

A Fragile Autonomy in a Performativity Culture?

Exploring Positions in the Recontextualising Field in a Norwegian rural municipality

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Internationally, the autonomy of schools and teachers is under pressure. In Norway, recent policies emphasise output control through national testing, combined with holding schools and teachers accountable for students' results that are then ranked and made public. Whereas recent research documents that the autonomy of schools and teachers is weakening in Oslo, there is little research on the rural parts of Norway.

Recent political intentions aim to improve the results by establishing a better *learning environment* and *classroom management*. These intentions are related to the regulative discourse, which is crucial to control as it dominates the instructional discourse. Two different projects were implemented in a rural municipality. Analysing their positions on three levels (author, actor and identity) this study finds considerable autonomy from the state in the pedagogic recontextualising field. However, this autonomy may be fragile as the teachers seem to have surrendered personal values. If teachers are disciplined, then the state may effectively reduce the potential discursive gap by reducing the autonomy of key agents in education. Investigating teachers' rationalisations is imperative if we are to understand the relations between interests, ideology and class, and thereby the potential for autonomy in the recontextualising field in a performativity culture.

Key words: recontextualising field, autonomy, Bernstein, rural Norway, performativity, regulative discourse

Word count: 7887

Introduction

Internationally, education is regarded as the key to economic development (European Commission 2017). In this *knowledge economy* (Ball 2017, NOU 2016), nation-states are vying to improve their international rankings on tests, such as PISA from the OECD. In the recent *Knowledge Promotion* (2006) curriculum reform, Norway has emphasised a strong

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economic approach by regarding human capital as the most important element in a country's economic strength. Norway has responded to current international trends by introducing a reform characterised by contradiction as it simultaneously increases both decentralisation and centralisation (see Apple 2006, Ball 2017, Bernstein 2000). The reform is characterised by decentralisation, where the municipalities and schools are assigned more responsibility for how the school is run and are given autonomy over deciding teachers' use of teaching methods. This is combined with centralisation of output control through national testing of students' basic competencies (see Hovdenak and Stray 2015). However, in an international perspective, the follow-up and control can be described as low-stakes accountability, as this accountability is combined with a relatively high level of professional trust and collaboration (Hovdhaugen, Vibe and Seland, 2017). The students are tested in reading, numeracy and English in the beginning of the fifth, eighth and ninth school years, and the schools' results are then ranked and made public on the national website *Skoleporten.no*. Ball (2003, 216) refers to such policy technology as *performativity*. 'Performativity is a technology, a culture and a regulatory mode that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition and change according to a system of rewards and sanctions (both material and symbolic)'.

Internationally, it has been widely documented that the autonomy of schools and teachers is under great pressure in the performativity culture, where suspicion is expressed as to whether the competence of teachers is good enough, followed by emphasis on standardised methods and evidence-based practice (Ball 2017; Apple 2006; Ravitch 2010; Wermke and Forsberg 2017). In Norway, recent research documents similar trends in Oslo's schools, describing a growing fear among school principals (cf. Bjordal 2016) and teachers (Haugen 2017a) over not following the prescribed methods and standards suggested by the educational authorities. In Oslo, the pressure for results and the competition level between schools are considered to

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be especially high within the Norwegian context (Bjordal, 2016, Haugen 2017a). However, Ball, Maguire and Braun (2012) argue that local conditions are important if we are to understand how schools do policy, and there is a lack of research documenting the conditions for teacher autonomy in rural parts of Norway, where the population characteristics, competition between schools and the stakes differ from Oslo.

In this context, I will look into the conditions for autonomy in a rural community in Norway, analysing two different projects related to improving the *learning environment* and *classroom management* in two schools. Looking into these specific themes is especially relevant as they have become key focal points in the Norwegian government's approach to improving students' learning outcomes. As stated in White paper no. 28 (2015/2016, 67-68):

Teachers and school leaders, the major professions in school, are vitally important for students' learning outcome and the learning environment in school where ...the teacher's classroom management and relational competence are...decisive for the students' learning outcome.

Learning environment and classroom management constitute what Bernstein refers to as the *regulative discourse*, which he defines as a 'moral discourse which creates order, relations and identity' (Bernstein 2000, 32). It describes the forms hierarchical relations take, for example the characteristics of the relation between teacher and student, as well as the expectations about conduct, character and manner in the classroom. According to Bernstein, the regulative discourse dominates the *instructional discourse*, which 'creates specialized skills and their relationships to each other' (Bernstein 2000, 32), or what in this context could be described as learning outcomes.

It should be stated that in this context *learning environment* and *classroom management* are regarded as expressions for first and foremost the regulative discourse. Looking at how these

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terms are used in policy documents (cf. quotation above), it could be argued that learning environment is related to the school collective, while classroom management relates to the individual teacher's work. However, both in policy documents and in the two projects under investigation here, the school collective's and teachers' work are closely intertwined, and both are addressed simultaneously. Therefore, it is not the terms learning environment and classroom management as such that are under investigation, but how **the two** pedagogic projects are positioned in order to recontextualise the political intentions of improving the learning environment and classroom management to form a regulative discourse in both the school's and teachers' work. **Thus**, the characteristics of the learning environment and classroom management will dominate what characterises the learning of specialised skills, or what in this context is referred to as learning outcomes. **This means that if the state is to increase its control over the pedagogic discourse of the schools, it is crucial to gain control over the regulative discourse.**

At the same time, Ball et al. (2012) state that the 'crisis' in public education also creates a market that for-profit providers can enter, where behaviour and discipline (i.e. the regulative discourse) are key components. In **this rural** municipality, two very different pedagogic projects were implemented to improve the local schools' learning environment and classroom management. One is an American evidence-based programme entitled 'School-Wide Positive Behavioural Intervention and Support' (SW_PBIS), which has been translated into Norwegian and given the name 'Positive Behavioural and Supportive Learning Environment' (henceforth: PALS). The PALS programme is rooted in the state ministries and agencies. The second project, entitled 'Relation-Based Classroom Management' (henceforth: RBCM), is autonomous and privately run. **What is interesting is that** the head of the municipal education authority stated in an interview that she has had a very negative response to the PALS

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programme as she felt that it 'goes against the basic values of both Norwegian education and the values of this municipality', whereas the RBCM project was regarded as 'in line with the fundamental purpose of schooling in Norway and the specific value statements of this municipality'. In other words, she found the state-related programme to be unsuitable, and the private programme suitable.

Analysing the positions of PALS and RBCM in this rural municipality can illuminate current tensions between positions and the potential for autonomy because political intentions for improving the learning environment and classroom management are recontextualised within a performativity culture. At the same time, such an analysis can also address the role private actors can play in a contradictory governing context where the state control over schools' and teachers' work can be described as both increasing and decreasing (cf. above).

The aim of this paper is

To explore tensions between different positions within the Pedagogic

Recontextualising Field and the potential for autonomy from the state in one rural

Norwegian municipality.

Theoretical and Methodological Approach

Basil Bernstein's theory on how power and control work in and through education is useful for analysing the potential for the autonomy schools and teachers have from the state.

Bernstein points to the spaces that are difficult (but important) for the state to gain control over, that is where the potential for autonomy lies when political intentions are translated into pedagogic practices. As the political intentions on improving the learning environment and

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classroom management in school become more of a pedagogic discourse, **Bernstein claims that** the discourse is transformed and ideology comes into play. It can therefore be difficult for the state to control the pedagogic discourse as in itself it represents a *recontextualising principle* which creates recontextualising fields and agents with recontextualising functions (Bernstein 2000):

The recontextualising field has a crucial function in creating the autonomy of education. We can distinguish between an *official recontextualising field* (ORF) created and dominated by the state and its selected agents and ministries, and a *pedagogic recontextualising field* (PRF). The latter consists of pedagogues in schools and colleges, and departments of education, specialised journals, private research foundations. If the PRF can have an effect on pedagogic discourse independently of the ORF, then there is both some autonomy *and* struggle over pedagogic discourse and its practices (Bernstein 2000, 33).

As educational policies are based on compromises, conflicting values are normally found in them, tearing schools in different ideological directions (Bernstein 1977; Apple 2006; Haugen 2014, 2010). There is a tendency today, however, where the 'state is attempting to weaken the PRF through its ORF, and thus attempting to reduce relative autonomy over the construction of the pedagogic discourse and over its contexts' (Bernstein 2000, 33). Bearing this in mind, and **as already stated above**, controlling the regulative discourse is crucial because of its dominance over the instructional discourse. This means that the **translation of the** political intentions on improving classroom management and the learning environment represent an important site for an ideological struggle when it comes to having influence over the pedagogic discourse in schools.

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Singh, Thomas and Harris (2013, 465) argue that 'mid-level policy actors are crucial to the work of policy interpretation and translation because they are engaged in elaborating the condensed codes of policy texts to an imagined logic of teachers' practical work'. In this context, PALS and RBCM represent translations of the policy intentions for improving the learning environment and classroom management. To analyse their *positions* (Bernstein 2000, 62), three different levels are analysed: *author*, *actor* and *identity*. *Author* refers to the authoritative discourse describing the theoretical and epistemological anchoring of PALS and RBCM, as well as their stated aims for the learning environment and classroom management. *Actor* refers to the sponsors, describing who finances and runs the enterprise, its size and role, as well as their relation to the state. *Identities* are the outcome of pedagogic specialisations through the interactional practice describing characteristics of roles and communication within the pedagogic contexts where PALS and RBCM are used.

Classification and framing are useful tools for analysing and comparing roles and communication in the interactional practices of PALS and RBCM, but also for relating the practices to ideology and class-. *Classification* is used to describe power relations through the degree of isolation between categories. In this case classification can describe the degree of isolation between such actors as teachers and students, or school and parents. Additionally, it can describe the specific characteristics or what counts as legitimate expectations in a given context. Hence, legitimate relations between categories or legitimate features for a specific context are established through classification. The degree of isolation can be strongly or weakly classified (+/- C) which provides opportunities to both describe and compare similarities and differences between roles and contexts of PALS and RBCM.

Framing establishes legitimate communications appropriate to different categories *within* a specific context. As with classification, framing can also be described as weak or strong (+/- F). When the transmitter has explicit control over the communication, the framing is

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characterised as strong, and weak when the acquirer has more apparent control. Framing refers to two interwoven systems: the *instructional discourse*, referring to control over selection, sequencing, pacing and criteria, and the *regulative discourse*, referring to a moral discourse that creates order, relations and identity. As mentioned above, the regulative discourse describes the hierarchical relations in the pedagogic relation and the expectations for conduct, character and manner. When there is strong framing, the hierarchical relation between teacher and student is clear, where being conscientious, attentive and receptive is likely emphasised. When there is weak framing, the hierarchical relation between teacher and student is blurred, as the student is expected to be creative and to make his or her mark in the pedagogic situation (Bernstein 2000).

The classification and framing characteristics can be related to different pedagogic orientations, whose distinctions, according to Bernstein (2000), are based on an ideological conflict between the old and the new middle class. A *visible pedagogy*, typically characterised by strong classification and strong framing, is a conservative form where clear hierarchical relations between teacher and student are emphasised and where there are explicit criteria for the student to relate to. Whereas an *invisible pedagogy*, characterised by weak classification and weak framing, is a progressive form, emphasising implicit hierarchical rules and criteria. Thus, through analysing classification and framing characteristics, PALS and RBCM can be related to ideological and power relations.

To summarise: Bernstein's theory is useful for analysing autonomy in the translation of political intentions to practice, as he points out where the potential for autonomy from the state lies in the recontextualising field. At the same time, his framework for analysing positions within the pedagogic recontextualising field provides a tool for describing and

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comparing PALS and RBCM, as well as relating the micro practices to power and ideology. Thus, the comparison can point out what characterises current conflicts within the recontextualising field when aiming to improve the learning environment and classroom management, illuminating both what is at stake and the potential for autonomy from the state.

The analysis is based on the following data material:

Data Material

Author

PALS. When analysing author, the data for the PALS programme is taken from the Norwegian book presenting the programme: Arnesen, A., Ogden, T. & Sørli, M.A. (2006). *Positive behaviour and supportive learning environment in school*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, Chapter 2 'The Theoretical Foundation', and Chapter 1: 'Why comprehensive work on school?'. The authors of the book are working on the implementation and evaluation of PALS at NUBU (*The Norwegian Centre for Child Behavioural Development*¹), which is responsible for the project in the Norwegian setting.

RBCM. When analysing the author of RBCM, the data material used is taken from the presentation of the project, found at the website of the *Institute for Relation-Based Leadership*, which is responsible for the project:

<http://www.inrel.no/OmInstituttet/tabid/1172/Default.aspx>

Actor

¹ NUBU was previously called *Atferdssenteret (The Behaviour Centre)*. The name was changed in March 2017.

PALS. When analysing the actor, the data for the PALS programme is taken from the *NUBU* website:

<http://www.nubu.no/om-oss/category7.html>

<http://www.nubu.no/historie/category1249.html>

These webpages provide information about the centre: its history, management, staff and role divisions.

RBCM. The data for analysing the actor in RBCM has also been taken from the website of the *Institute for Relation-Based Leadership*, which presents the management, staff and role divisions:

<http://www.inrel.no/OmInstituttet/tabid/1172/Default.aspx>

In addition, interviews of the school principals and the municipal head of the education authority serve as the data material for the actor category for both PALS and RBCM. In the interviews, the informants talked about how the projects started, how they were financed and how they were supported.

Identity

When analysing identity, the data material consists of nine interviews of actors related to the two schools where PALS and RBCM have been implemented. It is interesting to compare the

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work of these two schools on the regulative discourse as they are located in the same municipality and share many characteristics:²

- Both schools were experiencing behavioural problems when PALS and RBCM were implemented
- Both schools receive financial support for the implementation of PALS and RBCM, and the municipal educational authorities agreed on the pedagogic approach of the projects at the time they were implemented. (However, the PALS school has lost support as the municipality has a new head of the education authority who finds the PALS values problematic)
- Most teachers in both schools are described as enthusiastic about implementing PALS and RBCM
- The student groups are similar in terms of parental background, with relatively low levels of education among the parents
- Both schools are located in rural communities
- Both schools have worked on PALS and RBCM for six years when the interviews were conducted

Interviews were carried out with:

- The municipal head responsible for both schools
- The two school principals
- One teacher at the PALS school and three teachers at the RBCM school

² One difference between the schools is that the PALS school has years 1 to 10, while the RBCM school has years 8 to 10. However, it is important to state that neither PALS nor RBCM are designed for a specific age-group and are used in both primary and lower-secondary school elsewhere.

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- Two parents³ from the PALS school (one positive to PALS and who is also working at the school, one negative to PALS)

The interviews lasted from one to one and a half hours and focused on the background for implementing the two projects, how they were received, how the different actors at the schools worked with the projects, how various students responded to them, and different opinions about the projects. To focus on the informants' *experiences* with PALS and RBCM, it was important to understand why they responded positively/negatively to the projects.

In the following, the position of the two projects will be analysed by looking into the three levels: author, actor and identity (cf. Bernstein above).

Presentation of findings

Author

To analyse the author, as stated above, the focus is on the authoritative discourse, which is operationalised here as theoretical and epistemological anchoring, as well as the projects' intentions.

PALS as Author

The PALS programme builds on a 'multi-theoretical foundation...on psychological theories about how behaviour is developed through interplay between children and the environment'

³ The parents are especially relevant for the PALS programme as there was a conflict between the school and parents about it. This has been examined in another article (cf. Haugen 2017b).

(Arnesen, Ogden and Sørli, 2006, 31-32). The authors refer to Bronfenbrenner (1979) to anchor the PALS programme as an *ecological perspective* on students and school, meaning that children's development is viewed as a 'progressive, reciprocal adjustment between children in development and an environment in change'. Furthermore, *developmental psychopathology* is regarded as important for understanding and explaining children's development of problematic behaviour, emphasising how deviating behaviour and development are connected to normative behaviour. '*Social control theory* and *social connection theory* explain why the individual *does not* break norms and rules or the law, as opposed to looking at why someone commits such actions' (Arnesen, Ogden and Sørli 2006, 40).

In other words, referring to the multi-theoretical contribution to PALS, the authors state that:

Preventive and competence-raising work on the social climate in school has to affect behaviour through internal self-regulation, often by means of appropriate external influence in the form of informal social support and control. The students should experience that prosocial behaviour is more functional than antisocial behaviour, and rather develop an internal commitment that is about (that is based on) acting in a socially competent manner (Arnesen, Ogden and Sørli 2006, 41-42).

The epistemological anchoring of PALS is based on *evidence-based practice* and *what works*. It is argued that '[t]he school's efforts should... be based on empirical fact rather than supposition and opinion, and one should prioritise efforts that have proven to be effective through controlled evaluation studies' (Arnesen, Ogden and Sørli 2006, 19).

The intention of the implementation is to promote both social and behavioural learning as well as to achieve results related to learning outcome (cf. Arnesen, Ogden and Sørli 2006, 16).

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PALS as author can be related to an old middle-class discourse, a visible pedagogy, as it emphasises strong hierarchical relations between teacher and students, where effective reduction of problem behaviour to improve learning outcomes is the main goal. The programme is not interested in what motivates or what the student try to communicate through problem behaviour or the student as a person. Rather, what counts most is 'that the students actually behave in a prosocial manner' (Arnesen et al. 2006, 25), treating all students the same way, through standardised, evidence-based methods.

RBCM as Author

The theoretical anchoring of RBCM is described as 'existential and humanistic ways of working' (Institute for Relation-Based Leadership 2017).

We believe that new experiences (emotions) and new insight (thoughts) create the most long-lasting changes in our ways of relating to oneself and each other. The institute's point of departure is in recent research demonstrating that people thrive and develop best in relations characterised by equality.

The epistemological anchoring is experience-based and personal: 'We take the here and now as our point of departure, and this includes the person's or leader's own experienced problems in everyday life' (Institute for Relation-Based Leadership 2017).

The intention of RBCM is that the professionals develop an assuring and transparent relation-based leadership that is characterised by an environment of equality and authenticity, and being personal and acknowledging of others.

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In other words, in Table 1 we see that the authoritative discourse of PALS and RBCM are positioned in very different theoretical backgrounds and epistemological approaches, and their intentions are also different:

RBCM as author can be related to a new middle-class discourse, an invisible pedagogy, through its focus on teachers and students as persons, and on experience-based and personal knowledge that is based on relations characterised by equality and authenticity. It does not explicitly relate to improving learning outcomes; personal growth is the main focus.

How the authoritative discourse of the two programmes plays out as visible and invisible pedagogies in interactional practice is examined in more detail in the analysis of identity.

[insert Table 1 here]

Actor

Actor refers to the sponsors, i.e. the ones who are responsible for PALS and RBCM, their size and role, and their relation to the state.

PALS as Actor

The translation, further development and adjustment of the SW_PBIS programme to a Norwegian context (PALS) has been carried out by *the Norwegian Centre for Child Behavioural Development (NUBU)*. This institute was established by the Ministry for Children and Equality and the University of Oslo in 2003 and is rooted in both the Official (ORF) and Pedagogic Recontextualising Fields (PRF). The centre has 45 employees and its

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board is appointed by the owners (the University of Oslo), contributing faculties, institutes and departments, and one representative elected by the employees at NUBU.

The role of the centre is 'to create an environment for research on the issue of problem behaviour, to develop and implement programmes and initiatives and to evaluate what works. The centre also aims to contribute to the creation of a national network for research and methodological development in the field'. **In a recent evaluation of the centre, it has been found to have strengthened the political agenda on increasing the use of evidence-based programmes in both Norway and the Nordic countries (Forskningsrådet 2016).** The PALS programme (which is one of several programmes offered by the centre) has been implemented in 7.7% of the primary and lower secondary schools across the country.

The municipal head of the education authority and the principal at the PALS school have stated in the interviews that government officials pushed the programme onto the municipality, inviting all schools in the municipality to participate. The municipal head of the education authority at that time (the head changed during the period when the school worked with PALS) recommended that schools should make an agreement with NUBU to implement the PALS programme. However, few schools in the municipality wanted to participate in the PALS programme.

RBCM as Actor

The RBCM project is supplied by the *Institute for Relation-Based Leadership AS*, which, like NUBU, was founded in 2003. The institute is a private foundation established by a married couple with teaching and family-therapist backgrounds, with the support of a recognised author and family therapist in the Nordic countries, an organisational psychologist and a psychiatrist.

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The institute has no direct links to the ORF, but acts as a private actor in the PRF, providing courses, further education and counselling to different groups and leaders in the public and private sectors. The enterprise provides its own teaching and specially designed courses ordered by their numerous clients.

According to the principal at the RBCM school, the project was supported by the municipal head of the education authority and offered to most schools in the municipality. The school also received financial support from the central educational authorities to improve the learning environment, but without strings attached when it came to how the school wanted to work on their learning environment. Due to this approach, there was no direct link between the ORF and the RBCM project.

Table 2 shows that PALS and RBCM are very different actors, in terms of their sponsors, size and role in Norwegian education:

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Identities

The identities category refers to the outcome of pedagogic specialisations. A descriptive analysis of the interactional practice of PALS and RBCM is presented and compared here by exploring classification and framing characteristics of relations between contexts, teachers, students, and parents and school. The outcome is presented through the nine informants' descriptions of the experienced effects of the PALS and RBCM projects.

Classification between and Framing over Contexts

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PALS. The PALS programme is characterised by strong classification (+C) between contexts and arenas. First the teachers work on modelling what is considered to be good behaviour in all arenas, for example how to behave in the hallway, classroom and schoolyard. Together with the modelling they have a stock of 'GOOD cards' that they award to children behaving in the correct way, a strong framing (+F) of evaluation criteria. During a typical school-day, each teacher awards about 300 cards to students. At the end of the week, the cards for the whole class are collected and counted. If the class together meets the requirements for a set number of cards, they are given a collective reward. This could be, for example, watching a movie and eating popcorn.

Different experienced outcomes were reported in the interviews:

PALS was a good, systematic tool to use in specific areas. What we especially liked was the focus on praising and rewarding. Through PALS we changed our ways of behaving with the students. Instead of yelling and shouting, and focusing on negative behaviour, we focused on what was good. Through focusing on what was good, we established positive contact between teachers and students. Moreover, an 'expulsion chair' was sometimes used if our students didn't behave in the correct way.

We had very clear rules of behaviour in all arenas. And we did NOT focus on when the students behaved the wrong way, but rather rewarded those who behaved in the right way. If we praised one student for picking up his book and starting to read, and praised the student in a way so that other students noticed the appraisal, other students wanted that attention too, and also started reading in their books. The GOOD cards became a very concrete way of showing awareness of all the students. The rewards actually became the whole project, the main goal in a way. It was positive to have a common goal for the whole class.

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However, parents expressed concern, as some students experienced difficulty in understanding the reward system: 'sometimes you get rewards for one kind of behaviour, other times, not'. They also experienced that some students were rewarded whilst others were not rewarded for the same type of behaviour.

RBCM. The classification and framing over contexts in RBCM have the opposite characteristics as PALS. RBCM is characterised by weak classification (-C), as it emphasises few common rules at the school and rather states that the teacher should set his/her own rules. There is also weak framing (-F) as each teacher has a high degree of autonomy when it comes to shaping the rules and communication in their own classrooms.

As in PALS, students can sometimes experience difficulty in grasping the rules in the contexts:

The discussions we used to have on chewing gum and wearing a cap are gone, as each teacher sets their own rules in the classroom. So, some students find it kind of hard to understand, because each teacher has their own rules. In his classes you can listen to music while you work, in my classes, no. But after a while the students get used to it.

Classification between and Framing over Teachers and Their work

PALS. The PALS programme is based on two basic premises: that there is high degree of implementation, and that the intervention should cover the entire school. This can be described as a weak classification (-C) between the teachers as teacher autonomy is weak, whilst the framing is strong (+F), as all teachers are expected to follow the same criteria for

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what counts as legitimate performance of their pedagogic work. The programme sets the rules for legitimate communication.

The teachers' experiences were described as follows:

What we liked about PALS was that it was a systematic tool for the school to work with behavioural problems. There was 100% support for the PALS programme among the teachers and because of it teachers made fewer trips to the principal's office to deal with behavioural problems. It was good for us teachers to be given specific and clear instructions, we had clear ways of behaving and responding in all arenas. This helped us as we have many students who are struggling with behavioural problems. PALS made the work very easy and concrete. This is a 'we-school' where we stand together as colleagues.

The experience the parents had, however, was that the teachers were unclear in their communication and lacked good arguments for what they were doing: 'Instead of giving professional arguments for their actions, they responded: 'because we are a PALS school, the PALS team at the school has said so, and we are loyal to the system'.

RBCM. RBCM is characterised by strong classification (+C) between teachers as a high degree of teacher autonomy is emphasised by giving each teacher much responsibility to form his/her work. The quotation below exemplifies this:

You can be faithful to yourself in the teaching, I love that. I guess I wasn't always faithful to the common rules earlier (laughter). Through the RBCM I am acknowledged for being myself and doing what I do. You impart things differently when you can be yourself, use yourself. If you play a role that doesn't fit you, you

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automatically get uptight. And I guess the teaching becomes more interesting when you can use your initiative too than if you just follow what someone else has decided.

However, at the same time, focus was on the school collective, characterised by weak classification (-C) between the teachers, as all the teachers participated in the RBCM at the school. The teachers were described as having joint responsibility for the students, where they worked in teams so they could adjust the teaching to the students' needs. Bearing this in mind, the teachers' autonomy operates within frames that could be described as strong (+F), which forms the criteria for what counts as legitimate communication within the school collective: to 'promote dialogue and equality', but also 'to be a clear and transparent leader'.

Being a relational leader is really about having very clear boundaries. This is hard, because you have to stand up as the reference point: I like this, I can cope with this, I can handle this, this is okay or not, this is how I want it to be.

All teachers have to work with themselves: Look at yourself, and your way of acting, earlier experiences, find out why you react the way you do as a teacher. It takes blood, sweat and tears to do that. And although we have worked on this for six years, it is still easy to revert to old sins, screaming and shouting and so on. Some have found the work on the RBCM to be rather easy, while others don't really manage to open up to this way of thinking because you also have to reconstruct yourself. It comes at a cost.

The strong framing is evident in the following quotation:

All teachers do the same here, and we are all at the same level in the hierarchy. We play different roles, but have the same rights. We use dialogue as our tool, and we don't yell and shout. The point is to avoid getting very angry and offensive.

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Whether the criteria for legitimate communication are always good is problematised by one of the teachers:

However, I guess it could be good for a student to learn that others can be really angry with you if you do this and that. That is also something to learn. But I guess one can get mad without being insulting or offensive. No students are insulted in public here. It's all about dialogue.

Thus, teacher autonomy is strong in the sense that the teachers should establish their own boundaries and see themselves as the reference point, but the framing is strong in how the interactional practice is to be carried out, as there are clear criteria for what counts as legitimate communication through the basic principles. In this way the classification and framing over teachers and their work have to a high degree the same characteristics in PALS and RBCM, although the RBCM project apparently gives more autonomy to teachers.

Classification between and Framing over Students and Their Work

PALS. The PALS programme has been 'adjusted to the students' risk and functional level'. The students were mapped and then categorised as low, middle or high risk depending on their behaviour. Bearing this in mind, PALS is characterised by a strong classification (+C) between different students, combined with strong framing, as actions are adjusted in terms of focus, extent and intensity according to the student category. The high-risk students are followed-up in a closer way, where all behaviour throughout the day is registered, with the teachers talking with the students at the start and end of the day to review the goals and whether they have been met by the students. The positive behavioural support of the GOOD

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cards is a key part of the pedagogic work. In rare situations, punishment in the form of an 'expulsion chair' is used, where students who do not comply with the rules are placed. The following experiences were expressed:

We experienced that getting GOOD cards was important to most of the students. Our experience was that PALS was especially positive for students demonstrating a lot of disruptive behaviour. These are students who normally receive a lot of negative responses from adults, so with this way of thinking we actually turned our attention on to what was positive.

The critical parents and municipal head of the education authority, on the other hand, claimed that students reacted differently to the positive behavioural support. They expressed concern about some students, especially obedient girls, being *anxious* about not being good enough, although they had never demonstrated disruptive behaviour in the first place. Other students, typically older boys, demonstrated *resistance* to the system, leading some students to work hard at *not* getting good cards or throwing them around and cutting them into pieces. Moreover, some parents were worried about the long-term effects of PALS and what the children were actually learning from the programme.

RBCM. The RBCM project emphasises a weak classification (-C) between students in the sense that they are treated individually, but with no standardisation in terms of categorisation/grouping.

For us it doesn't matter what aims the students have for their future. The most important thing is that they develop into confident people who can make their own

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choices in life. It is okay if they want to work in a supermarket or become a doctor. You have to look at where the students' talents lie, and acknowledge them for who they are. You don't need to have big goals for everybody, you have to accept their differences. They need to hear that they are okay, whatever the case.

The framing is also weak (-F), as the students' needs and the students' expressions are important for how situations are handled:

It's about listening to the student, and then making a choice as to what to do, together with the student or as adults. A lot of programmes focus on changing the student into what we want. In this project, it is about me as a teacher changing my way of acting, and in that way creating a good developmental environment for the student. Let's say that the student forgets his books every week. It doesn't help to punish him. He needs more support from adults to help him to bring his books to school. Or if he makes trouble in class, it can often be a sign that he is floundering in the subject, trying to hide his failure. Then we have to work from that perspective.

We work in close cooperation with the students. We have regular meetings in which we address such problems as bullying. And we emphasise dialogue in other settings, base-groups where students are with their form teachers regularly, sitting in a ring talking. We have small groups where we discuss different subjects, we have team-leader meetings where we always address student cases. In the student council, the learning environment is always the focus of discussion. We get a good idea about what is going on in the school, both good and bad, and it sometimes disturbs my night's sleep. But if we don't know the problem, we can't deal with it. We have to have a dialogue with the students so we can know what's going on. Our philosophy is

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that bullying starts with small conflicts. We prioritise the social base before the actual knowledge learning.

The experienced effects are very positive on the general learning environment, as well as discovering problems, according to the informants:

It really works! We have some students who were reported as being extremely difficult before they came to our school. When they come here, we wait for an 'explosion'. We see that they are restless, but after a while, it depends on them as well, they land on their feet and feel that they are safe here. They realise that all the adults, we do the same, even though we have different tolerance limits. We see it with their learning outcomes as well, they learn a lot! And these are students who come here with very low levels of reading and writing. I think it is about accepting them as they are, not putting them into categories.

People who visit our school wonder what's going on, there's no noise. It's a lot calmer here now, the students realise that they are being taken seriously at our school, and they don't demonstrate oppositional and rebellious behaviour anymore. This is evident for those of us who have worked at this school for a long time. Of course, these are not 100% positive stories. But we reach most of the students.

We spend less time on conflict management. I don't know if it improves the learning outcome, but we have more time to do schoolwork now.

We listen to the students and sometimes we have to send cases to the educational-psychological service or to the child welfare service if we discover learning disabilities or children experiencing problems at home.

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Classification between School and Parents and Framing over Communication

PALS. PALS is based on *multimodal interventions*, implying that the work is carried out simultaneously at different levels (for example school level, group level and individual level), and both inside and outside school, and in the family. Due to the emphasis on parents being involved in the programme, the classification between school and parents is weak (-C). The framing of the communication is strong (+F) as there are clear criteria for what counts as legitimate communication in the PALS programme.

We found the collaboration with parents to be generally good. Most parents are positive to the PALS programme. However, there has been a long-lasting dispute with a rather small group of parents who disagree strongly with the programme. It was challenging that some parents did not have more faith in us and were not confident in our judgements.⁴

Parents who respond negatively to PALS describe the dialogue between school and parents as closed, and that they had lost their voice as parents. They experienced that the teachers had surrendered their professional judgements to the programme and were unwilling to change this pedagogy. Some parents were told to move to a different school if they were dissatisfied with the programme.

RBCM. Similar to PALS, the RBCM project emphasises a weak classification (-C) between school and parents through close collaboration. The communication is characterised by both strong (+F) and weak framing (-F).

⁴ The dispute with the group of parents lasted six years, which eventually led the school to opt out of the programme. This conflict has been analysed and discussed in a separate article (see Haugen 2017b).

The framing is weak in the sense that the teachers state that they are interested in what the parents think.

We are honest with the parents, and we contact them to establish good collaboration.

We listen to what they think and how they see what is happening with their child, and how we can work together to solve a difficult situation. We have changed from blaming the students and parents to taking the responsibility ourselves.

The strong framing is related to how the principles from the RBCM project are also applied to the families with the aim of influencing how they raise their children.

It is difficult to enter into dialogue with some of the parents sometimes because there are still parents who believe in this old-fashioned punishment and reward upbringing. That is totally misunderstood. So, we use some time on parental behaviour. When we talk in the parent group, when we have concrete cases, we try to explain to the parents how we think about things. We're interested in feedback from the parent group and most of them are happy with our work.

When we talk to parents about a student not doing schoolwork that is expected, we start by telling them that this is normal. If you sit next to a student who is very good in English, you feel worse, and may want to hide that you don't manage the subject as well. We do this so the parents don't punish the student at home, and so we can work together to help the student.

Thus, the difference between the PALS and RBCM projects in the classification between school and parents and framing of communication is not evident. Both address a weak classification, and strong framing, although the RBCM project is less strict. One difference is that PALS teachers argue for the pedagogic practice, referring to the programme as the

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authority, while the RBCM teachers aim to make parents understand why they do what they do.

Summary of Analysis of Identity

The analysis of the interactional practice of the PALS and RBCM projects demonstrates that they are based on very different pedagogic identities. PALS emphasises a standardisation of legitimate behaviour and communication in all arenas, where teachers have little autonomy in their pedagogic work, where students are categorised and supervised so that they comply with the standardised behaviour, and where parents have little influence on the pedagogic work at the school. The interactional practice is founded on strong hierarchies where teachers, students and parents lose their voices. The PALS programme strongly frames all relations, defining the PALS values as the only legitimate forms of communication. **Thus, through the strong hierarchies between teacher and pupil, where the teacher is author and authority, PALS can be described as a visible pedagogy anchored in the old middle class.**

The interactional practice of the RBCM project is based on stronger teacher autonomy as there is no standardisation of their work. Using the basic principles of emphasising equality, dialogue and being a transparent and clear leader, the framing of contexts is dependent on the individual teacher's perspective. Students' voices are important for adjusting the teaching to meet their needs to develop as 'whole persons'. The relation between the school and parents is more complicated as a close dialogue between parents and the school is emphasised. But there is also a need to educate parents who teach their children according to values that conflict with the RBCM. **Thus, as RBCM emphasises weak hierarchies between teacher and student, where the student appears to be the author of the pedagogic practice, it can be described as an invisible pedagogy, typically anchored in the new middle class.**

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[Insert Table 3 here]

Discussion

The first step here is to summarise the analysis of the PALS and RBCM positions. They are very differently positioned as authors and actors, and at the identity level. This demonstrates that in the Norwegian context autonomy from the state is potentially strong in the pedagogic recontextualising field. The PALS and RBCM identities can be understood, according to Bernstein, as conflicting in their class relations, where the ideological positioning is based on their different views about forms of control. More specifically, the conflict is related to whether the pedagogy should build on 'variety against inflexibility, expression against repression, the inter-personal against the inter-positional' (Bernstein 1975, 126 in Bernstein 2000, 178-179).

The PALS programme is based on psychological theories and evidence-based practice where the goal is to improve social and behavioural learning and results on learning outcomes.

NUBU, the institute responsible for PALS, is a major national actor anchored in both the ORF and the PRF. Even so, it has not found strong footing in this municipality. The pedagogic identity of PALS is based on a visible pedagogy where standardisation, repression of voices and inter-positional relations are emphasised.

The RBCM project is anchored within existential and humanistic perspectives, focusing on experience-based and personal knowledge where the aim is to build relations between teachers and students that are characterised by equality and authenticity. The Institute for Relation-Based Leadership, responsible for RBCM, is a small private actor in the PRF, and in this municipality, it has achieved strong footing. The pedagogic identity of RBCM is based on

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an invisible pedagogy where variety in the teaching, students' expressions and inter-personal relations are emphasised.

Bearing in mind the ongoing Norwegian reforms based on management by objectives, national testing and holding schools and teachers accountable for students' outcomes (cf. the introduction), the RBCM project may challenge the state's intentions to improve school's regulative discourse through visible pedagogies and evidence-based practices as provided by the national actor NUBU. The fact that the Institute for Relation-Based Leadership gains such influence in this municipality also demonstrates that the current policies create a market for actors focusing on invisible pedagogies. *In this, the mid-level policy actors, such as the head of the municipal education authority and school principals, are key in creating a market for alternative pedagogies and thereby challenging the dominant discourse within the public schools. As demonstrated in this rural municipality, a small independent actor comes to play an important part in developing the regulative discourse in a different direction. In this way, the potential for disputes and autonomy in the recontextualising field is, as demonstrated in this context, strong in the contemporary Norwegian context.*

However, this study also demonstrates that the relation between class and ideology may be changing in the educational field. According to Bernstein (2000, 2001), teachers tend to value invisible pedagogies. This relation is not evident in this analysis, however, as most teachers at the PALS school experience and value the visible pedagogy of PALS positively, and even though they were in conflict with some parents for a period of six years because of the ideological anchoring (cf. Haugen 2017b). Vincent, Ball and Kemp (2004) argue that relating values, practices and attitudes to occupational categories may be too simplistic. In this study, most teachers at both the PALS and RBCM schools are described as loyal and positive to what has been decided, leaving teachers' personal values little room in the discussions on the regulative discourse at the two schools. If this is true in the larger picture, then the autonomy

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in the recontextualising field may be fragile. If teachers are disciplined, then controlling key persons, such as the municipal education-authority heads and school principals may be an effective way of controlling the schools' pedagogic discourse. Thus, Bernstein's theory on autonomy in the recontextualising field (cf. Apple 2002) may at the same time point to significant areas that reduce autonomy if the goal is to reduce the discursive gap between policy intentions and the schools' pedagogic discourse.

Bearing this in mind, important questions that must be raised relate to *how* autonomy or control is gained: what are the disciplining mechanisms? In another study (Haugen 2017b), the specific *context* in which teachers are operating seems to be an important source of influence for understanding the relation between interests, ideology and social class. The schools examined here share many characteristics (see description under data material). One of them is a challenging pedagogic situation. Both the PALS and RBCM projects treat the school collectively, where all teachers are expected to follow the same basic values (see the relation between teachers -C, +F). It may be the case that this collective approach is found to be positive by most teachers because it offers them an opportunity to limit personal responsibility and pressure, regardless of the projects' ideological anchoring (cf. Haugen 2017b).

Ball states that '[t]o set aside personal beliefs and commitments' (2003, 215) is part of the 'terrors of performativity' under the current state regulation. The expressed univocality at both the PALS school and the RBCM school may be indicators of teachers setting aside personal beliefs in the contemporary Norwegian context. Recent studies demonstrate that the competition for positive results on national tests is found to be an important disciplining element for the work of the school principals in Oslo, the Norwegian capital, (cf. Bjordal 2016), and teachers in Oslo are expressing that they fear sanctions and shame when the results are published (Haugen 2017a).

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In rural communities, where the competition may be weaker between the schools, the question is whether a performativity culture can still help to explain why teachers surrender personal values. There is little research available on how the performativity culture plays out and affects the autonomy of schools and teachers in the rural districts of Norway. The pressure may be increasing in the districts as the minister of education recently stated that municipalities and schools that fail to meet a minimum standard of achievement will be placed under tighter state scrutiny (Røe Isaksen 2017). Many of the rural communities have weaker results compared to the bigger cities. Additionally, a Master's degree dissertation has shown that in a small city (Tromsø), where the local educational authorities place relatively little emphasis on results, teachers still report stress over the national tests, as it is easy to identify which teacher is responsible for which results (Theodorsen 2017). The rural community where PALS and RBCM have been implemented is a lot smaller, and probably even more transparent than Tromsø. Thus, the pressure over results could be experienced as high in rural communities regardless of what degree of pressure there is from the local educational authorities and that there is a lack of competition between local schools. The head of the municipal education authority stated in the interview that although this municipality places relatively low pressure on results, the teachers '...still experience the pressure as high enough'. Nevertheless, whether the findings on teachers surrendering personal values in the two rural schools investigated here are relevant for the larger picture is a question that calls for further investigation.

Based on the analysis presented here, I maintain that gaining deeper insight into how teachers rationalise and value their work in a performativity culture is crucial if we are to understand the current construction of the relation between interest, ideology and class, and thereby the potential for autonomy in the recontextualising field.

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