface, it may seem calm but it takes so little for anything, *anything*, to break out with these vulnerable children. They are so easily enrolled in trouble, and chaos lurks just around the corner. You can feel it just walking into a classroom. It's all there, vibrating, waiting for an occasion to break loose. (Manager, Saxby School).

> Let us imagine, then, that an explosion is something that collapses barriers, that it breaks down the practices and the regulations that keep matter in place. That it breaks down the barriers which secure an orderly traffic between inside and outside which secure, that is, the distributions of an *order* together with the matter of size. That it breaks down barriers which determine what is bigger than what, or what controls what. Let us imagine, then, that an explosion is something that undoes the work of making boundaries. (Law 2000:136)

> We never encounter time and space, but rather a multiplicity of interactions with actants that have their own timing, spacing, goals, means, and ends. (Latour 1997:182)

### Introduction

It only takes a knock on the office door to redirect the attention of school managers. The visitor may be a teacher who cannot summon the courage to confront her students after she has discovered her photo on Facebook with an attached list of mocking comments. The manager may then accompany her to confront the students in the classroom. The visitor can also be a single immigrant mother who does not speak Danish and is bringing her 10-year-old son to translate her grievance about not receiving her monthly welfare benefits and, as she is running three months behind with paying the rent, she now risks being evicted from her apartment. In this case, the manager may call the social services department and even get hold of some cash for her to avoid the tragedy of a

homeless family. Alternatively, it could be a report of a student whose parent committed suicide; a teacher reporting of his teacher team's conflicting views on how to deal with a "deviant" student; or a phone call from the janitor who has encountered a broken window. The list is endless. The episodes are many. They are also expected.

As described in the previous chapter, much literature renders teachers' reflexivity a central object of management as students with special needs are conceptualized as an effect of teachers' tacit knowledge, attitudes, and standardized practice. An interesting difference between this literature and my own ethnographic experience regards the status of "interruption." According to the literature, reflexivity is to interrupt or irritate teachers' presumably standardized practices and assumptions and make them supportive of and responsive to students' individuality. My field notes, in turn, speak of interruptions as something that happens continuously in managers' practices, caused by conflicts or incidents involving students considered to be to have special needs.

This chapter explores interruptions as a condition for managerial practices in which reflexivity is to make a difference. As we will see in the subsequent three chapters, interruptions have important implications for how reflexivity matters as they produce complexity that can only partially be managed by reflexivity, eliciting different managerial responses. Analyzing interruptions of managerial practices separately is not to claim that reflexivity exists outside of these practices. In contrast, a central point of the thesis is that reflexivity becomes situated in and mediated by managerial practices. Conceptualizing how interruptions affect managerial practices allows understanding conditions for managing inclusion and is necessary in order to understand the effects of reflexivity in various controversies resulting from interruptions.

I begin the chapter with a characterization of interruptions at Saxby and Fjelde schools. In order to conceptualize these as conditions for managing inclusion I present Latour's notions of *spacing* and *timing* (Latour 1997). I use these concepts to highlight how aligned and non-aligned actants shape the tasks that managers attend to in different ways. I then present a specific case involving the 12 year-old Ibrahim, around whom a series of interruptions erupts. To elicit how interruptions change the conditions for management, I offer an analysis of a meeting that is interrupted because of Ibrahim. I analyze how the timing and spacing of aligned actants shape managers' attention during the meeting and how they fail to do so after the interruption as I follow the managers through a rather eventful day and conceptualize the work done to put *scales* and *boundaries* back in place after the meeting is interrupted. To do so, I make use of the managers' own metaphor of *putting out fires*, to characterize the managers' boundary and scale maintaining work as responding to an acute situation characterized by non-knowledge and risk of rapid spreading. To conclude the chapter, I characterize the school as a *fragile center of intervention*. I also discuss the implication of managerial practice as entailing putting out fires vis-à-vis the literature's idea that the managerial task is to interrupt teachers' tacit knowledge through reflexivity.

### Interruptions

At both schools, managers report that they have to intervene in unforeseen events two to four times a day. Sometimes they are solved in 15 minutes, other times they take the rest of the day. This is the case one day, for instance, when during recess a football crosses the hedge enclosing Saxby School's playground. When two boys, as so many times before, crawl through a hole in the hedge to fetch the ball, they encounter an angry neighbor whose garden furniture has been burnt during the

weekend, a deed he assumes the school's students to be responsible for. One of the boys, diagnosed with a mild form of autism, reacts violently to the situation of an adult stranger shouting at him with the result that the neighbor calls the police. After this dispute has been settled another ensues; at the sight of uniformed police officers in their school, some of the school's older students respond by calling out "Nazi swine" and throwing a bottle of coke at one of the officers. This provokes the officer to put one of the students up against the wall while threatening him. The small incident of a ball passing over a hedge escalates and spreads into a series of controversies that take all day to resolve.

An example from Fjelde School involves two siblings, with alcoholic parents, who by chance learn of an ongoing legal investigation – a so-called § 50 investigation – looking into whether the siblings should forcibly be removed from home. During a domestic conflict, one of the siblings tells her mother that the municipality is finding her a new home, which results in conflicts between the social services department, the siblings, and the family. At school, it becomes more difficult than usual to engage the siblings in teaching activities, and conflicts tip over when one of them refuses to go back to class after recess, punches a school manager in the stomach and obstructs teaching in other classes by throwing toys at the windows from the outside. Two managers spend most of the day moving between the office, where they try to get hold of the social services department and the parents, and the playground and affected classrooms, to interact with the teachers and the siblings.

It takes little for the two schools to become associated with neighboring conflicts, family tragedies, substance abuse, tensions between the police and an ethnic minority group, crime, and sometimes even gang wars. Even geographic areas as far away as the Middle East can affect the school, as, for instance, when

escalations of the conflict between Palestine and Israel result in more fighting in the school yard. My field notes constantly talk of meetings, writing assignments, and organized activities being interrupted, cancelled, or altered because conflicts or other sudden events call for the immediate presence of school managers. The interrupted tasks are transformed into piles of "to do" notes, hastily passed on to other managers or populating desks, waiting for quieter moments or maybe abandoned completely. Economically pressed social services departments and long waiting lists at special schools do not ameliorate these conditions.

While most days are fast-paced, turbulent, and hectic in terms of the quantity and nature of these interruptions, they are also an expected part of everyday life. The regularity with which these interruptions happen indicates that despite their somewhat spectacular character, to me at least, they should be considered a mundane part of school management. Of course, the school managers' work is also characterized by mundane obligations in the common sense, such as attending to documents, emails, or meetings at other locations than the school. It was rare, however, that I had the chance to witness the writing of documents as such tasks were often postponed to be done in the evenings or on weekends in the privacy of the managers' homes. Likewise, when I followed one of the school managers to municipal meetings, he spent most the time talking on his mobile phone as local conflicts at the school caught up with him, in spite of his absence.

I imagine that most Danish school managers recognize this description of daily interruptions by teachers, parents, or municipal authorities. Inquiries into how school managers spend their time have concluded that they spend "too much" time on unforeseen tasks at the cost of "strategic leadership" (Fisker and Christensen 2009:32-35). Perhaps schools in socio-economically marginalized urban areas are to a greater extent exposed to interruptions. Research indicates that this is the case

in the USA where crime, poverty, and substance abuse are considered the biggest challenges among urban school managers, creating the need of efficient crisis management (Portin 2000:493-494). In the UK, a report on "schools facing challenging circumstances" in relation to poverty and low student performance similarly concludes that "leaders…are constantly managing tensions and problems directly related to the particular circumstances and context of the schools. The main leadership task facing them is one of coping with unpredictability, conflict and dissent on a daily basis" (Harris and Chapman June 2002:2). It would appear that the events I experienced during field work are not unique.

### Conditions for Managing Inclusion

Latour's concepts of timing and spacing are helpful to understand conditions for managing inclusion. By conditions for managing inclusion I here refer to the question of whether boundaries and scales are in place, such as the boundary between what does and does not belong to the school and the difference between big and small, center and periphery, what is important and what is not (Law 2000:133-148, Jensen 2007:832-850). Rather than assuming such "boundaries" and "scales" to always-already exist, Latour's concepts help explore which assemblages afford their production and maintenance (see also Brown and Middleton 2005:695-715, Cooper 1986:299-335). Due to interruptions, however, boundaries and scales prove both porous and difficult to maintain, and when they are (temporarily) undone it affects how managers spend their time.

Through a comparison of twin travelers, Latour conceptualizes boundaries and scales as ongoing accomplishments contingent upon an assemblage of human and non-human actants that fabricate space and time (Latour 1997:170-191). One twin is on a difficult bloody and sweaty journey deep in the jungle with a machete,

paying meticulous attention to all the obstacles she has to break down to move forward. The other travels in a Swiss, air-conditioned high-speed train, reading a newspaper and not exposed to the work done by train companies, gates, tracks, stations, logisticians, and clocks to make the trip possible. With this contrast in place, Latour advances the notions of "timing" and "spacing" to illustrate how fabrications of time and space are effects "of how bodies relate to one another" (Latour 1997:174).

Where the twin in the jungle makes her own trail, combating "mediators defining paths on their own terms," the other twin follows a network kept in place by "well-aligned intermediates" (Latour 1997:175). In the jungle, there is no distinction between time and place. The twin cannot afford *not* to devote her attention to where she is at each moment. She has to negotiate each and every step with a multitude of mediators who have not been aligned to form a path. The train-traveler, on the other hand, hardly notices the places he passes by. Durable non-human actants have been coordinated and folded into a relative stabilized network. The work necessary to enable transportation has been delegated to other actants, times, and places. This enables a distinction between time and space as he *can* afford to disregard the train's geographical location and, instead, imagine other times and places through reading stories in his newspaper.

Latour's contrast helps understand how time and space are constructed when "obedient" and stabilizing non-human actants keep boundaries and scale in place compared to when this is not the case. In the following, I will use the example of Ibrahim, who has been expelled but nevertheless turns up at school, to illustrate how short the distance is from a network of well-aligned mediators, enabling mundane managerial activities such as a meeting, to a situation where the boundaries and scales necessary for having a meeting temporarily become undone.

The example may appear somewhat extreme considering the boy's family background and the severity of his problems. While Ibrahim does not represent the average student at either of the two schools I visited, the crises and conflicts calling for the managers' intervention often involved students such as Ibrahim. The example is not atypical.

### When Exclusion Fails

Ibrahim exemplifies failed inclusion *and* exclusion. It is a sad story of a bullied boy suspended between different welfare interventions, and a boy associated with a mental illness, crime, and drugs. As refugees from Iraq, his family is described as suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome and depression; at school, there are suspicions of occasional violence in the home. His older brother is in jail and Ibrahim is described as a hot-tempered boy: "he loses his temper if someone gives him a wrong look or says something wrong. He wants to fight and we can't calm him," as a teacher explains.

Ibrahim has been subjected to a series of intervention strategies, involving the school's AKT teacher, the psychologist, the social services department, and his parents, but these interventions have failed to reduce the number of conflicts. At one point, his teachers and the school manager decide that they can no longer include him. The level of conflict is too high, draining energy from the teacher team and resulting in two pairs of parents moving their children (and the associated funding) to other schools. Further, a pedagogical-psychological report finds that Ibrahim, in addition to "deviant behavior," has "serious learning challenges" and concludes that he does not benefit from participating in the common education at the school. He is referred to a special school. The waiting

list is quite long, however, and as the school is responsible for his education until a free slot turns up, he continues to attend his old class.

One day, the conflicts reach a tipping point, leading to the suspension of Ibrahim. Ibrahim attacks several students physically, hits a teacher with a branch, and attempts to throw a chair out a second floor window, aiming at some students below. This leads the management team and his teachers to conclude that he is "dangerous to his surroundings." They expel him from the school and offer him individual tuition until the special school can take him in.[95] They are not happy about making this decision. As the school manager explains, "he will miss his friends. This is not a sustainable solution for him in the long run but that's all we can do now. It's too dangerous to keep him here." The event can be seen as constituting a threshold, a discontinuity that carves the world into a "before" and an "after" (Luhmann 2005:131), in terms of whether Ibrahim is considered to be "only" a student with special needs or whether he is also seen as dangerous. Ibrahim, his parents, and his contact person, assigned by the social services department, are all informed of the decision. Nevertheless, he turns up at the school the following day, sitting in the hallway outside the managers' offices. The secretary tries to get a hold of his parents but without avail and asks Ibrahim to go home.

This story, then, is not only of *failed inclusion*, but also of *failed exclusion*.[96] Despite expelling Ibrahim, he turns up and, as I will elaborate on below, this small

[95] This is a rather expensive solution as the school pays for the individual tuition, 12 hours a week.
[96] In this case, as in many others I observed, referring a student to a special school would not result in immediate segregation due to long waiting lists.

incident starts a chain of events, undoing the scales and boundaries, which normally keep matters in place at the school.

### Meeting Time

While the secretary asks Ibrahim to go home, the management team is in the middle of its weekly meeting and I am placed at the far end of the table with my laptop. It is a relatively stable set up. Most obviously, the arrangement of furniture allows the managers to distribute papers, look at each other, exchange utterances, and they only need to glance at the printed agenda in front of them to know what comes next. Further, the meeting has been coordinated with teaching schedules; teachers and students are occupied in classrooms. Had the meeting taken place during one of the breaks, interruptions from teachers and students would have been guaranteed. Parents are told to wait on the couch outside the office and phone calls are intercepted by the secretary.

The closed door allows the conversation to be held in a confidential tone. It has been a hectic week and the managers discuss what to do with the boys' toilets, which are flooded during each break due to soda bottles blocking the wastepipes, how to commit teachers to intervene in the matter, and how to respond to the cleaning staff that has complained of the dirt and stink. They also discuss what to do about the teacher who was hit by Ibrahim the day before and whom they believe is close to having a break down. Who should meet with her? What should be said? Should they offer her to take fewer classes?

After discussing these immediate and local events, they go through a stack of documents, which remind them of the deadline of the annual "quality report," of a conflict with the copy machine contractor, of new municipal project possibilities,

and of new legislation. The documents come from other places, representing other agendas, which need to be negotiated and aligned with the local interactions at the school. As agenda items, they contribute to the stability and rhythm of the meeting. The stack diminishes as the papers are distributed to whoever takes the responsibility to follow up on a certain item. They look at their own calendars to coordinate external visits, and they consult the computer to get an overview of the teachers' calendars and to decide when to schedule a staff meeting. The schedule overview provided on the computer screen is itself an assemblage of software, of modern ideas of time and planning. Folded into the present orderly overview are the past spring's tough negotiations with teachers about who was to teach the dreaded 7 B class and who was allowed to have an early weekend on Fridays. All of these have now been black-boxed (cf. Latour 1987). They are no longer visible and getting an overview is rather unproblematic.

Boundaries and scales are well maintained during this meeting, allowing for the separation of time and space. The future emerges as something to which the managers can relate intentionally and rationally through planning while the past emerges as a series of incidents, which can be discussed (cf. Born, Franckel and Thygesen 2006:122). For instance, they look back on the week's events and agree that the recurring problems with the toilets cannot continue. Such concerns, along with the ones written in documents coming from other places are translated into concrete tasks and distributed among the members of the management team.

Space is performed as a neutral container of people and documents. In this container, it only takes an utterance for the managers to jump between discussing a staff meeting taking place next week and a document containing their budget. They can articulate differing opinions on how to deal with a teacher and can attend to mundane issues such as unpaid bills. They are not required to relate to the

physical space in which their bodies are located. Space is not important and fades into the background, allowing for other places and times to summon their attention.

In other words, associated and heterogeneous actants are doing their timing and spacing to allow for the event of a meeting. A balance of connections and disconnections is in place: connections to the local municipality or Ministry of Education, mediated by documents, and disconnections from the local interactions at the school. What we see, then, is a well-aligned network performing relatively stable scales and boundaries, producing narrow and solid viewpoints and equipping the managers with the ability to plan the future, discuss the past and relate to requests from other places by attending to documents.

### Interruption

The meeting space detaches the managers from potential interruptions. The detachment is only partial, however, as it only takes a knock on the door to side-track the assemblage framing the meeting. This time, the meeting is interrupted by the janitor. He brings a message from the housing association across the street. Some children, suspected to belong to the school, are trespassing on their property, apparently riding a moped. The managers exchange telling gazes, one notes “this is a task for all of us,” and we all get up to leave the room.

We move quickly, crossing the street right outside the school gate. We do not use the pedestrian crossing only 20 meters away, even if this is customary for all staff in order to set a “lead example.” The once white, now gray concrete buildings stand rather tall and faceless in front of us. The children are nowhere to be seen. We divide into two groups. The pace is fast and we move along the edges of the

housing community, as if that could stop the children from escaping its hopelessly big area. We look at the green strips of grass between the housing blocks as we walk along the pavement, bordering the area. The children cannot be seen or heard. All we know is the janitor's message that children and a moped have been spotted on the property but it is still uncertain whether they are students of the school. There is a sense of urgency, as the incident previously described with the ball is still fresh and reminds the managers that the distance from an unhappy neighbor to bad press in the local newspaper is rather short.

The interruption radically changes the conditions for management. Instead of the partial detachment of the office, allowing them to jump to other times and places, they find themselves in a situation characterized by uncertainty and non-knowledge. They do not know *where* to find the students or *what* they are doing with the moped; have any buildings been vandalized? Have any residents become upset? Are there other elements involved than a moped? Is it, indeed, the school's problem at all? As the managers move along the edges of the neighbor's property, they are searching for something still unknown, which they will either recognize as a problem belonging to the school or choose not to engage with for the opposite reason.

This movement, takes place in a space where a management object has not yet been made visible, where meaning has not yet been ascribed, and from which problems have not yet crystallized. All they have is the knowledge that if they *do not* search for the children, unhappy neighbors may be the result. The managers thus become temporarily defined by this uncertainty, of the still-to-materialize-problem. As with the twin in the jungle, this moment constitutes an intense present without separation of time and space. Compared to the meeting, there is little possibility of relating to the past in terms of events of which they can have

differing interpretations, or the future as something which can be planned. The managers are *in* the space, searching it, looking for a problem they can react to as managers. In their search, there are no "faithful allies" for management to rely on, to provide them with particular means and ends.

### Boundaries Undone

From across one of the green strips of grass between the housing blocks, a manager whistles and shouts "come over here." The children have been found and we move towards them. We find six boys from the ninth grade and Ibrahim. The boys walk with a moped, which appears to be stolen. It has been spray painted white, but the original colors shine through and short-circuited wires stick out from the dashboard. The air is thick with suspicion, the gravity of the situation illustrated by the presence of the entire management team. Before any questions are asked, the boys claim their innocence. One gets a soda from the box beneath the moped's seat and drops the bottle top on the ground. A manager picks it up but does not say anything. Another manager asks them what they are doing here, motivating different versions of the same reply: "I didn't drive the moped, I swear, I didn't do anything, I'm innocent." They back away slowly and try to escape the scene casually.

Meanwhile, the school manager has taken a step back to call the police, whom he involves in petty crimes as a preventive measure. At this moment, however, the police are busy handling a bank robbery and are not able to turn up within the next few hours. We stand at the spot for some time and it seems that no one really knows what to do now the police cannot come. The boys continue to deny to having been riding the moped (still without this accusation having been made) and one school manager stands talking to the representative from the housing

association who has also turned up. Some of the boys manage to escape to the schoolyard but four are taken to an office to wait for the police. During this period, the AKT teacher and the school manager have a series of conversations with them about their class attendance and bullying. The moped is locked inside a room in the basement, next to another stolen moped that caused an earlier incident.

The managers do not control which connections get made outside the meeting room, but they need to move swiftly to catch up with the event of "boys riding a moped on neighbor's property." Once they find the boys, who turn out to be their students, new information crystallizes and is translated into new management problems: what to do with the moped, what to do with Ibrahim, how to "store" the boys until the police turn up, how to deal with their truancy and bullying.

Ibrahim is taken to another office, also to wait for the police. I follow, together with the manager who has been deeply involved in the past conflicts with Ibrahim and knows him well. Ibrahim tells us, first hesitantly, then more eagerly, that instead of going home as the secretary had asked him to, he went to get the moped, which he claims to have borrowed from a friend at another school. Then he went to the neighbor's ground where he bumped into the older boys with whom he has a history of conflicts. They took the moped to tease him. He also tells us that he uses the moped to deliver marihuana from a local dealer who deals from a bench between two apartment blocks. He says that everybody knows about the dealer and seems surprised that we do not. Throughout telling his story, it is obvious that he is afraid of the boys who told him "we'll beat the crap out of you." He repeats this several times. The police arrive. At three in the afternoon, students, police, and teachers have left. The day ends with a short meeting before the managers can leave behind the school's neighborhood, its students, and the knowledge of a drug dealer for the weekend.

### Putting Out Fires

The managers refer to events as the one just described as "putting out fires." They use this metaphor to signify both the acute aspect of the activity but also to refer to it as redundant and sometimes even as a hindrance to conducting their formal operational and strategic responsibilities. Here, I will inspect the metaphor a bit closer to analyze their response to the "fire." To do so, I return to Latour. Latour distinguishes between *complicated* and *complex* interactions. Where the former points to how stabilizing non-human actants generate specific possibilities for human interaction, such as a meeting, the latter signifies naked, non-framed human interaction, referred to as a Goffman-like "hell of interactionism" (Latour 1996:233). Where Latour never fails to demonstrate how "inter-objectivity" makes possible humanity, he is less interested in the need for *complex* human interaction, dependent on the co-presence of human bodies. This may be needed when actor-networks' spatial and temporal extensions fail to frame interactions. The metaphor of a *fire fighter* can help analyze the managers' response to the *undoing* of boundaries and scales affected by Ibrahim, the truant boys, and the moped.

Fire is an energetic chemical chain reaction involving fuel, oxygen, and heat. Fighting it thus involves depriving the fire of one of these substances. For the fire fighter, however, this is no easy task as fires tend to spread in spontaneous, unexpected, and uncontrollable ways involving explosions. The fire can spread in unknown directions and the fire fighters only know the extent of damages *after* the fire has been put out (Ratner 2011). Putting out a fire thus entails a situation of uncertainty and non-knowledge.

STS scholars John Law and Vicky Singleton are also inspired by the metaphor of fire to account for how objects are performed (Law and Singleton 2005:331-

355).[97] They speak of a "topology of fire," which is characterized by the re-emergence of elements that have been *excluded* from an ordering (Law and Singleton 2005:342). In that way, their usage of fire resembles Callon's notion of "overflowing" [98] and STS scholar Steve Brown's notion of "displacement", which I discuss in Chapter Nine: realities that have been excluded from a particular framing, return and destabilize the distributions holding that framing in place (Callon 2010:163-169, Callon 1999:181–195, Brown 2010).

The elements forming the "fire" around Ibrahim comprise such elements, excluded from the framing of a meeting: Ibrahim's parents who do not keep him at home as they are supposed to, a drug dealer not refraining from contacting the school's students, truant students not attending class, a housing representative who is tired of the school's students, and the police caught up with events elsewhere. These are elements of neighboring realities that have not been enrolled and perhaps *cannot* be enrolled in the school's framed interactions. When these realities instead of remaining disconnected from each other and the school form their own "expelled student + marihuana dealer + moped + truant boys + observing housing

[97] Their topological metaphors are partly advanced as a critique of the all-encompassing concept of the network, arguing that sociality may take other shapes than the network's topology. I do not think, however, that they acknowledge Latour's understanding of network as an analytical concept: "With Actor-Network you may describe something that doesn't at all look like a network – an individual state of mind, a piece of machinery, a fictional character….ANT is a method, and mostly a negative one at that; it says nothing about the *shape* of what is being described with it" (Latour 2005:142). In that regard, they ascribe Latour's concept of the network with an ontological dimension that he does not use himself, at least not in his later work. That said, their attempt to provide some positive "qualifications" of the relationship between objects and space comprises an important contribution in post-ANT.

[98] Instead of using the noun "overflow," Callon uses the verb "overflowing" as a noun (Callon 2010:163-169, Callon 1999:181–195). While he does not reflect on this decision, I interpret it as a matter of emphasizing the process (similar moves are made for instance between organization and organizing (Chia 1999:209-227, Tsoukas and Chia 2002:567-582)).

representative" intersection, they also undo the boundaries and scales necessary to hold a meeting by presenting themselves as an urgent matter requiring the immediate presence of managers.[99]

The managers' response is first to isolate from each other the different elements that have made up the chain event of a "fire": students are taken back to the offices and the moped is locked inside the basement. When contained on the school's property, these "combustive" elements cannot as easily spread to neighboring elements. The contained property of the school is better for dealing with the problems at hand than the "limitless" space of the "local community." Placing Ibrahim in a separate office moreover produces enough calm for an interaction to take place, which produces new information about the drugs and the events preceding the managers' arrival at the scene. Fighting the fire along with the work of re-establishing the school's boundaries and scales become a matter of moving actants from a space characterized by openness, uncertainty and risk of further "ignition" to more stabilized places where movement is limited.[100] It also becomes a matter of translating new information into management problems. Moreover, it is an endeavor characterized by *both* complicated and complex human interaction.

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[99] Danish schools are also obliged to prevent crime, work on family relations, and engage in affairs belonging to the social services department and I do not mean to suggest that these issues are not their problems at all. On the contrary, still more policy obliges them to take on other institutional logics, rendering schools rather polyphonic (Andersen 2008:33-68). However, such obligations are usually delegated to cross-institutional "projects" or "partnerships" rather than events such as the one described here. It is in this sense that I talk about the undoing of scales and boundaries.

[100] This understanding of translation is related to the original Latin word "translatus" (app. 1300), meaning "to bear, convey, or remove from one person, place or condition to another; to transfer, transport" (Oxford English Dictionary). Translation is a spatial and material effort rather than a matter of producing meaning across different languages.

When putting out fires, the managers cannot control which problems belong to the school and which do not. Drug dealing and stolen mopeds become associated with the school when the neighbor and Ibrahim provide information of their presence during the school's opening hours, even if drug problems and theft fall under the jurisdiction of the police. So when the police are busy elsewhere, the school managers need to do "their" (police) work until they turn up. In this situation it is difficult to tell where the school ends and where its environment begins. But the boundaries need to be re-established and this takes work. Perhaps we can understand the managers' actions as *snuffing* or *smothering* the chain reactions produced when the different "compounds" meet and ignite a fire. It is about stopping the escalation of the present event by separating it from the "oxygenized" space in which it unfolds. It is about producing possibilities of translating the overflowing into a manageable future.

### Managing a Fragile Centre of Interventions

We can contend that this Friday is very eventful but a day of few formal accomplishments. On the one hand, it is a day where the managers deal with neighbors, police, crime, and students of concern. On the other hand, a meeting that is meant to take one hour lasts the whole day, and no one has time to deal with the conflict with the copy machine contractor, write a draft for the annual quality report, let alone go through all the other items on the meeting agenda.

The episode illustrates how little it takes for the boundaries and scales necessary to hold a meeting to become undone; how easily excluded realities intersect and explode into new problems to which managers must attend. In this section I discuss the implication of this situation for management, proposing that when

managerial practice is characterized by continuous interruptions, the school becomes *a fragile center of interventions*.

The term is inspired by Latour's notion of "center of calculation" (Latour 1987), used to account for (scientific) institutions, which, through an accumulation of inscriptions, maps, documents, and objects, can *represent* peripheral institutions and thus feasibly act on behalf of them and manipulate them at a distance. A school is an institution already subjected to centers of calculation such as the local authorities' statistical mappings and comparisons. A school also functions as a center of calculation for its students, producing information such as grades, teachers' reports, and illness absence statistics about each student. When I refer to the school as a center of *intervention* rather than *calculation* it is to account for the fact that its responsibilities go far beyond calculation, although representation and intervention are obviously related (cf. Foucault 1980). It has been argued that schooling entails a civilizing project aiming at producing citizens who contribute to the cultural preservation of the Danish democratic society and community (Gilliam and Gulløv 2012). This objective includes intervention strategies and social technologies, both aimed at having students learn to master and engage responsibly in "civilized" social relations, fostering students desire for "lifelong learning," and at parents who increasingly become an object of intervention in order to make them "responsible" parents (Knudsen 2010, Staunæs 2011:227-247, Gilliam and Gulløv 2012). To account for such tasks, I use the term "intervention."

Whereas Latour's notion emphasizes the need for a center of calculation to be connected to other sites, in order to become a spokesperson, the school is dependent on maintaining boundaries and scales, which entail *disconnections* to the local realities in which it simultaneously needs intervening. For the school

managers to attend to their formal responsibilities, such as holding a meeting and providing education for their students, the inclusion of these neighboring realities must be controlled through planned interventions. It is a fragile rather than a strong center as the schools I studied not only do not exert their dominance over excluded interactions and networks but have difficulties excluding them from their everyday teaching activities. Indeed, rather than exerting influence over their surroundings, these interrupt the interactions and distributions making up the school's scales and boundaries. Thus, the managers need to constantly intervene in a series of uncoordinated and spontaneously emerging interactions and incidents, connecting the school to disparate realities over which they have little influence, in order to re-establish fragile boundaries and scales.

Interruptions, then, imply shifts in *scale*. Scale because small details (sending an expelled boy home when he turns up at school) end up being the most crucial challenge of the day, connecting the managers to flows of drugs, crime, and the school's reputation in the local community; scale because while the managers were meant to engage with documents from important but distant centers of calculation, they end up intervening in a conflict that is both very local, literally taking place next door, yet with links extending to times and places far away, such as Ibrahim's parents' traumas from a war in Iraq. In other words, what is small and unimportant may change within minutes and become very acute, and the other way around (cf. Jensen 2007:832-850).

In the settings of Fjelde and Saxby schools, technology's ability to make sociality "durable" (cf. Latour 1991:103-131) is rather limited. Managing a fragile center of interventions entails that managers spend much time dealing with problems that do not, officially, belong to the school but nevertheless interrupt the work necessary for boundaries and scales to persist. Dis-entangling from these realities often

proves a laborious, hectic, and time consuming effort; sometimes to an extent where managers spend more time dealing with overflowing than having their attention coordinated by framed interactions.

Repercussions of a Friday like this furthermore involve time-consuming repair and stabilization work in terms of reporting and debating such incidents with each other, parents, teachers, the police, and the social services department. They generate the need for more meetings where management is expected to fabricate a plan and the belief that such episodes can be avoided in the future through better organizing and more preventive action (Ratner 2011:27-52). Sometimes they occasion disagreements among managers and teachers, and sometimes they generate disappointment, producing the sense that someone did not do their job properly. Interruptions, thus, also have consequences beyond the specific interactions they interrupt.

### Summing up

Including students with special needs means engaging with the worlds that participate in producing their special needs. This chapter shows that special needs do not *only* emerge from teachers' social constructions of normality and difference. In socio-economically marginalized schools, managing inclusion is an on-going engagement with neighboring and partially overlapping worlds. These do not always align with the managers' formal tasks but regularly manifest themselves as non-knowledge or as overflowing, changing the conditions of management in a matter of seconds. Using Latour's notions of timing and spacing, and stimulating them with the managers' own metaphor, I have analyzed the managers as fire fighters who spend enormous efforts engaging with overflowing

to maintain the school's boundaries and scales and proposed to understand the schools I studied as fragile centers of intervention.

These conditions for managing inclusion have implications for how reflexivity matters. In order for managers to perform the literature's conception of reflexivity, one that irritates practice, they need to perceive of practice as a conservative, repetitive, and static structure to which change can be introduced, through irritating teachers' mindsets. While the managers at both schools subscribe to this idea, their attention is simultaneously occupied by what does not cohere and what is already made explicit as "irritated," in attempts to stabilize matters at hand. While the recurrence of conflicts and interruptions are expected, organizational stability and order are somewhat rare, temporary achievements rather than a general structure, to which reflexivity easily can be introduced as irritation.[101]

This chapter has conceptualized the kind of management practice that makes use of reflexivity. Managers are already busy maintaining boundaries and scales and making everyday efforts come together. The following chapters look further into this premise for managing inclusion: if managers' daily work is characterized primarily by interruptions, many of which are difficult to prevent or control, how is it possible to include students with special needs when they are often considered the very source of these interruptions? Why is reflexivity considered to be important, and to what end do managers use it? And how is it possible for

[101] I am not just making the standard process philosophical argument that everything is in constant flux and in a state of becoming rather than being (Chia 1999:209-227, Tsoukas and Chia 2002:567-582). While organizing, in principle, never stops, organizations can appear solid and unchangeable through reifications or abstractions, which feed back into the process of change (Bakken and Hernes 2006:1599-1616, Czarniawska 2004:773-791). These practical abstractions or reifications, evoking the sense of stability and order, were rarely articulated at the schools I studied.

managers to make teachers' tacit knowledge and their reflexivity on this an object of management when their own practice is continuously interrupted?

# Chapter Six

## Inclusion as Exclusion: When Reflexivity Standardizes

### Introduction

In this chapter I explore the idea that teachers can acquire "the right attitude" through reflexivity and thus enable inclusion. I am interested especially in how managers come to know if and when teachers are reflexive. How do managers acquire *information* about teachers' reflexivity? And how does the expectation that teachers should be reflexive generate *accountability relations* between teachers and managers?

At both Saxby and Fjelde, teachers are often expected to demonstrate reflexivity while the managers see it as their task to assess if and to what extent they are reflexive. At several occasions, the managers at both schools emphasize that it is not sufficient to register teachers' accounts of their own reflexivity, for instance, by letting them report on reflexive team exercises. This is generally seen as entailing the risk of hypocrisy, for example with teachers saying one thing and doing another, or simply mis-representation if teachers cannot formulate the precise reasons and effects of their choices (Ratner and Pors submitted). Instead, managers seek to obtain information about teachers' reflexive capabilities through other means: by observing their direct interactions with students and by talking to students about their experience with specific teachers.

As the school managers rarely supervise teaching in class, they attend to interactions between teachers and students in other situations, for instance, when a conflict has to be resolved. Conflicts between students and teachers are moreover considered important for managers to know about; if teachers do not manage conflicts "professionally," they may involuntarily reinforce negative behavioral

loops and to straightjacket students in unwanted roles. *Interruptions,* as those I analyzed in the last chapter, thus also affect the manner in which information about teachers' reflexivity is produced. Since such information cannot be acquired through conventional "information infrastructures" (cf. Bowker and Star 2000) such as statistical comparisons of students' grades and annual employment development dialogues, the managers to a high degree depend on incidental encounters, emerging in what I will refer to as "information ecology" (cf. Nardi and O'Day 1999). This gives information about teachers' reflexivity a somewhat elusive and arbitrary character.

I analyze an enactment of reflexivity at Saxby School, which I gradually came to understand as *standardizing managerial reactions* to teachers' self-management during conflicts with students. *Similar criteria* are used to extract information from conflicts and for assessing teachers in a range of *different situations*. This configures accountability relations among managers, teachers, and students in the following way: most importantly, the managers go to great lengths to understand the students' experience of conflicts while teachers' emotions[102] are seen as information for assessing their reflexive capabilities. An effect is that teachers'

[102] The role of "emotions" and "affects" are increasingly analyzed in educational management (e.g. Staunæs 2011:227-247, Bjerg and Staunæs 2011:138-156), sometimes drawing on what has been labeled the "affective turn" (Clough 2008:1-22, Massumi 2002). In this literature, scholars distinguish between "affect" and "emotion": Affects, which are defined as non-human intensities and atmospheres, unfold relationally and transform bodies and subjects, while emotions are defined as a "subjective, sociolinguistic fixing of the quality of an experience which is from that point of defined as personal" (Massumi 2002:28). I do not engage with this literature in the thesis (but do elsewhere: Staunæs, Juelskjær and Ratner 2010:25-40, Ratner and Pors submitted, Ratner 2009:105-121). Let me emphasize, however, that in my somewhat quick references to "emotion" here and elsewhere, I do not consider emotions as emerging from a bounded individual who "contains" and "exhibits" emotions such as fear or anger (Staunæs 2011:233) but rather as effects of an "affective movement of connection…a movement that is at once real and produced" (Lee and Brown 2002:277).

decisions and assessments of students may get overruled and thus *excluded* from the managerial decision making.

In the situations I analyze, the idea that teachers can interact differently with students through reflexivity becomes an important managerial resource for attributing responsibility. It is impossible to say, however, whether the (potentially excluding) assessments of teachers would have taken place without an ideal of reflexivity and inclusion in operation at Saxby School. Perhaps the managers would have mobilized other resources to keep the teachers accountable? However, as I will expand upon in the next session, inclusion is a point of strong tension between the managers and teachers at Saxby School and, thus, the managers show extra attention to the need for teachers to reflect on their practices and their views on students.

I structure the chapter in two parts. I begin with more broadly discussing the status of inclusion at Saxby School and show how interruptions become a locus for producing information about teachers' reflexivity. In the second part I illustrate how reflexivity standardizes by analyzing three conflicts between students and teachers. I conclude the chapter with a further discussion of these effects especially on relations between managers and teachers. It is important to emphasize that this is not the only managerial reaction to teachers' conflicts with students at Saxby School. Holding teachers responsible is far from the only way managers handle conflicts, and they side with the teacher if they consider the students' problems too great for the school or teacher to deal with. We saw this in the former example with Ibrahim. It is, however, rather difficult for me to asses where and how they draw that line, and my field notes tell of several incidents, similar to the ones I analyze below, where teachers' decisions and points of view are thematized as a signpost of their reflexivity. The standardizing modality of

reflexivity is important to understand as it illustrates how reflexivity, invoked in the name of inclusion to unravel asymmetries between teachers and students, itself generates new asymmetries.

### Inclusion: a Contested Program

As a recently merged school, Saxby faces different challenges than Fjelde in its work with inclusion. The new management team at Saxby has not inherited an archive of intervention records of its students from the preceding managers, and the teachers know only half the students in the new classes they teach. On top of this, during the period I study the school, both teachers and students are going through a process of testing each other's boundaries and negotiating new hierarchies. Teachers report on increased turbulence after the merger, both in their new teacher teams, in classes, and during breaks. This, of course, makes accomplishing inclusion more difficult.

In addition, the managers often express a concern that many teachers might not be capable of fully embracing the principle of inclusion. After starting at the school, the school manager presents and explains to the teachers on power point the principles of appreciative pedagogy. Appreciating students, according to her, is a matter of finding each student's strengths and encouraging the development of these strengths; it is also important to "look behind" unruly behavior. She informs teachers and pedagogues that this is how they will be working from now on. As the school manager expresses it, the least likable (aggressive and unruly) students are also the ones who need the understanding and care of adults the most. This is a view she also expresses publicly. In a brochure representing the schools she describes inclusive pedagogy as a means of changing teachers' reactions and practices: "If a student is wild, one should not think 'away with him'. It is we who

must learn how to handle the individual students (…). If there is no theoretical foundation for working with these children, then one [the teacher] needs to go and get it." During my fieldwork, she often talks about new books she has read about inclusive teaching and pedagogical techniques and she frequently informs teachers about this literature in order to provide them with such a "theoretical foundation" for working with their practice.

Not all teachers at the school are happy about the introduction of this new pedagogy. According to the union representative, many teachers feel that the school manager does not sufficiently appreciate the inclusive work they are *already* doing. Her launch of the new pedagogical vision is interpreted as taking a distance from their "old fashioned pedagogy." Moreover, when the school manager shortly after the merger enrolls the school as a volunteer in the municipal inclusion project, which involves educating teachers in inclusive pedagogies, there is little support from the teachers. Their main concern is that they are not ready to participate in such an intense project so soon after the merger.

These different sentiments eventually result in a rather antagonistic relationship between the managers and parts of the staff. At my first meeting with the school manager, for instance, she explains how powerless she feels about managing what she sees as fundamentally non-appreciative teachers. A teacher has asked her how they can make "mahogany boards from chip boards," indicating a strong doubt as to whether they are able to have any kind of positive impact on the school's students. The school manager tells me that she got so angry that she wanted to tell the teacher to leave:

> I almost got up and said "really, couldn't you find the exit by yourself or should I help you or perhaps spell it out for you. It says O.U.T. That means that you should leave now." We can't have people with such attitudes. I have never had chip boards

> as children. I only have good children, be it children with special needs, high school children, private school children. I have only had mahogany boards. It doesn't matter. All children are amazingly good. But they have different ways to tackle the world and that's a different thing. With such an attitude to humans, I have to say, then you can't teach.

While finding such attitudes among teachers extremely counterproductive, she interprets it by analyzing the leadership style of the former management. According to her, the teachers have depended too much on former managers who have simply scolded students who got sent to the office. During fieldwork, she frequently states that teachers need to work on their own assumptions and attitudes because she will not continue this style of management.

Instead, as mentioned, she offers to disseminate new theories to teachers for them to learn how to work differently. At a municipal seminar about inclusion, for instance, a teacher reports that she feels powerless as four students "sabotage her teaching" with constant "noise, whistling, and finger tapping" during class. She expresses the feeling that these students are "beyond pedagogical reach" and that it is "difficult and strenuous" to be on her own, both in the classroom and in her teacher team, which, in her view, does not support her enough. The manager responds with the observation that students' unruliness is always a good reason to start examining oneself and that this teacher should question whether she can change some of her teaching practices. She then tells her that over the weekend she intends to write a summary of a book she is currently reading about classroom management and that she will share this with the teachers for inspiration.

Both managers and teachers suspect that the municipal inclusion project might primarily be about cutting costs. At the end of one day full of conflicts, the managers make sarcastic comments on the possibility of achieving inclusion with no funding, which means, for instance that teachers with special AKT

competences have to be used for normal teaching. One of them explains the situation accordingly:

> Nobody disagrees with the underlying philosophy [of inclusion]. But the problem is that they ask us to include without giving us resources. (…) Our system has its limitations. I mean the facilities we have, our economy. (…) There are (…) students with needs we can't meet. But when they say inclusion, as they earlier said teaching differentiation (…) it is such a hurray word, which means that it doesn't cost any money; now all we need to do is to include and that's that. (…) But there ARE limits.

While expressing a firm belief in the potentials of inclusive pedagogy, the managers also reflect critically on which realistic possibilities they are given within the framework of the municipal inclusion project.

Managers also know that the teachers do indeed experience extremely challenging situations.[103] One day, talking to another manager, I follow up on my observation that they often go to great lengths to offer students second chances, even if teachers disagree and complain that the managers do not support the decisions they have already made. The manager explains that he understands very well that it can be difficult to interpret a student's (unwanted) behavior during class where many things are always going on. When students come to him for a chat, however, the quiet of the office allows him to listen to them in a way that a classroom does not. He is thus able to obtain better information for interpreting whether the student's action has been "wrong" and, consequently, he sometimes disagrees with a teacher's assessment of a student. Often there will be a good reason for a

[103] For example, a teacher at Saxby School explained to me, somewhat sarcastically, that "appreciating students" is not easy after having been embarrassed by an 11 year old student asking him, in front of the entire class, about the size of his penis or whether he "takes his wife from behind."

student's "wrong" behavior, and it is very important, he points out, that students do not lose their trust in adults.

Conflicting expectations thus characterize the status of inclusion at Saxby. Even if the managers, like the teachers, are skeptical about the financial aspects of the municipal project and understand that teachers face difficult situations, they still express a strong belief in the potential to include by providing teachers with new theories to reflect and develop their practice with. Considering this backdrop for working with inclusion, it may not be surprising that I found the managers of Saxby School to be especially attentive to teachers' willingness to embrace the principles of inclusion. As I discuss below, they make such assessments from information produced by *chance* rather than more systematic forms of surveillance.

### Interruptions as Information Ecology

Teachers' attitudes towards students are the objects of keen managerial attention at both schools. Mostly, their observations of teacher interactions with students happen by chance, and often, managers share stories about their observations with me and each other. A common topic in these stories is how to deal with teachers' use of "non-appreciative language," for instance when they have overheard teachers talking about students in the staff room or when teachers argue for the need to use "harsh language" to "get through to these students." While acknowledging that many of the schools' students are indeed challenging to teach, managers from both schools also explain that the schools are responsible for some of the most vulnerable students in the country. These students are in extra need of contact with responsible and reliable adults. Thus, the managers find it extremely important to offer the students the experience of getting treated in a fair manner,

without discrimination based on ethnicity or social background. The school, in their opinion, has to offer life options different from unemployment, substance abuse, and criminality, of which there is plenty in the local community.

At Saxby School, the managers sometimes express suspicion that some of their staff tries to hide their true colors. One morning, for instance, the managers discuss what to do about the "teachers' negative attitudes." A teacher has started a debate on the school's intranet, writing that she no longer feels safe after a student has been caught with a knife. She relates this incident to one where a few students wore masks and insinuates that the difference between the students and a criminal gang is not that great. While taking the knife incident very seriously, the managers express the feeling that the teacher's concern about gang activity is exaggerated. The incident, according to them, is just about students playing around and covering their faces with scarves during recess. The intranet debate, however, generates managerial concerns about the atmosphere in the staff room. As a manager says: "then they go to teach with a negative attitude and the children can feel that. Of course, as soon as *we* enter the staff room no complaints are heard but when we turn our backs… Generally there is a negative attitude here surrounding these children." The perception that true attitudes are mostly hidden from their view indicates why it is so important for managers to find occasions to learn about them.

While the frequent interruptions often invoke the sense that the managers do not achieve what they have planned, interruptions caused by teacher-student conflicts are also seen as opportunities for learning about relations between teachers and students. During my fieldwork at Saxby, I became curious about how managers turn such conflicts into information about teachers' attitudes. When they encounter a conflict by chance, they often stand in the background watching, and only later

will they talk the situation over with the teacher. Of course, when they estimate that a conflict has escalated to a level the teacher cannot handle alone, they interfere and mediate. But more often, conflicts become a *medium* through which the managers assess teachers' attitudes, considered a signpost of their reflexivity. Sometimes they report on such observations to other members of the management team.

Managers learn about conflicts when teachers ask for their assistance in the classroom or for their help with a particular student. There are also other kinds of moments. The spatial arrangement of Saxby School offers an opportunity for the managers to observe interactions between teachers and students. Outside the managers' offices there is a small hallway. It provides passage to the classroom corridors, the staff room, the toilets, the kitchen with the coffee brewer, and a working station with computers and a copy machine. The hallway itself is furnished with a sofa, a table, and three chairs. Sometimes parents wait here before attending a meeting with a manager and sometimes teachers bump into each other here and start talking. Managers pass through the hallway every time they leave their offices. The hallway is thus a central artery for the movement of managers, teachers, visitors, and students. Besides, or perhaps because of this particular function, it also provides a place for solving conflicts between students and teachers that cannot be handled in a classroom and have not yet made it to the manager's office.

Usually, two to four students, mainly boys, hang out around the hallway's sofa, also during class time. Here they laugh, cry, do homework, or fool around. They are here because they have been dismissed from the teaching space. This happens for different reasons but often because of conflicts with a teacher or another student. Sometimes, these students visit the managers' offices for a chat. Or the

managers stop in passing through the hallway and ask them why they have been dismissed from class. When the class is over, the teachers also stop in the hallway on their way to the staff room to solve the conflict with the student(s). To the teachers, the hallway provides a possibility for them to interact with students outside class, where it is rather difficult to have a conversation without the rest of the class calling for their attention or listening in. In this regard, the sofa arrangement constitutes a place where conflicts from the classrooms are "parked" and sometimes shared with the managers before the arrival of the teacher.

Although somewhat private, compared to the exposed space of a classroom full of students, the hallway is still public in the sense that managers and other teachers by chance may pass by and witness the conflicts as they unfold. The hallway thus constitutes an important place for managers to learn about teachers' interactions with students. One morning, for instance, the school manager tells me that an experience in the hallway has changed her opinion about a particular teacher. After having heard the teacher complain about her students, she had thought her to be unappreciative and to approach the students with the wrong attitude. However, upon her return from extended sick leave, the school manager witnessed how happy the students were to see her return. They hugged the teacher and this made her change her assessment. Despite her "negative remarks," displaying a "negative attitude," she is in fact a rather good teacher.

While there are many ways to survey teachers' work systematically, such as the aforementioned annual employee development dialogues, these methods are not deemed sufficient for revealing teachers' attitudes. Watching how teachers handle conflicts in the hallway, reading the intranet, and hearing students' stories, on the contrary, are generally considered to provide reliable information as these situations put the teachers' "real" emotions on display. Yet, managers do not

obtain this information by means of systematic surveillance but rather by noting random glimpses and hints as they pass by in the hallway or are interrupted in the office. In that regard, interruptions do more than occasion the need for repairing and maintaining boundaries and scales, as analyzed in the last chapter. They also constitute their own contingent, and very local modality for producing information about employees.

This kind of surveillance and production of information differs greatly from "modern" forms of surveillance. Obviously, it does not comply with Foucault's depiction of modernity's disciplinary, totalizing panoptic gaze, where one invisible prison guard can see all prisoners at once and the prisoners as a result internalize the disciplinary gaze (Foucault 1975). Neither does it comply with Latour's image of a limited but solid oligopticon, providing a narrow view of connected wholes (Latour 2005:181). There are no "whole" to look into and no "information infrastructure" (cf. Bowker and Star 2000) allowing the managers to access and construct this kind of information systematically.

Instead, I propose that this "surveillance," characterized by random glimpses and circumstantial indications which managers encounter by chance while busy doing other things evolves in an "information ecology" (cf. Nardi and O'Day 1999). Concepts such as "information infrastructure," "oligoptikon," and "panopticon" all regard some kind of *intention of* surveillance built into the design of e.g. a building or a technology generating, summing up, and mediating information. Information ecology, in turn, emphasizes an abundance of different "organisms" sharing the same "habitat" and influencing each other as they co-evolve. The metaphor of "ecology" emphasizes the effects of "local environmental changes and local interventions," and different organisms engage in complex, opportunistic relationships with one another. The hallway, which I imagine was designed for

different purposes than surveillance, produces information because it is a locality shared by many different "organisms" that influence one another. Interactions between a teacher and a student, for example, influence later interactions between that teacher and his manager. The teacher and manager, as I will show, might find different "opportunistic" reasons for attending to that conflict.

### Emotions as a Window into Teachers' Attitudes

Following the school manager on a relatively quiet morning, we pass a boy sitting on the sofa outside her office. The manager stops and asks the boy in a friendly manner why he is not attending class. The boy explains that he has had a conflict with his teacher over a bottled soft drink, which he had brought to class. This is generally not allowed but the boy is still angry with the teacher. The teacher had taken his soda and poured it into the sink. How could the teacher pour out his soda, which he has bought for his own money, he asks the manager. The boy had demanded that the teacher reimburse him but she had refused, resulting in a conflict and in the boy getting sent to the hallway. After hearing this story, the manager leaves the boy.

Later, during recess, we leave the office to go to the staff room and, by chance, we pass the teacher, who has arrived in the meantime to talk to the boy. The manager stops at a distance of approximately four meters away and without intervening watches how the conflict is resolved. In the beginning, the situation is quite tense. The boy stands up, shouts, and demands to get back the money he has spent on his soft drink. The teacher seems quite stressed. Her voice escalates and her body grows tense when the boy moves closer to her. None of them manage to stay calm. She tells the boy to "shut up," tells him that he knows that what he has done is against the rules, that he does not listen in class and that he is not listening now.

She calls him “impossible” and for a moment, the conflict seems deadlocked. However, within a few minutes they compromise, agreeing that they both feel that the other is unfair. They plan to have a soft drink together outside after class next Tuesday if the boy promises not to bring soft drinks to class anymore. Afterwards in the office, the school manager explains to me why this is a very interesting incident.

> We have a conflict between a teacher and a student. In the beginning, the teacher is very agitated and speaks to the boy in an unacceptable way. But then she enters into a dialogue and begins to see the situation from his perspective. And in the end, everything is solved with the new soft drink arrangement.

For the school manager, two important things happen. First, the conflict is solved and consequently there is no need for her to worry further about it. More importantly, she has observed a change (for the better) in the teacher’s conduct of herself, which prevents the conflict from escalating. She interprets this change as *the teacher taking the student’s perspective* rather than giving in to her anger. Interestingly, it is not important to the manager that a rule has been broken. Instead, her attention regards the teacher’s ability to “shift perspective” during a conflict. The manager's focus is on the teacher's self-management rather than on the (mis)behavior of the student.

For some reason, the manager does not consider whether the student has the capability of changing perspective as well. The student’s behavior is seen primarily as a reaction to the teacher’s anger. The manager’s reading of the teacher’s change as the result of “taking the student’s perspective” is of course only one possible interpretation. Another could be that the teacher simply wished to stop the conflict and did not actually “take his perspective.” While I did not speak to the teacher and hence do not know whether she has the experience of

"changing perspective," it was quite obvious that the manager uses the conflict and *especially* the observation that the teacher displays a certain control of her emotions to assess her attitude and ability to do so.

Based on this reading of the situation the manager decides that the teacher does well. Via her display of emotional change, the manager "looks into the teacher's head" and assesses her reflexive, perspective-changing capabilities. Indeed, she uses that image herself, once telling me that she tries to "enter the teachers' heads and to twist their inclusion button, which is often stuck." The teacher's emotional reaction is thus considered a signpost of her attitude towards students. An "appreciative attitude" is, in turn, seen to indicate a reflexive teacher able to shift perspective.

### Distributing Responsibility by Disconnecting a Drawing from Gobs of Spittle

In the second example, I explore how a teachers' ability to reflect becomes visible when she asks for managers to help her solve a conflict in class. As in the previous example, the teacher's emotional reaction also becomes a medium through which the managers evaluate the teacher. In this case, however, the managerial evaluation of the teacher affects how the conflict is solved. Even though the situation is different from the previous example, similar managerial expectations of teachers able to reflexively take the other's perspective are at play, and this shows how reflexivity can become standard.

One morning, upon arriving at the school, one of the managers directs my attention to a big drawing (A1 paper size) full of statements in crude writing such as "you are evil," "you are ugly," and "we want you to leave." The manager

explains that a teacher finds this drawing upon arriving at class. The story goes that he, not surprisingly, becomes rather upset and demands to know who has made the drawing. While interrogating the students he discovers two gobs of spittle on his pants and concludes that someone must have spat on him without him noticing. After class, he goes to the staff room and shares his story. Then he fetches one of the managers, and together they talk to the class. The episode is discussed later that day at a meeting. As the excerpt from the meeting illustrates, there is some disagreement between the union representative and the involved manager about how to interpret the situation.

> Manager 1: I went to talk to the class afterwards with Tom [teacher]. I used the whole recess to talk to the class and I feel that I got somewhere by acknowledging what they had to say. They admitted who had written the statements on the drawing and apologized. However, Tom did not hear anything. He only focused on the gobs of spittle. He didn't listen at all, he didn't hear their apologies. He kept asking who it was, looking for someone to blame, instead of acknowledging how far we already had come with the drawing. […] It's important to divide the episode into two parts. First, there was the drawing. Second, there were the gobs of spittle. And they claim that they didn't spit. But they admitted to have made the drawing and apologized. But Tom was so freaked out that he didn't react to the opening that the students provided.
>
> Union representative: But is there an opening in this situation?
>
> Manager 2: Yes. But he can't isolate the two situations.
>
> Union representative: It must be really difficult to convince him to go into that class again.
>
> Manager 1: His reaction was to go straight to the staff room. He didn't first go and talk to us about it. That created a really bad atmosphere. But I guess he needed his colleagues.

As in the previous example, the important aspect for the managers is how the teacher handles his emotions (in this case he "freaked out") and not the students' behavior, which could easily be interpreted to have provoked the teacher's

reaction in the first place. Moreover, the fact that the teacher first goes straight to the staff room is considered to contaminate the atmosphere (cf. Staunæs 2011:241). While the union representative wonders if the teacher could have reacted otherwise, the manager's assessment is used to decide on the matter: no further action will be taken against the students, even if the teacher has expressed wishes for "consequences." As the teacher is not "ready" to return they find a temporary substitute for this class.

Dividing the episode in two and discounting the teacher's experience, which does not contain this division, enables the management team to allocate blame: rather than blaming the students for spitting on the teacher, the teacher's lack of emotional control is turned into the managerial problem. The decision to find a new teacher for the class closes the case. This exercise in holding the teacher accountable to general expectations of reflexivity and emotional control enables the managers to dismiss the teacher's expressed desire for consequences to the students. As in the former example, the teacher's emotional response is used to interpret whether he is a competent, reflexive teacher.

### Compensating a Student's Experience

In this example, we return to the hallway and the couch where students hang out when dismissed from class. One morning three students visit the school manager's office after all having been dismissed by the same teacher. This teacher, Sarah, has been a frequent topic in discussions among the managers as she frequently requests that managers should give students a dressing-down. She is described as "angry" and "non-appreciative" of the students. The managers consider her to be a particularly difficult member of staff as it is difficult to "get through to her" and get her to work reflexively with her expectations and attitudes to students.

This example is particularly dramatic because it leads the managers to decide to fire her. My analysis focuses on how the students' interruptions become involved in this decision. It is important to note that to the managers, these stories are seen to bear similarity to earlier conflicts in which this particular teacher has been involved. The decision to fire her, then, is not based on these interruptions alone. These incidents, however, come to constitute a tipping point. Like in the former example with Ibrahim, certain events or incidents are necessary for managers to move from reluctant acceptance of a behavior to make the decision of, here, firing the teacher. I show how the students' stories become a means to produce knowledge about the teacher in question and for deciding to fire her. The managers moreover try to undo the teacher's "harmful" influence on students; to substitute the teacher's "wrong" attitude with a positive relationship between managers and students.

The managers have assembled in an office for an informal meeting to discuss how to inform parents about a teacher's long-term absence due to illness. However, instead of deciding on this matter, three interruptions occur in a row as dismissed students appear. This changes the agenda of the meeting to focus on the teacher that has evicted them. The first student peeps inside the office, asking for a manager who is away attending a seminar. Hesitating to leave the office, the school manager invites the boy in and gives him a hug. While hugging, she asks the boy why he is not in class with his friends. The boy responds that he has been asked to leave, that his teacher at the beginning of the class gave him the choice between leaving the class right away or being dismissed as soon as he opened his mouth ("du bliver smidt ud ved første pip"). To this statement, the school manager responds: "and then you chose to leave?" The boy nods, while still being hugged. The school manager pats the boy on the head and tells him that she understands

his decision and that he can go to the library and do some homework. Before returning to the subject matter of the teacher on sick leave, she throws a brief comment to her fellow managers, “what kind of way is this to talk to a child?!” This first interruption, then, does not change the agenda at the meeting. The managers do, however, immediately show the student that they sympathize with his decision to leave voluntarily, indicating that they probably already think that the teacher behaves in an unreasonable way.

After a few minutes, a manager leaves to meet a parent and finds another student from the same class sitting on the couch. He asks the student why he is sitting there. The student responds that the teacher had called him “stupid,” to which he had replied that this is not true. This had gotten him dismissed from class. The manager replies that he wants him to tell this to the other managers and leaves the student on the couch. After the parent meeting, the manager invites the boy into the office and the doors are closed. They all sit by the meeting table, the student included.

> Manager: The young man has been kicked out of Sarah’s class.
>
> Student: She called me stupid. Then I say ‘don’t call me stupid’ and then she kicks me out.
>
> Manager: But what happened before she called you stupid? I mean, she did not just call you stupid out of the blue.
>
> Student: I asked ‘where are we’ in the book. I wasn’t sure. Then she says ‘First of all, you don’t understand anything, and second, you’re stupid. Go to the office’.

After hearing this statement, the school manager asks another manager to hand her a piece of paper. She tells the student that he is not stupid and explains that she

needs to know all details about the incident. She notes the date, the class, and the student's full name. The school manager also asks the boy to recollect the teacher's precise wording and writes down that, too. At this moment, the sentences used to dismiss the student are turned into written statements, into information, which the managers can save and later use independently of the student's presence and memory when talking to the teacher. After repeating all information to the student to confirm its accuracy the school manager returns her attention to the student's experience.

> School manager: I am very sorry for what you have experienced. I have told the teachers how I would like it to be here at the school. We need to be comfortable around one another and have a good time together. And I want that teachers speak nicely to the students. There are no stupid students here.
>
> Manager: I always said, there are no stupid questions, only stupid answers. And you just got such a stupid answer.
>
> School manager: Yes. I can't accept when such things are being said. I'm sorry that this is the way it is. I don't want things to be like this. I would like us to respect one another. That's what it's all about.
>
> Student: But it isn't your fault
>
> School manager: I'm still very sorry for your experience.

After receiving these apologies, the boy is sent to the library. Contrary to the former case, this interaction is not just about comforting a student who has been excluded for what is considered the wrong reasons. The student is invited to leave the couch, a place symbolizing exclusion and blame, and enters the office to sit at the meeting table, usually reserved for adults. From being a "naughty" and dismissed student, he is now treated as a witness to a teacher's display of a wrong

attitude and a non-appreciative kind of behavior. The student's experience is taken seriously. It is documented and it acquires the status of information about the teacher who has dismissed him, a written statement that can be compared to similar written statements representing other students' or parents' experiences. All of this adds to an emerging image of the teacher and her ways with students.

The school manager also attempts to transform the student's likely experience of being the victim of accusation and blame to an experience of being heard, by emphasizing that the teacher is wrong and the student right. The school manager even apologizes for the boy's experience, on behalf of the school. In that regard, she re-directs the blame that the teacher had placed on the boy back at the teacher. Only then will she send the boy to the library. Before returning to the original discussion of the teacher on long-term absence, the managers briefly discuss an earlier episode with the teacher involving a football whistle used to quiet the students, an incident which has resulted in complaints about her "military style of discipline" from both students and parents.

A final interruption occurs when a third student is dismissed from Sarah's class and requires the managers' attention. This time a manager finds a girl on the couch outside the office and asks who has dismissed her from class.

> Student: I was sent in here by Sarah. She asked about ..you know…the schedule with all the boxes and letters and numbers
>
> Manager: The periodical system.
>
> Student: Yes. I had my finger up and asked – is that metal? Then she says ' you're just guessing'. Then I say: 'No, I actually believed, I didn't guess.' Then she says 'you are so stupid that you can't explain what you believe.' Then I didn't say anymore. Then I turned around to look behind me and then she told me to leave.

The managers ask her about the question she tried to ask in class. They find out that her belief was not completely wrong as she wanted to know whether gold is a metal. As with the former student, the managers tell her that the question is not stupid. After the girl leaves for the library, the managers debate how three students have been dismissed by the same teacher. One says, “I know her [the student] quite well. She can be extremely naughty but this is not a way to respond to them [the students]. She [the teacher] cannot tell them that they’re stupid.” They begin comparing the three students’ stories with the complaints they have received earlier about the same teacher and decide, on the spot, that it is time to begin a process to fire the teacher.

The above situations illustrate how three successive student stories of unjust exclusion by a teacher add to the managers’ general negative assessment of the teacher’s performance to such an extent that they decide to fire her. Random interruptions are slowly turned into information, a collection of individual statements gathered for later use. The conflicts occurring between the teacher and the students are not the only basis for the managers’ decision. Earlier episodes have already led to the formation of a general opinion about this teacher. At this meeting, the students’ reports are turned into evidence that can help the managers document the reasons for firing the teacher.

### When Reflexivity Standardizes

I propose to understand the three accounts given above as situations where interruptions are transformed into information about teachers' attitudes. Moreover I propose that they exemplify how reflexivity standardizes managers’ expectations to teachers across a wide range of different situations. I use the term standardizing to point out how the managers’ expectations of teachers to work reflexively with

their attitudes become "a rule, principle, or means of judgment or estimation; a criterion, measure," as the dictionary defines "standard" (Oxford English Dictionary). *Similar expectations* to teachers appear in quite *different* situations: the teachers' ability to maintain self-control and willingness to reflexively question their own perspective and instead take the perspective of students.

There is already a large discussion within STS about the powers of classification, standardization, and their consequences (e.g. Bowker and Star 2000, Star 1991:26-56). It has been argued that standards reduce complexity by providing criteria or principles, which allow for decisions to be made without paying attention to the premises for making that decision (Thygesen 2007:151-172). Moreover, standards provide an object of measurement (here, the teacher) and a scale (the idea that good teachers are reflexive) that can be used to assess that object (Bowker and Star 2000:15). In the situations analyzed above, the expectation that teachers should display reflexivity momentarily relieve the managers of taking into account the teachers' experiences, which are regarded as information about the teachers' attitudes, and then ricocheted back for the teachers to deal with alone.

As I illustrated in the beginning of this chapter, the managers express a strong belief in appreciative, inclusive pedagogy. Since their expectations to teachers resonate with those found in the pedagogical, managerial, and policy literature (cf. Chapter Four), the standardizing reflexivity can be interpreted as a *performative effect* of this conceptual apparatus. As I mentioned in Chapter One, performativity refers to the idea that a theory, rather than describing the world, helps bring into being the world it describes (Callon 2010:163-169). The examples analyzed above show that this body of knowledge does not always succeed in producing (what the managers can recognize as) "reflexive teachers." In the first controversy over the bottled drink in class, it does. In the others, the idea that teachers through

reflexivity can manage their expectations and attitudes to students produces managerial disappointment. Nevertheless, the managers' expectations of reflexivity seem to be clearly configured in this way, regardless of the "seriousness" of the particular situation, and the disappointments produced when teachers fail to live up to these expectations.

As a standard, reflexivity entails elasticity and flexibility as it can be mobilized in a range of different situations. Perhaps these very properties make it powerful. In the analyzed incidents, the expectation that teachers behave reflexively takes on the quality of a "catch all" standard. It allows a plurality of student behaviors to be accepted while leveling the teachers' reactions. Regardless of whether the conflict involves a student breaking a rule, students spitting on a teacher, or students asking fairly innocent questions in class, the teachers' (emotional) reaction is interpreted as a signpost of the *same thing*, namely how reflexive he or she is. If teachers can control their emotions, they can also take the perspective of students and change their attitudes. The problem with the teacher who is going to be fired is that her anger reveals her "unwillingness" to change her "old-fashioned" disciplinary attitude towards students.

Furthermore, the students' emotions are as a rule considered important to take seriously. Managerial interpretations of emotions thus depend on who exactly exhibits them. While teachers are expected to control anger, frustration, and annoyance by changing their attitudes and perspectives at will, students' expressions of anger, shame, and sadness are seen as signs that they need someone to talk to and in some cases, to have their negative experience substituted with more positive emotions (Staunæs, Juelskjær and Ratner 2010:25-40). This difference in *who* exhibits emotions may be related to the *scale* that reflexivity provides, which I discussed extensively in Chapter Four: the idea that students are

effects of teachers' attitudes, yet individuals, can be seen to have a leveling effect on expectations to teachers.

The standard then *homogenizes* expectations to teachers' conduct as it allows for encompassing and understanding *heterogeneous* student behavior. An effect of *including* students' behavior and experiences is, following, an *exclusion* of teachers' decisions and assessments of the situations. Excluding teachers' experiences can be interpreted as a way to bracket ambiguity and heterogeneity. Especially in the situations where teachers' experiences differ from the managers' interpretations or the students' accounts, these experiences introduce a complexity and ambiguity. Opposing points of view rarely add up to one coherent account. One effect of reflexivity as a standard is a managerial detachment from teachers' emotional reactions. Whereas the teachers' emotions become managerial information, their problems are bounced back to them.[104]

Considering how the literature promoting inclusion advocates the necessity of *dissolving* standards and replacing them with reflexivity, it is ironic that reflexivity can *also* become a new standard. It seems that the attempt to liberate practices from limiting standards produces new kinds of standardizing practices. When the managerial assessments of teachers emerge in an information ecology rather than through conventional information infrastructures, it furthermore has the effect that the information "gathered" about teachers is contingent upon factors such as which age group the teacher is responsible for (in the smaller classes, the conflicts less often result in dismissal from class) and which subjects he or she teaches (certain subjects, such as Danish, implicate that more time is spent with the

[104] It is important to note that this configuration of accountability relations may not be that general. For an example where the teacher's emotions were taken seriously at the costs of the student's experiences, see Staunæs in press:1-22.

students and these teachers also often take the responsibility for re-solving conflicts with the students). Generating information for assessing teachers' reflexivity in this information ecology thus has the effect that the managers gain more knowledge about some teachers than others.

### Implications

A standard is not innocent, as it "valorizes some point of view and silences another. This is not inherently a bad thing – indeed it is inescapable. But it is an ethical choice, and as such it is dangerous" (Bowker and Star 2000:5). The ethical challenge which the standard-like effects of reflexivity pose is connected to the idea that reflexivity has *enhancing* effects. With the various theories advancing the promises of reflexivity, the assumption comes that teachers can change their attitudes and practice *at will*. To paraphrase Strathern's observation of the assumption that technology is enabling (Strathern 1995:24), a side-effect of the promises of reflexivity is that persons become obliged to demonstrate that they have been enabled and can improve. At Saxby School, this "obligation" emerges in a range of different situations as I have shown. Somewhat paradoxically in this context, pluralizing and individualizing of students result in the reverse for teachers: they are leveled and homogenized, in the sense that they are expected to react in the same "enabled" way in quite different situations.

Conversely, the idea of reflexivity allows for inclusion of "deviant" student behavior, as it widens managerial tolerance of students breaking rules and offending teachers. Teachers are held accountable in terms of their emotional responses to students. Indeed, the expectation of reflexivity inadvertently rejects certain teaching experiences as invalid and as not amounting to a problem that management needs engage with. Instead, the teachers are held responsible and

their “lack of reflexivity” is seen as the reason for the escalation of those conflicts, which arrive at the managers’ office. At the same time, reflexivity allows for comforting students who are seen to have been subjected to unjust treatment, as we see in the last example.

This has a range of different implications, both for the managers and the teachers at Saxby School. Some teachers agree very much with the new inclusive pedagogy and complain that their colleagues will not cooperate. Other teachers report a lack of trust in management. The union representative describes the situation accordingly:

> Many teachers experienced that if they reprimanded students, if they scolded them, grabbed their collars and brought them to the office for disciplining, expecting the managers to put them in their place, then it was the teachers getting reprimanded by the managers instead. It was the teachers who were told to behave politely and always friendly with the students and that it didn’t help the students if they just shouted and scolded. The result was that a lot of teachers became extremely frustrated and didn’t know which pedagogical tools they could use instead. Because what they had done and what had worked for them over several years were no longer legitimate.

While reflexivity by the managers is considered an essential pedagogical method, it seems that part of the staff does not experience it that helpful. This has the consequence that some teachers stop coming to management when they face challenges. This, in turn, reinforces the managers’ suspicion that they keep their “true” attitudes hidden. Moreover, the managers’ express the feeling that it is difficult for them to influence teachers. At one point, towards the end of my fieldwork, the school manager explains that many of the teachers do not listen to her, even though, in her estimation, she has provided them with all the literature they need to begin a reflexive and appreciative teaching practice. She tells me that she does not know how to manage them when they do not listen and that she can

only manage through "chaos" when they will not take her advice. It was not entirely clear to me what "chaos" mean but I think she refers to her lack of ability to make teachers work reflexively with their practice, which resulted in a vicious cycle of conflicts and misunderstandings.

Another manager states that he feels that his responsibility to assess teachers jeopardizes his managerial authority. Often, he is not quite sure whether he shall intervene in a teacher-student conflict, even if he disagrees with how a teacher handles it. He tells me about an episode where he witnessed a teacher using a "confrontational style" during recess. In this case, he chooses to not intervene as he is afraid that the teacher will find his intervention problematic.

> I mean, the teacher didn't threaten the student as such, but he said something along the line of 'you little dog, I could easily beat you up'. I found it completely unacceptable (…) He did close the conflict and all that. But I thought – should I (…) take him aside and reprimand him and say 'really, this is not the best way, you may just escalate the conflict' or shouldn't I? Perhaps I would lose my possibilities of influencing him in the future if my intervention here would make him write me off, like, [imitating teacher] 'oh well, he [the manager] is completely naïve, one needs to be like this with this group of children, to be verbally direct because you don't get through to them if you're too nice.' (…) I mean, it wouldn't help anyone if he just writes me off for good. Then I can't intervene with him again, ever.

His concern is not whether the teacher can benefit from being appreciative or reflexive in this situation; rather he is worried that the teacher will not consider his advice sound. He is afraid to lose the teacher's respect, as an authority and as a pedagogical councilor.

As a standard, reflexivity provides a scale to settle managerial questions like "who is responsible" and "what constitutes a good teacher" in conflict situations involving teachers and students. While the pedagogy of inclusion entails unraveling old asymmetries where teachers retain the right to scold students and make judgments about their behavior, new asymmetries and uncertainties are

produced at Saxby in the endeavor to include. As a result, not only certain teachers' experiences are excluded and rendered invalid, but managers also become increasingly uncertain as to whether they can influence teachers at all.

### Summing up

In this chapter I explored how reflexivity matters when it takes on the quality of a standard. This standard generates the expectation that teachers, through reflexivity, can change their attitudes voluntarily and take the perspective of students, regardless of the circumstances. I have argued that conflicts constitute their own arbitrary and fragile informational ecology where teachers' and students' emotions can be read by managers as information for assessing to what extent teachers possess the right attitude. The school's office arrangement is an important factor in this information ecology because it allows for managers to observe teacher-student interactions and allows excluded students to visit the managers. This mode of knowing, however, is fragile as the managers cannot plan when to "collect" this information. As an effect, this information is rather arbitrary, providing important glimpses of a management object (teachers' attitudes, their effects on students, and their willingness to work on them) that by definition is already a somewhat elusive.

I have used the notion of "standard" to illustrate how the expectation of reflexivity can be used in a range of different situations. When working as a standard, reflexivity provides a scale for managerial assessments of teachers. I have described three rather different examples to illustrate the elasticity of reflexivity and how it allows for quite *different* situations to be approached with the *same* managerial expectation. These situations and their different degrees of severity are leveled as teachers in all of three examples are expected to be reflexive and able to

handle uncomfortable emotions emerging from conflicts. This leveling has implications for all parties involved, both for teachers who express not feeling supported and for managers who feel uncertain about the extent to which teachers respect their managerial authority.

This enactment of reflexivity cannot be dissected from the complex relationships between managers and teachers at Saxby after the merger. Considering that the introduction of new inclusive pedagogical principles has been experienced as a critique of teachers, inclusion is contested as a project from the beginning. Another important factor may be socio-material make up of reflexivity. What counts as reflexivity in this chapter is different from the following two chapters, where in Chapter Seven I analyze how reflexivity is enacted through a social technology, and, in Chapter Eight, where "it" emerges through an extensive planning process.

In contrast to these analyses, where reflexivity cannot be dissected from the paper technologies that construct, reify and objectify it, teachers' reflexivity in this chapter obtains an elusive and arbitrary status. While the managers and teachers at Fjelde School are equally enmeshed in an information ecology, the following chapters illustrate how the enactments of reflexivity through paper technologies commits the managers in particular future-generating ways. Even though teachers are still expected to demonstrate reflexivity, the managers take on a different responsibility for facilitating this display.

# Chapter Seven

## Complexity Overload: Bracketing Reflexivity to Assemble the School

### Introduction

One way in which the idea of reflexivity travels is through social technologies[105]. When "packaged" in this form, reflexivity appears as a generic and transferrable technique through which managers can improve various aspects of their organization (Karsten 2006:195-207). In this chapter, I analyze the managerial work surrounding a social technology named SMTTE (pronounced like "smitten"). The SMTTE is a general didactic technology for developing "quality" in practices and assessing that development and contains specific procedures for the reflexivity guiding this development. It is used in a wide range of planning and evaluation processes at Fjelde School. Among other things, the teachers and managers use it as a template for making action plans to monitor and conduct special interventions towards students who are considered to be "vulnerable" or "challenging." Even if the SMTTE is not developed specifically to achieve inclusion, it is used to this end at Fjelde School as its development procedures are considered to be a generic method for organizing reflexivity and quality, which are also objectives with inclusion.

SMTTE stands for "context," "goal," "signs," "initiatives," and "evaluation" (Sammenhæng, Mål, Tegn, Tiltag, Evaluering). Its developers emphasize that each

[105] I use the term "social technology" as shorthand for techniques and methods that originate from psychology and the social sciences rather than the machine like and steely instruments that often are the object of STS (Derksen, Vikkelsø and Beaulieu 2012). While "social" is a disputed term in STS, accused of reifying a dualism between "society" and "nature" (Latour 2005), it is used here in the sense that that all kinds of technologies participate in the construction and performance of our society, including those from the social sciences.

category is dynamically related to the other categories, asserting that it is a tool for managing processes rather than managing by objectives. Through reflecting on these categories, the SMTTE promises to create a relationship between "the level of values" and "the level of practice" (Andersen 2000). At Fjelde School, collaboration around a SMTTE action plan usually starts with a meeting among teachers, sometimes including a manager and the school psychologist where they put content into each of the categories.

I analyze the efforts invested in actualizing a SMTTE to better include a "vulnerable" student, the 10-year old John.[106] While John does well in class, his alleged "aggression" and "exaggerated emotional responses" during breaks are the cause of much frustration and concern among teachers and his fellow students. John's behavior, and the concerns it generates, are all about relationality: complex cultural and institutional dynamics that format expectations to "normal" interactions between children and adults (Brown 2010:103). The pedagogical literature I discussed in Chapter Four presents reflexivity as a method to further inclusion through disturbing those cultural frameworks. What proves difficult with John and his action plan, however, is not so much changing the teachers' conception of the "problem." It is rather coordinating the new "solution" with other matters of concern. The SMTTE does not only interrupt the teachers' "presuppositions," it also generates new controversies.

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[106] The SMTTE is not the only (social) technology monitoring and intervening in John's life. It circulates in a complex network of devices and documents, including the tests and reports conducted by the school psychologist, emails between managers, teachers and parents, the online class log where teachers write down daily observations, and databases across a variety of welfare service providers. In this chapter, the focus is on the SMTTE in order to explore how its procedures for reflexivity are actualized.

In order to understand how reflexivity, packaged as a social technology, matters in relation to including John, I engage with the STS-inspired *performativity thesis* used to analyze the relationship between "model" and "world." As I described in Chapter One, these studies focus on how various models and theories *perform* the world, in the sense of shaping and creating, rather than simply *describing* the objects they seek to represent. Performativity theory has mostly focused on how markets and 'the economy' are performed, hence the label Social Studies of Finance (SSF) (Callon 2010:163-169, MacKenzie 2003:831-868, Muniesa, Millo and Callon 2007:1-12). This chapter examines how we can learn about *schooling technologies* from the discussions of performativity.[107]

Scholars, however, have criticized the SSF performativity thesis for its lack of attention to processes of iteration (Butler 2010:147-161), the user end of the spectrum that may confine the performative powers of a model through, for instance, manipulation (Svetlova 2012:1-15, see also Grint and Woolgar 1997 for a similar argument about technology), or the "felicity conditions" (cf. Austin 1962) afforded by the local "culture" (Mikes in Svetlova 2012:1-15). Considering how the SMTTE *fails* to produce the procedural reflexivity expected, my analysis focuses on the "ambiguously theorized" dynamics of *overflowing* (see also Blok 2011:455, du Gay 2010:177).

After a short introduction to actor-network theorist Michel Callon's notion of *agencement* (Callon and Muniesa 2005:1229-1250, Callon 2008:29-56), a central tenet in performativity theory, I analyze the SMTTE's social-pedagogical

[107] As SSF discusses performativity in relation to the economy and not education, one should of course not be surprised to find different relationships between theories and the practices they shape, not the least because these theories are formatted in very different ways (e.g. algorithms versus procedures for reflection).

assumptions about development to elucidate how it is designed to distribute reflexive agency. I then move on to analyze how its "script" (Akrich 1992:205-224) is enacted in the case of John. Whereas the performativity theory of SSF illustrates how market agency is distributed among discourses, procedures, and technologies enabling *homo economicus* (Callon 2008:29-56), the SMTTE *fails* to perform a collective enabling the continuously reflexive teacher in the case studied here. This thus exemplifies which other performative effects a social technology can have besides producing a world that looks like the model. While the reflexive agencement of the SMTTE is *limited* the action plan nevertheless has real effects in terms of circulating unmanageable complexity and occasioning boundary work (Gieryn 1983:781-795) between managers and teachers.

### Agencement

Through the notion *agencement*, Callon specifies how models or theories *perform* certain realities (Callon 2010:163-169, Muniesa, Millo and Callon 2007:1-12). *Agencement* highlights how agency is distributed in socio-material relational configurations rather than emerging from human actors. The implication is that a "subject" is not predefined as having certain characteristics but is equipped with intentions and competence through a well-aligned agencement (Muniesa, Millo and Callon 2007:3). Agency is more precisely distributed among discourses, procedures, and technologies, which collectively assist a human in obtaining an identity (Callon 2008:38). Moreover, while agency is shared collectively it can be ascribed to an individual who only afterwards comes to be considered its source (Callon 2008:37). Callon uses the example of a pilot to show how this identity only becomes possible when an ensemble of air-traffic controllers, radars, gyroscopes, landing strips, international regulations, etc. is already in place.

Without this arrangement, the pilot cannot land a plane. Still, the action "landing a plane" is attributed to the pilot.

Unlike the economic and market models usually analyzed within SSF, the SMTTE aims from its outset at *transforming* rather than *knowing* the world. Nevertheless, the SMTTE performs a model of (how to achieve) organizational development by evoking the idea that "ascribed qualities of practice" can be changed through reflexivity. Understanding the SMTTE as an *agencement* means that it cannot be considered just a tool in servitude of the already reflexive teacher. Rather, it *performs* this kind of agency. In the analysis, I show how the emergence of the reflexive teacher is dependent on, not only certain discourses, procedures, and mundane paper technologies but also *verbal interaction,* which allows for a momentary *suspension* of the ideal of a reflexive teacher.

In response to the aforementioned criticisms of performativity theory for assuming too powerful models or tools, Callon emphasizes their dependency on the well-aligned social-technical *agencements* (Callon 2010). In his earlier writings, he also underscores that for a model to frame, or perform, sociality, it relies on *disentanglement* from the "multitude of relations" that usually define individual agents (Callon 1999:188). Any framing *inevitably* produces *overflowing* (Callon 1999:188). The implication is that any *agencement* also produces its own disorder through the overflowing that inevitably emerges from the framing. Agencements are "always fragile and rare" and their (temporary) success is often due to a temporal delay between the framing they perform and the overflowing produced by this framing (Callon 2010:164-5). While this condition is acknowledged, many scholars within performativity theory tend to focus the relationship between "model" and "world." Sociologist of Finance Donald MacKenzie, for example, presents three graduations of performativity, ranging from "just" having "effects"

to a strong version of performativity ("Barnesian") when the world begins to look like the model (MacKenzie 2007:55). Rather than discussing the fit between the SMTTE and the practices it brings about, this chapter explores in detail the effects of overflowing.

Analyzing the SMTTE's through the notion of agencement is interesting in more than one respect. As will become clear below, the SMTTE technology *plans* to take into account the overflowing it produces through continuous reflexivity. Moreover, while this social technology does equip managers and teachers with new ways of imagining the inclusion of John, it also generates a number of different controversies that cannot be contained by the format of the SMTTE, despite its preventive procedures of *reflexivity*. These controversies required managerial attention to an extent that the SMTTE's reflexive agencement has to be *bracketed*.

### SMTTE is Society Made Flexible

While the SMTTE is used at the school as a word document-template presenting the different categories mentioned, this is just the pointy-end of a more extensive assemblage. Originating from the Pedagogical Center in Kristianssand, Norway, the introduction of the SMTTE to Danish schools was mainly driven by the writings of Frode Boye Andersen, an action researcher and senior consultant at VIA University College. He worked with the SMTTE in the action-research project "Project School Evaluation," (Harrit 1998:108).[108] The experience today

[108] Originally, it was his colleague Hanna Mølgaard, also senior consultant at VIA University College, who introduced the SMTTE to the action research project in late 1990s. In an interview, she explained to me how she learned about it during a study trip to Norway and added the star-shaped visualization that is depicted below, to the original model. This visualization

circulates as a so-called best practice example in a pamphlet format book, now published in its fifth edition (Andersen 2000), and as a chapter in an anthology about reflexivity in pedagogical practices (Andersen 2006:55-84). Both publications describe the SMTTE's didactic principles and provide "how-to" instructions: examples of its implementation and advice about how to work with the model in practice.

SMTTE has spread well beyond these two formats. A quick Google search of "SMTTE site:dk," for instance, gives 13,400 hits.[109] These websites belong to teachers' colleges, municipalities, institutions (schools, after-school care institutions, kindergartens, PPR), consulting firms, and private blogs. Even the Danish Ministry of Education recommends the SMTTE on their website. This suggests that a large network of different actors is involved in circulating the SMTTE in Danish pedagogical settings. Moreover, the SMTTE resembles not only the didactic model of relationality (see footnote 107), but also other social technologies of evaluation, such as the "quality star" and the "development spiral," introduced in the Danish Ministry of Education's evaluation campaign in 2007.

The SMTTE is commonly visualized as a star-shaped form (see diagram below). Each category represents an aspect in forming a development process. The star is meant to illustrate the *dynamic* relationship between each category: change in one category leads to change in the others, including the evaluation category. This

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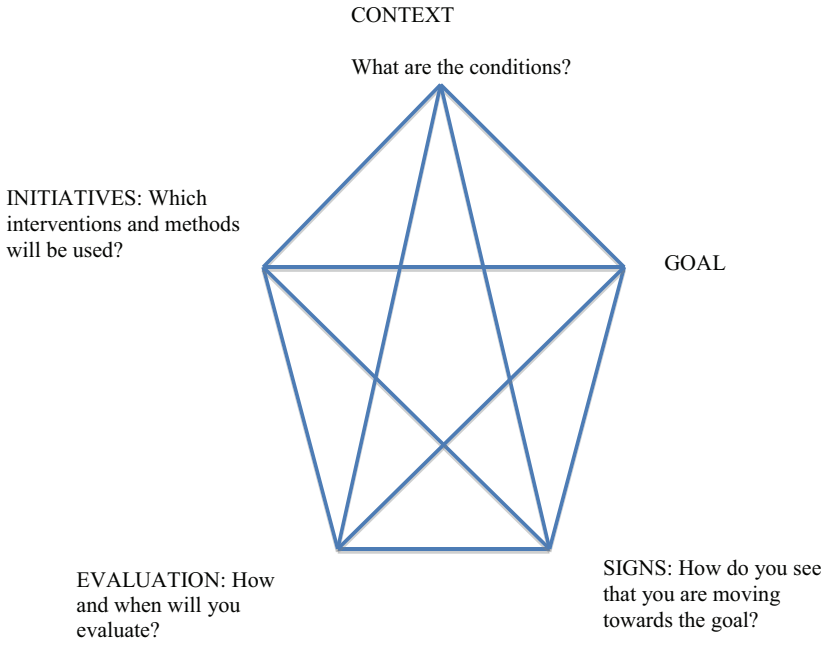
originates from a basic pedagogical textbook to visualize the "didactic model of relationality" (Hiim and Hippes 1997).

[109] Searched March 22nd 2011. I looked through the first 706 webpages. Of these, only 9 did not present this specific social technology. Google omitted the remaining 12,694 pages, which were "very much similar to the [first] 706."

signifies that the process is *both* imagined from the vantage point of a desired end-result, yet, the end-result itself can also change during the process. In his writings, Andersen highlights the importance of having a *processual* approach to development, instead of approaching development as a linear and objective-oriented task as this cannot sufficiently take unforeseen consequences or complexities into account. The SMTTE's procedure thus entails reflections *throughout* the process on whether any of its categories should be changed. In this respect, the SMTTE differs from the models that are usually studied in SSF. Rather than being an abstraction of the world, it is an abstraction of a development process and already has planned to counteract its own possible inadequacy through reflexivity. In this respect, it *calculates* that overflowing will emerge. In this context, reflexivity emerges the means for *continually* adapting to unforeseen emerging complexities.




**The SMTTE-star. The present figure is made by the author to have a model in English.**

Apart from a process-based understanding of planning, the SMTTE also aims to bridge "the level of values" with "the level of practice." It renders this possible through the category of "signs." These signs have to be "concrete" and describe practices. As Andersen writes, "The big challenge in deciding on signs is in making the signs sufficiently concrete or observable. In this regard, the observable is not just what is visible but any kind of sense impression" (Andersen 2000:31).

A manager at Fjelde School explained how they use the category of "signs" to create a distinction between teachers' "opinionings" ("synsninger," a barbarism

also in Danish) and "knowledge." For example, it would be an "opinioning" to claim that a child cannot concentrate as this merely indicates how the teacher interprets a situation. "Knowledge," in contrast, is seen to emerge from "concrete" signs, prior to an interpretation. This could be a description of the behavior that made the teacher conclude that the student cannot concentrate. Ideally, then, signs are observations that are described in a manner so they appear to be independent of the teacher's judgment. Not surprisingly, it is not always easy to establish consensus about when a description is "sufficient" or "neutral" enough to count as "knowledge" rather than "opinioning." However, if teachers do not succeed in producing neutral descriptions, it produces much managerial concern. At such moments the managers often articulate the need to introduce "more writing" ("skriftlighed") into the teachers' practice.

*At the same time*, signs also have the explicit status of social construction, to account for "the level of values." They are not presented as something 'out there' which can simply be observed. As Andersen writes, "Signs are something which we decide upon. Signs express the vision through a number of pictures from practice. Signs are the concrete emergence of our ascribed quality and show the way we would like to see quality unfold in praxis" (Andersen 2000:29). It is not only deemed important to separate "reality" from "interpretations" but *also* to (voluntarily) choose through which "values" one makes such interpretations. Contrary to the representational idiom used to distinguish between knowledge and opinionings, the emphasis on signs entails a focus on the *constructed* and *ascribed* aspect of quality. Signs then also have a flexible quality as they are subject to change if they, for instance, are deemed not to match the school's values.

Latour's concept of "factish" is helpful for understanding this double status of "signs" (Latour 1999). Factish accounts for the "neither-nor" status of "facts" by

provocatively combining it with "fetish," normally considered to be its very opposite. Whereas facts are generally considered to exist in their own right, waiting for a scientist to discover them, fetish accounts for (false) beliefs projected onto objects. The concept of factish, in turn, claims facts to be constructed: they neither exist in their own right, nor are they false beliefs. Whereas Latour's notion of factish is directed at the hard sciences in the context of Science Wars and hardly overlapped with the scientists' own accounts of their knowledge practices, the "factish" status of signs in the context of the SMTTE is an *explicit* reflexive strategy for developing didactic quality:

> Every practitioner has a repertoire of initiatives on which he draws. Routines are a coherent chain of intuitive and automatized initiatives that line up to get at known situations. (…) But the school professionals cannot settle with being practitioners (…) [but] must be didactic teachers. Didactic competence is not simply actions (…) but a systematic reflexivity of these actions. (Andersen 2000:18)

This articulation of reflexivity resembles Donald Schön's (1983) ideal of the reflective practitioner. Through reflecting on the category of the "sign," the SMTTE is used to unravel existing practices, to produce something that is different from what presently exists by new connections to "values."

Compared to market devices, or technologies conventionally studied within STS, the use of the SMTTE is not a matter of deleting the inscription process to give it an aura of objectivity (Shapin 1982:157-211). It is, in fact, the reverse. Instead of "black-boxing" the world, contingency is used as a strategic resource to keep all decisions open through the medium of teachers' reflexivity. In the words of Nigel Thrift, the possibility of continuously re-describing the categories provides "a peculiarly open means of framing the world as a set of becomings which keep... the possible possible" (Thrift 2001:429). The SMTTE is thus not quite a script to

make "society durable" (Latour 1991:103-131); instead it is to make society *flexible* by reproducing the ideal of a continuously reflexive and adaptable teacher.

### Management of Talk and Writing

Besides assuming that schools have "values," the SMTTE presupposes that teachers are ready to sit down and reflect on their practices, will decide on signs that are both concrete and reflect the school's values, will write down their commitments and, following, both realize them and continue to reflect on them during the process. At Fjelde School, however, teachers rarely take such initiatives when students cause concerns or frustrations. Instead, they go to the managers for help. In many situations, *talking* to managers is necessary for a SMTTE to get *written*. In the following I will explore what talk does and why it is considered so valuable for the teachers.

Working in socially deprived schools with a high percentage of children subjected to abuse or neglect can be challenging. It can cause emotional discomfort, sometimes even fear, for teachers in situations where students' behavior is "deviant" (Staunæs in press:1-22). The professional literature on this matter states that teaching students with special needs produces "maximum personal challenge" and that teachers need to expect "recurring conflicts," "to be hit and to be called very ugly names…that may affect them emotionally" (Platz 2010:91). Interview studies show that such conditions may be experienced as their own "inadequacy…. If they had only acted differently, were better teachers and so forth, they would have avoided [the conflicts]. They felt a lack of qualifications" (Platz 2010:93). If such experiences prevail, one might guess that it is difficult to sit down and write up a SMTTE voluntarily.

At Fjelde School, a manager explained how they encourage teachers to solve their conflicts with the students by themselves, to limit the number of "unruly students" who end up in their offices when teachers cannot handle them in class.[110] This is not the kind of inclusion the managers envision and they thus attempt to get teachers to work independently on resolving conflicts by reflecting on how they can change their practices through, for instance, writing up action plans. In many cases, however, this simply does not happen. In my interviews, teachers describe occasional feelings of powerlessness and experiences that demand managerial help. One teacher, for instance, describes the biggest challenge as having his authority challenged by students:

> The noise here, with the trouble makers (…), they are loud, incredibly loud, bang the doors and don't care about the others' learning. (…) We can ask them to do something but they don't care. And this is what drains you the most, this is probably the hardest part of being a teacher. This is when students disregard your authority. It is terrible, it is horrible.

While teachers at Fjelde are well educated in inclusive pedagogy and its principle of not making the child the problem, they nevertheless describe it as difficult when students make them feel powerless and inadequate about meeting the challenges at hand. Moreover, the engagement of managers is considered crucial when dealing with "vulnerable" students. As the teacher elaborates:

> Chris [manager] has been a fantastic help to us, he really does help us and has helped us much with our vulnerable students and I can contact him every single day and he's there immediately. He also knows the complex of problems with all our students. (…) this means that I don't feel that I am alone with the responsibility. I

[110] This had also been a problem for the managers at Saxby School. To deal with this, they temporarily banned dismissing students from class, a measure, which was rather unpopular among the teachers and was abandoned after a while.

> feel that whenever there's something, which I can't handle, I receive his help, he can help me. [Sometimes] he takes over the teaching, [sometimes] he talks to a student, alone, outside the class. There are very sensitive things; they have to be alone. And it's hardly ever scolding. Many of our students are what I call "beyond scolding" ("skæld ud forbi"). They can't handle adults simply scolding them.

This teacher needs the manager to help him handle his challenges with "vulnerable" students. In addition to the teacher's expressed need for sharing the responsibility with managers, managers often participate in the organization of flexible class schedules. The consequence is that even if the students are not sent to the managers' office, the managers still spend much time assisting teachers with the students they experience as challenging.

A concern among the managers at Fjelde School regards how the reflexive-appreciative discourse produces professional insecurity in teachers in situations where they cannot handle the complex and emotionally challenging situations. I asked a manager how he decides on which kind of help to give teachers. He sees his job as to help them begin *writing*:

> It's visible when they stutter (…) it's a sign of ill-being. (…) my goal is first and foremost (…) to create an overview. To give the teachers just a little more strength so they can stay in their job in the near future. (…) When it's in writing we can cooperate (…) systematically. And it's not just the teachers' (…) opinioning, right? "Now we have a problem" [imitating teacher voice]. A lot of teachers say that, right? (…) But what is it that the child can't do and in which situations? In what context and with whom? In all these situations, there is a possibility to discuss them when they're in writing and they're not just opinionings.

However, before managers encourage writing down "signs" and "goals," statements deemed to be "opinionings" or negative attitudes might be articulated orally. The managers listen to these accounts and sometimes squeeze the teachers' arm to provide comfort. As the manager elaborates, in the same interview:

> Of course, I could be provoked [by the teachers' descriptions of students] or I could also, ermm, recite the discourse or the way we speak about the children and say "hey, all children belong here" or be a little more confronting, but [sometimes] the situation …doesn't allow that. And this is such an intuition [fingerspitzengefühl] where it is about, possibly to avoid a notification of illness, it is about being as appreciative as possible. And then we …[look] at concrete possibilities. We [go through] the children, one after another.

Rather than rejecting the teachers' complaints, or the non-appreciative "values" they express, the manager sees the act of listening as facilitating the teachers to subsequently begin writing. The manager explains that in order not to lose faith, teachers need spaces where ideals such as the reflective practitioner can be suspended and old "convictions" can be articulated. The volatility of talk allows for voicing statements that, for instance, place the problem with the child and this kind of talk is sometimes deemed necessary. Such sentiments, in turn, cannot be *written* as writing extends them to last beyond the moment of utterance. Writing about students, the manager elaborates in the same interview, serves as a collective memory so knowledge about specific students does not only reside with individual teachers. Writing allows for organizing interventions around children with special needs and a distribution of responsibility for specific aspects of a plan. As I will elaborate later on, writing moreover entails *concretization*, which the manager suggests is especially important.

Perhaps we can understand the managers' engagement in creating a space for "wrong" attitudes to be exhibited as a temporary suspension of the ideal of the responsible and reflexive teacher. In the office of managers teachers can abandon this identity and delegate the handling of complexity to managers. Teachers come from a busy classroom full of students who need their constant attention. In the manager's office, conflicts from the classroom can be discussed with the aim of

receiving the managers' help. Also in this regard, the office temporarily suspends the normal identity of the teacher. The office becomes a place where the teacher is not expected to be the authority but can be the one asking for help. Behind the closed door, the teachers' frustrations can become narrated and specified as problems. This is not possible in the school's other spaces where students and colleagues can witness this temporary de-authorizing of a teacher.

With its ideal of a continuously and systematically reflexive teacher, the SMTTE cannot encompass the performance of a teacher as a fragile and uncertain professional. The reflexivity distributed by the SMTTE regards how modifications of (socially constructed) values – and extending these to practice - can develop practice. The mainly negative expressions and descriptions of students, expressed during verbal interaction with managers, perhaps feed into this writing process by acknowledging the teachers' difficult and "forbidden" emotions. For the SMTTE to become a *starting* point, the managers sometimes need to begin with providing a space for "non-appreciative" experiences to be voiced as *ending* points. Getting to the point where a SMTTE is written in many cases require managers to engage in a choreography of *listening and talking* first. The prerequisites required by a SMTTE thus delegate relational work to managers *before* it can be written. In the following, I turn to how *writing* a SMTTE mediates relations between the student John and his teachers.

### New Versions of John and Teachers

With the case of John, teachers also go to managers to *talk* over their challenges and allocate the complexity of finding solutions to them. As one of his teachers tells me:

> We *have to* include him [John] and we also work with the principle of flexible organization of teaching. So in principle, we have to solve the task alone, based on the idea that since we're the ones close to the case, we're also the ones who are best to handle it. Of course, they [the managers] should not come and solve our problems but sometimes this is how it has been, due to our frustrations. What the hell do we do! One feels powerless and not sufficiently competent to handle the task.

John is described as an intelligent and smart boy, who functions well in the classroom but not during breaks where teachers often experience his behavior as aggressive and disturbing. He is seen to start, participate, and intervene in conflicts. The electronic class log, in which teachers share their experiences from the classroom, reports numerous episodes. For instance, passing a boy making boxing moves in front of a mirror provoked John to start a fight. In an interview, his teacher tells me that John is extremely unhappy after these conflicts. He can explain and account for everything once he has achieved a certain distance to the conflict but he is under great emotional strain during and right after the conflict. The conflicts moreover occupy much of the time allocated to teaching:

> When you have a student who's constantly in conflict, who hits and kicks other children, who uses foul language with another student whose mother died where he said "I screw your dead mother" and other obscenities, then there's a lot of clean-up work. One has limited time at work and most of that time should ideally be spent on teaching but that doesn't happen because we need to clean up. People [the teachers] have been very frustrated. (John's teacher)

While this causes much frustration among teachers, no action plan is made before a rather serious incident takes place. John cycles into a group of boys, which results in a broken arm and a set of very unhappy parents. John claims it was an accident, but the boys and a teacher who have witnessed the act claim that it was intentional. Teachers and parents suggest that John should be referred to a special school because he is too dangerous for his surroundings.

When the school psychologist tests John, the test concludes that his cognitive abilities are above average while he scores low on "action competence" as he lacks ability to "calculate consequences." In other words, he is not able to calculate the danger of bicycling into other people. Because his IQ level is "above average," however, he cannot be referred to a special school. This becomes a reason to start a SMTTE. The following is an excerpt from the action plan written in collaboration between the school psychologist, a manager, and John's teachers.

> Context: John is a boy who often has difficulties during breaks where he gets into fights with other students. John often intervenes in others' conflicts and thus becomes party to these conflicts (…)
> Goal: We wish to ensure that John will have comfortable breaks with his friends – without conflicts or defeats.
> Signs: A boy who smiles more and is happy during breaks, fewer conflicts during breaks
> Initiatives: (…) Structured play activities [adults structure games and play during breaks] (…)
> Evaluation: (…) [describes the procedures and the frequency of the evaluation]

Rendering "difficult" students' lives knowable and manageable entails producing descriptions and plans. While writing the SMTTE involves relatively mundane artifacts, such as a meeting, paper, and pen, the *agencement* also involves the bicycle event that turns John into a "case" serious enough to warrant a specific intervention, the expertise and tests that equip the psychologist, and managers to do the listening necessary *before* helping with the writing.

Rather than being a container of information already there, a place to where information can be transferred, writing is "a material operation of creating order" (Latour and Woolgar 1986:245). The SMTTE is not a neutral description but rather performs and translates the students and teachers that are inscribed in the plan (Haraway 2004). The SMTTE produces a problem that also contains a

specific solution, calling for certain interventions. The problem has its own goals and signs: a smiling boy with fewer conflicts during breaks. Deciding upon the initiatives (structured play activities) happens through generalization. The school psychologist asks the teachers in which situations John functions well to generalize these conditions. She is told that John does well during classes, characterized by “structured activities,” and turns this into the plan of “structured play activities” during breaks.

Whereas writing is normally accused of failing to represent reality properly because of its reductive properties (e.g. Mol, Moser and Pols 2010:7-26), the writing here has a curious, different effect: it allows for teachers’ frustrated experiences to be transformed into descriptions with nuances, which might wither away in verbal communication and might not become an object of generalization. As noted before, a manager considers writing a way to give teachers “strength” by translating their experience of deadlock into specific descriptions and plans. In this case the experiences are “authorized” by the categories of the SMTTE. The SMTTE thus performs John as an existence external to the text. Along with that, it performs problems, goals and solutions, and the teachers who are to accomplish these. Writing down these statements establishes a correlation between John's problems and the teachers' role in preventing them. Other information, such as John's or his parents' accounts, are outside the scope of the action plan. As I will return to later, these would very likely have affected a different problem-solution constellation.

The SMTTE translates the teachers’ frustrations with a “challenging student” into a detailed description, which invites visualizing a different student emerging from structured play activities. These descriptions produce new “versions” of both students and teachers: John becomes a center for organizing teachers’ activities

during the break. His body becomes a surface on which to look for signs selected by the collective, which can then be evaluated and referred back to the action plan. The action plan moreover maps out new courses of action and specific responses that teachers will use in their preventive efforts. Through the action plan, a vision of a different future is reified and turned into something to be contemplated, planned, evaluated, and manipulated (Cooren, Thompson, Canestraro and Bodor 2006:545). This, of course, also produces new responsibilities for teachers, who are not only committed to realize the planned initiatives but also to engage in continuous reflection on the plan and the status of its signs.

The action plan thus succeeds in generating reflexivity on how teachers can change their practices to better include John. The SMTTE, however, is nothing but a template if its plan is not realized after the process of writing. It depends on teachers to be extended to "practice," while teachers depend on finding the assumptions inscribed in the SMTTE plausible and on having the time to sit down, close the door and reflect on the action plan throughout the whole process. In the following, I explore how the SMTTE not only "empowers" teachers to see new possibilities for inclusion but also disrupts other settlements, which in turn require *more* managerial engagement. In such situations, asides from delegating reflexive agency to teachers, the SMTTE delegates work to managers whose support is needed in order to assemble the collective necessary to coordinate across a wide range of concerns.

### Boundary Work and Bracketed Reflexivity

While the action plan proposes a somewhat simple solution of organizing structured play activities, this solution also generates a new set of problems. After the action plan is in place, John is referred to a 6-week special pedagogical

program. As this includes three hours of structured play a day, it is considered a good way to introduce the action plan.

The first challenge emerges when John's parents disagree with the assessment that John faces difficulties and needs attending the special pedagogical program. The teacher responsible for John explains that the parents perceive John as "a boy who [like other boys] plays [which involves that] children sometimes hit each other." They regard his aggressions as "boyish pranks," which do not call for any special initiative. At one point, the father keeps John at home to not attend the pedagogical program, claiming that John will only return to school if he is not subjected to the program. The mother is also seen as difficult to communicate with:

> The mother comes and says that he shouldn't be part of it [the special pedagogical program] because it rains and he gets wet and that isn't nice. She doesn't think he should be part of it. It's difficult to talk to them about it. Her starting point is that he shouldn't get wet from the rain, mine is to take care of John and his friends, to make sure that they are happy.

The parents do not agree with the definition of the problem written in the SMTTE, indeed, they do not perceive there to be any problem at all. The tensions escalate to the point where the teacher asks a manager to accompany him whenever meeting the parents, to give the action plan and its decisions authority:

> The management participates in meetings with the parents. They are there to say "this is what we do" (…) I organize the meetings and inform the parents of how things are going and what we're doing in the future. [the manager] is there to say: 'if you disagree, you need to find another school'. I asked her [the manager] to join me.

After a manager begins attending these meetings, it becomes easier to make the parents support the program. The teachers' on-going evaluations of the initiative are rather positive. The final evaluation report, posted on the class log, reports "a

happy boy who for the majority of the time participated in good spirits." The action plan, nevertheless, has produced the need for negotiating boundaries between the parents and the school in terms of who holds the expertise and authority to decide what is best for the boy to an extent where it becomes necessary to threaten the parents to agree.

Similar boundary work also emerges within the school. After John finishes participating in the special pedagogical program, the teachers are to begin using the action plan, which, as mentioned, entails organizing structuring play activities during breaks. Rather than offering a solution to John's involvement in conflicts, however, this produces new challenges.

The fact that teachers should organize play activities for John during breaks fuels into an ongoing debate at Fjelde, which also frequently surfaces at Saxby School, about whether recess for students means that teachers also have a break. This is indeed how many teachers interpret recess, much to the discontent of managers. Thus, John's teachers allocate the hours spent in organizing play activities during recess from teaching activities. A week of structured play activities amount to ten lectures, which the teachers decide to take from the "special needs education pool" based on the argument that John is an "AKT-student." The manager responsible for the team learns about this decision by coincidence:

> During meetings [with the team] we then learn that – they say it themselves, that when they spend their time with John during breaks, then they lose the possibility to give other students special needs education from that year group. This is a real problem! They don't get additional hours in their team because they need to take care of this task [structuring play activities]. But I had imagined that they, instead of draining their pool of teaching hours, had (…) taken turns structuring the breaks instead of this very rigid perception of a break between 9.30-10.

As it turns out, it is rather costly to actualize the SMTTE. At one point, the manager even suspends the action plan because spending a large amount of the limited funds for special needs education on one student only is difficult to justify. However, suspending the plan only brings about a recurrence of John's old behavior. The manager then decides that they cannot afford *not* to follow the action plan, even if it means less special needs education for other students.

It also proves to be rather time-consuming to plan the structured breaks. The teacher team often asks the manager for her help in this planning, because they perceive the SMTTE to interfere with other responsibilities. The manager gives the following account:

> [we helped them with creating the SMTTE] and then it was their task to decide how they as a team could implement that action plan, how they should structure the day. (…) and then I realized that in a lot of meetings, they had been discussing schedules and structure, that is, who has him and when. In my head, this was not how they ought to spend their time. They should spend their time on their subject matter and the content. (…) and then it became, like, "then you need help with the structure," they shouldn't spend their time on that. And that's how [another manager] and I ended up sitting with the structure.

Making a weekly "shadow schedule" turns out to be a complicated task as three breaks a day have to be scheduled. In some sense, the SMTTE performs *too well* since the planning efforts it requires extend to – and interfere with – other pedagogical priorities, and lead teachers to neglect pedagogical tasks such as coordinating the contents of their teaching. In this case, two managers end up being responsible for adjusting and planning the action plan's daily shadow schedules despite the fact that the teachers were originally supposed to handle this task.

Finally, the action plan gives rise to discussions among some teachers about whether or not they are to spend "their breaks" as "pedagogues." As the teacher responsible for John describes, "there has been quite a lot of hassle because some of the teachers don't want to participate, it's not in their official job description. [They say,] 'I don't want to play with children … I'm here to teach'." As a response, the manager at one point, "in desperation," asks the teachers to simply *watch* John, rather than arrange play activities. This, however, only produces conflicts between the supervising teacher and John, as "John felt he was in prison." Despite being both economically unsustainable, time consuming, and a cause of tension in the team, the structured play activities are reintroduced. By the time I finished my study of the school (late December 2010), the three daily breaks are divided between John's main teacher, a pedagogue, and a part-time teacher, a solution, which the manager characterizes as "precarious" since the pedagogue does not know John at all, and the part time teacher cannot "handle" John very well.

That the manager ends up being so involved *after* the SMTTE has been written produces discussions in the management team about where to draw the line. The manager, who works with the teacher team responsible for John, explains that the continuously emerging difficulties produce new occasions for teachers to visit her office:

> When it comes to the small, small decisions they come and ask "what should we do, what should we do" (…) [They ask for our] participation in meetings, like, "now you know that this is what we do," they demand for us to take the responsibility (…), they just come by and debate initiatives (…) they, like, seek our approval that it is okay. (…) It is not a problem for me but in the management group we disagree about what a manager is and who manages whom. Are they managing me by defining what I need to participate in? Personally, I truly want to manage where people need me. (…) I feel quite divided in my own expectations.

The manager sees these interruptions as the teachers' need for her to perform an outer display of authority. Yet, she states that this makes it difficult for her to plan her time. What defines a manager, she asks. Is it to be there for the employees with the consequence that they are in charge of how management time is spent? Another manager expresses a more ambivalent attitude about letting teachers decide when to engage managers:

> …Yes, if it works and if it gives adults and children a sense of calm or safety. But honestly I believe that the teachers need to take these conversations with the children alone. Especially if they regard disciplinary issues because I think it de-professionalizes teachers if they use the managers as a daddy and mommy.

The uncertainty about how to be a manager originates, among other sources, from the SMTTE. Its authorization of complex planning tasks produces new occasions for teachers to "need management." The SMTTE, in a sense, manages both managers and teachers by challenging expectations about who should do what. This, in turn, produces uncertainty, both for individual managers but also within the management team where discussions about when to intervene and how to reject "teachers' problems" continue.

### Limited Agencement and Circulation of Complexity

In order to explore the performativity of a social technology such as the SMTTE, I introduced Callon's notion of *agencement* in the beginning of this chapter. The SMTTE aims to produce continuously reflexive teachers. Its categories are to be updated, aligned, and re-described on a regular basis, and teachers are expected to reflect upon the normative values implicit in their interpretations and relate these to the school's values. The SMTTE does distribute reflexive agency to teachers, in helping them think about preventive measures to keep John from getting into

conflicts. This reflexive agencement, however, turns out to be rather *limited* and *partial* once the SMTTE is to be actualized in the teachers' practices.

Rather than producing self-managing reflexive teachers, the agencement of the SMTTE produces a continuous involvement of managers to negotiate the resulting controversies, especially divisions of labor and responsibility. Importantly, this need for management is *not* produced by a continued reflexive adjustment of the action plan despite that this is *the* central procedure of the SMTTE. It is the realization of the initial plan, which generates both time-consuming planning tasks and new controversies. Perhaps we can understand these coordination challenges by considering how the SMTTE is produced.

The relationship between SMTTE and school is not one of part to whole in the sense that the reflexive agencement of the SMTTE fits seamlessly into other relationships that make up the school. During write up, the SMTTE gains its strength through an amplification of certain realities at the expense of others. By focusing only on John and his immediate surroundings, the SMTTE offers a viewpoint that zooms in on his behavior while letting questions of resource allocation, the school's relationship to his parents, and identity conflicts between teachers and pedagogues fade into the background. Like STS philosopher Don Ihde characterizes (embodied) technologies, "with every amplification, there is a simultaneous and necessary reduction. And ... the amplification tends to stand out, to be dramatic, while the reduction tends to be overlooked" (Ihde 1979:21). What has been excluded from the write up re-emerges when the SMTTE is to be realized. When it cannot be made compatible with other matters of concern, the managers interfere and take (back) the responsibility for (and the task of) actualizing the SMTTE.

While the SMTTE allows for imagining new interventions and creating different criteria for success, it simultaneously produces overflowing, which ricochets back during questions of how to finance the extra teacher effort or who should plan the shadow schedule. As we remember, Callon depicts a successful *framing* as contingent upon *disentanglement* (Callon 1999:188). This example illustrates how a social technology that aims to *change* practice is dependent on *both* disentanglement, to write up the SMTTE and imagine a different practice, and subsequent *entanglement*, to change that practice. Even if the SMTTE has procedures for ongoing *disentanglements*, reflexive moments where the plan's categories are to be updated to deal with possible *overflowing*, these do not materialize in this case. Once the plan, so to speak, *re-entangles* with everyday practices, it generates controversies that are not resolved through reflexivity, and the procedures of ongoing reflexivity are bracketed.

Rather than a sustainable solution, the SMTTE initiates a process where complexity traverses and irritates different social relationships (school-parents, teachers-pedagogues, teachers-teachers, manager-teachers, managers-managers, values -union agreement, values-financial means). These relationships become visible as fragile, contentious, and non-aligned. The manager responds by ambivalently attaching herself to the complexity introduced with these different collisions, negotiating fragile and temporary closures that both need much maintenance and produce new overflows.

### Summing up

The SMTTE is one of the rather popular social technologies, which travel and circulate specific ideas and procedures for organizing reflexivity. However, as the above discussion testifies to, its reflexive effects are rather limited when it comes

to initiate inclusive measures for John. For the SMTTE to be relevant for teachers in the first place, the manager's presence is necessary to provide a space where teachers can articulate experiences in a language that is not possible to formulate in a SMTTE. Although the SMTTE subsequently does afford partial translations of teachers' experiences with John, turning these experiences into indexed descriptions that are used to portray a different future, this translation does not easily extend into teachers' practices.

Once the SMTTE has been written up, its delegation of reflexive agency to teachers is not very "durable." The plan's somewhat simple solution of rethinking the teachers' role during breaks turns out to be difficult to realize when it interferes with other arrangements at the school. Circumstances, such as the teacher union's official working hour agreement, the time-consuming labor of planning a shadow schedule, limited financial means, and parents who disagree with the proposed solution (and problem!) are difficult to resolve through the SMTTE's conceptual distinction between "values" and "practice." These unresolved controversies instead circulate across a wide range of relationships and especially back and forth between teachers and managers, producing much ambivalence regarding how to negotiate professional boundaries. Moreover, it triggers time-consuming efforts to stitch up every day plans and produce temporary closures or distributions.

The chapter has not only discussed the SMTTE's performative effects through Callon's notion of agencement but also taken these debates in a rather different direction. Where much performativity theory focuses on the relationship between model and world, in terms of the extent to which the former creates the latter (MacKenzie 2003:831-868, MacKenzie 2007:54-86), or, as with Callon's notion of agencement, focuses on the distributed *set-up* necessary for a model to be

performative, I have highlighted other aspects of performativity. These include how *overflowing* and *entanglement* are handled, and the unintended effects overflowing generates.

After reading this chapter, the main manager of Fjelde School responded that spending so much time on *one* student has consequences. For a long time, unresolved issues generated by John's action plan have affected almost all interactions between the managers and the teacher team for this year group. This means that other students, who might be equally in need of extra attention, are overlooked. Another implication is that they hardly spend time discussing other pedagogical initiatives. Managing a whole year group has become reduced to circulating complexities emerging from *one* action plan. This points to *interruption* in a different sense of the word than I discussed in Chapter Four, where *reflexivity* is to interrupt practice, and in Chapter Five, where *practices* are already interrupted. Here, *the SMTTE* interrupts several pedagogical relationships; not because it affects "the level of values" through reflexivity but because the preventive action plan is difficult to coordinate with other relationships.

The collective efforts vested in actualizing John's action plan bracket reflexivity to settle other fragile relationships, which become visible once the plan is to be realized. When asked about the value of the SMTTE, however, both the manager and John's teachers describe its idea of reflexivity with excitement, especially in relation to empowering them with the possibility of ascribing new qualities to practice and making invisible values visible. This excitement, of course, can be interpreted in relation to other SMTTE experiences that were less "interrupted" than the one I have analyzed here. A supplementary interpretation could be that the language and belief in reflexivity prevails, even if the reflexivity is rarely performed as the theory prescribes. By offering a language of *change*, it allows

managers and teachers to imagine having some kind of control of achieving inclusion in the midst of on-going interruptions. While maintaining this belief, they nevertheless become attributes of the constantly emerging controversies, calling for their presence to temporarily mend and attend to complexities that *cannot* be managed through the kind of reflexivity that the SMTTE prescribes.

# Chapter Eight

## Vision Impossible: Encounters between Abstracts and Concretes

> Fjelde School strives to be known for offering the children of the local community the best conditions, and the best teaching, to participate in and further develop the democratic society of which they are part (Fjelde School's vision).

### Introduction

This chapter presents the last analysis of the dissertation. Here I ask how reflexivity matters in a managerial endeavor to create a "common vision" at Fjelde School. Compared to the last two chapters, where the idea of reflexivity is enacted in response to *particular* controversies and conflicts, this chapter explores a situation where reflexivity is enacted in response to the *general* sense among managers that teachers need to become more inclusive and that this can be realized through reflecting on their common vision and values and through building "a learning organization." The managers work towards this goal by writing down a vision of the future school (cf. the starting quote). The teachers are then to reflect on their practice by translating the vision into their "mission." Working with a vision is thus seen by managers as a way to establish a connection to the teachers' practices and help them reflect on (and change) it.

Working with a "vision" is not an everyday, mundane event like the situations I have characterized in the previous chapters. It is, however, an important aspect of the conceptual apparatus, which accompanies the idea of reflexivity. As I discussed in Chapter Four, reflexivity is not only considered a means to change one's practice in relation to individual students but is seen as a means for ascribing new meanings to the overall purpose of the school and for settling on a *general*

*meaning* of inclusion. The idea that managers' should direct their attention to teachers' general attitudes to inclusion can be seen as a deliberate attempt to work with *performativity*: reflecting on a vision and its relationship to practice is seen to help in making the vision emerge in practice. To reflect on a vision is moreover considered to be a method for working on "the level of values," which, for instance, the SMTTE assumes to be already in place. Working with a vision thus assumes that one can temporarily *disconnect* from the "level of practice."

I begin the chapter with a characterization of Fjelde School's vision process and how the managers envision reflexivity. To make the vision performative, reflexivity is planned to unfold in a double movement. Teachers are to disconnect from their everyday practices, in order to connect to the school's vision, and, only then, they are to reconnect to practice, which they presumably will see differently after having worked with the vision. As implied by the chapter's title, however, a shared vision does not materialize in this example *exactly* because it proves difficult to escape "practice." Indeed, the vision process *generates* complexity by making explicit a lack of unity and common values among the staff. Instead of producing a common mission, the meeting arranged to reflect on the school's vision and values becomes a forum where teachers articulate practice-related problems in front of the managers. I suggest understanding this event as an encounter between different, situated versions of the "abstract" and the "concrete." Rather than connecting the managers' vision to the teachers' practice, the teachers' problems emerge as "gaps" between the managers' vision and the teachers' practice.

I follow how the managers and team coordinators attempted to bridge this gap through a dynamic of deferral and inversion, which translates the teacher's problems into a "visionary" vocabulary comprising a set of aims to be

accomplished in the future. Despite these efforts, the attempt to establish new reflexive connections between the "vision" and "practice" only bring about the discovery of new "gaps." In this process, reflexivity is changed from a *means* to a *goal*. As a goal, documents and emails are assembled, making a certain vision of the future seem feasible; materiality rather than teachers becomes the bearer of reflexivity.

### Transformative Visions

Like other private sector strategy concepts (Osborne and Gaebler 1992), the concept of "vision" has become quite a common aspect of strategic change management in the public sector. Moreover, through the late 1990s and 2000s Danish municipalities have developed various strategies for simultaneously making schools independent, professional organizations and accountable to overall political goals (Pors 2011:121 pp). The idea that schools should have a vision is thus related to developments in governance and development of the profession of school management discussed in Chapter Four.

The idea of working with visions rests upon the assumption that managers can incite change and collaboration towards a common goal if employees share a common vision of the future (Rüegg-Stürm and Gomez 1997:70-93). As inclusion to a high degree is assumed to depend on teachers' mindsets and attitudes, it has become a matter of course that the successful change towards better inclusion relies on the school managers' ability to engage teachers in the school's (inclusive) vision and values (Sperandio and Klerks 2007:140-149, Villa, Thousand and Jacqueline 1997:94-95, Avisar, Reiter and Leyser 2003:355-369). In her report on successful leadership in challenged urban schools, for instance, Alma Harris concludes that successful school managers were "realigning both

staff and students to their particular vision of the school" (Harris and Chapman June 2002:6). The theory that individual perspectives or visions can be aligned, and that it is the job of school managers to procure this alignment, is not only at play in the field of inclusion management but emanates from, among other traditions, the so-called "transformational educational leadership" (Leithwood and Poplin 1992:8-12). The theory encountered here is a "schooled" version of "transformational leadership" (Burns 1978).

Working with management concepts such as a vision implies a constructivist understanding of what makes an organization (cf. Morgan 1997:485). Scholars argue that school leadership literature has taken a "linguistic turn" by perceiving "language use [as] connected to … defin[ing] reality, generat[ing] meanings, and constitut[ing] social forms and relations" (Riehl Spring 2000:70). One implication is that schools are understood "as cognitive accomplishments and social constructions, in which meaning-making is a primary dynamic" (Riehl Spring 2000:60). Visions are thought of as a way to generate a different future and thus contain an assumption of *performativity*: simply thinking differently and positively of the future will have transformative effects on in the present (cf. Cooperrider and Srivastva 1987:129-169, Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros 2003). These theories thus circulate not only the idea that managers can influence how teachers ascribe meaning to their practice but also that this is their most important task.[111]

[111] Even if management concepts such as visions have become popular this does not necessarily indicate that all public managers share these beliefs. The proliferation of public organizations with visions is related to a growing "fashion" industry of management concepts (Abrahamson 1996:254-285) and can also be a strategic maneuver to present the organization as "professional" to its environment (cf. Brunsson 2002).

At Fjelde School, the reflecting vision is the last step in a large development process towards becoming "a learning organization of second order."[112] The school manager partly has his inspiration from his diploma course in management.[113] As an assignment, he has developed a detailed plan that includes "measuring" the level of learning and reflexivity through observations (see picture below). It also involves having a "self-management day" where he gives the teachers a lecture containing a condensed version of the theories of public management and organizational change from his diploma course. He explains to me that in "today's complex society," teachers need to work at "an organizational level" (as opposed to an individual level) and gain an understanding of complexity, both in relation to the political environment of increased accountability and in relation to the specific needs of the local community. "We really want all teachers to be able to work on an organizational level (...) and this

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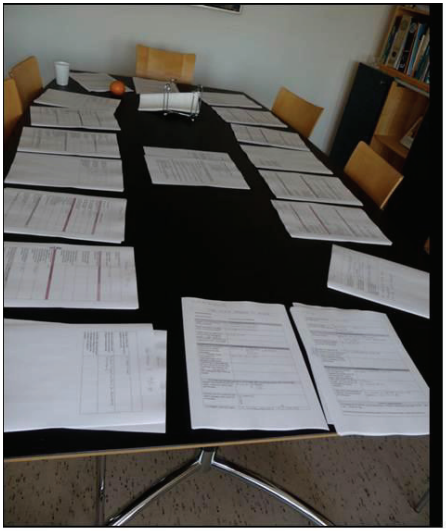
[112] Generally, the idea of "learning organizations" enjoys much popularity, vis-à-vis the ideal of flexibility and change in policy papers and (school) management literature that I analyzed in Chapter Four. As with visions, this concept reappears in both "general school management" and "inclusive school management" (e.g. Alenkær 2008).

[113] In his diploma thesis, he has written about "learning organizations" by reviewing (public) management literature by Jørgen Gleerup (1998), Kurt Klaudi Klausen (2006), my colleague Dorthe Pedersen (2008:198-224), and Lars Qvortrup (2008:87-114). These texts, he concludes, underline the need to couple the municipality's strategic goals to the school's vision, mission, and values. He writes: "[considering that] a learning organization is…autopoietic, i.e. the system creates its own input from its own basis," this endeavor necessitates a "complex system of communication with a common (…) language for all employees" (quote from diploma thesis). In order to become a learning organization, he concludes that it is necessary for everybody to share a "common language," which he translates into generating a "common vision." In another document he authored, describing the development plan in detail, "a learning organization" is defined as entailing continuously "challenging our mental models: questioning the implicit, daily norms and routines; meeting new ideas positively and without resistance; reflecting and offering honest feedback." These ideas thus conform to the "state of the art" managerial literature, which I described in Chapter Four, aimed at gearing the organization for constantly adaptation to the future.

is where we try to couple the vision to a mission. And they have to start by deciding how to get the mission in place in their department."



**The meeting table in the management office is covered with data from the investigation of the teacher teams' "learning culture." The data comprises of observations made by a coordinator from another team who has looked at the "level of artifacts and behaviors," using Edgar Schein's theory of culture (Schein assumes three levels of culture where "artifacts and behaviors" constitute the visible level and are considered to produce information about the hidden "assumptions" that *really* constitute culture (Schein 2004). The questions aim at detecting "organizational learning" by asking about how teachers cooperate, give each other feedback, etc. The school manager explains that this information gives him an overview of whether they have become "a learning organization." He concludes that some teams still have a long way to go.**

With explicit references to Schön and Argyris' distinction between single and double loop learning (Argyris and Schön 1974), the school's development program articulates reflexivity as a second order learning process that involves questioning existing assumptions and making explicit how these constitute practice. The vision process is organized around a series of meetings where teachers, divided into three groups or "big teams,"[114] are to translate the vision

[114] The teachers are organized in three "teacher big teams," each consisting of a team across an in-schooling (kindergarten class to 3rd grade), middle schooling (4th to 6th grade) and out-schooling (7th to 9th grade). Each big team has between two and four coordinators, teachers or

formulated by the school's four managers into a mission relevant for their year group. Working with the vision and the mission is considered an important aspect of becoming a learning organization, and reflexivity is considered *the* way to connect the vision to the teachers' practice, partly because it is seen to instantiate a practice of learning (through reflexivity), which should be a constant in their practice. Where the vision is considered situated at the "level of values," the mission is to operationalize these values and *connect* the vision to concrete practices.

The managers emphasize that a vision only matters in so far as it becomes manifest in the teachers' practices. The teachers' practices generally have a precarious status among the school managers. It is through the teachers' practices that the school's core product is delivered, in interaction with students. While considered to be the most important aspect of the school, the teachers' practices are also often discussed as the most uncertain object of management. As I discussed in Chapter Five, it is not always clear to the managers exactly what goes on in the teachers' practices. Of course, having been teachers themselves, they know that teaching entails a range of tasks and challenges. Their uncertainty regards how teachers manage conflicts and challenges, either with students or with fellow teachers. As at Saxby School, they often learn about such matters by chance at Fjelde. After conflicts, teachers and students come by their offices offering different accounts of incidents, making it rather difficult for the managers to access *exactly* what has happened. The vision process is thus not only considered to be a way to make teachers reflect on the purpose of their practices but also seen as a window into how teachers reflect on them.

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pedagogues who take the role of "middle managers" between the management team and the staff.

### Reflexivity: One Means and Many Goals

Once the development process starts, other concerns become attached to the goal of becoming a learning organization. Most importantly, the municipality is about to initiate a cost-saving drive, which includes closing down one of the district's three schools. This brings the school manager to expedite the discussion of the vision, even if he does not think that all employees are ready for participating in the process, based on the investigation of the level of learning. As he explains in an interview: "we simply have to tell [the municipality] that we have done everything we could. We need to point out why we are here and this is where we include the employees in the strategic leadership forum where we have always discussed values." He needs a vision and a mission, preferably in textual form, to present the school to the municipality as full of dedicated teachers who are capable of translating the political visions to practice. With the overarching threat of closure, the vision is seen as a way to do "branding from within."

> We simply have to say branding from within: why are we really here? I mean, it's great with visions, that we use philosophy, we use Luhmann – but why are we here? (…) What will it say on our tombstone if they choose to close us? What is it that the parents will not get, then? What is it that they don't have the opportunity to get any other places than here? (...) What is it we stand for, what is it we want for our children? Is it 100 % further education or is it a good learning environment that characterizes our school? Or is it independence, or what do students become here?

Rather than a method to "bring the teachers to an organizational level," as he has first stated, reflecting on the vision is pictured here as a way to extract values imagined as already existing in practice, waiting to be made visible to the municipality. Without being able to formulate how the school adds value in the municipality, the vision will be of little use. The school manager suggests that

their added value is not related to their theories but to their *values*, which the managers generally see as related to the teachers' attitudes to children and learning.

At the same time, the school manager feels that the teachers do not expose sufficiently inclusive attitudes, as he perceives that parts of the staff do not work with the pedagogical principles of inclusion. The second motivation for speeding up the vision process is thus also related to "the level of values," however from the perception that not all teachers "hold" the "right" values.

> It [the decision to work with a vision and mission earlier than planned] has also been prompted by the fact that inclusion was a bit itchy some places. It [the students] is also customers in the shop. We will not include children who don't benefit from being here but we should try to include as many as possible – otherwise we simply cut the branch we sit on. Also that focus – it shouldn't be the cooperation [in teacher teams] that is the most important. "It's a damn good workplace but the teaching is just not so good" [imitates generic teacher voice]. … all the way down in the core service: what are we here for.

Here, the manager refers to his observations that some teachers do not find inclusion of students with special needs meaningful. Indeed, some teachers find the challenges encountered teaching students with special needs the least positive aspects of their job. Apart from not realizing the school's stated values of inclusion, such attitudes have economic effects, he explains. Several students have been referred to special schools over the past few years, and the number of students enrolled in the school is diminishing, due both to demographic changes in the area and parents choosing schools with a different social profile. As the school's funding is based on taximeter income per student, referring too many students to special schools deprives the school of income. In this context,

reflecting on the vision is believed to bring parts of the staff on the track of inclusion.

Another manager, looking back at the vision process, repeats this perception of teachers' lack of adherence to the values of inclusion, explaining that it occasionally is necessary for them to emphasize to the teachers that they work for the *local area's* children, who happen to face many "social challenges":

> Our hope [of working with the vision] was that it would become meaningful for teachers and pedagogues to include, accommodating the many different ones (…) Our [in the management group] experience was that whenever the teachers faced a challenge, they came to the management 'you need to take care of this', 'it can't be true that he should be here', 'it can't be true that we need to deal with this' [imitating generic teacher voice].

The managers interpret the teachers' frequent demands for referring especially unruly "AKT students" to special schools as a sign that they do not subscribe to the values associated with inclusion. In this regard, the vision process is seen as a way to make present the values and (economic) necessity of including students with special needs.

The managers thus imagine that the vision process will enable several things. In the context of potential school closure, reflecting on the vision is considered a way to make visible values intrinsic to practice. When regarding the agenda of inclusion, reflecting on the vision is seen as a method to *change* teachers' attitudes. Thus, reflexivity is both endowed with the powers of *extracting* from practice its implicit values, which should be communicated to the municipality and of *adding* values to practice (the flexibility of a learning organization and the purpose of inclusion).

In the process, however, reflexivity does more than emerge as the ultimate bridge builder between "vision" and "practice." It also reproduces the idea that vision and practice are two separate domains in need of connection. In that sense, the concept of reflexivity performs a dualism between a visionary "level," which can supposedly be decided upon through rational thinking, and a practice "level," characterized by (non-reflected) conduct or doing. As I will show in the following, keeping these "levels" separate proves difficult.

### Encounters between Abstracts and Concretes

The managers first present the school's vision, which they have already written, at a common staff meeting. The plan is to have two more meetings after this: one where each of the three teacher teams will translate the vision into a team-specific mission, and another common staff meeting where the missions will be shared with one another. Letting each team produce their own mission will not only translate the vision to apply to three specific age groups but is also seen to produce an important link between the managers' vision and the teachers' practices. To guide the formulation of missions, two pieces of paper, one with the vision and the other with a set of questions, are circulated among the staff. The questions read:

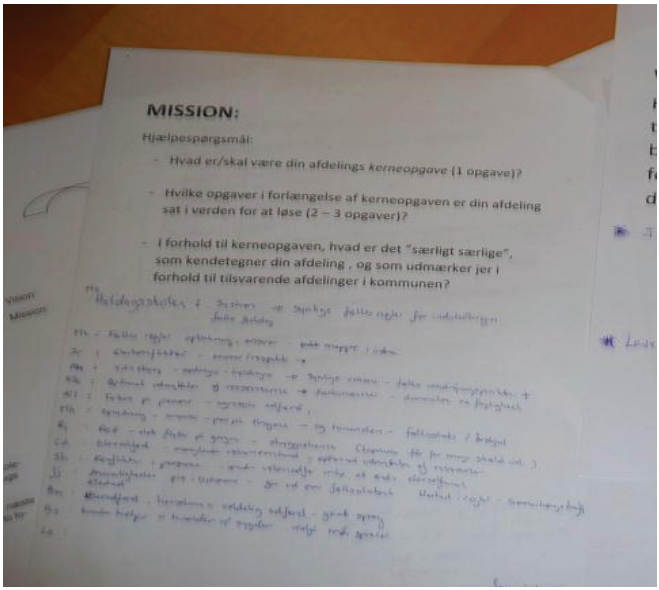
> What is/should be the core task of your big team?
> Which tasks, situated in continuation of the core task, is your big team put in the world to solve (2-3 tasks)?
> In relation to the core task, what is the "special specialty" characterizing your big team, which singles you out compared to similar teacher teams in the municipality?

The questions assume a reflexive process where value is to be extracted from within, from their practice, in the hope of singling them out as having a "special

specialty" compared to other schools in the municipality. The managers moreover hope to ensure a connection between the vision and practice. When planning teachers' reflections on the vision, the managers foresee that this might be a too abstract task: simply asking a team to connect the vision to their practice by formulating a mission might not be concrete enough. Thus the mission is specified into a "core task," which again is to be specified in "tasks…in continuation of the core task." It seems that each bridge between the vision and practice itself is in need of another bridge to make the vision even more concrete and, thus, easier to connect to practice. The managers plan to connect their vision to the teachers' practice through a dynamic towards the more concrete and specified.

Two of the big teams write down a mission, which the managers recognize as connected to the vision. Evaluating the process, the school manager is especially happy with the out-schooling team who as a result of reflecting on the vision has reinvented their teaching structure. They have designed a "youth school" with different streams such as "adventure," "communication," and "sports" by asking: what excites young people today? The manager describes this team as generally "working on an abstract level," discussing concepts of innovation and mainly involving him to give them theoretical feedback on such ideas. The middle schooling team also produces a mission which, however, is later overtaken by a series of centrally decided municipal measures aimed at that age group, requiring them to relate to two *new visions*. However, as the school manager says, reflecting on this series of vision processes, they have succeeded in retaining some continuity to their early ideas and have not started from scratch every time. While I in the following focus on the in-schooling team, who do not produce a mission, this thus does not suggest then that working with visions *generally* "fails."

The in-schooling team does not produce the hoped for connection between the vision and their practice. Instead of working with the questions to formulate a mission, other issues fill up the meeting. Many conflicts, both among the teachers and with students, quickly create a sense of deadlock. As the picture below illustrates, the blank space on the paper, designed to guide the use of reflexivity necessary to formulate a mission, is instead used to plot down dissatisfactions. Bullet points with the initials of a teacher and a few words characterizing his or her statements fill out the entire page. The task of producing a *general* statement has collapsed into *particular* concerns. Rather than a general, anonymous "team" mission, individual and particular complaints are stated.




**The guiding questions followed by teachers' concerns**

Much uncertainty regards complaints from an after-school care institution, whose pedagogues are unhappy that the teachers do not solve students' conflicts but leave them to this institution. The debate on this issue gives rise to general disagreements among the teachers about how to shape their practice. The bullets include a call for making "common rules" about how to react to unwanted student behavior. Some teachers state that there is a "lack of consequence" and that students can get away with anything while others experience that there is "too much scolding," which, in their view, only makes matters worse. Many of the bullets note variations over "aggressive students," "violent student conflicts," "indecent student language," and some pedagogues and teachers articulate sentiments of fear, powerlessness and desperation. "Support" and "mutual respect, children and adults alike" are noted because it is perceived that people will rather "save themselves" than help each other out in conflicts. Other bullets regard staff issues such as "lack of energy among adults" and a high level of illness absence. Then there are internal staff conflicts regarding the responsibility of leaving rooms and common areas in a clean and tidy condition, which is listed under the bullet point "responsibility for our things and each other." Some teachers and pedagogues express that certain persons do not live up to their responsibilities and request that the manager reprimands and gives official dressing-downs to teachers who fail to clean up after themselves.

In combination, the bullet points depict teachers' articulations of overlapping and related problems, a collection of scattered experiences of frustration and a general lack of well-being in the team. Throughout the meeting, the goal of producing unity becomes ever more unlikely as the debate produces a growing diversity of viewpoints and mutual accusations. Their frustrations are so strong that they come to set the agenda, suspending the original plan of formulating a mission. Instead of

reflexivity disconnecting the teachers from their practice to discuss the vision and the general values of inclusion, challenges of inclusion in their practice become manifest. Inclusion cannot be discussed as an abstract ideal to be cherished as daily issues pointing to the difficulties and dissatisfaction of working with this very ideal become predominant.

Instead of "elevating" the teachers to an "organizational level" and making the vision of inclusion meaningful as the managers had planned for, the manager is "lowered" to the level of frustrations emerging from the teachers' practice. It is not a movement on a single scale, however. Rather, managers and teachers have different ideas of what is abstract and what is concrete: teachers find the vision abstract and disconnected from their concrete problems. For the management, in turn, the mission is considered a concrete response to the threat of closure and the process becomes part of their effort to perform the school's success to the municipality.

The teachers' day-to-day challenges with internal cooperation, in turn, are at this moment best left for teachers to solve.[115] Talking to me after the meeting, the manager sighs and explains that the teachers do not understand her role as a *supervising* manager. Handling their disagreements about room maintenance is not one of her managerial task and she definitely does not consider this a reason to give official dressing downs. Instead, it is a "team-internal" problem and it can only be solved through their mutual calibration of expectations and responsibilities. In this sense, the teachers' problems with specific students and

[115] As I illustrated in the previous chapter, this does not mean that the managers at Fjelde do not engage in teachers' and students' conflicts. Indeed, this takes up most of their time and in that respect, these problems are also "concrete" to managers. At the same time, as I have also discussed, the managers feel ambiguous about these interventions, to what extent it is their responsibility, whereas working with a "vision" is considered an outright managerial task.

their internal lack of agreement are *abstract* to the manager for whom the concrete aim is to obtain a "mission." In that way, what is abstract and concrete is situated in the challenges and tasks that respectively teachers and managers have. For managers, the concrete challenges are the burning platforms of municipal budget cuts and a diminishing number of enrolled students. For teachers, it is conflicts with each other and the students.

The meeting has failed to produce a mission. It has also produced new problems for the manager. How to recognize the teachers' concerns, incompatible as they are with producing a mission? The manager explains to me that she at the moment decided that it was more important to discuss the team's issues and to listen to the staff. Until that has happened, she estimates, they will not be ready to reflect on the vision. In minutes from the meeting, the manager thus writes: "the mission has been postponed to deal with here-and-now problems, which we in the in-schooling team need to discuss." This suspension of the vision process produces a distinction between "here and now problems," considered emerging from practice, and the vision, considered being outside practice. While the managers have envisioned reflexivity as a re-articulation of the teachers' practice, they do not recognize the team's frustrations as adequate descriptions of that practice. Indeed, rather than seeing the staff's concerns as general challenges and tensions inherent to the ideal of unity or inclusion, naming them "here and now problems" attributes to them a temporary and surmountable character.

The manager and the team coordinators hold a team management meeting where they decide to write the mission for the team.[116] Although this is

[116] The resulting mission reads: "To create the conditions for a whole and coherent school day for the students in order for us to, with a special focus on language and concept formation

against the initial plan, the manager explains that the team's teachers and pedagogues have complained that "too many meetings" have just produced "talk" and that "action" is needed instead. Writing the mission, the coordinators argue, is producing action rather than talk. Again, there are different versions of abstract and concrete at play here in the form of a difference between "talk" (considered being abstract and irrelevant) and "action" (considered being concrete and relevant). From the perspective of the manager and the coordinators, writing the mission is considered a concrete "action," delivering a result. For the team, "action" is related to bringing closure to the recurrent conflicts with students and each other. Writing the mission on behalf of the teachers, however, also entails sacrificing what has originally been thought of as the reflexive bridge between the vision and practice.

### Organizing Reflexivity: Deferrals and Inversions

The manager and coordinators see the so-called "here and now problems" as a gap between the vision and practice. After writing the mission on behalf of the team they discuss the bullet points. How can they generate the sense that *something* is being done about the frustrations? And how can they formulate the frustrations as a problem that they as managers can respond to? They begin by transforming the list of individual bullet points to a summary, which contains four general themes:

> Aesthetics: from mess and chaos to a nice and cozy ("hyggelig") atmosphere
> Common rules and guidelines

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through variating learning environments, play and participation in decision making, make the students capable of becoming active in their own development."

Common attitude to vulnerable students
Cohesion.

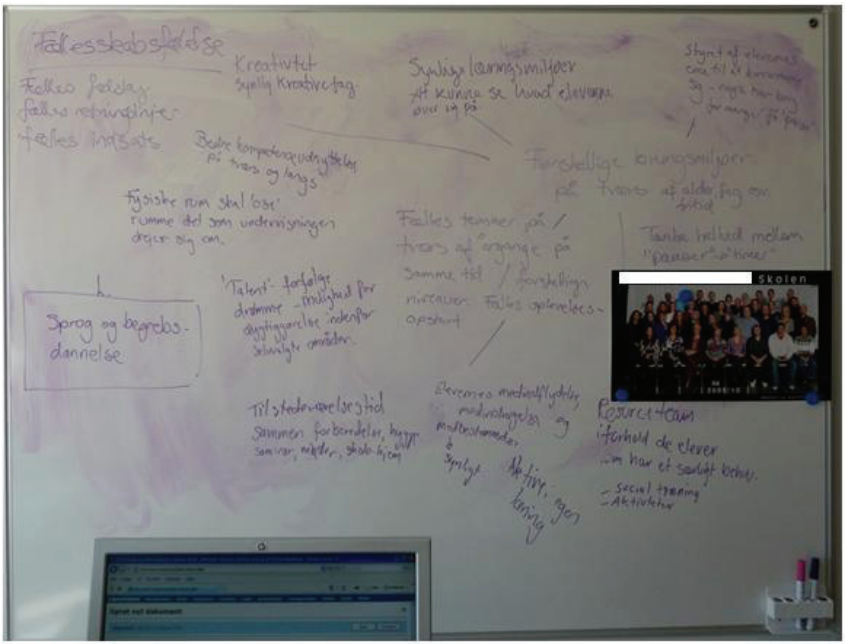
Each theme changes the listed frustrations to their opposites as goals: A wish to work in a tidy and nice atmosphere instead of people not cleaning up; common rules and guidelines for dealing with student conflicts instead of disagreements on how to react; "cohesion" to support and help one another rather than "save" oneself. To fulfill these goals "in practice" they arrange an extraordinary team meeting and have teachers sign up for working groups attending to each of the themes. The working groups are tasked with producing "clarity" and "clear expectations" within their theme. Again, the manager writes down their initials on the piece of paper. However, instead of signifying an authorship to particular concerns, their initials this time signify a responsibility to suggest solutions to the frustrations they voiced just a week earlier.

By turning a list of scattered frustrations into general themes, they become a set of objectives to which people can be assigned. Through abstraction and inversion the problems can be handed back to the teachers, now enrolled as responsible actors. What is achieved, then, is not the expressed request for "clarity," "common approaches," or "better cooperation" here and now as the teachers have requested. Instead, the manager and coordinators provide them with a plan for it to be accomplished in the future. The "here and now problems" can precisely not be resolved here and now but have to be deferred to future meetings.

The manager and coordinators do more than use the original bullet points to organize working groups. They also rephrase them in a language where they do not constitute a hindrance but rather become a link to the vision. As the manager explains: "we wanted a positive approach. What kind of school is it we

want to create – not so much what we deal with on a daily basis but what we want to have." To talk about the school in terms of values, from her perspective, it is necessary to separate it from everyday issues. In order to change practice at a *general level*, the perception is that *distance from* rather than concrete solutions to particular problems is needed.

Even though the working groups are assigned to produce general reflections on their theme, the manager and coordinators also give it a shot. To translate the teachers' frustrations into a "general level," they plot their own ideas onto a whiteboard in the manager's office (see picture below). Short statements and positive words such as "to chase talent," "creativity, visible creative subjects," and "visible learning environments" populate the board as the positive inversions of the frustrations. For example, "lack of cohesion and unity" is replaced with "united steps, united lines of direction, united action." "Think about coherence between 'breaks' and 'classes'" is the positive inversion of conflicts overflowing from breaks to class. These positive statements are later copied to a colorful mind map, which is to be shown to the teachers at a future meeting. The manager and coordinators thus once again make "the reflexive" translation between the vision and the teachers' practice.




**A whiteboard with the coordinators and manager's brainstorm initiative**

As is the case with the working groups, these positive articulations do not bring closure to the problems and conflicts in the team. Rather, they are translated from a lack in the present to reassuring statements about the future. Whereas the specific frustrations leave little place for the kind of reflexivity, which the managers have imagined to connect the vision to practice, the generalized positive statements substitute the vision's task of "generalizing" through a future-projecting language.

Despite these differences, there are also commonalities between the "here and now problems" and the vision. The managers do not achieve closure by having the teachers reflect on the vision; but neither do the teachers reach closure with respect to their problems. Neither teachers' nor managers' objectives are met, though both have expressed the desire of a future unity. As a result, both are translated into new plans, entailing the prospective construction of what has "not-yet become" (cf. Miyazaki 2004:9). While writing the mission solves the manager's concrete and immediate task of producing a mission, it also produces a new problem. Instead of having the mission bridge the gap between the vision and the teachers' practice, the gap is simply displaced from vision vs. practice to mission vs. practice. In the meantime, the mind map, working groups, and mission are inscribed in documents, which reify instances of reflexivity and become vehicles for distributing and inspiring teachers to be reflexive.

### The Mission of Planning Reflexivity on the Mission

One could say that the much wished-for reflexivity both does and does not exist. On the one hand, reflexivity is absent in the sense that the team has not produced the necessary document (the mission statement) or interacted in the "right" reflexive, future-generating manner. On the other side, the perceived absence of reflexivity has generated reflexivity *on behalf of* the teachers, undertaken by the manager and coordinators. Moreover, it has real effects in terms of the complicated planning process that ensues.

One effect of the "absent reflexivity" is the generation of meetings. The "here and now problems" alone generate (at least) two extra meetings: one between the manager and the coordinators where they write the mission, design the mind map and the working groups, and one where these working groups are

presented to the big team who sign up for them. The last meeting produces even more meetings within each working group. When the manager and coordinators return to the vision process, another two meetings are generated. Again, the meetings take the form of, first, a meeting between the manager and the coordinators where they design the new mission meeting, and second, a meeting where the staff is to reflect on how the vision, and now also the mission, can be connected to their practice.

The management meeting where they prepare the second attempt at making teachers reflect on the vision begins with one of the coordinators voicing her frustrations. As the vision has been annexed by the team's general frustrations at the first meeting, a priority is to avoid a repetition of that situation. Moreover, it has overall been difficult to coordinate the process and she thinks that the team should know about her frustrations. Following, she suggests that the frustrations, which everybody has felt, should constitute a pro-active starting point for engaging with the mission.

> Coordinator: But I'm thinking – why not take the starting point in how it felt to be a coordinator this year? That thing with the cohesion. (…). Just to mention briefly that this [the vision-mission process] comes from *our* frustrations, confusion, and chaos. It isn't because we all of a sudden have discovered a vision [pretends to blow dust of an imaginary piece of paper] or because the municipality has press-ganged us. It's as colleagues, as coordinators.
>
> [...]
>
> School manager: Exactly. It is important that they [the team] experience being heard. They shouldn't feel that this is the management's project – rather that it [their frustrations] is deeply related to the vision and mission.

The manager and coordinators decide that the "here and now problems" can strategically be linked to the vision and mission, to avoid the potential critique from teachers that it does not address their everyday problems. By connecting the vision to their frustrations they might even increase the motivation for reflexivity. Whereas the vision and the frustrations could not co-exist at the first meeting (where it was a question of either discussing the vision or the "here and now problems"), the manager and the coordinators plan to weave connections between the vision, the mission, and the team's experience of a fragmented workday and internal disagreements.

While they consider it important to absorb the teachers' frustrations within the vision framework, they are also keen to avoid opening up for yet another session of "here and now problems." The before-mentioned mind map, which translates the "here and now problems" to a visionary vocabulary, is thought of as a device to make that connection and they plan to have the teachers reflect on the mission (and vision) through the mind map. In addition, they plan to divide the team into smaller groups who are to reflect on how to translate the mind map to practice. This is seen as a way to "activate" the team and "make people think along." To make sure that the dialogue in the work group takes the "right direction," they decide to place a coordinator in each group.

Despite having a vision, a mission, a mind map, and four working groups with a coordinator, the coordinators are still concerned whether the activities are sufficient to establish a "common ground" for linking the vision to practice. They thus create *two additional themes* to guide the group work with the mind map. One is titled "common themes," to inspire looking for connections between the different ideas on the mind map, and the other is "a coherent school day" to connect the mind map's ideas to the mission, which contains those very words

("To create the conditions for a whole and coherent school day for the students…"). To concretize the task even further, a coordinator suggests bringing up past examples of "coherence." This suggestion is quickly abandoned. Another coordinator objects that bringing up examples from the past risks encouraging the team to chip in with other, presumably negative, past examples. The process should "first and foremost be forward-looking," as she says. As an alternative to "examples from the past," the coordinators decide to begin by presenting their own thoughts on "coherence in the school day" and "common themes," to give the team some inspirational and concrete sentences, which can be linked to the common themes, and again to the mind map, which in turn can then guide reflexivity on the mission (and again, the vision).

The coordinators are still not convinced that they can "activate" the team, and the manager continues to emphasize their need to "manage" the agenda: "It has to be managed. We need to be precise in what we ask the groups to do." Looking again at the planned activities, they decide to sacrifice the teachers' group presentations to have more time for preparing the teachers for practicing reflexivity and instead have "the coordinators wrap up later." The fear that the meeting will end up as another session of "failed reflexivity" does not vaporize entirely. However, the meeting ends with no more time for them to install more safety mechanisms for ensuring that reflexivity will materialize. The meeting's temporal limits, rather than a certainty of success, stops the seemingly infinite way in which manager and coordinators are able to insert more initiatives and exercises to make the reflexive connection between the vision and the team's practice emerge.

### Fractal Scales

If there had not been a limit to how many activities they could plan to take place in one meeting, it seems that the generation of ways to ensure reflexivity between the vision and the teachers' practice would not have stopped. Indeed, it seems like whenever the manager and the coordinators build a new "bridge" to facilitate reflexivity between the vision and practice, this effort mainly brings about the discovery of a new potential gap. The vision is to be bridged by the mission, which is to be bridged by the "here and now problems," which are to be bridged by the mind map, and so forth. Regardless of the number of bridges, the concern remains that they will not be able to reach the teachers' practice. The effect is that the manager and coordinators end up, not only writing the mission, but performing, on behalf of the teachers, every instance of reflexivity they have imagined, for example by writing a mind map when the teachers are to formulate similar ideas in their working groups or giving them concrete examples of "coherence in the school day" before leaving this task to teachers and pedagogues.

This reproduction of complexity across different "levels" resembles the mathematical phenomenon of the fractal. Insofar as "connecting to practice" is a fractal problem, this has implications. In order to discuss these, I first characterize how fractals depict complexity.

Commonly known from stunning computer generated visuals of infinite recursive iterations of patterns within patterns, the term "fractal" emerges from the mathematical field of chaos theory. While I cannot translate my empirical observations into the complicated formulas of fractal mathematics, I use its imagery to make sense of my observations of how the problem of establishing a connection between the managers' vision and teachers' practice is reproduced with

every new reflexive bridge. As I am far from the first to make use of the fractal analogy in social analysis, I draw my inspiration from other scholars who have made use of the term (Strathern 2004, Jensen 2007:832-850, Mosko 2005:1-46, Gad 2009).

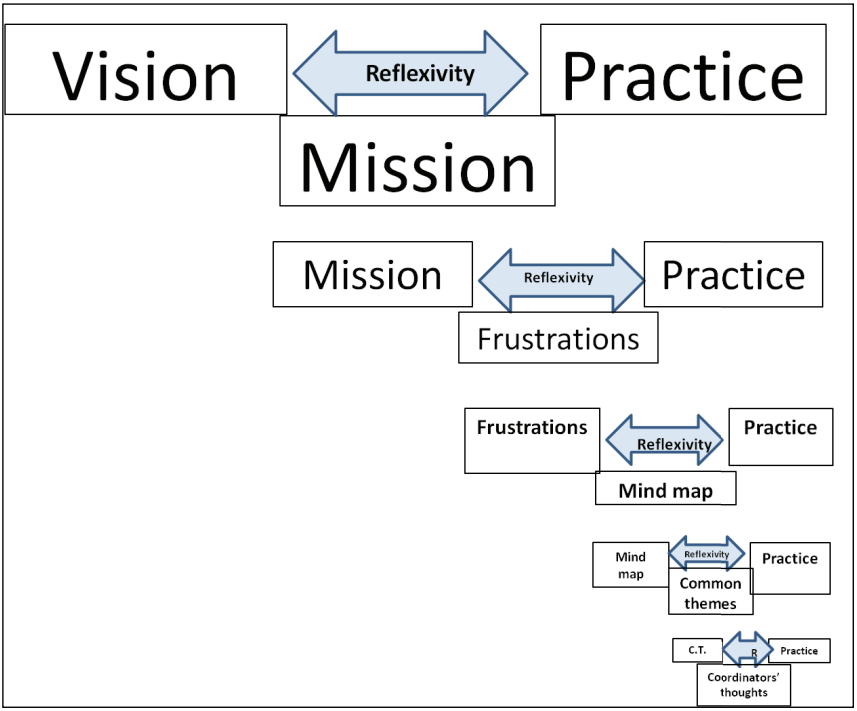
The fractal compels the analytical attention towards a "repetition, …[a] not-quite replication" across different levels or scales (Strathern 2004:xx). "Not quite replication" entails that we are not talking about an *identical* reproduction. A commonly used example is a jagged coastline, which from a given altitude above the earth consists of an irregular pattern of peninsulas, bays, islands, inlets, and such. Changing one's elevation to a higher or lower altitude will make visible a similar pattern, which appears random or disorderly from one singular point of observation (Mosko 2005:24). As the figure below illustrates, zooming in or out reveals an iterative pattern, regardless of how close or far away one is positioned (Mosko 2005:24, Gad 2009:48).

**A fractal coast, here depicted through pictures from different altitudes of the Southern coast of England. Downloaded from** http://www.realworldmath.org **(29th of September, 2011). Copyright: Google (2007) and Infoterra Ltd & Bluesky.**

The recursive similarity in a fractal opens up a new way to understand the relationship between micro and macro. Exactly because the same pattern appears across levels, the notion of a micro and a macro "level" is a rather imprecise way of accounting for scale. Indeed, the fractal's *scale invariance* resists the stratification implied by the term "level," with the effect that complexity emerges as a constant (Strathern 2004:19, Gad 2009:49). No matter how close one gets, the amount of details and information remains equally complex.

The school manager and coordinators' concerns about how to reach practice through teachers' reflexivity is characterized by a similar recurrence of complexity across different "levels." In the figure below, I have illustrated how the problem of

making a connection to their practice, through reflexivity, is reproduced with every solution.




**Vision/practice fractal**

When the managers write the vision it is because having teachers write a mission is imagined to constitute a reflexive (dis)connection to practice. When this fails, the "here and now problems" are seen as the new link, which are coupled to the mind map, which again is assisted by the common themes and so on. Each link generates a new juncture, a remainder or gap, which requires a new link. Understanding the relationship between the vision and practice as fractal accentuates that what is at stake is not a simple scale of "distance" where the

manager can be placed farther away from or closer to the teachers' practice. Rather, the distance to practice seems to be fractal in the sense that the manager and coordinators can continue to imagine new potential gaps within the bridges they establish to close other gaps. Teachers' practice remains equally complex and constitutes a constant threat of "overflowing" to the managers' endeavors of creating a reflexive distance. The complexity, the pattern of a repeated disrupting gap, remains in the coordinators' imagination of potential interruptions, regardless of whatever reflexive link they plan for.

Recall this chapter's earlier discussion about the double movement of disconnection and connection that the concept reflexivity entails. One conclusion that follows is that reflexivity does more than constitute a connection to practice; it produces the very idea that practice exists in a realm separate from the "vision." That is, the very idea that reflexivity can disconnect and connect produces the idea that there is a gap. This suggests that the ability to imagine (infinite) potential gaps between the vision and practice is inherent to the notion of reflexivity rather than something outside it, which it can overcome. The idea that there exists a "level of practice" and a "level of values" creates the desire to establish a connection; this desire, as we saw in my description of the managerial meeting, co-produces a concern that new gaps may emerge. This means that recursion, or fractality, partly is a result of the conceptual imagination of a "separate practice." As we saw, an effect of this idea is the production of yet more managerial concern about how to include teachers in reflexivity on the vision.

As I suggested earlier, it is not simply a matter of making teachers think as "abstractly" as the managers, but rather an encounter between different scales of the "abstract and concrete." This means that teachers and managers do not move along the *same* scale and do not find the request for respectively a vision and

conflict resolutions equally important. Approaching the "same" problem from two different scales thus also contributes to the fractality of the process: complexity cannot be reduced because the scales are difficult to align with one another. In so far as this is the case, the possibility of making the vision an "obligatory passage point" (Callon 1986:196-223) remains out of reach.

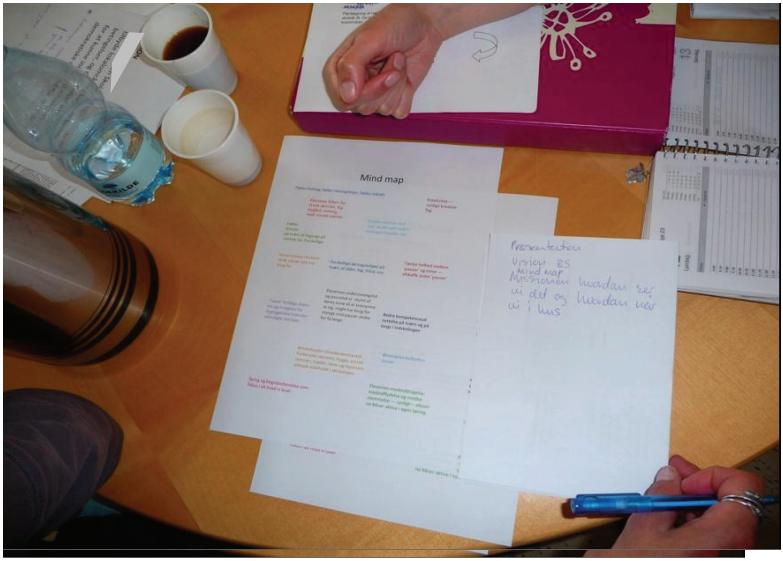
### When the Means Become the End

While the fractal imagery offers a way to understand the school manager and coordinators' repeated concerns with establishing a connection to the teachers' practice, the mundane issue of limited time brings closure to the fractal movement's infinite recursion: there is not more time in the meeting for reflexive exercises. This closure, however, also changes the status of reflexivity. I argue that reflexivity is transformed from being a means, a (dis)connecting device, to being an end in itself.

Since the recursive movement of inserting more reflexive connections between the vision and practice is interrupted, reflexivity has to be placed elsewhere. After having produced a set plan for the meeting, the manager and coordinators move on to distribute reflexivity to before and after the meeting. They decide to attach the vision and the mission to the email invite in order for the teachers "to have an experience of recognition" at the meeting. The email is delegated with the responsibility of "activating" the teachers' reflexivity before the meeting itself will take place. In the same vein, they decide to create yet (described as "only"!) two more working groups, which are to follow up on the two themes of "common themes [in the mind map]" and "a coherent school day."

The manager explains to me that this is decided in order for the team "not to do everything at once"; to keep the connection between the vision and the teachers' practice somewhat limited and manageable but also to give the working groups' discussions of the two themes a life of their own *after* the meeting. In that regard, the new working groups constitute a way for the manager and the coordinators to imagine that reflexivity will continue. By planning for reflexivity to take place *before* and *after* the meeting, its future actualization is distributed on a longer time span than the meeting itself. This relieves the meeting from the responsibility of performing reflexivity once and for all and allows for it to fail without this being a total failure.

During the planning meeting, the manager is quite concerned that the coordinators will send out the wrong invitation or attach the wrong documents. She offers to send them the right documents, which they can include in their email invite. Similarly, as the meeting plan grows more and more advanced, the manager encourages the coordinators to write down the agreements so they will remember all the reflexive steps and to put them in the email invite. As a result, notes are scribbled on photocopies of the mind map, the vision and mission (see picture below). This assemblage of mundane artifacts such as notes, documents, and an email invite to some extent carry the hoped for reflexivity. It is to these entities that the manager and coordinators delegate their hope of its future actualization (cf. Bencherki 2010): of remembering their meticulous plans for how to perform reflexivity in front of the teachers; of making visible the frustrations in their inverted forms on the mind map; of extending the possibility of reflexivity to other times than the meeting.




**The mind map and a coordinator writing down the plan.**

All these endeavors, however, also change the relationship between reflexivity and the teachers' practice. While reflexivity, before the vision-process began, was imagined to be a connecting device, it ends up confirming the fear that teachers' practice cannot be reached. Reflexivity started out as a *means* to make inclusion a meaningful practice through the concept of a learning organization but ends up becoming a *goal* in itself. Rather than reflexivity being a means to write down the mission, *the mission*, marshaled with a complicated plan involving emails, working groups, a mind map, and common themes, becomes the means to make teachers reflexive. It is in this sense that reflexivity changes from being a means to a goal. One effect of the fractal dynamic, then, is a still greater delegation of teachers' reflexivity to managers, coordinators and non-human actants such as emails, mind-maps, and working groups.

### Reflexivity Bouncing Back

After the meticulously planned meeting has taken place the school manager is very happy. The following day, he reports of good spirits, "activated" teachers and pedagogues, and is proud that the coordinators managed the process so well. The next day, I finish fieldwork at the school, but I follow up on this issue in three more interviews. I interview the school manager five months later, in October 2010: what has happened since I left the field? What has happened after this meeting? In this conversation, he is less excited. By the time I had left them, the school year was coming to an end, which meant that the team had spent all their energy planning the new school year, with new students to be welcomed, new teams structures to be organized, and new annual events to be planned. And after the summer break, new teachers and pedagogues had been hired and the energy was spent introducing them to the school. Not much had happened with the vision.

The next time I speak to him, a year later in October 2011, he does not mention the vision process at all. Instead, he tells me about the merger that they are going through, which produces new challenges. Fjelde School has survived the municipal restructuring scheme while a neighboring school has not. This school's teachers and students are divided between the district's remaining two schools. Inclusion has attained a new meaning as new teachers and students have to be included at Fjelde School after the merger. All the meticulous work of planning to become "a learning organization" and team's working groups have been put on hold.

I have a final conversation in February, 2012, almost two years after conducting my fieldwork at the school. In this conversation, he is supposed to comment on this chapter, but he has not had time to read it. With my thesis deadline

approaching rapidly, we have agreed that I explain the argument to him over the phone. Before I get started, however, he interrupts me and begins explaining that they have actually *stopped* exerting the supervising form of management with this particular team. He says:

> They are at a place where it isn't possible. We demanded self-management from them without looking at their competences. The entire vision process with the in-schooling team was more than anything a learning point for us [managers]. It was management feedback to us: that we needed to redefine our management of them. So we never followed up on the vision or mission. Instead we asked: "what kind of management would you like?" And now we support them, we assist or even instruct them but we don't disturb them anymore. When I was a teacher, it was my dream to be as self-managing as possible, to be allowed to formulate my own visions. But not all teachers share that dream.

He still hopes that the team will one day be able to reflect "on a higher level," and they continue to arrange small-scale exercises of reflexivity. Overall, though, reflexivity is no longer the overarching goal for this team. Instead, one could say, the managers have been forced to reflect on their idea of reflexively self-organizing teacher teams working on the level of values and drop this idea. Reflexivity has bounced back.

### Summing up

In this chapter, I explored a vision process at Fjelde School to extrapolate some ways in which reflexivity matters when informed by theories that assert the idea of connecting "vision" to "practice" through reflexivity. I followed the in-schooling team's process where problems "from practice" overflow and disrupt the plan of writing a mission. I have analyzed this incident as an encounter between different versions of the abstract and the concrete. At the mission meeting, the teachers prefer to discuss their concrete problems and the vision is considered to be rather

irrelevant. For the managers, in turn, writing a vision and a mission is the concrete task attaining the specific goals of branding the school in light of the threat of school closure. The teachers' "here and now problems" in turn are "abstract" in the sense that they are difficult to engage in with the specific goal of the vision in mind. Indeed, the manager and coordinators have to translate the "here and now problems" to a visionary language and to the temporality of "what we would like to have in the future" in order to engage with them.

I showed how this encounter between different versions of abstracts and concretes does not bring about the hoped for connection between "vision" and "practice" but rather makes it visible as a gap. The manager and coordinators' imagined difficulties of engaging teachers in reflexivity generates a *fractal* dynamic where they do "the reflexivity" on behalf of the teachers. To maintain a hope that the teachers, at some point, will continue the reflexive work by themselves, they moreover delegate the enactment of reflexivity to emails, documents, and future meetings. These documents work as coordination devices that both maintain reflexivity as important and real *and* work as a channel for distributing reflexivity to teachers. It seems that these documents and plans, rather than the teachers, become the vehicles of reflexivity.

In mathematics, fractals are infinitely recursive. Managerial efforts at facilitating teachers' reflexivity are not, even if they resemble a fractal dynamic. As time goes by, new concerns and challenges take over. At one point, the management team decides that attempting to facilitate their reflexivity is not the appropriate approach to this team. Reflexivity has bounced back and made the managers reflect on the usefulness of reflexivity with this particular team.

One straightforward conclusion could be that the ideal of reflexivity installs a fantasy of a practice, from which teachers need a distance in order to connect to "a level of values." Such a conclusion would characterize their efforts as unnecessary or excessive. This is not the point I want to make. While the perceived absence of reflexivity instantiates a rather labor-intensive and time-consuming collective effort, the meetings and the thorough plans are not "useless." In my estimation, they produce important encounters between the managers, coordinators, and the teachers. They may not produce the wished for distance from *a* practice, but they do constitute a series of important points of engagement where the manager, coordinators, and teachers make contact with each other's *practices*.

Even if the managers' vision process cannot encompass the teachers' frustrated descriptions of practice, the encounter between other versions of the abstract and concrete obliges the manager to engage with the teachers' practice. Conversely, the teachers receive re-descriptions of their practice in a visionary and future-oriented language. While the managers do not "resolve" the teachers' frustrations, they create a sense that "something" is being done, even if this something is rather vague and is to be achieved in the future. Rather than producing a common vision, the (impossible) vision instead produces a (fractal) contact zone between different practices. Finally, these encounters help make the managers reflect on, and change, their management strategies.

# Chapter Nine

## Politics of Reflexivity

> If one begins, as I do, from the premise that thinking is as "real" an activity as any other, and that ideas and discourses have important and very real social consequences, then in analyzing systems of ideas one cannot be content with interrogating them for their truth value. For a social scientist, there is always another question: what do these ideas *do*, what real social effects do they have? At this point the analysis more closely resembles vivisection than critique. For the question is not "how closely do these ideas approximate the truth," but "what effects do these ideas (which may or may not be true) bring about?" ...what we are concerned with is not an abstract set of philosophical or scientific propositions, but an elaborate contraption that *does* something. To say what such an apparatus does is not a critique, still less a refutation. Would we say that the vivisection of a frog constitutes a critique? Or that it aims to "refute" the frog's organs? When performing such cold-blooded operations, neither correction nor judgment is called for. One can aim only to be, in Nietzsche's terms, a good physiologist. (Ferguson 1994:xv)

### Introduction

In this thesis, I have explored how the inclusion of students with special needs is imagined and managed through the idea of reflexivity. Inclusion is to reduce segregation of students, which is believed to be an effect of socially constructed categories and culturally instilled practices of special needs education. With the goal of inclusion, reflexivity is mobilized as the primary tool for questioning and changing the assumptions shaping teaching practices and through this make them more inclusive. With this conception of a solution, school managers become responsible for managing how teachers ascribe meaning to students with special needs. Through facilitating teachers' reflexivity, they are to puncture and irritate presumably outdated and standardized assumptions and teaching practices. Reflexivity thus becomes part of a deliberate, constructivist politics aimed at changing norms and practices. As Maurer writes, the "apparent consensus that

'everything is constructed'…is accompanied by the moral imperative that we can and must construct those worlds at will" (Maurer 2005:165). Even though such a normative imperative grounded in a constructionist outlook does not necessarily follow from many theories of constructivism, a similar "consensus" prevails in school management.

In the first analysis (Chapter Four), I have explored how understanding special needs as embedded in "culture" and socially constructed categories of "normalcy" allows for a critique of existing knowledge practices and to conceive of more inclusive practices through reflexivity. I have analyzed how inclusion emerged as a policy agenda and how reflexivity is perceived as a resource in a variety of policy, pedagogical, and managerial literature. In Chapter Five, I conceptualized the interruptions that I found to permeate managerial practices around students who are deemed difficult (or impossible) to include and show how they lead to managerial work vested in maintaining boundaries and scales. In the last three chapters I explored different, socio-material enactments of reflexivity, analyzing how reflexivity, as it is variously understood, is performed in managerial practices characterized by interruptions.

One important point is that reflexivity can take many different forms in managerial practices. I have explored three of these: 1) reflexivity as a generalized, managerial expectation towards teachers (Chapter Six), 2) reflexivity as a social technology, the SMTTE (Chapter Seven), and 3) reflexivity as a method to generate a common vision of the future (Chapter Eight). The chapters engage with managerial attempts at infusing change through reflexivity both in *particular* situations and on a *general* "level": Chapter Six and Seven illustrate how reflexivity emerges in response to *particular* challenges arising in interactions among students, teachers, and managers, where Chapter Eight

explored how reflexivity, as a guide for visualizing the future, is used to create *general* change in teachers' practices.

Mine is not an exhaustive list of all possible shapes reflexivity can take. Neither am I presenting here an analysis of reflexivity's general forms. For example, I would not go so far as to claim that the SMTTE, offering a specific, packaged version of reflexivity, would always conduct the same version of reflexivity. Following anthropologist James Ferguson, quoted above, I contend that close ethnographic accounts, rather than enabling universal conclusions, allow one to become a "good physician" conversant in the *specific* effects of what are often considered *general* problems. My analyses illustrate the many hopes and personal investments involved as well as the difficulties in realizing certain ambitions; that reflexivity can be interpreted and conducted in a variety of ways and that it is difficult to organize change. School managers are *already* busy attending to a steady flow of conflicts, such as teachers' frustrations and students' connections to worlds of crime, mental illness, and unemployment. These constitute *limits* to reflexivity's power to change teachers' practices, as long as "practice" is understood to be the result of their social constructions.

The various enactments of the idea of reflexivity at the two schools generate distinct effects. Reflexivity does not simply lead to better inclusion of students, but, depending on its enactment, can also cause managerial disappointment, exclusion of teachers, and re-negotiation of managerial identities. In the manner of Ferguson, I will not discuss whether or not we can use reflexivity specifically to orchestrate social change. Instead, I am interested in asking "What are the *effects* of reflexivity?" How can we better understand the expectations, responsibilities, and practices that emerge when managers aim at accomplishing inclusion through making teachers' reflexive?

To answer this question, I begin with a discussion of the relationships among *reflexivity, interruption,* and *practice* in the analyses. I then argue that managing inclusion of students with special needs entails a politics of how to *dispose of complexity* and how to *include teachers*. I then relate these findings to the literature I have taken as my discussion partner, including Critical Management Studies and discussions in STS and anthropology about how to study conceptual practices. From here, I discuss what *politics might mean* for STS through feminist cultural scholar Judith Butler's critique of STS (Butler 2010:147-161) and through Annemarie Mol and Michel Callon's different accounts of politics (Mol 2002, Callon 2010:163-169). To conclude the thesis, I discuss the implications my analyses hold for policy, in light of some recent developments.

### The Fallacy of Misplaced Social Constructivism?

Discourse on reflexivity suggests that reflexivity's power to engineer social change knows no bounds. At Fjelde and Saxby schools, I found a series of partial "failures" to realize this potential. While translation and overflowing are an inevitable premise for *any* program (Callon 1986:196-223, Callon 1999:181–195), the conception of practice one finds in the literature on reflexivity (analyzed in Chapter Four) holds a clue to the particular discrepancies between the promise of reflexivity and its enactments.

My paraphrasing of process philosopher Alfred Whitehead's famous idea of *the fallacy of misplaced concreteness* (Whitehead 1997 [1925]:58) is a comment on the social constructivist conceptualizations of practice that I discussed in Chapter Four. Whitehead originally warned against mistaking the abstract for the concrete, treating an abstraction, a construct, as if it were real. Although hardly a fruit of process philosophy, advocacy for inclusion can be seen as an attempt to undo the

fallacies of a misplaced concreteness. Deconstruction of categories, or abstractions, is to render the term "special needs," formerly considered apt, nothing more than a socially constructed category. The hope is that one can deliberately change *concrete practices* by changing the *abstract social constructions* believed to constitute them. However, when reflexivity is seen as the means to realize this potential, another reification simultaneously happens as a dualism between *concrete practice* and *abstract thinking* is invoked.

With his *topological* metaphor of "misplaced," I moreover use Whitehead's term to suggest that there are implications to "placing" social constructivism and reflexivity at schools. For my own part, I am not questioning whether schools should be "theoretical." Indeed, I find the debate of unintended consequences special needs education important. Moreover, as philosopher Isabelle Stengers writes, "Nothing (neither theoretical nor ethical vocabularies) holds the power to determine what a phenomenon means for other" (Stengers in Gad, Jensen and Winthereik submitted). I will, however, discuss the consequences of decentralizing to schools the *burden* of realizing reflexivity's imagined potential.

In Chapter One and Four, I show how *school's practices* are enlisted to explain "the paradox" of a discrepancy between a growing moral support for inclusion and the growing number of students placed in segregative special needs education (Tetler 2004:81-98, Andersen 2004). In this literature, reflexivity emerges as a method to realize new potentials by *interrupting* the "misplaced concretism" of practices commonly referred to as "integration," the knowledge practices of diagnosing children with special needs. When "practice" is considered to result from teachers' conceptions of "normalcy" and "difference," reflexivity offers new ways of attributing meaning and thus makes the implementation of change seem possible. In this conception, reflexivity is not considered to be part of practice but

becomes a vantage point from which practice can be questioned, irritated, or interrupted, ultimately to good effect.

In Chapter Five, I contrast this conception of practice as *static* and *standardizing* with an example of how managers spend their time putting out fires, in responding to conflicts that emerge around students deemed to be "challenging" or "vulnerable." Showing how the school's *scales* and *boundaries* are porous and difficult to maintain, I argue that practice is *already interrupted* by other means than reflexivity, with the effect that managers spend the bulk of their time maintaining boundaries and scales. The implication is that in order to understand how reflexivity is performed we need to understand how *interruptions* invariably affect managerial practices.

In the management and inclusive pedagogical literature, reflexivity amounts to a "joker" (cf. Brown and Middleton 2005:695-715), which can always trump practice by escaping it and changing its constitutive elements. In the practices I analyze, reflexivity can neither escape nor encompass the "whole" of practice, but instead becomes an element of convoluted processes constituting practice. Indeed, *interruption* comes from rather different sources than reflexivity, and reflexivity affects rather different "constellations" than the teachers' tacit knowledge envisioned in the literature prescribing reflexivity. In Chapter Six, I explored how interruptions become a *source of information* for managers, used to assess whether teachers are reflexive. In Chapter Seven, I looked at how a social technology prescribing reflexivity, rather than irritating teachers' "level of values," instead irritates other arrangements and priorities making up the school. In Chapter Eight, I analyzed how "here and now problems" interrupt a reflexive process *itself* intended to "interrupt" the "standardized" manner in which teachers approach these problems from practice. In all chapters, changes are already taking place in

the form of *interruptions* and call for *stabilizing* managerial interventions rather than *more* interruption.

To some extent, it is not surprising that observing one's practice reflexively proves difficult. If we look at STS and anthropology, many academics, as Maurer puts it, "tired of the demands of textual reflexivity for anthropological practice, have either absorbed the critique by proffering more 'voices,' or negated the critique by getting 'back to business'" (Maurer 2005:11). In other words, while reflexivity is considered important, it has ironically become a standard disclaimer allowing people to carry out similar (representational) activities. Parallel to this, school managers, aware that social constructions constitute their practices, continue to respond to problems that are difficult to reify as social constructions, even if they feel that these problems can be prevented if teachers question their "social constructions." In the same way that reflexivity debates in anthropology and STS did not deconstruct anthropology's "empirical impulse" (Maurer 2005:5), it is also difficult for school managers to negate the wide range of elements making up their managerial practices. Even if reflexivity, as I also discussed in Chapter One, regards very different matters of concern for STS scholars (the impossibility of accurate representation) and school managers (the possibility of organizing social change), the two groups encounter similar difficulties. It becomes apparent that the means for managing schools, or producing knowledge, cannot be *reduced to* reflecting on the conditions for doing so.

Although there is not *one* single "version" of reflexivity in my analyses of managerial practices, I can discern an overarching consequence. The burden of dissolving fundamental ambiguities about how to prioritize, translate, and organize complex social interactions involving "difficult" and "vulnerable" students has to an large extend been deferred to schools; schools whose practices are imagined to

be static and in need of "interruptions" even if the opposite is more often the case, in a mundane sense of the word "interruption." When these mundane interruptions are imagined to be preventable through more reflexivity, reflexivity continues to fuel hopes of change despite the hard-to-get realizations. As I will now discuss, these expectations around reflexivity produce new forms of exclusion, blame, and ambiguity.

### The Potential as a Political Settlement

Using the theory of autism *Theory of Mind* as an example, STS scholar Steve Brown has characterized social science as tasked with providing *political settlements* instead of truths. Drawing on Latour, he defines a "political settlement" as a *partial explanation* that enrolls collectives (Brown 2010:104, see also Latour 2005:129). *Theory of mind* produces a political settlement by offering explanations to parents and caretakers who deal with uncomfortable situations of "deviant" behavior, by locating "the problem" of autism within the child (Brown 2010:16, see also Andersen 2004). If we generalize Brown's characterization of the political settlement in *Theory of Mind* to include other diagnoses of children, we can understand diagnoses as simplified *codings* and *explanations* of complex matters. As such, they entail a displacement (for example, re-locating the problem in the child), although these displacements are always partial, due to the fact that "conditions of real experience [displaced by political settlements]…re-emerge" and impose themselves on practices of dislocation (which here are the diagnosis) (Brown 2010:117).[117]

[117] Brown's notion of dislocation thus resembles Callon's notion of overflowing (1999:181–195), which I discuss later in this chapter.

Much of the pedagogical, political, and managerial literature that advocates inclusion considers that diagnoses, seen as an artifact of the "paradigm" of integration, are not independent truths but products of cultural and institutional assumptions. This discovery causes scholars to view practices of diagnosing and referral quite *negatively* because it exposes existing practices not to be grounded in *truth* but rather in cultural constructs and personal interests.[118] This valuation is somewhat different from Brown's depiction of diagnoses, in which the premise of social science *generally* is its "over-determination." As such, social science can provide *only* political settlements and never deliver context-independent truths. In Brown's view, even the social sciences that reveal truth as contingent and constructed stems from such over-determination.

When the question is not simply how to replace with a new truth an old truth revealed to be a construction, this changes how we can evaluate diagnoses.[119] Making explicit diagnoses as a "political settlement," to employ Brown's term, in need of deconstruction, the aim with reflexivity is to open up new potential formations of the social. Even if reflexivity, as I discussed in Chapter Four, does not constitute a new "truth," in the general sense of the term, as a "potentiality machine" it works *akin* to a transcendental truth. In principle, there is no limit to the number of truths that reflexivity can question and unravel.

Thus, instead of truth and certainty, we have reflexivity; by continually refusing truths and categories, reflexivity dissolves everything but the necessity of

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[118] We might remember pedagogical scholar Jens Andersen's assessment that "diagnoses make it too easy to escape life as the accountable [teachers] are freed from responsibility" (2009:171).

[119] Here I speak on my own, as social science, according to Brown, can summon the prerogative of neither representation nor evaluation (Brown 2010:104).

reflexivity *itself*. This raises the question of what kind of political settlement inclusion, through reflexivity, can engender. Inclusion rearticulates the child with special needs as an effect of cultural frameworks informing *practices* rather than as a problem located in the child. It also entails replacing *actuality* (what we *are*) with *potentiality* (what we can become). This, as I discussed in Chapter Four, has an auto-generative effect, because any practice in principle always can reflect critically on how it can improve. One might even say that *change* becomes the only "stable" political settlement (cf. Andersen 2012:220).

***Displacements and Accountability Relations***

By asking how reflexivity matters, I have explored three instances of (or attempts at) the political settlement that reflexivity offers in managerial practices aimed at inclusion. Reflexivity, as I argued in Chapter Four, is *generally* imagined to create new potentials by turning contingency and complexity into a resource for deconstructing what already exists. The empirical analyses of reflexivity, however, indicate that reflexivity cannot address the different types of complexity that teachers and managers encounter, and also produces new kinds of complexity, with the effect that *displacements* take place. The specific socio-material setups distributing reflexivity also affect how complexity is displaced. In the three examples I analyzed, reflexivity is *arranged* in different ways, ranging from being a general expectation that is confirmed or disappointed through managers' coincidental observations of conflicts to processes that are imagined, reified, and abandoned through documents, meetings, and plans. It is important to understand how such displacements affect the implicated parties.

The thesis' examples of interactions around students deemed difficult to include – or, as in Chapter Five, impossible – share the characteristic of generating

complexity calling for managerial involvement. Managerial responses, in turn, aim at maintaining boundaries and distributions by bringing temporary closure to the complexities that summon them. They do so through a mix of engagement and displacement, affecting *accountability relations* between, in particular, managers and teachers. In the following, I discuss these accountabilities by specifying what emerges as "complex" and the corresponding forms that displacement takes. I argue that displacement takes the forms of *exclusion, circulation,* and *deferral*, each one entailing different implications for managing inclusion.

In Chapter Six, I analyzed the managers' assessments of teachers as involving a *standardizing version* of reflexivity. The ideal of reflexivity at play in this case allows managers to imagine that "challenging" and "vulnerable" students can be included if teachers have an appreciative attitude. Reflexivity standardizes by providing *similar expectations* of reflexive teachers, which are used to assess teachers in *different situations*. Teachers' *assessments* of conflicts are rarely considered a factor, which managers should take into account. Instead, teachers' *reactions* are read as displaying their emotions and become *information* for assessing their reflexive capabilities. This, I argue, *excludes* the teachers' assessments and requests for "consequence." Through *exclusion,* ambiguities and controversies in the specific situations are to some extent purified for managers who, when responding, only need to take into account the students' assessments. In the long run, however, this form of displacement brings about a *mutual delimitation* of agency. A growing collective of teachers expresses a lack of trust in the management team, and managers, correspondingly, express frustration about their lack of influence or authority over teachers.

In Chapter Seven, I analyzed how a social technology's procedures for reflexivity (the SMTTE, used as an action plan) are realized. For the SMTTE's textually

mediated reflexivity to emerge, the managers do not only follow its procedures but also allow teachers to express "opinionings" quite contradictory to the SMTTE. By inscribing their experiences onto paper, the SMTTE allows a distinction to be made between teachers' "opinioning" and their "knowledge." Once the action plan is be realized, however, its attempts to enroll other settlements regarding the teachers' working hour agreement, the school's financial means, and the parents' consent produce new complexity and controversy. This complexity is not disposed of but traverses and interrupts a range of different arrangements at the school, and the original procedures of ongoing reflexivity on the action plan's categories are bracketed. Through this circulation, the SMTTE makes it necessary for managers to produce partial closures and negotiations over how to draw the boundary between teacher and manager responsibilities, often with the result that managers simply take over a task they think the teachers do not solve in the right way. As mending practices disturbed by the SMTTE takes time from other issues that need their attention, the managers complain that they are overwhelmed.

In Chapter Eight, I showed how managers attempt to "elevate" teachers to a "level of values" and "visions" to make inclusion a more present matter of concern in their practices. The move is thus initially to break with the "stability" of how teachers handle conflicts with students. Ironically, the teachers' frustrations *interrupt* managers' attempts to *interrupt* the teachers' "values." Rather than challenging teachers' presuppositions of inclusion, their challenges with inclusion become the overarching issue in the vision process. The managers meet these challenges by doing the meta-reflexivity on behalf of the teachers and by *deferring* both teachers' and their own problems of making teachers reflect to future meetings. Postponing the very operation of reflexivity, deferral makes it possible to continue in a non-satisfactory present *as if* the future will bring about the unity

that has hitherto failed to materialize. In order to defer reflexivity, mind maps, emails, working groups, and "inspiring examples" are employed to manifest, in the present, belief in a future reflexivity. When I spoke to the manager 10 months later, they had stopped "imposing reflexivity" on teachers as a result of this process. Reflexivity had bounced back, so to speak.

In all versions, reflexivity comes into being not as a cognitive effort but through various non-human actants. Reflexivity becomes a means for attending to current matters of concern. Whereas the standardizing version of reflexivity, generated by random "surveillance" and managerial disappointments in an "information ecology" (cf. Nardi and O'Day 1999) allows managers to *exclude* teachers' concerns, the paper technologies and manager-teacher interactions performing the SMTTE and the vision process engage the managers in rather different ways. The documents produce commitments to realizing a plan and spur managers to fulfill the plan in various ways. As I show in Chapters Seven and Eight, the paper can both be an actant that gather humans in a dialogue *and* allow for reflexivity to be *postponed* or *bracketed* when teachers or settlements cannot be enrolled.

Besides having implications for *what* counts as reflexivity, these arrangements also entail decisions about *who* is left with the burden of disposing complexities. The question of who primarily regards distributions between managers and teachers. In all chapters, both the managers' and teachers' status are rendered precarious, although in different ways. It becomes important whether and how *teachers are included* in managerial attempts to promote the idea of inclusion. Chapter Six most clearly illustrates that excluding teachers through standardized expectations of reflexivity risks limiting *both* teachers' and managers' agency. Yet, as Chapter Seven and Eight testify, simply calling for the reverse, that is, the *inclusion of teachers*, is hardly a "solution" either.

Reflexivity does not offer a pre-defined political settlement that allows for comforting explanations and easy distributions of responsibility. My analyses instead indicate the contingency of *what gets to* count as reflexivity, *what* is made an object of reflexivity, *who* is expected to reflect, and *how* managers react when they assess teachers to lack reflexivity. My analyses illustrate ongoing uncertainties and even conflicts about how responsibility and accountability are distributed among managers, teachers, and students. While these accountability relations are hardly effects *only* of reflexivity, reflexivity does provide a language for legitimizing, attributing, and negotiating these distributions. Managing inclusion raises the question not only of whether teachers need to reflect more on how they can better include students, but also of how and to what extent management can address the challenges experienced by teachers. Besides outlining a politics of what it means to be a manager, a teacher, and a student, my analyses also raise the question of *what* overflowing does *to whom*, and *how* overflowing is handled through new displacements when it re-emerges.

## Contributions

I have engaged with several theoretical debates around the term reflexivity, including Critical Management Studies' critiques of Donald Schön's concept of the "reflective practitioner" and the reflexivity debates in STS and anthropology about the relationship between the researcher and the researched.

### *Critical Management Studies*

In Chapter One, I discussed how scholars in the so-called Critical Management Studies and post-foucauldian tradition have approached technologies of reflexivity (Day 1993:pp. 83-93, Pors 2009, Fendler 2003:16-25, Thrift 1997:29-57,

Erlandson 2005:661-670, Fejes 2008:243-250, Gilbert 2001:199-205, Rolfe and Gardner 2006:593-600, Zeichner 1992:161-173, Wright 2004:34-52). I argued that they consider the ideal of reflexivity and the increased managerial attention to culture, mindsets, and attitudes as a sophisticated form of power that disciplines teachers by shaping their self-relationships. This body of literature generally explores reflexivity at a programmatic "level," analyzing the intentions and assumptions expressed in documents and social technologies advancing the idea of the "reflective practitioner." Looking at how the political, managerial, and pedagogical literature articulates reflexivity, as I also do in Chapter Four, interpreting reflexivity as a form of discipline is certainly possible.

However, my subsequent analyses of managerial practices illustrate that reflexivity is often performed differently than the literature prescribes. If governance is a question of making teachers internalize dominant norms, discourses, and ideals, as the critical management literature suggests, my analyses indicate that reflexivity executes this strategy somewhat *weakly*, given the many translations it undergoes. Quite rarely does it succeed in establishing its intended norms. Although the idea of reflexivity does introduce new standards for what counts as a "good" teacher, which inadvertently exclude other teacher profiles, my analyses also illustrate that the accountability relations between managers and teachers are far from settled. Rather than measuring the success or failure of reflexivity according to the predictions outlined in the literature, my analyses instead illustrate the importance to study a variety of effects in practices.

Instead of deciding in advance what reflexivity *is*, I have explored how the idea that teachers can and should be reflexive plays out in managerial practices. While reflexivity is commonly assumed to be a cognitive operation, related to thinking, through my engagement with STS and anthropology I have directed attention

towards both the non-human and distributed aspects of the idea of reflexivity. Following ANT, subjects acquire their capabilities not only from discourses but also from various material components that co-constitute practice (Callon 1999:181–195, Latour 2004:205-229). This means that neither practices nor humans are passive, blank templates onto which new ideals are easily inscribed. Instead, they are constituted relationally and situationally from moment to moment and translated in this process. Exploring reflexivity with STS sensibilities allowed me to gain insights about the challenges and distributions of agency that are already making up managerial practices and which affect how the idea of reflexivity is appropriated and enacted. I have referred to this approach as a study of *how reflexivity matters*, in order to underline that this is an exploration of how (what the managers recognize as (a lack of)) reflexivity emerges, in which enactments, and with what effects.

***STS and Anthropology***

The phenomena of reflexivity and inclusion cut across conventional boundaries between the "conceptual" and the "empirical," implicating social science in several ways. In Chapter One I showed how inclusion is promoted as a backlash against integration (cf. Beck 1998). Inclusion is influenced by sociological critiques of integration, and the method of reflexivity to deconstruct socially constructed categories and practices emerges as a way of organizing cultural change. This use, in turn, can be seen as a reflexive version of social science, also influenced by my colleagues' conceptual work, which I re-discovered in my empirical data. To reflect on this premise for studying reflexivity, I have engaged with the reflexivity debates in anthropology and STS. Rather than reiterating the

reflexivity debates' critique of representation, however, I argued that what is at stake is *performativity*.

Scholars have through the notion of performativity attended to how models and theories *of* the world also *shape* it, for instance, that economics *performs* the economy (Callon 2010:163-169, MacKenzie 2007:54-86). With my study, the theories that contribute to the phenomena it seeks to explain emerge from the social sciences, more precisely from social constructivism and critical sociological analyses of the categories and practices of special needs. It is thus a kind of reflexive performativity theory, pointing back to constructivist theorizing rather than to neighboring disciplines, as is the case with SSF.

In Chapter Two, to disentangle these relationships and to discuss which analytic consequence to draw from finding "the conceptual" in "the empirical," I reflected on the status of "the conceptual" among my informants, in anthropology, and in ANT. This discussion revolved around the question of what status "their theories" (which are never just theirs) hold in the practice approach advocated by (post-) ANT scholars. In a response to calls for STS researchers to take the thinking of the informants seriously, I argued, drawing my inspiration from anthropologists Marilyn Strathern and Bill Maurer, that ANT enables a *lateral compatibility*. Lateral compatibility means engaging with a rhizomic empirical-conceptual complex through multiple entry points, rather than through the conceptual and the empirical on a singular scale. The notion of lateral compatibility frames the relationship between researched and researcher as characterized by partial (dis)connections and consequently research is not "just" about taking seriously actors' thinking. While this can indeed exist as an ambition, the concrete relationships among different actors in the field (who may have conflicting ideas of what counts as "thinking") take many different forms. These include both

moments of epistemic collaboration and "adding agency" (cf. Jensen and Lauritsen 2005:59-77) *and* involve considering "their concepts" (which are also present in my own institution) as part of the data to be analyzed.

Lateral compatibility, however, is not only about analyzing practices, including their conceptual makeup, but also about letting "the empirical" form a "perspective" on "the conceptual." In my estimation, doing so throughout the chapters has allowed me to question certain meta-theoretical commitments usually associated with ANT. In Chapter Two, I argued that "practice" also brings into being *perspectivalism*, even if STS scholars such as Annemarie Mol (Mol 2002) and John Law (Law 2004) argue fervently against the idea of perspectives *on* the world. They do so to outline a sociology in opposition to perspectivalist theories of the social (e.g Andersen 2003) and to forefront the *multiple* and *processual* construction and performance of *realities*. However, when perspectives are performed by the *multiplicity of enactments* in practice, perspectives can also be seen to help perform realities.

Studying school managers' hectic practices has moreover allowed me to take ANT in new directions. Bruno Latour, to cite an example, has developed ANT to show how "social" or "human" phenomena are mediated by non-human actants (Latour 1997:170-191, Latour 1991:103-131, Latour 1996:228-245, Latour and Venn 2002:247-260, Latour 1993). While I also deploy this methodological strategy to open up the term "reflexivity," I do not conclude my argument by restating the classic ANT dictum that "technology is society made durable" (Latour 1991:103-131). Rather, in Chapter Five I focus on *human* efforts (conceptualized as "fire fighting") when non-humans fail to perform boundaries and scales. Whereas Latour tends to emphasize how "human agency" is mediated by "missing masses" (Latour 1992:225-258), "subjectifiers," (Latour 2005) and "inter-objectivity"

(Latour 1996:228-245), he pays less attention to human agency that is not directly enabled by technology (Krarup and Blok 2011:44). My own examples have highlighted how human agency involves maintaining and attending to boundary- and scale making, and how humans may actually be better fitted than "missing masses" of "mundane technologies" to deal with overflowing.

Mundane technologies such as a meeting agenda and a table may be adequate to hold a meeting, but they are of little use when an expelled student associates the school to a drug dealer and a stolen moped. I have explored how difficult it is to organize both teachers' reflexivity and interventions around students with special needs *in spite of* the presence of mundane technologies and well-aligned networks. In this vein, I offered in Chapter Six the idea of information ecology instead of enlisting more classic concepts of surveillance, such as panopticon (Foucault 1975) or oligopticon (Latour 2005); in Chapter Seven, I focus on the "ambiguously theorized" dynamics of "overflowing*"* (du Gay 2010:177, Blok 2011:455) rather than analyzing the fit between "model" and "world" as is common in performativity theory debates (e.g. MacKenzie 2007:54-86); and in Chapter Eight, I use the mathematical concept of the fractal to analyze the complexity produced by reflexivity and how different scales of abstract and concrete make it difficult to conduct reflexivity. These analyses contribute to theoretical discussions on "fractality" and "complexity" among scholars influencing post-ANT debates (Strathern 2004, Law 1999:1-15, Mol and Law 2002:1-22, Law and Singleton 2005:331-355, Lee and Brown 2002:258-280). In the following paragraphs, I follow up on the implications my analyses hold for the concept of "politics" in STS.

### The Politics of Performativity Theory

In a rare encounter between different theories of performativity, Butler accuses STS-inspired performativity analyses of economic models of legitimizing capitalism. She accuses scholars such as Michel Callon and Donald MacKenzie for abandoning "any effort to evaluate and oppose…multivalent operations of capitalism" (Butler 2010:153). While acknowledging, as any good post-structuralist would do, that there is no "outside" from which to pose criticism, she suggests an alternative normative horizon through "performative agency," which takes "responsibility for building a future," thereby implying that STS scholars are remiss (Butler 2010:155).

Butler extrapolates the notion of "performative agency" from the works of political theorist Masao Maruyama and philosopher Hannah Arendt. These scholars, in her opinion, perform a critical and responsible form of politics by uncovering "not yet" and "unrealized" potentiality through causing a "crisis" in existing cultural frameworks and "bring[ing] about new [fictional] social forms" (Butler 2010:155). Maruyama's performative agency, for example, consists in exploring, through "translation and invention," "whether there were resources within Japan's cultural traditions for developing an openly critical relation to state authority" (Butler 2010:154-155). Assessing Butler's claims, organizational sociologist Paul du Gay notes that Butler's notion of performative agency displays a particular "moment of theory," which he, following historian Ian Hunter, understands as an intellectual attitude shared across a variety of disciplines (du Gay 2010:171-179). According to du Gay, this moment provides an insight into "theory's hope" (cf. Fish 2004) of affecting social change while leaving the actual politics emerging from such a hope unclear (du Gay 2010:171-179).

A basis for studying inclusion and reflexivity is the lateral relationship between this thesis and its object of study. A similar lateral resemblance crops up when imagining politics. Butler's qualification of a performative agency bears a curious resemblance to "inclusion's hope" of reflexivity. Both are imagined to question existing frameworks through disturbance, and both draw on a vocabulary of potentiality. If *being political* entails questioning and transgressing existing frameworks, as Butler proposes, then the pedagogical scholars, school managers, and policy makers I have studied are already engaged in this form of politics and hardly need the performative agency of social scientists.[120]

It seems that Butler's "moment of theory" and its imaginary of social change is not the purview solely of certain academic disciplines but today also informs attempts of *governing* and *organizing*, thus constituting a "practice' hope" alongside the theory's hope.[121] Social sciences, in other words, are *already* providing *performative agency* to practices by circulating ideas of reflexivity. This involvement, which I have referred to as lateral compatibility, obviates Butler's call for general political prerogatives for social science.

The task of social science, as I see it, is not to *add* to the political through normative-critical registers but rather to study how the political is *already*

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[120] Butler might object that policy documents would not qualify as genuine critiques, enveloped as they are in the State. However, if we have never been modern, as Latour claims (Latour 1993), then there is little need to differentiate society into different domains such as "politics" and "science" as everybody, policy makers and social scientists alike, shares the premise of being situated, interested, and articulating their alternative worlds from partial perspectives (Haraway 1995:175-194).

[121] Some scholars, however, consider the overlap of political imaginaries between social science and "society" as rather dangerous. This, for instance, is a concern to human geographer Nigel Thrift who is worries that "theoretical developments now routinely leak across the old boundaries between academia and business, thus helping to produce a new form of capitalism: 'soft capitalism'" (Thrift 1997:31).

negotiated and constructed *in practices*. What is needed may not be *additional* "theory's hope" but a study of the practical politics of the very idea of *performative agency*, when, in the format of reflexivity, it is taken up by policy makers, scholars, and school managers. Such a study, in my estimation, is one contribution my thesis makes. Rather than being a *non-critical* study of effects, however, this entails an *a-critical* attitude, because the researcher, through descriptions and analysis, contributes to making up practical ontologies, situating and rendering the analyses partial in the first place (Brown 2010, Gad, Jensen and Winthereik submitted).

***When Politics-of-What Is a Politics-of-Who***

While STS, with its sensitivity to the emergence, constructions, overflowing, and multiplicities of a phenomenon allow us to study how practices are *already* political, STS scholars have offered differing conceptualizations of what kind of politics practices entail. In the following passages, I discuss this issue with two scholars who have been particularly influential in shaping my study: Annemarie Mol, whose idea of *multiplicity* resonates with my approach to reflexivity as enacted in and by heterogeneous elements making up managerial practices, and Michel Callon, whose notion of *performativity* inspired me to explore how models and theories of reflexivity influence the phenomenon they theorize. In a brief discussion of how they locate "the political" in, respectively, a "politics-of-what" and "misfires," I argue that politics of performativity cannot be settled in any *general way*.

As I argued in Chapter Two, Mol, with her notion of *multiplicity*, locates the political in practices. When multiple realities rather than a single reality are continuously conjured, maintained, disputed, and negotiated in heterogeneous

practices, these practices perform "ontological politics" (Mol 2002). Considering the flexibility of reflexivity – that anything in principle can be made an object of reflection – it is not surprising that I found different "versions" of reflexivity; hardly anyone would consider reflexivity to be singular. This, however, does not make understanding how the idea of reflexivity is enacted in managerial practices any *less* important.

Mol's highlighting of practices suggests that there is more than one reality. The consequence of multiplicity, according to Mol, is a "politics-of-what": an attendance to and curiosity about how a phenomenon comes into being (Mol 2002:165ff). Mol positions a politics-of-what in contrast to a "politics-of-who," which focuses on a *plurality of perspectives*. A "politics-of-who," according to Mol, bypasses important political questions of how *realities* come about in the first place. She firmly locates the ontological (and thus political) differences to reside in the mundane technicalities through which an object is attained and *not* in different "perspectives" of people who may or may not hold the authority to represent or decide. However, as I argued above and in Chapter Two, being a highly influential idea among school managers, perspectives *do* partake in making up realities in my empirical material. This has implications for Mol's politics-of-what.

I agree with Mol that it is important not to settle, as would a politics-of-who, for *only* a division of powers among, in my case, teachers, managers, and students, lest we assume homogeneity within each group, which is far from the case, or overlook the importance, which I discussed previously, of how reflexivity is enacted. Yet, in the case of reflexivity, the distinction between "what" and "who" is not clear-cut. The enactments of reflexivity entail not only asking "what should be done" but also distributing accountabilities. Especially considering that the

practices enacting reflexivity *bring into being* also the perspectivalism that Mol so strongly criticizes, the politics-of-what, in my case, involves settlements of politics-of-who. Moreover, because Mol deems the political question of "what to do" the most important to ask, her politics-of-what values doubt and indeterminacy higher than certainty (Mol 2002:177). First one must ask *which* tasks get to be questioned in this way, and then whether *all* tasks would benefit from the virtue of doubt, not to mention whether it is practically possible to relate to all practices without some kind of ontological surety. At the schools I studied where a lack of stability coexists with the ideal that teachers and managers should question their practices, the most important question is not always "what to do." My analyses further point out that it is equally important *who* gets to ask and answer the question "what to do." These questions remain unanswered in Mol's political program.

In order to understand the politics of a given phenomenon, in my estimation, one does not need to choose in advance between the politics of "who" (perspectives) or "what" (practices), even if this would accord with Mol's empirical philosophy in a neat and consistent manner. In fact, the two kinds of politics may implicate one another and be hard to disentangle. In my study, a politics-of-what and a politics-of-who are intertwined.

***When Overflowing Reinforces the Framing***

Like Mol, Callon locates the politics of practice in the idea that "there is no single way of organizing" phenomena such as the economy (Callon 2010:163). However, instead of seeing it as residing in the *multiple enactments of phenomena*, as Mol does, he claims that the political emerges from the interaction between *framing* and *overflowing* (Callon 2010:163-169, Callon 1999:181–195). As I also discuss

in Chapter Seven, overflowing, or misfires, is constituted by what is *excluded* by a framing and, according to Callon, is the *inevitable result* of any attempt to frame an interaction (Callon 2010:163-169, Callon 1999:181–195). Moreover, as Callon, inspired by Derrida, suggests, overflowing constitutes more than just unavoidable conditions of organizing: it is its *return* to the framing that generates "issues that lead to the explanation and discussion of the politics that [the framing] implies" (Callon 2010:165). In Callon's conceptualization, politics of practice thus is when issues emerging from overflowing question the framing that created the overflowing in the first place.

While this return may be produce a "political" questioning of the frame *in some instances,* it is hardly the case in all instances. As du Gay writes in a response to Callon's formulation, Callon assumes that any program *generally* "bring[s] into being its own counter-programme which takes as its starting point what was left out by the original programme" (du Gay 2010:177). Within my own analyses, there are many examples of "failed" reflexivity, in the sense that teachers do not demonstrate the "right" reflexivity due to what could be regarded as overflowing. However, as I just discussed, overflowing is handled through further displacement and does not automatically bring about such (reflexive) questioning of the framing.

The contrast between the "ideal" and "real" of reflexivity occasioned neither much surprise nor indignation in the school managers I worked with. Managers at both schools remained convinced that reflexivity should irritate and change teachers' practices. When reflexivity "standardizes," overflowing (the teachers' experiences) returns in the form of mistrust between the management and teachers. However, instead of causing managers to question their expectations to teachers, the gap between expectations and outcomes only confirms managers in their belief

that things can improve if only teachers become more reflexive. Similarly, when the managers and teachers abandon the SMTTE's procedures of reflexivity in order to address the controversies it breeds, this does not cause anyone to question the value of its reflexivity. Rather, both managers and teachers remain excited about the SMTTE's ability to connect "the level of values" to "the level of practice." Only in Chapter Eight, when the managers attempt to make teachers reflect on their vision, do the managers *after a year* ask whether all teachers benefit from working with reflexivity.

With the exception of the vision process (and only after much managerial effort) my analyses testify to how instances of "failed" reflexivity can generate the perception that there is *more need* of reflexivity. In contrast to Callon's idea that the return of overflowing produces a questioning of the frame, such a return only rarely inspires managers and teachers to respond reflexively to the idea of reflexivity itself, to question whether reflexivity *is* indeed needed. In this respect, the ideal of reflexivity is self-perpetuating.[122] Furthermore, the practical "fluidity" (de Laet and Mol 2000:225-263) of the term, that many different practices can count as "reflexive" and that reflexivity can be used to a variety of ends, makes the concept of reflexivity attractive, versatile, and strong. While reflexivity encompasses such heterogeneity, it simultaneously provides a language for change management, promoting the belief that managers' can facilitate social and organizational change. The promises of reflexivity thus continue to negate the practical complexities of managing inclusion.

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[122] Interestingly, self-perpetuity does not just regard the potential of infinite regress that so often is evoked as a critique of reflexive theoretical programs (Lynch 2000:26-54). Here, it is in a very practical sense, related to how an interpretation of reflexivity as lacking fortifies the perception that it is needed.

The subsequent displacement of the overflowing (produced by the framing) is central to understanding why overflowing only rarely questions the framing. By delegating the responsibility of being reflexive to teachers (Chapter Six), bracketing the reflexive questioning of practice while dealing with other complexities through sending them into circulation (Chapter Seven), and deferring reflexivity to the future (Chapter Eight), managers can respond to the boundary- and scale maintaining challenges of including students as if these problems were real and not merely effects of teachers' social constructions. Ironically, it seems that the idea of *reflexivity* can persist *exactly* because its deconstructive impulse makes it easy to displace. In the meantime, the managers can attend to mundane interruptions by negotiating and maintaining boundaries and scales.

For this reason, the practical politics of performativity that I propose is more relative than the politics proposed by Mol and Callon. If I were to formulate a universal claim, it would be that it is impossible to settle the question of politics of performativity *in general* through notions such as *misfires* or *politics-of-what*. Rather, we can only study *empirically* the specific politics that a phenomenon, through the specific translations, multiplicities, and overflowing it brings about. In my case, the politics to a large extent emerges in the further *displacements* of overflowing and the effects of these displacements on accountability relations between managers and teachers.

### Implications

In this final part of the chapter, I explore some important implications of the social constructivist conceptualization of practice in relation to *policy's hope* of reflexivity. Although my analyses illustrate that the practical effects of reflexivity are contingent and uncertain, this does not render policy unimportant. In fact,

insofar as governing takes the form of prescribing *more reflexivity*, it has had at least two effects. The first is that the managerial work needed to simply stabilize practice remains invisible: the task of changing practices is *trivialized* when change is reduced to questioning tacit knowledge and "standardized" practices. The second effect relates to some recent developments in inclusion policy. As is often the case with research projects, this thesis has to some extent been overtaken by events which both draw upon the existing vocabulary of reflexive potentiality and also change the schools' chances of fulfilling this potential. My analyses, therefore, have acquired a new relevance, with which I conclude this thesis.

While this final discussion illustrates how STS sensibilities can contribute to practices such as the making of policy, the discussion is not meant as a recipe for prescriptive interventions. I do not suggest that policy makers or school managers through STS sensibilities can include all the issues that are excluded by existing notions of reflexivity and practice. To reiterate a classic ANT finding, processes of enrolment, including the textual accounts of this thesis, are likely to fail and produce their own overflowing (Callon 1986:196-223, Latour 2005:127).

Furthermore, when I address this final discussion to policy makers it is not to ascribe to them a deliberateness or intentionality "beyond" the practices that I have analyzed. As Chapter Four makes clear, there is no powerful center from which the agenda of inclusion is organized. Rather, inclusion is entangled in human rights debates and new forms of expertise and knowledge, and *also* emerges from critical social pedagogical analyses, a general professionalization of public managers inspired by the OECD, and a vocabulary of strategic change issuing from the private sector. Policy makers are not beyond any of these processes, in the sense of orchestrating them from the outside, but remain cogs in much larger conceptual-practical assemblages. It is instead due to the recent developments in

policy, which I will presently address, that I find my analyses especially relevant for policy actors. While there is no guarantee for success, I nevertheless hope that my conclusions, to use a term with which practitioners at both policy and school institutions are familiar, may "irritate" current understandings productively.

***Survival of Paradox***

One effect of the prevalent concepts of reflexivity and practice is that the schools' practices, which advocates of inclusion consider to be *the* locus for realizing their democratic commitments, remain an enigma and outside the reach of these advocates (cf. Jensen 2004:212, Jensen 2006:41-59). I have described how scholars see the repeated discovery of the gap between the "real" and "ideal" of inclusion as a "paradox": that despite a growing public consensus that inclusion is *good* and *necessary*, the number of students excluded to segregating special needs education is on the *rise* (Tetler 2004:81-98, Andersen 2009:157-181). With this paradox in mind, scholars locate the cause and object of intervention in schools' practices, which are considered to be an effect, in particular, of teachers' attitudes and tacit knowledge. Practice is simultaneously considered the hindrance and the solution to inclusion.

As I discussed earlier, this conception of practice implies that effects, which cannot be reduced to teachers' social constructions, remain somewhat opaque. Policy makers, who reduce inclusion to a matter of managing *meaning* and *mindsets* through reflexivity in order to make teachers question their own practices, do not take into consideration the efforts vested in putting out fires, displacing complexity, and maintaining and negotiating boundaries and scales. However, as the verb *matter* also indicates, meaning is never divisible from the

material and tangible actants and matters of concerns that mediate human practices. When policy does not consider these material, tangible actants and concerns, they prepare fertile ground for the reproduction of the paradox, as practices do not seem to change despite all indications that practitioners' *attitudes* do change, including through a growing moral support for inclusion.

Of course, one should not be surprised that policy, like any other attempt at governing or knowing, this thesis included, is dependent on simplifications and reductions of complexity. I am not calling for policy makers to engage in an absurd mapping exercise. Attempting (the impossible task of) taking into account all local complexities would most likely result in paralysis. Rather, I am calling for policy makers to consider the implications of "their" conceptual machinery, specifically what it highlights and what it excludes.

***From Zero-Sum to Plus-Sum***

The growing number of students referred to special needs education is increasingly discussed, not only as a matter of democratic and pedagogical concerns, but also as an expensive proposition, a heavy drain on municipal budgets (Danish Ministry of Finance 2010, Houlberg 2010:6-9). The special pedagogical effort proves to be an unprecedented budget buster, with 9 out of 10 municipalities reporting greater expenses than forecasted, and every fifth municipality exceeding the budget by 25 % (Houlberg 2010:6-9). In times of welfare budget cuts, facing unintended, expensive policy consequences of the special-common division, inclusion has become attached to the agenda of public sector savings. The expenses have garnered the attention not only of Local Government Denmark, who for some time has discussed different models for generating greater economic incitement for inclusion at the level of individual

schools (Local Government Denmark 2005b), but also of the Ministry of Finance, as I noted in Chapter One (Danish Ministry of Finance 2010). The attention of the Ministry of Finance in particular indicates the increased association of inclusion with fiscal matters of concern.[123]

Although the recent economic questioning of inclusion regards the municipalities' ability to budget expenses, the issue of cost has far from replaced the call for new school cultures and practices. If anything, the perceived need to change cultures has become accentuated and underscored by economic incentives. In *New Perspectives on the School*, for instance, Local Government Denmark draws an explicit link between the needs to "allocate resources" and to "break with customary perceptions and action":

> [We need to] (...) make more efficient and think in new solutions about how the allocated *resources to the school area can be spent better* (...) there is also a need for a break with customary perceptions and actions. The children's learning must be the dominating incentive in the school. Therefore, we need new perspectives. (Local Government Denmark 2010:5, my emphasis)

In this publication, we find the same future generating rhetoric that I described in Chapter Four, but this time suggesting the possibility that resources can be spent better. The potential, however, *still* emerges from rethinking and changing practice through "new perspectives."

This new fiscal focus has not only changed the rhetoric but has also heralded legislative changes. In the annual agreement concerning the municipalities'

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[123] The merging of inclusion and economic incentives has, not surprisingly, been met critically. The Danish Teacher Association comments that it is "impermissible practice" to steer with economic incentives an area "which in the nature of the matter must be steered by demands" (Riise 2010:4).

economy for 2011 between the Government and Local Government Denmark, it was decided that the definition of special needs education should be changed to only cover what is currently known as "*extensive special needs education*"[124] (Danish Government and Local Government Denmark 2010:16). The implications are that no extra resources are allocated to less severe cases. This means that many of the so-called "AKT students," who also figure in the chapters of this thesis, are deemed includable *without* extra funding. To make sure that schools become inclusive, municipalities have moreover been required to introduce "*inclusion-promoting models of steering*." These models, which give schools an economic incentive for retaining students, decentralize the economic responsibility. Rather than simply losing the associated taximeter funding for students, the school is required to pay the *additional* costs if a student is referred to a special school or class.

This shift *fortifies* the status of reflexivity as a resource: the relationship between pedagogy and economy changes from a zero-sum game to a plus-sum game. In the paradigm of integration, the money would be split between special needs education and the common school. With inclusion, however, students with special needs can (potentially) stay within the school *and* the pedagogy of the school overall will improve due to "new perspectives," "learning," and a more diverse and flexible form of teaching. As opposed to subtracting resources by referring students to special needs education, this approach considers the resources to already exist within the school and the teachers *as a potential*. These potential resources, it is *still* suggested, can be utilized fully if existing practices are changed. The increased focus on more parsimonious fiscal steering thus intensifies

[124] 12 hours of special needs education or more per week.

the perceived need to employ reflexivity to change schools' practices. Reflexivity, in short, is now deemed a viable substitute for funding.

These developments imply that schools are no longer simply *invited* to extract potentials from existing practices through reflexivity, they are *required* to do this. Schools can simply not afford *not to* include. As of this writing, new legislation is already being implemented.[125] Some municipalities approach the matter by closing down existing special schools and returning the majority of their students to the common schools (Stanek 2011, Grunert 2011). As my analyses indicate, however, working with students considered to have special needs takes much energy and time, efforts that to a great extent involve mending and maintaining boundaries and scales, talking to teachers who might feel inadequate, as well as negotiating divisions of responsibilities and handling overflowing. Moreover, my analyses point to a lack of certainty about whether practices can even be so deliberately changed. Policy's "misplaced social constructivism" lies exactly in trivializing questions of change and in believing that social constructions, and the practices they are assumed to engender, can be re-engineered by managers' organizing teachers' reflexivity.

The simplification of "practice" makes plausible and legitimate the zero-sum game between pedagogy and economy. As long as accomplishing inclusion is understood as a matter of substituting one socially constructed category with another, inclusion does not seem like a costly affair. The imaginary created by *promises of reflexivity*, now bolstered by economic incentives, relieves policy makers of responsibility to address the complexities and costs of changing practices.

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[125] January 2012.

Questions one might ask are “To what extent does inclusion depend on managing teachers’ 'social constructions?' To what extent can these be changed at will? What can we do if reflexivity does not matter in the way we believed? To which relationships is complexity dislocated when reflexivity produces particular framings?” Perhaps we need a conceptual vocabulary in which every instance of “failure” cannot be trumped by reflexivity and that also allows a critical discussion of this very idea, including the policy decisions it legitimates.

## Conclusion

So what does it mean to manage inclusion through reflexivity? How does it matter? What kind of political settlement does reflexivity offer? It succeeds in unraveling, at least discursively, the political settlement of integration where children could be diagnosed and problems given a cause. Moreover, reflexivity fuels a hope of better inclusion. As a settlement, however, it is left for managers and teachers to codify and, when the ideal fails to materialize, to handle the controversies and conflicts that arise around students deemed to have special needs. This task, along with the difficult work of resolving complexities and distributing causes and responsibilities, is to be negotiated in practice.

The political settlement that reflexivity offers, with its fixation on the potential, itself seems to be a settlement of unrealized, continuously displaced potential. The promises of reflexivity remain exactly that: promises of a new political settlement that may never quite materialize in the way we hope. Its promise consists in a

"future nostalgia" (Zournazi 2002)[126], a dream about and a longing for a future political settlement that is unlikely from the perspective of the present, fuelled as it is by conflicts, interruptions, disagreements, and insecurities. The implication is that political settlements can only be local, partial, and temporary. To accept this is to accept that the manager is a fundamentally ambiguous figure who, simultaneously, is defined by fraught relationships among a wide range of heterogeneous actants *and* contributes to their re-making by continuously displacing their complexity.

While I have analyzed what happens when managers are expected to make teachers' practices more inclusive through reflexivity, at stake are attempts, fuelled in part by vocabularies from social sciences, to create a common, egalitarian world. These attempts bring about not only democratic commitments but also difficult relationships among the professionals who are to actualize this politics. My analyses are not outside such relationships but provide the complex with new, lateral entry and exit points. For this reason, it constitutes not an end but a new beginning for questions to ask and practices to consider.

[126] Zournazi's original quote is a critique of xenophobic, nationalistic political agendas. My use of the term is "future nostalgia" is just that wording and I do not intend any of her negative associations in this piece.

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## English Thesis Summary

### Promises of Reflexivity: Managing and Researching Inclusive Schools

This thesis examines "reflexivity" as the key theme for understanding how Danish school managers work with the currently influential political vision of including students with special needs in the common school (educating children aged 5-16). Despite repeated attempts to realize the vision of inclusion, the number of students referred to special pedagogical services, and thus segregated from the common school, has continued to grow, especially since 1995. There is a widespread consent that this development is due to the schools' practices and socially constructed categories of "special needs" and "normalcy." Pedagogical scholars and recent policy initiatives posit that schools can achieve the much-wanted cultural change towards inclusion if teachers *reflect (more) on their mindsets and practices*. When advocating inclusion, scholars often refer to school managers as "leaders of meaning construction," thus emphasizing their importance in facilitating cultural change. Existing knowledge practices are depicted as too "durable" with the unintended side-effects of segregation and budget overruns, and school managers are, following, encouraged making teachers change their practices through (self-) reflexivity.

This thesis draws on theoretical concepts developed in social anthropology, Science and Technology Studies (STS), and actor-network theory (ANT). The discussions here emphasize that the ongoing construction and performance of our society is a heterogeneous, distributed, multiple, and unfinished process involving all kinds of actants, including discourses, humans, and non-humans such as objects, texts, and technologies. By posing the overall research question, *how does reflexivity matter in managing inclusion?*, the thesis suggests that the idea of

reflexivity is distributed in different socio-material practices where it gains its significance and importance, rather than belonging to a purely human domain. The thesis explores reflexivity through ethnographic studies at two schools working with inclusion. The main method used was "shadowing" school managers throughout their daily practices.

"Reflexivity" is not only an empirical phenomenon but cross-cuts conventional boundaries between the "conceptual" and the "empirical." The emergence of the policy agenda of inclusion and reflexivity as a method is entangled with critiques and concepts developed in social science. Policy documents on inclusion reiterate sociological critiques of the "social construction" of "special educational needs" categories, while sociological and anthropological concepts have become general resources in school managers' efforts to organize "cultural change." This renders anthropological and STS discussions of "reflexivity" important. How can we, "the observers," analyze practices that already analyze themselves through "the observer's" or similar concepts, and which consequence can be drawn from the fact that social science plays a performative role in the emergence of inclusion? By examining these questions the thesis offers reflections on the "conceptual" in the "empirical," which has summoned the interests of "post-reflexive" anthropology and (post-) ANT. Drawing on social anthropologists Marilyn Strathern and Bill Maurer, the thesis develops the concept of *Lateral Compatibility*, which suggests that the relationship between researcher and researched is characterized by partial (dis)-connections.

The thesis contains five empirical analyses of how reflexivity is enacted. Running through all analyses is an interest in the relationship between "practice" and "interruption." Depending on whether one focuses on policy documents or managerial practices, reflexivity is performed as something, which supposedly

*interrupts* practice, yet what the analyses make apparent is that such practices are already getting interrupted in all kinds of ways. Thus the ethnographic account provides a very different image of practice and, following, a very different vision of the effects of reflexivity compared to how these are most commonly envisioned in pedagogical and management oriented literature.

In Chapter Four, *The Emergence of Inclusion and Promises of Reflexivity*, the thesis examines how establishing inclusion as a policy agenda both involves a semantic shift and the built up of new expertise and knowledge. It also illustrates how in strategic management literature and in pedagogical theories reflexivity performs a dualism between "thinking" and "practice," which is how practice can be perceived as rigid, standardized, and in need of "reflexive interruptions." Finally, the chapter characterizes the promises of reflexivity as constituting *a potentiality machine*. Reflexivity promises to help organizing cultural change through identifying the value of what has yet to come. This generation of value, from reflecting critically on how practice can change, can in principle go on infinitely.

Chapter Five, *Interruptions*, argues that managerial efforts vested in maintaining boundaries and scales have implications for how reflexivity matters. To explore this, the chapter analyzes how managers' interests are configured by an acute incident involving a "student with special needs." Through Bruno Latour's concepts of timing and spacing, it conceptualizes interruptions as undoing the boundaries and scales necessary to hold a management meeting. Characterizing the school as a *fragile center of interventions*, the chapter concludes that managers spend much time dealing with problems that do not, officially, belong to the school but nevertheless interrupt the work necessary for maintaining boundaries and scales. Dis-entangling from these (interrupting) realities and events is often a

laborious, hectic, and time-consuming effort. This situation makes it difficult to see teachers' practices as an effect of their tacit knowledge and attitudes. Much else seems to be involved in shaping the construction of students' special needs.

Chapter Six, *Inclusion as Exclusion: Reflexivity as Standardizing*, analyzes how reflexivity in the form of *general managerial expectations* to reflexive teachers can have standardizing effects. Through the concept of informational ecology, it proposes that, for managers, conflicts between teachers and students are transformed into information about teachers' attitudes and willingness to question these reflexively. The expectation of reflexivity is enacted to hold teachers accountable in the *same* way across *different* situations. This allows managers to encompass a wide range of "deviant" student behavior. However, simultaneously, teachers' assessments of the conflicts are excluded. Teachers' experience of the conflicts, and at times also the uncomfortable emotions invoked, are thus "returned" to teachers, who are expected to handle these feelings and their alternative accounts on their own.

Chapter Seven, *Complexity Overload: Bracketing Reflexivity to Assemble the School*, analyzes a social technology named SMTTE. The SMTTE offers a conceptual package of reflexivity along with procedures for developing the quality of practice through reflexivity. The chapter discusses Michel Callon's concepts of performativity, agencement, and overflowing to explore the SMITTE as a social technology in action. The chapter specifically explores how the SMITTE is used to make an action plan for an "aggressive student." This action plan is meant to distribute reflexive agency but fails to do so as it instead ends up interrupting other arrangements at the school. While the action plan both reconfigures the problem of an "aggressive student" and offers a preventive solution, it also affects the

continuous displacement of complexity across different settlements that take up so much time that the SMITTE's procedures for reflexivity are bracketed.

Chapter Eight, *Vision Impossible: Encounters between Abstracts and Concretes*, explores a so-called vision-process where managers attempt to make teachers' attitudes more inclusive through making them reflect on the schools' vision and connect it to their own practices. However, it proves to be rather difficult for managers to generate this form of reflexivity on "the level of values" as the teachers are mainly interested in problems related to including particularly "difficult" students. The chapter analyzes this difficulty as the effect of an encounter between different versions of the abstract and the concrete. Rather than helping teachers to bracket everyday challenges and conflicts in order to imagine a different future, the vision process is interrupted and the managers end up "doing the reflexivity" on behalf of the teachers. For the teachers, reflexivity is changed from a means to achieve inclusion to the goal of becoming reflexive. The chapter uses the mathematical figure of the fractal as a metaphor to illustrate how the conceptual dualism in reflexivity produces a complex process of planning for teachers to become reflexive.

The concluding chapter, *The Politics of Reflexivity*, discusses the implications of the analyses with special attention to the practical effects of the concept of reflexivity. One of these effects is that the rhetorical promises of reflexivity, and the entailed dualism between reflexivity and practice, not only simplifies the relationship between practice and reflexivity but also trivializes the complexity of problems and concerns which managers face.

The different analyses, however, do not add up to one whole, overall conclusion on how reflexivity matters. Rather, each of them exemplifies in their own way that

it is difficult to change practice at will and they illustrate how the idea of managing and evoking social change through reflexivity can effect and legitimize quite different and unexpected kinds of practices. The final chapter furthermore discusses the effects on accountability relations between managers, teachers, and students of the idea that practice can be changed through reflexivity. This discussion is followed by reflections on the status of "the political" in STS through engaging in a debate with feminist cultural scholar Judith Butler, and STS scholars Michel Callon and Annemarie Mol. The thesis concludes with reflections on the relevance of the findings in light of recent developments in inclusive policy.

## Dansk Resume

**Refleksivitetens forhåbninger: Ledelse af inklusionsskoler**

Denne afhandling undersøger ”refleksivitet” som et altafgørende tema i, hvordan danske skoleledere arbejder med den aktuelt dagsordenssættende politiske vision om at inkludere flere elever med særlige behov i folkeskolen. På trods af gentagne forsøg på at øge inklusionen bliver stadigt flere elever (især siden 1995) henvist til specialpædagogiske tilbud og dermed fortsat segregeret fra den almindelige folkeskole. Der eksisterer en udbredt enighed om, at denne udvikling i høj grad skyldes folkeskolens standardiserede undervisningspraksisser og kulturelle kategorier hvad f.eks. angår børns ”særlige behov” og ”normalitet”. Både pædagogisk forskning og politisk-administrative tiltag påpeger, at skoler kan opnå inklusion via ”kulturændring”, som skabes ved (i højere grad) at lade lærerne reflektere over, hvordan deres kategorier og praksisser er med til at *producere* elever med særlige behov. Skolelederne, som anses som kulturskabende forandringsagenter, får da til opgave at facilitere lærernes (selv) *refleksivitet*.

Afhandlingen diskuterer og anvender begreber udviklet inden for videnskantropologi og de såkaldte Science and Technology Studies (STS), herunder aktør-netværksteori (ANT). Tilfælles for disse tilgange er, at ”samfundet” og organisationer som skolen anskues som en række igangværende, ufærdige og distribuerede konstruktionsprocesser, der involverer en række forskellige ”aktører”, herunder diskurser, humane og non-humane entiteter (eksempelvis objekter, tekster og teknologier). Med afsæt i denne forståelse undersøger afhandlingen, hvilken socio-materiel betydning refleksivitet får i ledelse af inklusion. I stedet for at anskue refleksivitet som en ren menneskelig og kognitiv aktivitet undersøges, hvordan refleksivitet *performes* i og af forskellige socio-

materielle netværk. Undersøgelsen bygger på etnografiske studier af to såkaldte inklusionsskoler. Den primære metode var at "skygge" skoleledere gennem deres daglige arbejde.

Afhandlingen diskuterer "refleksivitet" som ikke kun et empirisk fænomen, men som noget der sætter grænsen mellem det "konceptuelle" og "empiriske" i spil. Den politiske inklusionsdagsorden og det ideal om refleksivitet, som her fremføres, er spundet ind i samfundsteoretiske kritikker og teorier. Politisk-administrative dokumenter om inklusion repeterer sociologiske kritikker af, hvordan "diagnosen" placerer "problemet" i barnet, og stiller også spørgsmålstegn ved diagnosens "sociale konstruktion" af børn med "særlige behov". Ydermere er det blevet almindeligt, at skoleledere i bestræbelser på at skabe "kulturforandring" anvender sociologiske og antropologiske begreber som f.eks. "kontingens" og "refleksivitet". Dette giver 1980'ernes refleksivitetsdiskussioner inden for antropologi og STS ny aktualitet. Hvilke analytiske konsekvenser har det, at samfundsvidenskab har så stor indflydelse på afhandlingens empiriske genstand? Hvordan kan vi som "iagttagere" analysere praksisser, der allerede analyserer sig selv gennem socialvidenskabelige begreber? Afhandlingen diskuterer denne genkomst af det "konceptuelle" i det "empiriske" gennem "post-refleksiv" antropologi og (post-) ANT. Med afsæt i antropologerne Marilyn Strathern og Bill Maurers arbejder udvikler afhandlingen begrebet "lateral kompatibilitet" til at beskrive forholdet mellem iagttager og iagttaget som karakteriseret af delvise forbindelser.

Afhandlingen præsenterer fem empiriske analyser af, hvordan refleksivitet performes. Fælles for alle analyserne er en interesse for forholdet mellem "praksis" og "forstyrrelse". Hvor litteraturen præsenterer refleksivitet som en metode til at forstyrre en "utidssvarende" praksis, viser analyserne, at de

praksisser, man kan observere i folkeskolen, allerede løbende ”forstyrres” på en lang række måder. Dette har implikationer for, hvilke betydninger refleksivitet får.

Kapitel Fire, *Inklusionens fremkomst og refleksivitetens forhåbninger*, undersøger først, hvordan inklusion er opstået som politisk dagsorden. Dette har både involveret et semantisk skifte og en etablering af nye former for ekspertise og viden. Herefter undersøges, hvordan både strategisk (skole)ledelseslitteratur og pædagogiske inklusionsteorier om refleksivitet opererer med en dualisme mellem ”refleksion” (tænkning) og ”praksis” (handlen). I denne litteratur beskrives praksis som en (alt for) stabil og standardiseret størrelse, der bør ”forstyrres” gennem refleksivitet. Afslutningsvis karakteriserer kapitlet refleksivitetens forhåbning om at skabe forandring som en ”potentialitetsmaskine”. Refleksivitet stiller i udsigt, at man kan skabe og styre kulturforandringer ved at udsætte eksisterende praksis for kritisk refleksion og hermed være i en stadig bevægelse sig mod det potentielle og bedre. Denne bevægelse kan i princippet fortsætte i det uendelige.

Kapitel Fem, *Forstyrrelser*, undersøger, hvordan skolelederes praksis allerede er genstand for ”forstyrrelser”, hvilket medfører, at de bruger megen tid på at konstruere og vedligeholde ”grænser” og ”skalaer”. Gennem en akut hændelse, som involverer en ”elev med særlige behov”, undersøges, hvordan skolelederes agens konfigureres af ”overflowing”. Med Bruno Latours begreber ”timing” og ”spacing” begrebsliggøres forstyrrelsen, der får et ledermøde til at bryde sammen og ”oversætter” lederne fra at være planlæggende til at være ”brandslukkende”. Gennem en karakteristik af skolen som et ”skrøbeligt interventionscenter” konkluderer kapitlet, at ledere bruger tid på problemer, der ikke hører under deres formelle opgaver, men alligevel i høj grad sætter dagsordenen for deres daglige praksis. At brandslukke og genetablere grænser og skalaer er ofte en hektisk og tidskrævende indsats. Dette har betydning for, hvordan refleksivitet performes,

hvilket undersøges i de efterfølgende kapitler. Men allerede her antydes altså, at meget andet synes at være involveret i udformningen af elevers særlige behov, end lærernes "tavse viden" og "ureflekterede holdninger".

Kapitel Seks, *Inklusion som eksklusion: Standardiserende refleksivitet*, analyserer det forhold, at ledelsens generelle forventninger om refleksive, perspektiv-skiftende og anerkendende lærere kan have standardiserende virkninger. Med begrebet "informationsøkologi" undersøges, hvordan konflikter mellem lærere og elever bliver til ledelsesinformation om lærernes perspektiver og vilje til at arbejde refleksivt hermed. Forventningen om refleksivitet ansvarliggør lærerne på *samme* måde i en række *forskellige* situationer. Mens det bliver muligt for ledere at tolerere "afvigende" elevernes opførsel, udelukkes lærernes vurderinger af konflikterne. Lærernes vurderinger, og til tider også tilhørende ubehagelige følelser, sendes således "tilbage" til dem med forventningen om, at de kan håndtere dem på egen hånd gennem refleksion. Effekten på denne skole var en voksende mistillid mellem ledelse og lærere og dermed et begrænset handlerum for begge parter.

Kapitel Syv, *Kompleksitetsoverskud: sammenhæng eller refleksivitet?*, analyserer en social teknologi kaldet SMTTE. SMTTE'n tilbyder refleksive procedurer for en kvalitativ og processuel udvikling af praksis. Efter en kritisk diskussion af Michel Callons begreber om "performativitet", "agencement" og "overflowing" undersøges, hvordan SMTTE'n distribuerer refleksiv agens. Som eksempel analyseres udarbejdelsen af en handlingsplan for en "aggressiv elev". Denne handlingsplan ender ikke blot med at "forstyrre" lærernes opfattelse af problem og løsning, men også en række andre forhold på skolen. Kompleksitet forskydes på tværs af forhold som undervisningsplanlægning, overenskomstaftaler, forældreinddragelse og ansvarsdeling mellem ledere og lærere. Disse forstyrrelser

viser sig at være så tidskrævende, at SMTTE'ns oprindelige refleksive procedurer glemmes.

Kapitel Otte, *"Vision Impossible": Sammenstød mellem forskellige versioner af det abstrakte og det konkrete*, udforsker en såkaldt visionsproces, hvor lederne forsøger at udstyre lærerne med mere inklusionsfremmende holdninger gennem refleksion over skolens "vision". Det viser sig dog at være svært at facilitere refleksion på "niveauet for visioner", da lærerne primært er interesserede i at diskutere samarbejdsproblemer og særligt "vanskelige" elever. Kapitlet analyserer dette forventningssammenstød mellem ledere og lærere som en kollision mellem forskellige versioner af det abstrakte og det konkrete. Snarere end at hjælpe lærerne "ud af praksis" og "op på visionsniveau" gennem refleksive forstyrrelser, forstyrrer lærernes frustrationer visionsprocessen. Effekten heraf er, at lederne både omformulerer lærernes problemer til et fremtidsskabende og visionært sprog samt reflekterer på vegne af lærerne over, hvordan visionen kan oversættes til praksis. Kapitlet analyserer dette som et resultat af refleksivitetens iboende fraktale dualisme mellem vision og praksis. Hermed ændrer refleksivitet også status fra at være et middel til at opnå inklusion til at være et mål i sig selv.

Det afsluttende kapitel, *Refleksivitetens Politik*, diskuterer afhandlingens implikationer. En overordnet effekt af den dualistiske konstruktion af forholdet mellem refleksivitet og praksis er, at praksis anskues som konservativ og standardiseret, og at kompleksiteten i hverdagens ledelse, som f.eks. omfatter meget brandslukning, trivialiseres. De forskellige analyser giver ingen samlet eller entydig konklusion på, hvilken betydning refleksivitet har i praksis. I stedet illustrerer de, at forestillingen om, at man gennem refleksivitet kan ændre på sociale konstruktioner, giver anledning til andre og uventede former for ledelsespraksis, der har implikationer for ansvarsfordelinger mellem ledere, lærere

og elever. Denne diskussion følges op af overvejelser om ”det politiskes” status i STS gennem en diskussion af feministen Judith Butler samt STS forskerne Michel Callon og Annemarie Mols bud på ”det politiske”. Her argumenteres, at det politiskes status ikke kan afgøres i nogen generel eller konceptuel forstand men må undersøges empirisk. Afhandlingen afsluttes med overvejelser omkring konklusionernes relevans set i lyset af den seneste udvikling inden for inklusions-politik.

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