Bullying and Social Objectives A Study of Prerequisites for Success in Swedish Schools

Björn Ahlström



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Table of Contents

Abstract	5
Acknowledgments	7
List of original papers	10
I. Introduction	11
Aim	12
Outline of the thesis	12
II. Structure, culture and leadership in relation to bullying	13
Structure	13
Culture	15
Leadership	17
Relations, Cultures, Structures and Power	20
Bullying	22
Social objectives, bullying and success	24
III. Successful schools (?)	27
The SCL-project	27
Methodology	27
Selection of the schools	29
IV. The four articles	34
1 Measuring the Social and Civic Objectives of Schools: Article One	34
2 Mobbning och skolans sociala mål – En studie av fyra skolor i Sverige	
[Bullying and the social objectives - A study of four secondary schools in	
Sweden]: Article Two	35
3 We are No Different! – Swedish Principals' Views of Their Schools' Level	
of Bullying: Article Three	36
4 Participation, Bullying and Success – A study about participation, grades	
and bullying among 9 th grade students in Sweden: Article Four	37
V. Conclusion and further research	37
Successful schools	38
Prerequisites for success	39
Further research	40
VI. Swedish summary	40
References	47
Internet	51

Abstract

This thesis examines the relationship between organizations structure, culture and leadership. The specific organization that has been studied is Swedish secondary schools. The Swedish schools have a divided task, first to develop the students academic skills and secondly to develop the students socially and civically. This thesis has its interest on the schools social environment with special interest focused on questions regarding bullying and insulting behaviour. The data that has been used consists of interviews and questionnaires with students, teachers and principals in 24 Swedish schools that have been studied in a larger study. This work is a part of a project called Structure, Culture and Leadership – prerequisites for successful schools?. The 24 schools that took part in the SCL study were divided in to four different groups depending on how well they are succeeding in reaching the social and academic objectives formulated in the steering documents. The main result show that principals that succeed to align structure and culture in relation to both the social and academic objectives are the ones that can be perceived as successful. It is these schools that have the lowest level of bullying and the highest grades. The principal takes social responsibility and takes questions in relation to bullying and insulting behaviour seriously. By doing that the principal can communicate the seriousness of the topic in order to develop awareness within the organization and a preventive work can therefore be possible. In schools that work with the students' ability to be participative seems to develop the students both socially and academically.

Keywords: Successful schools, Social objectives, Leadership, Bullying, Insulting behaviour

Acknowledgments

Remember, remember the sixth of November. Everything has an end and so does the work with this thesis. The sixth of November will therefore be a day to remember. A day, which for me, marks the end of a nearly five year long process. A process and end result that would not have been possible without help from some very important people that has helped and supported me through out this period of time. In relation to the work with this thesis my supervisor, associate professor Jonas Höög has been a great support by challenging me in numerous discussions. These discussions has been interesting and developing, topics like leadership, culture, structure and hockey have been reoccurring through out our meetings. For the most part we have been able to, after a long time of discussion, come to an agreement. One area however has been more difficult to agree on and that is hockey. Therefore these discussions have been more elaborate and time consuming. I have to thank all the colleagues at the Department of Sociology at Umea University and especially Eva Sundström for discussions and support. I gratefully acknowledge the work of Frances Boylston in revising and editing the English text in this thesis. It has been a pleasure to be a part of the SCL-project which has provided even more discussions, funny dinners and educating trips, so thank you Olof Anna-Maria, Monika, Helene, Leif, Anders, Conny, Hakan and. When mentioning the SCL-project I have to add my gratitude to the Swedish Research Council who has provided the founding for the project.

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List of original papers

"Measuring the Social and Civic Objectives of Schools", published in S. Huber (Red.), *School Leadership – International Perspectives.*

"Mobbning och skolans sociala mål – En studie av fyra 7-9 skolor i Sverige". Forthcoming in Höög, J. & Johansson, O. (Red.), *Struktur, kultur och ledarskap – Förutsättningar för framgångsrika skolor?*

"We are no different - Swedish Principals views on their schools' level of bullying". Submitted to *Power and Education*.

Student Participation and School Success - A study about participation, grades and bullying among $9^{th}\,grade$ students in Sweden". Submitted to Sociologisk forskning

I. Introduction

Bullying has been a topic of concern in Swedish schools since the 70s when the expression was first introduced (Heinemann 1972). In any society conflicts will always occur and power relations will be exposed in different ways. The schools are an arena where these conflicts will or should be - visible and discussed given that students are compelled to attend school. The compulsory nature of school attendance means that the school environment is a place where students cannot choose to leave at any given time and in which the participants cannot choose the members of their own group. A common assumption is that these groups can be problematic and can create a foundation for bullying (Olweus 1994). We should note that we have to be careful when speaking in terms of bullying being omnipresent in specific settings because this can create the impression that bullying is somewhat acceptable and cannot really be avoided. In the steering documents the message is clear; bullying should not exist at all in Swedish schools (Lpo 94, SFS 1985).

The overall aim of this study is to have a picture of the general state of bullying, participation, as well as the social and civic objectives within Swedish schools. In this study the focus has been on the schools' everyday work with these questions and their perception of the problems surrounding these topics. In the analysis used in this study three important components have been studied at different levels, namely, 1) structure, 2) culture and 3) leadership.

In the Swedish curriculum there are two main objectives for the schools. The first is to develop the students' academic abilities and the second is to develop the students' social competence. The assessments of academic achievements are usually based on the marks obtained by students in Swedish schools in the 8th grade. In recent years the main focus has been on students' academic achievements. For example, in Swedish newspapers the mean marks for all schools are published. Little attention is directed toward questions related to the schools' success in developing their students' social and civic competences.

During the last 15 years Swedish schools have undergone quite extensive changes, both structurally as well as culturally. Special attention will therefore be put on organisational change and the different organisations' abilities to adjust to new prerequisites. These changes can appear both internally as well externally. How well is the culture, structure or leadership prepared for changes? Are they prepared to deal with changes no matter how big or small? In order to be able to handle conflicts, such as bullying, a reasonable assumption is that there has to be an organisation that is ready to act when problems occur. While this thesis does not study changes within schools over time, it should be noted that schools are unique organisations that are, in fact, characterised by change. First of all, one-third of the students changes every year, and this means that schools have to create or recreate the social environment for the new students. Secondly, the schools have directives both from a national and municipalities level that demand that schools have to be ready to act and react to sudden changes. One might say that schools epitomise organisations that have to be on constant alert for new prerequisites.

Aim

The aim of this study is to examine aspects of the schools' social and civic objectives and the level of bullying at the schools. Moreover, the impact of structure, culture and leadership on the efforts to counter bullying and insulting behaviour will be studied.

Outline of the thesis

This thesis aims to focus on the schools' social task in general with bullying being a topic of special concern. By focusing on different aspects of the schools' structural and cultural prerequisites and relating these to the schools' leadership in relation to bullying, this study seeks to visualise and problematise the manner in which the schools deal with these topics. Bullying is a phenomenon that is often discussed, especially in a school context, due to the fact that the Swedish curriculum states that it should not exist at all, even though in reality it does. By visualising different aspects of bullying and the way that the schools manage to handle problems of this nature this thesis, it is hoped, can contribute to further discussion in the research area.

The introduction sets a direction of the thesis by a brief presentation of the topic at hand that includes the purpose of the study. As well, the introduction includes a presentation of the prerequisites that affect students in Swedish schools, both internally in terms of school functions and externally in terms of the general school debate in Sweden taking place within the context of the environment that schools and students find themselves in today. The second chapter presents and defines the different concepts used in this thesis. It ends with a presentation of how these concepts relate to the overall topics and how they are used throughout the thesis. In the third chapter the methodological approaches used during this work are outlined. This chapter includes a discussion of the instruments employed as well as a discussion of ethical considerations and a critical reflection on the methods used. The fourth chapter contains a brief summary of the four articles. In this chapter main aims and conclusions are reviewed and summarized in relation to each of the articles. The fifth chapter contains a discussion of the main results and conclusions of this thesis and suggests avenues for further research in relation to the topic. A Swedish summary concludes the thesis.

II. Structure, culture and leadership in relation to bullying

In this thesis structure, culture and leadership are central concepts and will therefore be conceptualised and explained below. Additionally, bullying as a concept will be defined and how it will operationalised in this thesis will be explained.

Structure

In this thesis the concept of structure refers to the way a specific organisation is designed. Structure provides for a plan of how the organisation should work and includes direction for forms of cooperation, how to conduct and when to have meetings and for steering documents whose purpose is to structure activities within the organisation. One can say that an organisational structure is a drawing or a plan that depicts patterns of expectations and social interactions within the organisation but also between the organisation and external actors (Bolman & Deal 1997). Another way of looking at school structure is to see it as the internal environment that impacts on the

way that work in teaching situations is shaped. For instance, limitations on the freedom of action are reduced or increased by the physical structure; some things are possible and others are impossible due to these prerequisites (even though this relationship is evident it has not been a popular subject in organisational studies) (Ahlberg 2001, Jacobsen & Thorsvik 1995, Hatch 1997).

Organisational structure is, as indicated previously, a type of division of labour between the people who are members of the organisation. Different tasks are appointed to different people. Furthermore, the structure delineates ranks and hierarchy, setting out the rules and expected patterns of decision making and behaviour according to organisational position. Whereas the organisational structure does not, by itself, create total conformity with expected actions at any given time, the structure can work in such a manner to prevent random behaviour within the organisation (Hall & Tolbert 2005). The Swedish school system has multiple structures, first the national level where the curriculum and other steering documents sets the objectives for all schools, second the steering documents at the municipality level and third the internal structures at each individual school. In this thesis all these levels will be approached in different ways in the four articles. The main understanding, however, is that the national structure is the same for all schools and this makes this level especially important. Variations in the way the schools deal with the national directives in regard to the social and civic objectives will in particular be studied.

During the last few years, for a number of different reasons, schools in Sweden have undergone major changes. In times of change often the organisational structure changes first, and in the educational milieu a result of this is that the principal sometimes may focus more on the structure than the culture (Höög, Johansson & Olofsson 2005). Focusing too much on the structural changes without paying attention to the cultural aspects in the process of change can, in the end, produce undesirable results (Johansson 2000). In other words, one can argue that in order to reach the full potential of changes and obtain the desired results one has to incorporate both structural and cultural aspects in the work (Höög, Johansson & Olofsson 2005). A reasonable assumption is that organisational structure and culture are always closely connected and have a symbiotic relation to one another (Alvesson 2001). If changes in routines and rules occur a plausible assumption is that clashes occur when the cultural patterns within the

organisation do not correspond with these new changes (Fombrun 1986). This relation is also dialectic in the sense that the opposite relation, between culture and structure, also is possible.

In the event that the organisations' entire structure changes, new norms and values have to be developed that match the new structure. People are socialised in groups, organisations and societies, and thus specific ways of thinking and relating to an organisation develop over time. When the structure is changed it does not necessarily follow that the culture changes at the same pace, resulting in confusion and disorder. Studies of organisational culture have usually focused on mutual understanding and harmony rather than on conflicts and power relations. As a result organisational culture has often been associated with common values (Alvesson 2001). However, in this thesis the focus will be on tensions between culture, structure and leadership.

Culture

In sociology the concept of culture has always been a central issue. Culture can be defined at different levels, from cultures incorporating whole societies to cultures that affect only a few individuals. Adding to the complexity social scientists often use the concept of culture to refer to whole societies and civilisations in general (Miegel & Johansson 2002). Essentially, culture can be understood as something related to peoples' understandings of their surrounding world. Culture affects the way of life and it manifests itself through a number of social activities (Williams 1981). One might say that culture as a concept is closely related to structural prerequisites in our social, economic and political life (Williams 1993, Williams 1981). Accordingly, the main focus in this thesis is on culture at the organisational level and the relation between culture, structure and leadership.

Culture or, more specifically, organisational culture is important when studying organisations and leadership. The cultural dimension is central to trying to understand how an organisation copes with changes, both externally and internally. In Swedish schools there have been major changes within the last 15 years that result in the schools finding themselves in the process of changing old structures into new ones. Even today not all schools have changed their way of working though the structural changes have been set out in two curriculums and

have been part of the main steering documents for some 29 years (Lpo 94, Lgr 80). In this ongoing process it is interesting to observe the possible collisions between new structures and old cultures. Culture is essential in relation to how organisations work and function during change. Culture colours the relationship of the leaders (in this case, principals) and the employees to the customers (in this case, students and parents), and furthermore it affects the way knowledge is created, shared and maintained. (Alvesson 2001).

When dealing with and talking about organisational culture it is easy to believe that only one particular culture is being referred to; however, a more plausible assumption is that there are multiple cultures within an organisation. For example, in the school milieu it is clearly evident that cultures can vary within a school and between schools and these cultures can also be in direct conflict with each other (Berg 1999). The origin and survival of such cultures are dependent on a variety of factors such as the level of education among the staff, the schools surroundings, the school's leadership, traditions and differences between municipalities. In discussing culture we should always keep in mind the difficulties in assessing or classifying these cultures. (Hofstede 1991).

The concept of culture can appear to be abstract and as well the occurrence of different cultures within an organisation can be perceived as abstract, especially when fundamental values are not always visible. Culture might be ignored if it is simply perceived as that which is "normal" or something that is a part of the woodwork. A culture is often something that changes slowly, which makes the aspect of organisational change especially interesting. But what is organisational culture? There are several definitions of culture and organisational culture. One definition of culture is that it is conceptions and meanings that are common to a certain group of people, another defines culture as something that is expressed in symbolic form and acts as guidance for people as they relate to their surrounding environment (Alvesson & Björkman 1992, Giddens 2006). Culture also has a dialectic characteristic in that people not only act as maintainers of the culture, but also as creators and recreators of the culture in which they exist. In other words, culture is not static, but rather something changeable. This assumption (or this way of conceptualising culture) is central in relation to organisational change.

But how can cultures manifest themselves? According to Geert Hofstede (1991) there are four cultural manifestations, namely, 1) symbols, 2) heroes, 3) rituals and 4) values. Symbols refer to words, pictures, gestures and objects that have a certain meaning and only have an inclusive affect for those who share the common culture. Heroes are people who have personal characteristics with high status in a specific culture. Rituals refer to collective activities whose primary objective is to manifest something that is considered as socially necessary. Finally values, which can be described as the core of culture, are something that we are being taught when we grow up and throughout the educational system (Hofstede 1991). That is to say, our values are something that we obtain through both our primary and secondary processes of socialisation when different cultures meet and through which we later on create our identity. This is an individual as well as a collective identity, and would apply, for example, to how we identify ourselves with our work. In our own self-conception of identity one or more cultures, which have their own symbols, heroes, rituals and values, play a role.

In this thesis culture is studied in 24 schools. Therefore it is appropriate to examine the different schools cultures and relate these to one another. Organisational culture can vary and different cultures can exist within one organisation. By focusing on the dominating culture one can study how this culture relates to the steering documents and different forms of school outcomes.

Leadership

In this thesis special interest will be given to the leadership functions in relation to bullying and organisational change. Consequently, the starting points will be a focus on transformational leadership and on the study of the relationship between the leader, the follower and the situation in which they find themselves.

Leader

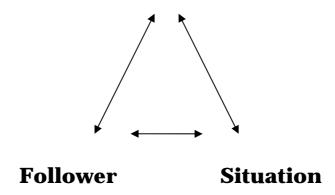


Figure 1: Interactional Schema of leader, follower and situation

This model is interactional because leadership is created in a process in which the interactions with the followers and the context or situation of the participants are important (Yukl 1998, Hughes 2002). This model is useful in understanding a number of different relations between leader and follower.

As mentioned earlier, Swedish schools have been subject to a number of major changes in recent years and this has actualized a change-oriented leadership such as transformational leadership. During these changes, routines and processes that have been a part of the organisation have been challenged and sometimes replaced. In order to have an effective organization it is important that during these times of change and challenges that there are members of the organisation who can initiate change processes and make decisions independent of old routines and who can express new visions (Ekvall & Arvonen 1994, Jacobsen 2005, Bass 1985, Bass 1990). The basic idea of transformational leadership is that the leaders possess an ability to think in new ways (outside the box) and motivate the followers to work

in new directions and towards changed goals (Bass 1990). The transformational leader bases the leadership on four central themes, namely 1) compassionate leadership, 2) intellectual stimulation, 3) inspirational motivation, and 4) idealized influence.

Compassionate leadership means that the leader is interested in the well-being of others and takes time to work with people operating outside of the group constellations in the organization. Intellectual stimulation refers to the leaders' ability to encourage the followers to be creative and to give them the tools and opportunities to develop new ideas and suggestions. Inspirational motivation is the third of the four central themes and includes the leaders' visions of the future work in the organisation. It incorporates the leaders' ability to help the followers focus on the job-at-hand. Idealized influence is the fourth theme and refers to the leaders acting in a confident, determined manner and being able to serve as role models. By so doing the leader respect of their followers (Antonakis. Sivasubramaniam 2003, Northouse 2002).

The transformational leader inserts values in the organisational work that are important to the leader as well as to the followers in this process of change. Essentially this leadership style deals with interactions between people and judges this as an important factor (Hughes 2002). The leaders persuade their followers to work better and more efficiently by creating meaning in relation to the work and through this the work will contribute to personal development. By the followers being given more authority and power, the organisation as a whole can benefit because knowledge is collected and used in a broader sense (Plunkett & Fournier 1991). The leader has a central role and therefore has a responsibility for transformation or change becoming successful. A more specific example of the four central themes in practice is provided by Behling and McFillen (1996) when they discuss the different forms of leadership behaviours that have different effects on the followers. For example, the leader might show empathy or might dramatise the assignment in order to get the follower to feel

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¹ In terms of the relationship of leadership and organisational change (structurally and culturally) one has to stress that there is a risk. When talking about leadership behaviours that create expected actions among the followers one has to be clear, careful and reflexive. From an ethical standpoint leadership can be abused and used to reach questionable goals. However, the leadership in schools is a part of the school structure and school organisation has to change. This is a part of the reality that the schools face on a daily basis and it is in this context that this text should be understood and read.

inspired (Behiling & McFillen 1996). This aspect deals specifically with how the work or the task at hand should be dealt with, but it also means that the leader has a central role as a leader and should show confidence and create an image that will lead to respect from the followers.

Behling and McFillen indicate that the leader should validate the competences of their followers and should also show that there are possibilities to be successful within the organisation (Behling & McFillen 1996). As a consequence of the leader showing this type of behaviour, the organisation will benefit since the followers will show a high level of commitment, putting in greater efforts and taking higher risks for the organisation. The transformational leader's task is to create a positive atmosphere within the organisation whereby the followers believe in themselves, the leader and the organisation. In other words, the co-workers should feel encouraged, needed and involved. The keyword in relation to this style of leadership is communication, both vertically and horizontally within the organisation. It is important to point out the complexity and potential problems with this form of addressing leadership issues. When reading what is written above it is easy to believe that there are direct causal connections between the leaders' behaviour and the desired effects in the followers' work and their desires towards their own work. This is an assumption about which it would be prudent to be hesitant. Of course, in a given situation in a particular culture and a particular structure the style of the leadership can be more successful than in others. Within an organisation there can be any number of different conflicts, between leader and follower, between cultures or other forms of conflicts. The leadership is especially crucial because it is the leader's responsibility, for example, to carry out changes; this factor makes this an extremely relevant area for studying. What kind of resistance will the leader meet? What kind of strategies has the leader developed to be able to carry out changes despite conflicts between different groups or cultures?

Relations, Cultures, Structures and Power

Culture can be seen as an expression of a group of persons' common conceptions and values about the world around them. Such basic values lead to a similar interpretation of actions and statements. People belonging to a specific culture have a similar understanding of reality

and this understanding makes communication and collective actions easier (Sandberg & Targama 1998). In the relationship between the leader and the followers the concept of organisational culture must be related to power. There are differences between culture and structure and the way these relate to power. The way that power is perceived is the part of culture that relates to values and understanding, but the way power is distributed is part of the organizations' structure. One way of conceptionally combining informal culture and formal structures is through the concept of archetypes. Archetypes combine structural elements with processes within the organization that constitute underlying patterns of meaning and schemes of interpretation (Greenwood & Hinings 1987). By looking at organizations as archetypes one is aware that organizations are built upon both formal and informal elements and that given that these are closely connected a more comprehensive picture of the organization and organizational change can be drawn. A reasonable starting point when dealing with culture and power is to acknowledge that power is important within the cultural aspect of an organisation. This means that understanding power relations help us to understand the larger world; those that have power can define how reality can be understood. Power not only is something that one person can possess and practice in relation to other individuals and groups of people, but power can be something far greater. For example, ideologies can exercise some form of power over a leader who then can both use this kind of power and at the same time be dependent on it. The main point of this discussion is that while power is something that a leader practices the leader has relatively little control over it and thus we need to study the effect of power within a larger perspective in which ideas and values limit the individual's freedom to act (Alvesson 2001).

A central area of concern when dealing with change, structure, culture and leadership is how different groups work within a specific organisation. Groups can have different characteristics and the compositions can be different. Schein (1980) speaks of two different groups within organisations, formal and informal. The formal groups are created by the leader in order to fulfil a specific assignment or task that is related to the organisation's overall commission (Schein 1980). This is a group that has been created "involuntarily" for its members; the leader has composed the group. The individuals that are part of an organisation have an assignment to fulfil, such as work. However,

people have needs other than work, such as the need for social interaction. To satisfy these needs relationship ties with other people within the organisation are created. At a workplace, where people often encounter others, such relations are created and result in informal groups being formed (Schein 1980). These informal groups will be created on the basis of the structural prerequisites, for instance, the manner in which the workplace is designed (meeting places), work schedules and other factors that influence how people within the organisation come in contact with each other. Thus, we can say that these informal groups are the result of people's need for social interaction and organisational structure (Schein 1980). Informal groups can possess some power and challenge the organisation, and we can say that they create a culture and a structure of their own within the one that already exists; this makes these groups particularly interesting to study. A leader can use structure, such as the workplace's physical space, time and other logistical arrangements, to work with questions dealing with different groups within the organisation. Informal groups are, however, not always in conflict with the organisational task and these informal groups may be instrumental in working toward changes in the organisation, which in the long run can be beneficial for all. Informal and formal groups exist at all levels in an organisation. In a school context it is reasonable to believe that the principal is included in several different groups, and the same assumption can be applied to teachers and students as well.

Bullying

A central theme in this thesis is bullying and how different schools handle problems related to it. Bullying as a concept was introduced to the Swedish schools and public by Physician Peter-Paul Heinemann in the late 60s and early 70s. (Heinemann 1969, Heinemann 1972). Heinemann refers to bullying as something that occurs in groups where the group uses violence and/or other demeaning actions against a single individual. This results in the group marking out differences and alienations (Larsson 2008). An underlying assumption of Heinemann's theory is that behaviour related to bullying is something of which all humans are capable, depending upon specific situations and settings. This conception implies that certain actions are unavoidable under

certain situations simply because humans are biologically so driven. This deterministic understanding of bullying has been criticised and to some extent revised in other studies of bullying. A contrary view of bullying sees that bullying is by no means a natural human behaviour, rather it is something that humans are taught through interaction with others. In the Swedish steering documents it is clearly stated that bullying is not to occur at all in Swedish schools (Lpo 94, SFS 1985).

The definition of what bullying really is and how to define this phenomenon has changed over time. A common definition is the one formulated by Olweus:

A person is bullied when he or she repeatedly and during a period of time is exposed to negative actions by one or several individuals (Olweus 1994).

This definition characterises bullying as something that occurs over a period of time rather than an action that occurs only once (Olweus 1994, Sharp & Smith 1996). Bullying can be direct, including punches, kicks and/or taunting, or indirect, including exclusion and/or slandering (Olweus 1994). In terms of the relation between the bullied and the perpetrator, there is an imbalance of power (Andreou 2001, Björk 1999, Carney 2000). Within the school milieu this power relation may be invisible to adults in the situation because they are, to some extent, excluded from the students' environment, such as the corridor and the locker rooms (Höistad 1997). We know from earlier studies that it is primarily boys that are the bullies (O'Moore & Hillery 1998, Hazier, Hoover & Oliver 1992), whereas, the ones that are being bullied are both boys and girls, though it is unclear whether boys are more victimized than girls (Slee 1995, Rigby & Slee 1991). Strategies to prevent and decrease the level of bullying have to include actions at the school level that strive to change the culture or climate at the school (Whitted & Dupper 2005). Studies of bullying have primarily focused on psychological aspects of bullying and on who becomes a bully (Bliding 2004). In this thesis the main focus will not be on the individual level or on the psychology of bullies and victims, but rather the focus will be on the organisation as a whole and how the organisation works with the social objectives and questions regarding bullying and relating that to the school's structure, culture and leadership.

The definition of bullying used by the Swedish schools has changed during the time of this study. The concept of bullying has more and more been replaced by the concept of "equal treatment". This has put more focus on insulting behaviour and is not dependent upon the numerical count of occurrences or the time duration of such actions. The schools are charged with being more involved in preventive actions. They are expected to have plans to assure equal treatment that will be pro-active against common forms of discrimination such as gender, ethnicity, religion, disabilities and sexual orientation. The questionnaires and the interview manuals used during the data collection phase of the study used the term "bullying" as the operative expression and that is the reason for using that term throughout the thesis.

Social objectives, bullying and success

A study of successful schools can begin from different starting points. In this thesis the main concepts are the social and civic objectives and bullying. In the steering documents it is clearly stated that schools shall work actively with the social and civic objectives as well as with the academic objectives (Lpo 94, SFS 1985). These tasks indicate that a school cannot be perceived as fully successful if it is not achieving both academically and socially (Ahlström & Höög 2009, Höög 2009). The main topic interest during the project² has been the study of the structure, culture and leadership in the school in order to find prerequisites for success. In the project different aspects of success and prerequisites for success have been studied. The researchers involved in the project have also had different areas and organisational levels as their subjects of concern. The contribution this thesis has to the overall project is the focus on the students, both as the main resource of data and as the group of special concern. Topics such as the social task of schools and bullying have been related to the overall aim of the larger project in which this work is a part.

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² This study is a part of a larger project *Structure, Culture, Leadership: Prerequesites for Successful Schools?*. The project is situated at the Centre for Principal Development at Umea University and led by Professor Olof Johansson with co-directors Associate Professor Jonas Höög, Umea University, Professor Leif Lindberg, Växjö University and Associate Professor Anders Olofsson, Mid Sweden University campus Härnösand. The Swedish Research Council has provided the project with financial support.

Almost all organisations are divided into different hierarchic levels from the top leader to the followers at the bottom of the hierarchic ladder. In this specific study the people at the bottom are the students. There are, however, differences between schools and other forms of organisations in a number of ways. In almost every other form of organisation the members are there voluntarily; they can quit at any given time. The school as an organisation is somewhat unique due to a number of goals and prerequisites that set it apart from other organisations. The students as a group are worthy of note for a number of reasons. First of all, they are the ones that are the product, they are the ones being assessed and it is their outcomes that define school success. By choosing the students as the study object it is possible to obtain a different view of the organisation.

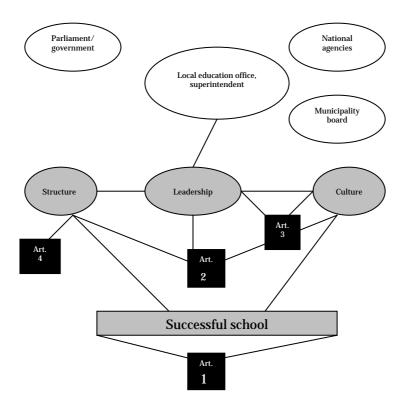


Figure 2. The four articles in relation to the project's overall scheme

In the figure above we see that the topic of special interest in this thesis is the schools and the relationship between the principal, the teachers and the students. Furthermore, it is the school's internal organisation upon which the focus is directed (marked in gray). The black squares above in Figure 2 refer to the four different articles presented in this thesis. Article 1 examines the relation between the academic and social and civic objectives of schools. Article 2 draws a comprehensive picture of four schools' structure, culture and leadership in relation to success in the areas of academics, social and civic outcomes and the level of bullying. Article 3 has its starting point in the school culture and the manner in which principals relate to a culture of mitigation and denial in questions of bullying and insulting behaviour at their schools. In the

fourth article the structure of participation in the schools is related to different forms of schools outcomes, namely, the grades and the level of bullying.

III. Successful schools (?)

The SCL-project

The structure, culture and leadership - prerequisites for successful schools? project is situated at the Centre for Principal Development at Umea University. The project is interdisciplinary with researchers from education, sociology and political science. The basic theoretical approach is that a school's performance depends on the interplay between its leadership, structure and culture. Within this framework each of the researchers had his or her own specific research questions (See Ärlestig 2009, Björkman 2008, Törnsén 2009). The theoretical framework and basic assumptions common for the project as a whole is that culture, structure and leadership interact and that each of these organisational features has an impact. These features must nevertheless be seen as something that correlates and creates a complicated web of prerequisites that the project aimed to study. One starting point was that successful school leaders have a stronger capacity to combine structural and cultural dimensions of the organisation (Höög, Johansson, Lindberg & Olofsson 2003, Höög, Johansson & Olofsson 2005).

Methodology

All the schools in the study are secondary schools and those students chosen as the representatives of the student population were in year nine. The reason for this selection is that these students have been attending school for nine years and are reaching the end of their stay in the compulsory school. Therefore, we assume that they should have developed their skills both academically and socially in accordance with the curriculum. By choosing students in year nine one should be able to have a picture of how well each school has succeeded in their task of

developing these two objectives among the group of students at the specific schools.

In this thesis several data sets have been used. All data utilized was gathered within the project *Structure, Culture, Leadership* – *Prerequisites for successful schools?* At this point is appropriate to elaborate on the procedures behind the data collection. The construction of the interview manuals and the surveys has, for the most part, been the result of a joint effort within the project. The selection of schools in the project underwent several stages, which will be described below.

The data upon which this thesis is based has been gathered at 24 schools in twelve municipalities. In order to gather the data efficiently the project participants were divided into three research groups who each visited four municipalities and eight schools. The project used common interview guides and surveys at all the schools. The data was both quantitative and qualitative. The goal was to have a comprehensive picture of the schools visited. For that reason, principals, teachers and students were interviewed and answered the surveys. In addition to this, every group filled out an observation protocol that included both structural and cultural dimensions.

The surveys were delivered to the member of the school board in the municipality, to all of the students in the 9th grade, to all 9th grade teachers and to the principals at the selected schools. Interviews were conducted with approximately 10 students at each school. These consisted of four individual interviews with two boys and two girls and two group interviews where one student (one boy and one girl at each school) took two friends along for the interview. Five interviews were conducted with teachers at each school, chosen in relation to which subject they were teaching.³ Interviews have also been conducted with all of the principals, deputy principals, superintendents and the chairperson of the municipal political school board.

The main reason for this eclectic methodological approach is that the projects' purpose was to draw as deep and comprehensive picture of each individual school as possible. In this thesis both quantitative and qualitative data will be analyzed and the results presented. The two

 $^{^3}$ Mathematics/ Science Studies, Swedish/ Modern Languages/language options, Art/Craft/Music, Spec and Social Studies.

types of data complement each other and reveal different dimensions of the schools and their work with bullying.

In this thesis special interest is directed towards the students and their psychosocial environment and bullying. Much of the data being analysed is therefore student-centred data that was gathered from interviews. These interviews have been conducted in all of the 24 schools participating in the study. The methodology used changed somewhat during the period of data collection. The initial approach utilized in the schools was group interviews but problems arose during the course of the study. One problem was that these groups were selected randomly with a quite large (5-8) number of participants and it was extremely time-consuming to get the group to work in a manner that would produce the needed information (Ritchie & Lewis 2005). To overcome this obstacle smaller groups were formed, ones in which the group was formed by selecting one student who then chose two or three peers to joined him or her in the interview. Individual interviews were also conducted with the students throughout the study. The participants were chosen in such a manner that half of the informants were boys and the other half girls.

Selection of the schools

The main focus for this project has been to compare successful schools to those that are less successful. The point of departure was to create questions about what the concept of success really means and what is its relation to the curriculum. At the outset the project intended to select two secondary schools in each municipality, one that could be classified as successful and one that would be classified as less successful. These classifications initially were based on the schools' academic achievement. However, early in the project it was concluded that success could not be measured only by academic achievement, but that social and civic objectives had to be taken into account. A survey was developed in order to be able to assess the social and civic objectives (Ahlström & Höög 2009). Hence, success as defined in the project was measured by academic and social and civic achievements.

The selection of schools was made by looking at several organisational levels and keeping different aspects in mind. For

example, the fact that the project is multidisciplinary inferred that the researchers had different interests. A major concern of the researchers in the project was that the schools selected for the project be representative of different parts of Sweden. Size, geographical location and the municipalities' political majority were taken into consideration. The final number of municipalities that took part in the study was twelve.

All of the schools that participated in the study were secondary schools with classes from year 7 to year 9 and whose students were in the age range of 13 to 15 years-old. In each of the twelve municipalities two schools were selected. One school in each municipality scored above the national academic outcomes and one scored below. The selected schools were also chosen on the basis of comparability in a number of prerequisites such as the students' socioeconomic background, gender and immigrant background. The academic grades in the initial selected schools were basis on scores obtained in 2004. Schools that were selected as successful had students in the 9th form having grade-point averages between the 75th and 80th percentile and the ones judged less had scores that fell in the 25th and 45th percentile. Even though this might seem to reflect major differences between the two groups, the actual difference is relatively small. The merit value is based on the sum of the student's 16 best grades at the point that the student leaves the school. Swedish grades are classified in four levels – U = fail (0 points), G = passed (10 points), VG = pass with distinction (15 points) and MVG = pass with special distinction (20 points).⁴ The maximum that a student can achieve is 320 points. The mean of grades among all schools in 2004 was about 205 points. The schools that were chosen as successful in relation to academics had about 210-215 points and the ones less successful about 195-200 points. The reason for making such selections is to avoid schools that differ drastically in relation to the academic objectives because the schools that score at the extremes, really high or really low, often have external prerequisites that make them different and not appropriate for the study at hand. Our interest is to study schools with similar external prerequisites but that perform at different levels due to a number of different aspects in the school's structure, culture and leadership.

⁴ http://www.skolverket.se/sb/d/483/a/1229 [090324]

In this way twelve municipalities were chosen; each of these municipalities had two schools that met the demand set by the project as presented above. Due to the fact that the objectives of Swedish schools are divided into two main categories, namely, 1) social and civic objectives and 2) the academic objectives, it was apparent that other measurements were needed in order to define the individual school's success. A survey was developed (the Social and Civic Objectives Scale - SCOS) in order to assess the school's level of success in relation to the social and civic objectives.§ The SCOS questionnaire, based on the steering documents, attempted to embrace all aspects of the social and civic objectives.⁵ The students in the twenty-four schools that were part of the study answered the questionnaire, resulting in the ability to rank the schools in this respect. Student grades along with the score on the SCOS allowed for a ranking of the school's level of success in relation to the school's objectives. The twenty-four schools could then be placed in one of four boxes in Figure 3 below. It shows the number of schools considered successful in relation to the projects requirements. The SCOS questionnaires were conducted during the fall of 2005 and the spring of 2006 and the grades from the schools are from 2006 as well. This means that the grade-point averages used in this study are those of the same students that answered the questionnaire.

Within the project three theses have been completed before mine. Compared to the other three the classification of success is different in my thesis. The school results in the other three are based on a mean for three years of the merit values and the percentage of students that passes exam combined with the SCOS value. In this thesis the mean merit value for year 2006 plus the SCOS value for the school is used. The rational for this is that in the thesis I focus on the students and want the merit value and the SCOS value to emanate from the same student group in the school. So the views and attitudes shown in the student questionnaire correspond to the academic performance for the same group. In the other parts of the project the schools and their leadership are the units of study and therefore it's reasonable to assess school performance with a broader measure in the other three theses even if they are part of the same project.

 5 For a more elaborate description of SCOS see $\,$ Article I in this thesis and $\,$ Höög 2009.

Successful in reaching academic objectives

		More Academic (A)	Less Academic (a)
Successful in		A/S	a/S
reaching the social and civic	More social/civic (S)	8	4
objectives		A/s	a/s
	Less social/civic (s)	4	8

Figure 3. The four types of schools and number of schools in each square

In this thesis two different sets of codes are used in relation to the schools in the study because a comprehensive system for identifying the different schools was not developed when the first article was published. Below in Table 1 a comparison of the codes is displayed to help identify the different schools that were part of the thesis. SCOS1 is the label used in the first article *Measuring the Social and Civic Objectives of Schools.* In the remaining three articles the SCOS2 codes are being used. For example, school A in the first article is labelled E1 throughout the rest of the thesis and so on.

Table 1. The different school codes.

SCOS1	SCOS2		
A	E1		
В	J1		
С	B1		
D	D2		
Е	F2		
F	B2		
G	J2		
Н	I2		
I	C2		
J	L1		
K	G1		
L	E2		
M	G2		
N	H1		
0	C1		
P	F1		
Q	K1		
R	H2		
S	I1		
T	L2		
U	K2		
V	A2		
X	A1		
Y	D1		

IV. The four articles

This chapter begins with summaries of the four articles. Thereafter the four articles in full are appended to this section. Those articles already published are reproduced with permission from the publisher.

1 Measuring the Social and Civic Objectives of Schools: Article One

The aim of the first article was to evaluate the assessment tool designed to measure the social and civic objectives assigned to the schools. Though this assessment instrument it was hoped that we would be able to have a comprehensive understanding of school success. Due to the fact that the mandate of the schools have two different aspects, namely, to develop the students knowledge in the different subjects in school and to develop their social and civic skills, new techniques had to be developed to assess differences between schools. The instrument that was developed was inspired by the assessment tool BRUK6 used by the Swedish National Agency for Education. BRUK is based on the curriculum and other steering documents (Skolverket 2001) and is adult-centred; the adults at the schools assess the students and the environment. Another instrument developed for this project focused on questions regarding norms and values and endeavoured to assess the level of social and civic development among the students. Notably, this tool is student-centred, which means that the students themselves assess the level of specific phenomenon within their own school. This questionnaire contains 52 questions that attempt to capture the essence of the social and civic objectives. The results discussed in the article are based on two separate studies, one smaller pre-study and one larger that contain students in the 9th grade in twenty-four schools across the country. In the second study there were 2,128 completed questionnaires. The dropout rate was 20.63%; in other words, the return rate was 79.37%.

 $^{^{6}\} BRUK = Bed\"{o}mning,\ Reflektion,\ Utveckling,\ Kvalitet\ (Assessment,\ Reflection,\ Development,\ Quality)$

The result of this exercise showed that it is possible to develop a questionnaire that assesses the social and civic objectives of schools based on the curriculum and the school law (Lpo 94, SFS 1985). The tool used was the SCOS (Social and Civic Objectives Scale), which was primarily used as a selection tool to help define different types of schools. Even though the questionnaire was effective revisions and additional studies will be needed.

2 Mobbning och skolans sociala mål – En studie av fyra skolor i Sverige [Bullying and the social objectives - A study of four secondary schools in Sweden]: Article Two

In the second article, using an organisational perspective, the focus was on linking the structure, culture and leadership of four schools to the social objectives and bullying. The four schools in the study were chosen by looking at three aspects of school outcomes. The first was the schools' grades, the second the schools' positions in the SCOS-ranking of the twenty-four schools and the third is the level of bullying at the schools. The main idea was to include one school from each of the four different school types used in the categorisation of the schools. One school should be successful both academically and socially, the second school should be successful in developing the students academically but score low on the SCOS, the third school should succeed in developing the students socially but fail to develop the students' knowledge in the different subjects in schools and the fourth school should be one that fails both socially as well as academically.7 In relation to the social aspects of the schools one extra parameter was added and that was bullying. The schools that succeeded socially should also have a low percentage of the students who perceived that bullying occurred at their school, whereas those schools scoring low on SCOS should have a relatively large percentage of students perceiving that bullying occurred. The schools then were compared in relation to different structural, cultural and leadership parameters, for example, bullying prevention plans, participation (on different transformational leadership among other items.

⁷ Look at Figure 3

The result shows that the schools that are successful both academically as well as socially seem to be able to align cultural, structural and leadership dimensions in order to create an environment where the students can develop. The other schools seem to direct their attention to other areas that end up creating an environment in which the students cannot work in accordance with the directives of the steering documents.

3 We are No Different! – Swedish Principals' Views of Their Schools' Level of Bullying: Article Three

The third article focuses on the principals and their leadership in relation to perceived bullying among the students. Eight schools were chosen, the four schools with the lowest amount of perceived bullying (according to the students) and the four schools with the highest amount of perceived bullying. At these schools interviews were conducted with the principals and later analysed. A key question in the analysis was the principals' responses to the question of whether bullying occurred at their school.

The third article concluded that there was indeed a relationship between principals' responses and perceived bullying. In those schools that seem to have a high level of bullying the principals responded in one of two ways. One response was one in which the principal mitigated the problem by responding that the level of bullying is at a "normal" level or just like "any other school". The other response indicated denial of the problem as judged by the principals' responses that there was "no problem", indicating that bullying does not occur at their school. In contrast, the schools that have a low level of bullying have principals that acknowledge the occurrence of bullying. A quite interesting picture emerges here: Schools with a high level of bullying have principals that do not acknowledge bullying whereas schools with a low level of bullying have principals that perceive the level of bullying as a problem and acknowledge its existence.

4 Participation, Bullying and Success – A study about participation, grades and bullying among 9th grade students in Sweden: Article Four

The fourth and final article in the thesis examines the relationship between student participation, grades and bullying. Eight out of twenty-four schools in the study were chosen to represent schools with either high or low levels of participation. The selection was guided by a theoretical approach to participation and with the help of the SCOS assessment tool. Three dimensions of participation, namely, 1) communication, 2) democratic competence and 3) cooperation, were developed with the basis being the steering documents. By using these dimensions a ranking of the twenty-four schools was undertaken in which different aspects of participation were taken into consideration. The three dimensions were added together to get a comprehensive ranking of the schools in the study and from this ranking the eight schools were chosen.

The outcome of the study was that the four schools with high levels of participation have a lower level of students perceiving that bullying occurs at their school than schools with low levels of participation where bullying seems to be more frequent. The high participation schools also have better grades than the low participation schools. This finding leads to the conclusion that the level of participation among the students appears to have positive effects on the students socially as well as academically. By working in accordance with the curriculum, which states that students should be able to participate in the operations of the school, students not only benefit in relation to lessened bullying and higher grades but they also can develop into democratic citizens. The school that does not work in a participative way does not give their students the chance to develop their social, civic and academic competences.

V. Conclusion and further research

In this thesis four articles with different points of departure are presented. While each highlights particular aspects of the students' everyday life in school, some aspects are common to all articles. First, for the most part, the data is student centred and it is through the students' experiences that the final conclusions can be drawn. Another point in common is that all the articles consider the social environment in the students' school even though the topic of special interest varies from focusing on the social objectives at a comprehensive level to looking at a more specific issue, for instance, bullying. Can there be one specific conclusion drawn from a material that includes four articles in which each has its own subject? The answer to that question is not easy to give. Nevertheless, it is possible to draw several conclusions that incorporate different levels and different aspects of the schools' work in general and in relation to the social and civic objectives. This leads to the question: What in a school's structure, culture and leadership promotes attainment of the social and civic objectives (as represented by resistance to bullying)? In this thesis the prerequisites for school success is the topic of special interest. Furthermore, school outcomes in relation to the divided task are studied and compared among different schools and their prerequisites.

Successful schools

As mentioned previously, the starting point of this project was to define success in relation to the curriculum and other steering documents. One thing that is evident in these documents is that the task of the schools is divided into a social objective and an academic objective. Consequently, the purpose of this study has been to identify the schools that succeed in developing their students in relation to both of these objectives since the fulfilment of the social objectives is difficult to assess. A tool for this task was developed, the SCOS survey for students. Success as a concept can be perceived as problematic and not easily addressed. During the time period of this study, the issue has been often discussed in the media and among the general public. In the public debate success is often measured by the students' grades and it is the academic objective that has been put forward as the natural tool for assessment. Because of the shift in the public debate in Sweden (more focus is directed towards the grades in general and the Swedish students academic knowledge in relation to other students from other countries more specifically), not many attempts to develop tools for measuring the social objectives have been presented. The attempt made in this thesis can be seen as a first and promising attempt to combine the assessment of both academic and social objectives. However, further development and revision of the tool is needed. Success is a relative concept and different schools and different principals can have varying understandings of what success is. One of the questions that arise is: What has to be done to reach a level where principals can say that their school is successful? Presently the concept of success can only be related to what tasks the specific organisation has and how it is formulated at a structural level, in this case, in the steering documents.

Prerequisites for success

A divided starting point that has two parameters for success creates the need for a methodological approach that includes both of the outcomes as fields for special interest. With help from such a tool success can be dealt with in a new way that incorporates and visualises a school's whole organisation in relation to the steering documents. The relation between school success and structure, culture and leadership is evident when summarizing the four articles. Transformational and ethical leadership, characterized by meaning, values, ethics and compassion, appear beneficial for schools to be successful in both the social and academic field. The schools need a structure that encourages the students to participate and by so doing aids the students in developing academically. As well, the school environment needs to be a safe place with little or no insulting behaviour or bullying. A culture that embraces fundamental democratic values gives the students abilities to interact with each other in a manner that is characterized by respect and thus makes them secure and able to develop their confidence and self esteem; this has benefits in relation to both objectives of the schools. The findings seem to clearly indicate that schools that are successful in relation to both the academic and social arena are able to align structure, culture and leadership in such a manner that the whole organisation seems to strive towards a common goal and a common understanding of how the work in the school should be conducted. In accordance with the present curriculum, a pedagogic approach that gives the students the ability to participate and be involved in the school has benefits in relation to the academic development as well as reducing the level of bullying. Notably and significantly, a school that has a high level of participation also has students with higher grades and less bullying.

Further research

The topic of bullying will always be a topic of concern in schools. An angle on this topic that would be of special interest for further studies is to develop the SCOS questionnaire in relation to the schools psychosocial environment. By asking questions in relation to the social and civic objectives in general one can get information about the students' level of social development. This data could be complemented with other forms of questions regarding the school's environment and relationship patterns between the students. By developing such a methodological instrument unique data could be gathered that would be student centred. However, the SCOS-questionnaire, as it is today, needs to be revised. With such additional questions, more testing needs to be carried out in order to develop a tool for school climate and psychosocial environment testing. Another topic that could be interesting to examine further is the principals' narratives in relation to the students' experiences of bullying and insulting behaviour in Swedish schools (Se article III). The concept of denial seems to operate as a device that is used by some as a response to twenty-four difficult situations such as a school environment with a relatively high level of bullying.

VI. Swedish summary

Denna avhandling undersöker skolors arbete med de sociala målen och mobbning. Vidare läggs fokus på skolors struktur, kultur och ledarskap i relation till dessa frågor. Centrala begrepp i avhandlingen är mobbning, sociala och civila mål, delaktighet, ledarskap, struktur och kultur. Skolan är på många sätt en speciell organisation att studera, då förutsättningarna hela tiden förändras. Det är inte bara de olika styrdokumenten som kan ändras och revideras, utan varje år byts dessutom cirka en tredjedel av eleverna ut mot de nya som börjar årskurs sju. Alla elever har en viss frihet att välja vilken skola han eller hon vill gå i, men den svenska skolplikten bestämmer att de skall gå nio

år i skolan. Ett vanligt antagande är att i grupper, där människor inte får eller kan välja sina meddeltagare, skapas förutsättningar för mobbning och motsättningar (Olweus 1994). I och med att skolan inte är frivillig och att eleverna inte kan sluta gå i skolan när de själva vill, har skolorna ett delikat men bindande uppdrag. Detta uppdrag innebär att se till så att inga elever skall behöva vara mobbade eller utsättas för kränkande behandling (Lpo 94, SFS 1985). Frågor som rör mobbning och kränkande behandling ingår i ett av de två uttalade mål som den svenska skolan har - det sociala/medborgerliga målet. I detta mål ingår att stötta och hjälpa elever att utvecklas socialt i mellanmänskliga relationer, med andra ord hur man ska behandla varandra. Dessutom skall skolan fostra eleverna till demokratiska medborgare. Det medborgerliga uppdraget handlar inte bara om att öka och utveckla elevernas kunskaper om demokratins form och hur samhället fungerar, det innefattar också att de skall förstå demokratiskt arbete i praktiken genom att arbeta under demokratiska former i skolan. Det andra uttalade målet som skolan har, vilket också rönt speciellt intresse i den politiska debatten under 2000-talet, är det akademiska. Detta uppdrag handlar om att utveckla elevernas kunskaper inom de olika ämnena i skolan.

Struktur, kultur och ledarskap – förutsättningar för framgångsrika skolor? är namnet på det projekt inom vilket denna avhandling är en del. Projektet har sin bas vid Umea universitet. SCL-projektet⁸ är ett interdisciplinärt projekt med både doktorander och forskare från ämnena sociologi, pedagogik och statsvetenskap representerade. Projektets ansats har varit att studera svenska 7-9 skolor och dessas organisation utifrån ett flertal perspektiv. Projektnamnet pekar dock ut skolornas struktur, kultur och ledarskap som huvudämnen för närmare analyser. Flera olika områden inom skolorna har dock analyserats mer specifikt, där var och en av forskarna i projektet har haft olika utgangspunkter (Se Ärlestig 2008, Björkman 2008, Törnsén 2009, Johansson & Höög 2009). Utgångspunkten i arbetet har varit att inom projektet ha en gemensam teoretisk ram för att förstå organisationers arbete och studera hur struktur, kultur och ledarskap interagerar. Dessa tre organisatoriska fenomen har var och en betydelse för organisationer i stort och tillsammans skapar de mönster där de möter

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⁸ Structure, Culture and Leadership

och påverkar varandra med spänningar, hinder och möjligheter. En utgångspunkt har varit att framgångsrika skolor har rektorer som genom sitt ledarskap klarar av att förena skolans struktur och kultur (Höög, Johansson, Lindberg & Olofsson 2003, Höög, Johansson & Olofsson 2005).

Avhandlingen har fokus på den "lägsta" organisatoriska nivån, nämligen eleverna. Eleverna har varit den primära källan för data som använts. Data som samlats in utöver detta, står i relation till elevers vardag i skolan, deras arbetsmiljö och deras förutsättningar i relation till de sociala målen och mobbning.

Syftet är att ge en bild av den svenska skolans arbete med delaktighet, mobbning, sociala och civila mål. Även om fokus främst har riktas mot de sociala målen i skolan, är de akademiska målen viktiga i relation till framgång och till vad det innebär att vara en framgångsrik skola. Ett grundantagande är att det är genom dessa båda mål man kan mäta framgång. Betygen som eleverna får från och med årskurs åtta är ett naturligt sätt att mäta skolors akademiska framgång i relation till andra skolor. Ett motsvarande mått för elevers och skolors nivå vad det gäller den sociala och civila utvecklingen saknas. Ett mätinstrument har därför utvecklats inom ramen för det här avhandlingsarbetet. Detta instrument har fått namnet SCOS, vilket är en förkortning för *Social and Civic Objectives Scale*. Med detta mätinstrument är det möjligt att skapa en bättre bild av skolors framgång genom att tillsammans med betygen, få en bedömning av skolans samlade prestationer i relation till andra skolor.

Initialt valdes 24 skolor ut i 12 kommuner runt om i Sverige. Urvalet baserades på ett flertal parametrar så som storstad - landsbygd, socialdemokratiskt styre — borgerligt styre etc. för att få en så representativ bild av den svenska skolan som möjligt. Vidare skulle varje kommun ha minst två 7 — 9 skolor med minst två parallellklasser i årskurs nio. I varje kommun skulle en skola prestera över och en under det nationella betygsgenomsnittet men vara relativt lika när det gäller elevernas sociala sammansättning. Många skolor trängs runt medelvärdet därför blir skillnaden mellan urvalsgrupperna inte så stor. Avsikten med detta är att inte studera de starkaste och de svagaste skolorna, en jämförelse som nästan alltid landar i social sammansättning och yttre faktorer. SCOS har, som nämnts, utvecklats som ett urvalsinstrument för att kunna bedöma skolframgång på ett sätt som bedömer skolors hela uppdrag i relation till styrdokumenten. I

den första av avhandlingens fyra artiklar presenteras utvecklandet av SCOS och hur frågeformuläret använts i projektet (Ahlström & Höög 2009). Om man utgår från att både dessa två mål de kunskapsmässiga knutna till skolans ämnen och de sociala skall uppnås kan man skapa en tabell som beskriver hur skolor i grad lyckas med att nå sina mål.

Framgångsrika i att nå de akademiska målen

		Mer (A)	Mindre (a)
Framgångsrika i att nå de sociala	Mer (S)	A/S	a/S
och civila målen	Mei (5)	8	4
			,
	Mindre	A/s	a/s
	(s)	4	8

Figur 4. De fyra olika skoltyperna och antalet skolor i varje ruta

Ovan i figur 4 visas hur många skolor som placerade sig i var och en av de olika rutorna. Åtta skolor kan betraktas som A/S skolor, det vill säga att de är framgångsrika i relation till skolornas båda uppdrag. Fyra skolor är a/S skolor vilket betyder att de är starkare i relation till de sociala och civila målen men lyckas inte i samma utsträckning utveckla elevernas akademiska kunskaper. Fyra skolor kan betraktas som A/s vilket betyder att de är skolor som når relativ akademisk framgång men misslyckas med elevernas sociala utveckling. De resterande åtta skolorna i studien är a/s skolor vilka inte kan betraktas som framgångsrika i relation till något av skolans mål som de är

formulerade i styrdokumenten. I projektet har tre avhandlingar skrivits före denna. I dessa tre klassificeras skolorna i relation till framgång något annorlunda till den indelning som gjorts i den här avhandlingen. avhandlingarna är resultatmättet andra baserat betygsmedelvärden och andelen av elever som klarat målen under tre år tillsamman med SCOS. I det här arbetet är däremot endast betygsmedelvärdet från 2006 och SCOS grunden för klassificeringen av skolorna. Anledningen till denna skillnad är att fokus i det här avhandlingsarbetet har varit på eleverna och därmed finns det anledning att utgå från betygsmedelvärden och SCOS-värden från samma elevgrupp. Därmed skall attityder i elevenkäten kunna jämföras med elevernas akademiska resultat. I de andra avhandlingarna som skrivits inom ramen för projektet har intresset riktats mot skolorna och deras ledarskap och därför är det rimligt att mäta skolframgång med en bredare ansats även om de ingår i samma projekt.

I avhandlingens andra artikel tittas det närmare på fyra skolors struktur, kultur och ledarskap i relation till de sociala målen, mobbning och betyg. De fyra skolorna som är med i artikeln är valda utifrån fyrfältaren som presenteras i figur 4, en skola för vart och ett av de fyra fälten. Ytterligare ett urvalskriterium har lagts till och det är att de skolor som är framgångsrika socialt skall ha en låg grad av mobbning och de skolor som mindre framgångsrika socialt skall ha en relativt hög grad av mobbning. Skolorna jämfördes i relation till olika strukturella, kulturella och ledarskapsparametrar som t.ex. om de har en mobbningsplan, graden av delaktighet och ledarskapets utformning. Resultatet visar att skolan som är framgångsrikast när det gäller de sociala och akademiska målen samt graden av mobbning karaktäriseras av att de lyckats kombinera och integrera strukturen, kulturen och ledarskapet på skolan vilket i sin tur har skapat ett skolklimat där eleverna kan utvecklas både akademiskt och socialt. De andra tre skolorna verkar rikta fokus på områden som inte utvecklar eleverna, då de inte arbetar som det uttrycks i styrdokumenten.

I den tredje artikeln ligger fokus på åtta skolors rektorer och deras ledarskap i relation till elevernas upplevda nivå av mobbning. I artikeln analyseras dessa, där fyra av skolorna är de som i undersökningen har elever som upplever att deras skola har lägst grad av mobbning. , medan de andra fyra har elever som upplever att det är högst mobbningsnivå. På dessa åtta skolor valdes en fråga ut som ställdes till alla rektorer där rektors upplevelse av nivån av mobbning på skolan

efterfrågades. Rektorernas svar jämfördes vidare med elevernas upplevelse av förekomsten av mobbning. Resultatet visar att på skolor där det förekommer en högre grad av mobbning enligt eleverna, svarar rektorerna att just på deras skola är det "på en normal nivå" eller "som vilken skola som helst". En annan vanlig respons hos dessa rektorer var att det inte förkommer alls och att de inte upplever nivån av mobbning som något problem. På skolor där eleverna upplever en lägre grad av mobbning svarar rektorerna med att nivån är "ett problem" och att "det förekommer" mobbning. Dessa resultat är intressanta då skolor som har elever som upplever en högre grad av mobbning inte har rektorer som bekräftar detta. På skolor som har elever som upplever en lägre grad av mobbning finns det rektorer som uppfattar nivån av mobbning, oavsett att den är på en relativt låg nivå, som ett problem.

Den fjärde artikeln behandlar relationen mellan elevers inflytande, betyg och mobbning. Åtta skolor där fyra har högt värde på ett teoretiskt delaktighetsindex och fyra som har lågt valdes ut. Urvalet skedde med SCOS där tre dimensioner av delaktighet togs fram: demokratisk kompetens, kommunikation och samarbete. Genom att rangordna de 24 skolorna i varje enskild dimension kunde ett index skapas och i detta valdes de fyra skolorna i toppen och de fyra i botten ut. Dessa skolor jämfördes sedan vad det gäller graden av upplevd mobbning bland eleverna och skolornas betyg. Vidare relaterades det till de övriga 16 skolorna som befann sig mitt mellan dessa två grupper. Resultatet visar att de skolor som har en hög grad av delaktighet också har en lägre grad av mobbning och graden av upplevd mobbning ökar i takt med att delaktigheten blir lägre. Den grupp med skolor som hade en högre grad av delaktighet har dessutom högre betyg än de grupper som hade en lägre grad. Sammanfattningsvis kan sägas att skolor som arbetar med delaktighet också verkar utveckla eleverna både socialt och akademiskt.

Sammanfattningsvis visar resultaten att det är i skolor där rektor lyckas att länka samman struktur och kultur, i relation till både de sociala och akademiska målen, som är framgångsrika. Det är också i dessa skolor som mobbningen är lägst och betygen högst. Rektorer som tar socialt ansvar i relation till mobbning verkar också kunna förmedla detta i organisationen på ett sådant sätt att preventivt arbete kan bedrivas. Frågorna tas på allvar. I skolornas arbete verkar också elevernas möjlighet att få vara delaktiga och ha inflytande vara något

som har positiv effekt både på det sociala klimatet och på elevernas akademiska utveckling.

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