This paper is the first piece of a jigsaw puzzle in an effort to study the conditions that enable Swedish principals and preschool leaders to do a good job, create an identity and safeguard health. The present study is the first step to approach the overarching aim of understanding how principals’ and preschool leaders’ assignments are interpreted and construed and of who or what enables or prevents them from doing a good job. The primary aim of this paper is to narrow down how the assignment (the task)) is interpreted and to identify the markers for how principals and preschool leaders look upon the chances of doing a good job. These markers will subsequently form the basis of an in-depth qualitative study we have begun.

How is the assignment interpreted? Do conditions exist for doing a good job? These are seemingly modest issues, albeit quite central both for individual wellbeing and for the benefit of the organization with regard to individual performance (Ericsson, 2010). This opens up two concepts that are central to us, assignment and performance. We have replaced the more conventional concept of work by the concept of assignment. Work is often defined as “an intentional value-creating activity” (Docherty et al., 2008). Where focus lies on the actual operation performed by the individual, i.e. the very activity itself. Choosing the term “assignment” involves zooming out (Nicolini, 2009) from the immediate operation and referring instead to the principals and preschool leaders view of the aim and meaning of being on the job in a wider perspective. In other words, it entails an idea of what is to be completed, which comprises both the leaders own interpretation of her work and other people’s expectation. In contrast to “work”, which can be easily restricted to individuals and their activities, “assignment” is more tangibly and intricately intertwined with law, political decisions, pupils, teachers profession and other people concerns and discussions. The interpretation and view of one’s assignment thus becomes more closely linked to other phenomena like affiliation and identity, the experience of meaningfulness, of contributing to a
social context and pride, but also to guilt, shame and insufficiency (Ericsson, 2010). Hence relationships and the conformity with conditions for doing a good job become important in several respects. If there are no chances of doing a good job, various reasons for this will probably be presented. Such a strategy runs the risk of reducing the experience of the importance of the assignment. In other words, if nobody cares about what I am supposed to do, there is every reason to question whether those around look upon this as important. Naturally, this affects our self-evaluation of the assignment, as our understanding is socially construed, i.e. by other people’s actual, implied or imagined presence (Weick, 1995). Another possible risk is an experience of insufficiency. The reverse side of the coin would be that there is a positive connection between how the assignment is interpreted and how individuals consider themselves having met the implicit and explicit demands involved in this interpretation. This will instead produce meaningful experience, fulfilling the urge to contribute to a social context, and evoking a feeling of pride.

We know that these seemingly modest questions about how the assignment is interpreted and whether conditions obtain for doing a good job as well as the actual answers in local practice have a great effect on both individuals and organizations (Ericsson, 2010). On the other hand, we do not know how principals perceive their assignment, whether they regard themselves as possessing the qualities for doing a good job or who/what enables and/or prevents them in their effort to fulfil their assignment.

Knowledge about all the issues mentioned above is important for creating and maintaining good conditions for efficient leadership which contributes to, supports and manages organizations and teachers in such a way that they are able to perform their assignments satisfactorily, both in private and public schools and preschools.

**Working Life Changes**

Quite a few people have in recent decades experienced changes in the character of their work. These changes have involved a gradual shift from clear, well-defined tasks to more diffuse areas of responsibility (Ericsson & Bengtsson-Tops, 2014; Kira & Forslin, 2008). No longer does it seem possible to cognitively and emotionally plan the time the work contents will take (Aronsson, 1999; Aronsson, Svensson, Gustafsson, 2003). A number of such jobs are found within what is usually referred to as complex and knowledge-intensive organizations. Such jobs are usually characterized by containing a certain amount of expert knowledge by
operators who possess an equal or better understanding of the job than their superiors. Furthermore, they are also characterized by requiring a high degree of commitment and active participation beyond the actual performance of the task (Aronsson et al., 2003). Perceiving one’s job as important and absorbing is a mark of its meaningfulness, which is a necessary condition for jobs with health-promoting potential (Ericsson, 2010; Kira and Forslin, 2008; Nilsson, 2010). Nevertheless, these are jobs of a type often connected with high emotional and cognitive pressure (Kira and Forslin, 2008). Schools exemplify both sides of the coin: emotional and cognitive pressure parallel with meaningfulness and commitment. The principal holds the role entailing responsibility for the school and its work environment, which is also faced with contrasting demands. A principal’s work situation involves external adaptation as well as internal integration. External adaptation includes legislation, decrees by the National Agency for Education and the Schools Inspectorate. Principals also have to relate to parents’ views and demands and to local politicians. Internal integration concerns local situated work in a specific school, involving teachers, students and principals (Augustinsson & Brynolf, 2012). Principals are approached from all corners with sundry dilemmas ranging from external demands on rational management to skilfully handling local complexity, making insecurity and surprises natural elements in their everyday life (Ericsson & Augustinsson 2015). The chance of planning rationally and authoritatively as well as keeping an eye on activities has become more and more questioned (Ericsson, 2010; Kira & Forslin, 2008). This primarily applies to complex and knowledge-intensive organizations, not least in the world of schools (Scherp & Scherp, 2007). But, “The current goal-instrumental control system makes it difficult … to optimally contribute to student, professional and educational development …” (Scherp & Scherp, 2007, p. 14). Parallel to this runs a control system entailing an increasing effort towards instrumentality, rationality and administration with elements of New Public Management (NPM), as well as goal- and result-oriented management (Scherp & Scherp, 2007). There is thus every reason to reconsider the current principles of management and work organization in schools and preschools to pay attention to principal and preschool leaders health and wellbeing as well as student learning and development.

The context of a principal and a preschool leader
How do we look upon contexts and conditions for management and organization in which principals and preschool leaders are involved? What do leaders do and why? We approach these issues by asking questions about how they themselves interpret their assignment and what chances they perceive for doing a good job and what/who enables or prevents them. As regards the way leaders are viewed, we agree with Alvesson (2013, p. 151):

Leaders are often portrayed as strong and authoritative, possessing the ability to challenge, drive and change, create a good atmosphere, security and solidarity. The pictures we encounter in mass media, popular science and academic writing are often surrounded by a heroic aura.

Instead we see leaders, or leading and organizing, as complex activities there trowness (thrown in a situation and mood) (Heidegger, 1927/2009) are essential in leaders daily work.

To approach the interpretation of the answers to our questions our starting point is “practice-based research”, emanating from what leaders actually do (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012; Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003; Carlile, et al. 2013; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). By asking different questions arising from the assignment and the chances of implementing this, we refer to the way they interpret what they are supposed to do in their own practices. Antonacopoulao (2008, p. 112) describes this approach as focusing on the constant state of flux that organizations are exposed to and which leaders have to deal with:

New and emerging approaches to management and organization research need to fundamentally engage with such complexity in its own terms. Instead of seeking simplifications and classifications of the complex into substances and variables to be isolated, measured and tested, we need to learn to work with complexity in the relational, interconnected, nested and perplexed ways in which it constitutes and defines the social”.

Tsoukas & Chia (2002, p. 613), referring to Feldman (2002), demonstrate empirically that even routines “are actually emergent accomplishments”, being “flows of connected ideas, actions, and outcomes”. The dominant view of leadership and organizations is,
unfortunately, focused on treacherous illusions like the exaggerated belief in order, control and predictability (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012; Stacey, 2003; Streatfield, 2001). This is a further reason why we have chosen to empirically investigate their attitudes linked to their everyday activities as managers.

Even generalizations and categorizations agree badly with what the world actually seems like and how it develops in it’s becoming (Bruner, 1998; Czarniawska, 2003). Becoming and flux put the focus on movement and action that leaders have to deal with, which turns the use of an open-question questionnaire into a methodological challenge.

To sum up the evidence that principals actually do a great number of different things this quotation is included from a study of what principals talk about and what they actually do:

> The overarching picture of the observations is that the ideas described by the principals in the interviews are not evident in their everyday work. It is true that the strategies described by the principals largely consist of long-term work involving a great many steps, both big and small ones. However, when shadowing a principal during a day one notices that there is a great deal more that has to be managed, and hence the development actions do not emerge very clearly. The leader strategy conveyed in various ways in most interviews consists of dialogues with colleagues. The opportunity of starting such a dialogue is shrouded by concerns related to the here and now (translated by the authors, Hallerström 2006 p. 119).

Alvesson & Sveningsson (2003) write that there is a great need for “taking the mundane, almost trivial, aspects of what managers/leaders actually do seriously.” Scherp & Scherp (2007, p. 45) describe the working day of a principal as

> … fragmentary and characterized by a great many brief encounters which are being continually interrupted. … Martin and Willower (1981) found that lower secondary school principals devoted themselves on average to 149 tasks per day, with ca. 60% of their activities being interrupted by other ones. Over 80% of the activities took between 1 and 4 minutes.
Earlier studies like these are also confirmed by Scherp & Scherp (2007) and Augustinsson & Brynolf, 2012) in their later studies of what principals and preschool leaders actually do. To a great extent it concerns the handling of everyday troubles rather than strategies and long-term work (Holmberg and Tyrstrup 2010).

Our assumption is that principals’ and preschool leaders’ work are constructed by continuous negotiations with several significant actors and their view of school and preschool activities and of how these should be managed. The formal control and management by principals and preschool leaders derive from various levels: legislation, national policy documents and local policy and control documents. Principals face constant pressure from and negotiations with teachers, teacher unions, parents, pupils, national and local politicians. Management also contains, as mentioned, elements of fashion like NPM. Within this complex web of relationships, principals and preschool leaders try to achieve results and do a good job.

Using the above assumptions as starting points, the aim is to understand how the assignment of principals is interpreted and construed and who/what enables principals to do and/or prevents them from doing a good job. We are further interested in whether there are differences between private (profit-making) organizations and public ones. More specifically, and somewhat more modestly, this aim has generated the following sounding-out questions:

- What do principals highlight as the most central aspect of their assignment?
- Do principals consider themselves having the prerequisite for doing a good job?
- What enables principals to fulfil the aim of their assignment in their everyday job, and/or what prevents them from doing so?

Our purpose is to unpack these questions using theoretical concepts like complexity and paradoxes, as well as legitimacy and shadowing.

**Complexity and paradoxes**

As appears from the above, leadership and organizations are equivocal and ambiguous. The complexity concept helps narrowing down the basic character of practice of leading and organizing. Are schools and preschools complicated or complex organizations? To narrow down the difference between complicated and complex we will benefit from complexity sciences (Augustinsson, 2006). To this is added the handling of paradoxes, which is a vital everyday element in complex organizations (Czarniawska, 2005). A typical trait of complex things is that the known and unknown factors are simultaneously present (Norretranders, 2002; Stacey,
2009). This is a paradox that leaders simply have to accept and deal with as best we know how to do (Czarniawska, 2005; Weick, 1979). Through comparisons of complex with complicated we gain new insights into the things we need to handle (Abrahamson 2002). A general difference between these two is that complex things include situation, context and coincidences (Uhlin, 2001).

Cars and airplanes are complicated, while weather is complex. We have all experienced the Saturday News meteorologist telling us that the Sunday weather will be nice and warm, while mentioning in passing that there is of course a risk of rain, even though it is small. The prognosis we stick to is likely to be nice weather with sunshine. The picnic basket is packed, but when we wake up in the morning we face grey clouds and intense rain. Those who do not understand complexity blame the meteorologists for bad prognoses. Nothing could be more wrong. Weather contains an abundance of factors that affect one another in a network of causes and effects that is local and temporal. The mutual influence of the various factors results in a high degree of unpredictability when the weather is turbulent. Unpredictability thus emerges as an element of contextual chance.

Method

The present study is the first step to increasing our understanding of how principals and preschool leaders interpret their assignment, what are their conditions for doing a good job and who or what enables them to achieve this or prevents them from doing so. Simply speaking, how do they interpret and perceive the possibilities as first line managers of a assignment whose formal aspects are controlled by legislation and other regulations concerning schools or preschools? This approach to a deeper understanding of how they interpret their assignment is primarily based on two empirical collections. The first empirical material comprises the questionnaire presented in this paper. The second includes focus group interviews with principals and preschool leaders containing the same issues as here, but involving broader and deeper talks. The concluding discussion will also briefly highlight some aspects of the study that supplement the questionnaire.

The three questions raised in the questionnaire are as follows:

- Describe briefly what you consider as your assignment. In other words, what are you expected to do?
• Do you consider yourself having good conditions for doing a good job? Describe and explain.
• What or who enables and prevents you (or both/and) in your assignment?

Participants and procedure
The respondents participate in the three-year compulsory education for principals in Sweden. All the participants already work as first-line managers within preschool, compulsory school, upper-secondary school or adult education. About 20% work in private organizations. The following analysis does not, however, include any statistical comparisons between private and public organizations.

The questionnaire was distributed in connection with, or immediately after, a course meeting near the end of the programme, by which time the respondents had been managers for at least two years. There were five groups in all (12 B, C, D, 13 A and B) and the number of responses were n=206 out of possible n=247 (with an 83% response frequency). The positions were distributed as follows: Preschool leaders (n=47, 23%), Principals (n=97, 47%) Assistant principals (n=30, 15%) Upper secondary school leaders (n=26, 13%) and Adult education leaders (n=6, 3%).

Analysis
The formulation of the questions in the questionnaire and the analysis of the answers are based on a constructionist approach and on “human social research” focusing on interpreting and understanding phenomena (Agar, 2013; Cunliffe, 2014). Czarniawska (2005, p.15) defines constructionism as an “epistemological program: a way in which to look at organizing. The main question that arises is: How is the world constructed?” To interpret one’s assignment means expressing what one considers to be the core assignment. The equivocal aspect of managerial work (Alvesson, 200x, p. x) makes room for different interpretations affecting what managers do and how they perceive their situation. This further entails that we, as researchers, do not start from a hypothesis. Instead, a “hypothesis is discovered and constructed as part of the research …” (original italics, Agar, 2013, p. 123). Several hypotheses will recur in the discussion section.
One way of achieving reliability (Cuba & Lincoln, 1995), as mentioned above, is to compare different interpretations of empirical material. This approach has permeated the whole analysis. To begin with, the authors analyzed the questionnaire responses separately and then compared and discussed the material together to reach consensus. In this initial process, our discussions resulted in what was most salient in the responses. The first dominating key words we found recurrently in the answers referred to the economy/budget and trust issues. With the support of Atlas ti we established the frequency of the different words used by the respondents. As expected, the analysis agreed with the one we first performed. Among the respondents, 83% referred to economy/budget issues, followed by law/legislation (40% of the respondents). Other frequent keywords emerging from the Atlas ti process of counting words were pedagogical leadership and goals. After the initial reading and coding of the material, the analysis, supported by Atlas ti, turned into an abstraction process aggregating the core content of the codes of meaning to subthemes and later to main themes. One example is the analysis of Enablers and Preventers presented in Table 1 below.

Table I. Enablers and Preventers. Themes, subthemes and examples of codes of meaning emerging from the analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Subthemes (not used in the findings as headings)</th>
<th>Codes of meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paradoxes</td>
<td>The engaged teacher and the lazy teacher; using or getting used to the law; support and non-support service; mandatorship – coaching or obsession with numbers?</td>
<td>Teachers do not fulfil their assignments; engaged and competent colleagues; security in decision-making; the irrelevance of legislation for pupils with autism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyday hassles</td>
<td>not the core work; being inadequate; spatiotemporal</td>
<td>I only put out fires; conflicts between teachers; misunderstandings among the staff; there is always something else</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premises/Physical conditions</td>
<td>Being elsewhere; out of space; multiple schools, responsible for</td>
<td>A long way between schools; premises that do not meet our</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Another type of reliability was obtained by following up the analysis by individually rereading a sample of questionnaire responses to identify gaps in our initial analysis and utilizing the support of Atlas Ti in our search for central codes of meaning.

It may be noted that one of the themes identified as a assignment label is “developing human resources”. This label was the outcome of sorting questions containing systematic quality work and the development of colleagues’ competence and knowledge but was also extended to include labour legislation and employment issues. Due to the somewhat equivocal character of the label, each respondent’s text underwent careful study from a holistic point of view.

**Findings**

The result is presented in three parts following the questionnaire structure of *assignment, conditions, enablers and preventers*. I) By way of introduction we will describe how principals and preschool leaders have rendered their view of the assignment. This will be done through what we call *assignment labels*, i.e. overarching terms for how principals and preschool leaders have chosen to portray their assignment. II) The following description comprises whether principals and preschool leaders consider themselves having suitable conditions for doing a good job or not. III) The result section will be concluded with what is considered to be preventing or enabling elements in their everyday work.

**Assignment labels**

Using a content analysis where the most frequent concepts have been studied with the aid of Atlas Ti, three core aspects of principals’ and preschool leaders’ assignment descriptions have been identified: Economy and Law, Human Resources Development, and Goal Fulfilment. A fourth aspect, which has been highlighted because of its less expected appearance, is Marketing and Customers\(^1\) (see Table II).

Table II. Assignment labels

\(^1\)Marketing and customers were not as frequently mentioned as the other three labels. However, since they reflect something related to current times, we decided to include it among the assignment labels.
### Economy and Law
In this field the exercise of authority is highlighted with clear references to what is legally expected of principals and preschool leaders in their capacity as foremost representatives of the school in question. The economy creates other framework and limitations which have to be met. This is thus where the respondents express the formal framework of the organization.

### Human Resources Development
The material reflects both a “soft” and a “hard” view. A prominent example of a soft description of the assignment with links to the development of human resources is developmental leadership, especially pedagogical leadership. As examples of the hard view, it is largely systematic quality work or systematic work environment activities that are highlighted.

### Goal fulfilment
Goal fulfilment is a concept recurrently commented on, either referring to student or to organization goal fulfilment. For those respondents who equate the primary assignment of the organization with work concerning students these two directions probably converge.

### Marketing/Custormers
This is an almost non-existent “label”, as marketing and customers are mentioned by a few respondents only. Even though this view of the assignment notably differed from other more traditional views, we decided, however, to present this as a separate label. Marketing and customers are not exclusive to private and profitmaking schools, but occur as frequently in public school contexts.

### Prerequisites for doing a good job
The second question in the questionnaire read: Do you consider yourself having good conditions for doing a good job? There is nothing unequivocal among the answers to whether or not principals and preschool leaders experience that such conditions prevail. A recurrent feature is, however, the ambivalence in the expressions of their conditions, which is most adequately summarized as partly or both and.

One representative description of this ambivalence is taken from two respondent. On is both a principal and a preschool leader and the other principal, both public:

Yes and no. My working place is in the school and close to activities. The preschool is located elsewhere, which means that I am there too seldom. I have plenty of chances to discuss problems with colleagues. Too much of my time/job has to do with sitting in the office in front of the computer (Principal/Preschool leader; public, 12D).

It depends on what you mean by good conditions. Not ideal if you consider that I have 35 staff, budget responsibility, local response, for many categories of staff to lead, etc. But if you
compare with other principals or preschool heads so you can safely have even fewer
opportunities, then I still have an assistant principal that I can get relief by (Principal, public
13A).

The ambivalence of principals and preschool leaders was manifested in different ways as
regards the different parts of the assignment and also in the different ways the same
phenomenon manifested itself within the organization. For example, colleagues were declared
competent and collegial cooperation was said to work well, but the economy was felt to be
tight and to cause too great limitations in the organization. This ambivalence could also apply
to the same phenomenon, for instance when there was, on the one hand, competent teachers
doing a very good job, and on the other, those without professional competence, which
naturally created a problem for the principal.

I do not think I have the potential to be the educational leader who I believe think I will ...
(Principal, public 12A)

The administrative burden is a hinder for driving educational development. It does not
help how I do (Preschool leader, public 13B)

The time to educational leadership is minimal (principal, private 13B)

I have a lot of freedom within a fixed framework. Unfortunately, the state and the
municipal assignment do not always go hand in hand and many times put the economy
spanner, in order to carry out missions, in the way you would like (principal, public
12B)

**Preventers and enablers**

In the analysis of the third part of the questionnaire three distinct themes emerged: Paradoxes,
Everyday hassles and Premises/Physical conditions.

**Paradoxes**

The ambivalence emerging from a direct question about the conditions for doing a good job or
not received a wider scope in this part of the questionnaire. Principals and preschool leaders
describe the enablers and preventers of their everyday work in terms similar to those
identified under the heading of assignment labels. The economy, law and teachers were three
highlighted core aspects. On the aggregate level (as well as in specific practice) a world filled
with paradoxes appears. Obvious enablers become obvious preventers. Against the
background of how principals and preschool leaders interpret their assignment, teachers, not
surprisingly, serve as an important resource for achieving the goals set up within the
organization, in other words, a given background. The teachers’ role in this respect also emerges quite clearly in the descriptions. However, this group’s ability to form an enabling factor for principals and preschool leaders is not presented unequivocally. Nevertheless, the descriptions were actually equivocal in that teachers appeared both as enablers and preventers. Similarly, a number of different factors were highlighted: the prevalent (administrative) support function, which did not always act as such but rather to the contrary, throwing spanners in the works for principals and preschool leaders, or legislation, which was primarily described as an enabler in contexts where a principal or preschool leader needed an authoritative ally, for convincing teachers or parents on a specific point, for instance. Still, in other contexts the law and legislation turned out to act as preventers. Concrete examples were supplied by the respondents of situations or cases that did not fit into the “norm template” of various laws and therefore turned into problems instead: “… the legislation is not suited for pupils with autism…”.

So, there are some paradoxes

Yes and no. I have the support from my colleagues and can consult them. There are procedures and guidelines developed that everyone knows and who you can lean on. Time, or the lack of time, however, is a major obstacle for me to keep up with everything that lies in the assignment. I also have a fragmented area of responsibility, which includes many different programs and part of my responsibility. I'm manager of 43 people, also affecting my work load (principal, private 12C)

Paradoxes are also near what we call everyday hassles.

Everyday hassles

Principals and preschool leaders described the aspects of their daily work, which prevented them from fulfilling their assignment in terms of everyday hassles. Although they had a picture of what they were supposed to do, every now and then other things took over. This was not related to how they interpreted their (actual) work, but was something that took time and resources from fulfilling the imagined assignment. Everyday conflicts, misconceptions and other unpredictable and momentarily emerging problems could take over a whole working day. “I only put out fires” is a representative quote illustrating how principals and preschool leaders described parts of their everyday work.

I feel that the constant interruptions affecting negatively. Student Affairs, who constantly seems to increase, also reduces the prerequisites to act more educational. Parents' "rights" also takes effect. Parents do not always understand that the school did
not look the same anymore. Resources (both financial and human) also limits the scope for action (principal, private 12D)

Yes, however, I have discovered that working hours are eaten up by too many meetings. Meetings that are sometimes not so operating close, I would rather have been visits classrooms instead (principal, private12B)

I do not think I have the potential to be the educational leader who I consider my mission is all about. My time is eaten up by things that have everything from real estate and ventilation to issues of sand and various schemes to do (preschool leader, private 12D)

Unfortunately not. Hindered by emails (inquiries!), appointments and tasks such as fire safety, playground materials, food rations, maid service, financial reports, mail sorting, etc. as others would better for these tasks should be doing (preschool leader, public 12D)

Insufficiency is an experience described in situations when everyday hassles take over from what their assignment should really contain.

**Premises/Physical conditions**

Principals and preschool leaders pinpoint premises (as well other physical conditions, see below) as contributory factors in preventing them from fulfilling certain assignment-related ambitions satisfactorily. The main criticism is that the premises are too small for the activities the respondents wish to develop. They do not specify whether the intended development is, for example, some special pedagogy in need of bigger premises or if the premises are just overcrowded, in general terms. Restrictions caused by localities are seldom mentioned as such but are highlighted in connection with the attitude of the responsible authority to the organization or with economic restrictions that are impossible to affect. Some voices are they

… have to walk through the property regularly (principal, private 12D)

Too much staff, responsible for the premises and the work associated with the premises, but I can not change it because the premises are technical administration. Overtime. Too little knowledge of ventilation (principal, public 12A)
Further, principals and preschool leaders who work in different schools that are located far from one another refer to the distance as a preventer. To keep moving continually between two working places or always having a bad conscience for not spending enough time in either of them was emphasized by the respondents who highlighted premises, locations and distances as among the major preventers in everyday life.

**Discussion**

Firstly, the preliminary results of the analysis are that the assignment includes phenomena that are legitimate to express. We refer here to what Stacey (2003, p. 667-671) call legitimate themes in organizations (and groups, in general). Themes contains phenomena that are formally / informally accepted in larger or smaller groups. It can be openly expressed and simultaneously maintain membership in the group. One example is political correctness. The concept of discourse indicates what is legitimate to speak of within a group. In the education in Sweden is an ongoing discussion about educational leadership and systematic quality work. The content of the talk has a sense of instrumentality, rationality, and linearity. The complicated has priority over the complex. But, practice is complex, not complicated. Everyday lives containing a series of paradoxes and dilemmas. Then, paradoxes and dilemmas are what we term as everyday hassles. This is what Alvesson & Sveningsson (2003) refer to as mundane leadership work instead of the ideal leadership (transformative leader, etc.) (Augustinsson & Brynolf 2012). In everyday hassle, we include the complex and the trivial, as a reasonable summary of responses to "What conditions do you have to do a good job" and "preventers and enablers".

It is evident that all principals are declaring they are working with what is called educational leadership and actively engaged in systematic quality work. Manager would not publicly say that they are not involved in educational leadership or systematic quality work. How they deal with these issues varies, however, to a greater or lesser degree.

The School inspectorates set limits what is, and what is not legitimate to talk about. In official contexts, it is seldom dissenting voices are heard from principals. Likewise emerges a criticism of the school inspectorate in personal communications (outside the legitimate room, in the shade) (Augustinsson et al. 2014). The documents and official conversations about the school and its leadership arise ideologies. This ideology is what is right and wrong. Ideology is evident in the responses to what the assignment is.
The legitimate themes consequently arise through the exercise of different types of power. Formal documents and conversations in formal settings is a kind of power. Some such examples are documents from the State School Board, school inspectorates and researchers. A further important legitimizing theme is the legislation that concerns schools. Other examples are equal education for pupils and inclusion in the classroom.

Included in the legitimate theme is also the economy. For example, if the principal exceeds the budget there will be a requirement for cuts. It is not legitimate in public to express that they do not care about the budget. Even if the budget is exceeded, relying on legitimate grounds on the basis of the law, the principal may have a requirement for financial cuts. The principal is facing a dilemma if there is a need, by law, to hire more teachers to pupils with special needs and at the same time the budget is exceeded. Municipalities set up the budget - the law regulates the schoolchildren educational settings. Furthermore, it is for a private school legitimate for the owners require a some level of economic performance.

Interpretation of the assignment, and ability to do a good job as well as preventers and enablers, providing contradictory images. Ambivalence, dilemmas, or what we call paradoxes show up here frequently [Stacey 2003]. Good teachers - bad teachers, shared leading of schools (the state - municipal), educational leadership (as manager being in the classroom or not). The respondents further report an extensive administrative burden that leads to perceptions of lack of time to do work they describe as legitimate.

The answers to the questions of what prevents and enables the assignment is full of contradictions, in comparison with the assignment in itself. It is not only ambivalence, but also schools ambiguity appears, on even larger scale. Everyday leadership is complex emerges in the answers. Not infrequently can also obvious enablers simultaneously be something that prevents them from completing the assignment.

Legitimate themes, daily hassles, and physical abilities are premises for doing a good job is a summary of the above. The experience of everyday hassle takes over appears relatively clear. That daily hassle takes over, is also the preliminary results from focus group interviews. These results are the same as from practice based research on leadership [Alvesson & Sveningsson 2003; Holmberg & Tyrstrup 2010].
What emerges in the above is different tensions between the various phenomena / factors such as the physical environment, the legitimate themes, and everyday hassles (see Figure 2). Various tensions are one sort of paradoxes and complexities principals have to handle in a skilled way.

*Figure 2: Different parts that interact with each other, and managers have to handle.*

This reminds us of “The Bonnie Situation” scene from the “Pulp Fiction” film. After Jules (Samuel L. Jackson) and Vincent (John Travolta), the gangsters, have made a mess of everything by killing somebody in the wrong place, they finally get in touch with The Wolf (Harvey Keitel). The Wolf immediately takes command and fixes everything by cleaning up after Vincent and Jules so that ordinary life can go on as usual. Principals and preschool leaders recurrently describe their workday as if they were Mr Wolf in a world of Vincents and Jules. Such a role takes too much time and resources from what the respondents claim that they would really want to devote their workday to.
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