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NEWLY ARRIVED PARENTS AND COLLABORATION IN SWEDISH SCHOOL CONTEXT: AN INTERACTIONALLY AND ETHNOMETHODOLOGICALLY INSPIRED ANALYSIS

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The purpose of this study is to analyse 1) newly arrived parents' accounts of collaboration in Swedish school context and 2) depicted triads and alliance constellations presented during interviews with recently arrived parents regarding the collaboration in Swedish school context. The study's analysis is based on secondary empirical material (empirical sequences from previously published qualitative analyses). Its analytical discoveries are presented as three themes: (1) collaboration identity through distancing, (2) invitation to collaboration alliance, and (3) home- and school-focused collaboration. Analysis shows that the parents dramatise the need for collaboration between teachers and parents and construct and reconstruct collaborative alliances and triads in their narratives. Members who appear in these interactions are parents, children, and teachers. In the parents' narratives about the collaboration, a picture emerges of an invitation to teachers to form an alliance partnership. The alliance partnership seems to strengthen stability in the triad with the objective of creating a successful collaboration in the children's best interests and to draw attention to the importance of parents' participation in collaboration in the school context. Successful collaboration in the school context seems to be a basic prerequisite for the successful involvement and integration of parents from different ethnic backgrounds into general society.

Keywords: education, pedagogy, collaborative triad, interpersonal interaction, intersectional perspective, recognition, qualitative method, reanalysis

Introduction

Since 2015, more than 70,000 children and adolescents came to Sweden, of whom more than 35,000 were unaccompanied (Swedish Migration Agency, 2018a-c, 2020a-c).¹ The big influx has been a challenge for the Swedish school system. During the following year, various initiatives were put in place to support the schools, such as mapping material of new arrivals' knowledge (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2016) and a compilation of good examples (Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, 2016).

Multiple scientific studies call attention to the importance of collaboration between parents and schools for the success of newly arrived children and adolescents (Bunar, 2015; Hamilton et al., 2000/2007). According to Hamilton et al. (2000/2007), support from home is crucial for success in school, and the importance of good collaboration between teachers and parents is emphasised. Initial discussions about earlier school experiences of students and parents are noted as a dimension of success for collaboration with families. Initial talks with students and their parents are seen as a good start on building a successful relationship, which together with genuine meetings promotes the collaboration.

Previous research shows that the parents' participation in school practice can basically be divided into two categories: (1) school-focused school involvement that

1 Some parts of this text were previously published in the thesis, "When collaboration becomes a struggle. A sociological analysis of a project in the Swedish juvenile care" (Basic, 2012), in the independent work at the second cycle, "Meeting with recently arrived refugee parents: a study of the meetings, expectations and collaboration in Swedish schools" (Johnsson & Blivik, 2016), and in the article, "Collaboration and identity work: a linguistic discourse analysis of immigrant students' presentations concerning different teachers' roles in a school context" (Björk, Danielsson, & Basic 2019).

includes participation in the classroom, at parent meetings, and in parent associations; and (2) home-focused parental involvement characterised by parents helping the children with their school work at home, serving breakfast before the school day, and going to individual meetings that the school requests (Andersson, 2004; Bouakaz, 2007; Bouakaz & Persson, 2007).

The aim of this study is to analyse newly arrived parents' accounts of collaboration in Swedish school context and the depicted triads and alliance constellations presented during interviews with recently arrived parents regarding the collaboration in Swedish school context. The study question is: How do recently arrived parents describe the collaboration with teachers in Swedish school?

In this study, qualitative methods (Flick, 2013; Silverman, 2015) are used to analyse recently arrived parents' accounts of the collaboration in Swedish schools. Empirical sequences (accounts) from previously published qualitative analyses in Bouakaz (2007) and Bouakaz & Persson (2007) are used to investigate the phenomenon of collaboration with new arrivals in the Swedish school context (see further information on the method and studies empirical material in section *Method: Reanalysis of qualitative secondary empirical material*, Corti & Bishop, 2005; Corti, 2007; Bouakaz & Persson, 2007; Fielding & Fielding, 2008; Medjedović, 2011; Basic, 2013; Wästerfors et al., 2013; Björk, Danielsson, & Basic 2019).

The empirical sequences from Bouakaz (2007) and Bouakaz & Persson (2007) that have been reanalysed in this study were gathered before the refugee crisis of 2015. An examination of previous research that was used together with theoretical starting points to aid the analysis of quotes from Bouakaz (2007) and Bouakaz & Persson (2007) shows that tendencies in conjunction with migrant crises that affect the education sector and the rest of

society are similar in nature in Sweden as in other countries (Hamilton et al., 2000/2007; Bouakaz 2007; Bouakaz & Persson 2007; Basic 2015; Bunar, 2015; Basic, 2018c; Björk, Danielsson, & Basic 2019). This study's contribution to knowledge lies in its nuanced analysis, aided by collaborative research (not only from the school context but also from other related fields, Andersson, 2004; Willumsen 2007; Røkenes & Hanssen 2007; Tallberg Broman, 2013; Jakobsson and Lundgren 2013; Basic, 2018a-b, 2019), as well as the use of concepts grounded in theory that characterize interactionist theory building and analysis (Simmel, 1950/1964; Caplow 1968; Blumer, 1969/1986; Garfinkel, 2002; Foster 2012; Bhopal & Preston, 2012; Fuller, 2018).

The study's analytical discoveries are presented in the following sections: (1) collaboration identity through distancing, (2) invitation to collaboration alliance, and (3) home- and school-focused collaboration.

Theory: Symbolic Interactionism, Ethnomethodology and Alliances

The study's general premise is interactionist, i.e., that people create meaning through social interaction. The study is also influenced, however, by an ethnomethodological perspective of how people present their social reality (Blumer, 1969/1986; Garfinkel, 2002). As Gubrium and Holstein (1997) point out, ethnomethodology does not want to explain what a social world is, but how it arises. From this perspective, the recently arrived parents' accounts and the analysis of these accounts can be viewed as meaning-creating activities to be used in the development and improvement of school activities (Scott & Lyman, 1968; Basic, 2012; Björk, Danielsson, & Basic 2019).

The focus for the analysis of the symbolic interactionism is presented in queries about how the individual defines the situation, how the individual presents him or herself

in various situations, how various situations are combined with other situations to create social rituals, and how the individual's identity is created, preserved, and re-created. In addition, the interactionists investigate how symbols, such as language, documents, pictures, and films contribute to the creation of cultural context.

The symbols are, according to Blumer (1969/1986), social objects that are provided a certain meaning. That meaning does not need to be the same for everyone; different individuals interpret each other's symbols and try to give them a meaning. Various symbols create cultural community but can also incite *conflicts*. The symbols can be seen not only as building blocks for the situation's (context's) continuing existence and development, but also as food for conflicts (Blumer, 1969/1986).

The interactionists analyse the individual's identity as a dynamic field and not as something static. The identity is not clearly defined; it can be negotiated and also lie at the borders between various categories. A single individual can use several different identities at the same time, such as a professional identity, gender identity, and ethnic identity. The identity can be seen as the name we give ourselves, and because it is socially constructed, it can change (Blumer, 1969/1986; Snow and Anderson 1987). An interactionist perspective has inspired us to take note of and analyse how the individual creates and re-creates identities in the conversation about collaboration.

According to Garfinkel (2002), ethnomethodology is a perspective with a strong interest in the everyday and in practical aspects. As an ethnomethodologist, the researcher is not primarily interested in what a social world is, but rather in how it comes about and is designed. In other words, the ethnomethodologists believe that speech and interaction create the social world instead of being simply examples of what social reality

is. Ethnomethodologists especially emphasise the significance of the world's creation based on its members' interaction, as well as drawing interpretations about those interactions. The ethnomethodologists also emphasise that people in any situation try to understand it and use this understanding when they formulate their own actions (Garfinkel, 2002, pp. 91-198). According to the ethnomethodologist perspective, the members' statements acquire different meanings depending on the context where things are expressed and depending on which individual is speaking. This perspective has inspired us to focus in analyses on descriptions of reality that members provide regarding the collaboration in the school context and about participation in the collaboration practice by the other members in the context (parents—children—teachers).

Alliances, Triads, and Collaboration

A starting point in the analysis of the study's empirical materials is Simmel (1950/1964) and Caplow's (1968) view of interactions among three actors in a triad. Simmel (1950/1964, pp. 135-136) believes that interactions among the actors in a triad mean that one of the actors easily ends up outside—an alliance between two actors is created as an antithesis to the third. Caplow (1968, p. 19) describes interactions in the triad as unstable and easily changeable. In a triad, one actor can be depicted as outside, but in changed circumstances, one or both alliance parties can feel like intruders. This easy changeability means that two actors in a triad tend to ally themselves against the third, but the specific alliances can vary (Caplow, 1968, p. 2).

This article analyses depicted triads and alliance constellations that were presented during interviews with recently arrived parents regarding the collaboration in Swedish school context. Actors who appear in the accounts are parents, children, and teachers. The children and parents in this analysis adopt a

special position because they are not a part of a bureaucratic organisation like the teachers, for example (in the sense that they would fight for their organisational interests; see Basic, 2018a-c, 2019). The children are subject to different educational efforts in school, with the goal of achieving knowledge in various subjects in accordance with the curriculum. The parents are generally assumed to choose according to their children's best interests and provide support for the educational work done in the school. It would be simplistic, however, to view young people and parents as a uniform party; there are clear analytical discoveries in earlier collaboration research where they crystallised as two parties in a conflict (Basic, 2012).

The Intersectional Perspective and Recognition

Additional theoretical aspects essential to analyses of inter-human interaction in the school context are the phenomena of ethnicity, gender and class that are created and recreated in daily interactions between: 1) pupils, 2) pupils and teachers, and 3) pupils, teachers and parents. In their analyses, several researchers focus analytically on the question of how ethnicity is actualized in different cultural contexts when the actors' gender and class affiliation is created and recreated during communication and relationship building—and how the power relationships in these interactions change (Bhopal & Preston, 2012; Basic 2015; Fuller, 2018). Newly arrived parents and their children (pupils), as well as teachers and other resources (staff) acting in the school context, use several different identities in a series of daily interactions simultaneously (e.g. professional identity, gender identity, ethnic identity, collective identity, individual identity, etc.). On the basis of the intersectional perspective, the importance of the phenomenon of *recognition* (Foster 2012; Björk, Danielsson, & Basic 2019) in the

school context can be actualized as an important analytical factor in examining the question of how parents and pupils are recognized in the school context based on their specific experiences and actions, irrespective of their perception of class, gender and ethnicity. The aspect of recognition appears to be important for successful collaboration in the school context and for successful involvement and integration of both parents and students in the school context and into society at large.

Previous Research: Collaboration, Interaction, Conflict, and Consensus

Previous research on collaboration between professional actors and actors outside the bureaucratic organisation has noted the importance of participation of these outside actor(s). Willumsen (2007, pp. 192-197), for example, emphasises that participation of children and their parents is central to successful collaboration. She stresses the importance of the professionals' viewing children and the family as a whole, even if goals for efforts by the bureaucratic organisation primarily focus on the children.

A successful and results-oriented interaction contributes to creating a context with meaning that assists in the creation of good relationships and successful collaboration (Andersson, 2004; Basic, 2018a-c, 2019; Røkenes & Hanssen, 2007). The researchers analyse successful and results-oriented interaction and emphasise the importance of good relationships in the meeting. The researchers note that two actors who meet and interact with each other create, re-create, and experience the situation together. The foundation of a good treatment during the meeting is precisely the interactions where the actors actively behave with the goal to respect, affirm, and listen to each other.

Many dimensions affect interaction between parents and pre-school/school and thus the conditions for a good, successful, and

results-oriented collaboration. Possible family constellations and collaboration formats have changed over time. In today's western society, a family can have many different configurations and characteristics. Families can be single parent, extended families of several generations, or single gender; involve new partners and step-children; and include different ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Bouakaz, 2007; Bouakaz & Persson, 2007; Tallberg Broman, 2013, pp. 25-40). The researchers note that, through the child, the parents are indirectly present in the school every day, which the teacher cannot ignore. It is the professional's responsibility to create the conditions for good, successful, and results-oriented collaboration (Røkenes & Hanssen, 2007).

Interactions with actors who have a different ethnic background compared with the majority in society create unique opportunities for both greater cultural understanding and conflicts (Basic, 2015, 2018a-c, 2019). Simmel (1950/1964) believes that in contrast to routine perceptions that conflicts entail division in the parties' relationship, the conflicts may instead be seen as unifying for parties. He writes that conflicts are an expression of the actors' strong involvement in a situation and that they fill an integrating function between actors. Simmel views the conflicts in the relationship as cohesive, integrating, and uniting instead of divisive; to achieve this, however, a trade-off is needed between conflicts and consensus, between a fighting spirit and the striving for calm and harmony in the interaction among actors (Basic, 2012).

In interaction and collaboration with somebody from a different ethnic and cultural background, an opportunity arises for all participating members to gain understanding and knowledge about the other culture (Røkenes & Hanssen, 2007). In the interaction, a cultural positioning of the people in the situation arises that crystallises in the depictions

of the expected collective characteristics assigned to different members and groups. These perceptions affect participation in the interaction, which also affects approaches that actors choose to adopt towards *the others* in the situation. The interaction between teachers and parents can be characterised by either closeness and identification or by distance and unfamiliarity (Simmel, 1950/1964). In the interaction, individuals are categorised to create and re-create a simplified view of the reality (Basic, 2015, 2018a-c, 2019). Immigrants in Sweden in interaction with Swedes are often interpreted and re-interpreted based on stereotypes created earlier. Stereotypes are both identity-founding and form frames of reference; the person arises and acts based on the expectations that exist. The knowledge of cultural positioning and stereotypes is a prerequisite for professionals to create a good, successful, and results-oriented collaboration. Røkenes and Hanssen (2007) emphasise the importance of ignoring category and stereotype in the interaction to be able to collaborate, which seems to be extra important in the interaction with the 'other'. Not everything needs to be culturally dependent, and asking the questions "why" and "what is it due to" can lead to further explanations that lie outside what the culture encompasses.

Parents' participation in collaboration in school

According to Røkenes and Hanssen (2007), all collaboration is about human interaction between people regardless of the purpose and goal of the collaboration. The interaction is noted as a bearing bridge between people who are expected to collaborate. The collaboration is the traffic that crosses the bridge; it demands rules, skills, and responsibility. In this metaphor, the teacher is the one who represents leadership and creates the framework and direction for the "traffic," and knowledge is exchanged over the bridge

through communication. A bearing relationship preserves the collaboration and communication between people, which leads to greater understanding of each other, a broader community of experience, and a sense of participating in a common context.

Jakobsson and Lundgren (2013) emphasise the importance of parents being involved at an early stage of the collaboration, that the child's perspective is taken into account, and that the child's perspective takes precedence over the goals of the bureaucratic organisation. Parents are crucial for children to create a sense of context and make the world comprehensible and manageable. Children show great faith in parents doing what is best for them, and the need for the parents' participation in school when changing countries and losing social networks is especially important. Jakobsson and Lundgren (2013) believe that the school should therefore support the parents and contribute to a well-structured, functioning, and secure everyday environment.

Research emphasises the importance of parents being involved in school (Tallberg Broman, 2013, pp. 25-40). Most studies of collaboration in the school context focus their analysis on both parents' participation and participation of various professional actors and the children (Jakobsson & Lundgren, 2013). Bryk and Schneider (2003) emphasise that trust, confidence, and identity recognition of parents and teachers are key dimensions for successful collaboration.

Andersson (2004) brings up the issue of whether or not it is possible for parents and teachers to collaborate. Teachers in school are tied to and affected by ideology that students should achieve the knowledge objectives, objectives that are expected to be achieved at the same age regardless of the children's background, circumstances, and needs. In addition, Andersson believes that the collaboration between parents and teachers often takes place on the school's terms and appears

more possible when the parents' and teachers' values and expectations align.

It is not unexpected that there is tension between teachers and parents because they have different relationships with the same child. The teacher has universal interests that are based on meeting all children's needs and interests, while parents have particular interests with their own child as the focus.

According to Bunar (2015), most studies done regarding children recently arrived in a school's world indicate problems and difficulties. The interaction and collaboration with the parents are described as especially problematic. Basic (2012, 2018a-b, 2019) believes that collaboration in today's society is depicted as favourable although there is a lack of scientific evidence that this recipe is always successful for the client. Collaboration is also combined with conflict that can negatively affect the client. Support is lacking in both Swedish and international research for collaboration as improving the client's situation, using resources in the best way, or minimising duplicated work effort.

Method: Reanalysis of Qualitative Secondary Empirical Material

"Reanalysis of qualitative data should be at the core of qualitative research. It facilitates dialogue, debate and progression in qualitative research, not only between various researchers and studies (Fielding & Fielding, 2008), but also between works from the same researcher at different times (Riessman, 2003; Roulston, 2001). Reanalysis slows down analysis to a point at which new findings, theories and methodologies can more easily crystallize. Using reanalysis, researchers may disentangle data from preceding perspectives and zeitgeists, make comparisons across time and cases, and frame data in a new way" (Wästerfors et al., 2013, p. 467).

This study is based on a qualitative method (Flick, 2013; Silverman, 2015). The reanalysed empirical material is of a secondary nature (Wästerfors et al., 2013; Björk, Danielsson, & Basic 2019). The empirical sequences (accounts) analysed in this study have been published and analysed previously in Bouakaz (2007) and in Bouakaz & Persson (2007).

Empirical sequences

Bouakaz (2007) is a PhD thesis in educational sciences published at Malmö University. The overall purpose of the thesis is to acquire knowledge of what promotes or prevents parent collaboration in compulsory schools with pupils in school years 6–9 (elementary school) situated in a district with a high density of immigrants, as well as to gain a better understanding of how parents from an Arabic background and teachers view parent collaboration. A further, related purpose is to better understand how these parents can be supported in a manner that facilitates an enhanced sense of participation in the school that their children attend. Bouakaz (2007) also analyses the question of how and to what extent parents are involved in their children's education in these various meanings. To answer to these questions, Bouakaz takes an integrated approach, applying both critical ethnography and participatory action research. Bouakaz (2007, p. 102) describe the school and the area where the research context of the study it is located:

The research was carried out in a comprehensive school, i.e. one that offers a variety of different curricula (up through the junior high school level) and also includes a preschool. It currently has some seven hundred pupils up to 16 years of age, nearly 90 percent of non-Swedish background. The research concerns parents who have children in upper secondary school,

i.e. children between 12 and 16 years of age. Both the number of pupils and the variety and complexity of their needs, especially linguistic ones, are increasing. Getting the parents more closely involved in the education of their children has long been pursued as a goal, efforts in this direction having been directed at parents both of Swedish and of immigrant background. The school is located in an urban area of /.../ belonging to a district having about 39,000 inhabitants, 14 932 of them being of foreign background. The area had undergone considerable changes during the last six years, many minority families having moved in and many Swedish families having moved out. The Iraqi group is one of the dominant Arabic speaking groups in the district, about 1 598 persons living in its different part. Arabic speaking children represent the largest group in the school. The school is the only general meeting place for the children, since the area lacks shops, cafés and other such places where people in the neighbourhood can meet. The school and the area in general are presented in the media as an area dominated by crime, drug abuse, school vandalism and students who are low in achievement. During the school year 2005 more than 57 percent of the students did not achieve sufficiently good results to allow them to join the upper secondary school programmes...

The empirical material in Bouakaz (2007, pp. 106-123) was collected among others using qualitative interviews with 16 parents ("eight women /.../ eight men /.../ arabic background /.../ different Arab countries," Bouakaz 2007, p. 108-111). The study observes ethical guidelines, for example by not using the real names of teachers, parents, and

other school staff when publishing the study's empirical sequences (Bouakaz 2007, p. 124-127). The names used are fictitious.

To analyse the study's empirical material, Bouakaz (2007) uses Bourdieu's theories of social capital, habitus, field, symbolic power, and symbolic violence. Bourdieu's analytical concepts of agent and doxa are also used as tools to clarify what promotes and prevents parent collaboration in a school situated in a district with a high density of immigrants. The study's analysis is presented in six chapters ("What the teachers say about parental involvement," "How parents view the school and their involvement," "The home-school mediation project," "Parental involvement-activating social capital," "Parents' struggle and involvement outside the school," and "Summary and discussion"). The parents who emerge in Bouakaz (2007) note a lack of knowledge about the school system and demonstrate a great desire to learn so that they can align more closely with the school to be able to help their children. The teachers in the study note various types of obstacles, such as parents' linguistic shortcomings and cultural and religious dimensions.

Bouakaz (2007) is used in the present study both as a source of important empirical sequences for reanalysis and as relevant prior research and important help in future analysis. Bouakaz & Persson (2007) is analysis based on secondary empirical material collecting and analysing also in Bouakaz (2007).

Reanalysis of empirical sequences

Wästerfors et al. (2013) note various methods for implementing reanalysis of secondary empirical material. These methods are (a) researchers reanalyse their own collected empirical material; (b) researchers reanalyse other researchers' empirical material available from archives and databases; (c) researchers reanalyse other researchers' empirical material available from already

published work; or (d) researchers combine the above methods to implement reanalysis of secondary empirical material.

Wästerfors et al. (2013) present a variety of motives for reanalysing qualitative secondary empirical material. One common motive is that the researcher feels a long-term attraction to certain empirical material and/or that the material arouses interest and contributes to creating and re-creating ideas for new analysis. Another motive is that the researcher realises that there is an opportunity to contribute to analytical, theoretical, and/or methodological development without the need to gather new empirical data (Corti & Bishop, 2005; Bouakaz & Persson, 2007; Corti, 2007; Fielding & Fielding, 2008; Medjedović, 2011; Basic, 2013; Björk, Danielsson, & Basic 2019). The collection and processing of new empirical material is time consuming (Silverman, 2015), and there are financial advantages to the researcher and the study in using the time that would have been spent on gathering empirical data for reanalysing existing material. Another motive noted by Wästerfors et al. (2013) is researchers' analytical drive to investigate phenomena through history and/or to conduct comparative studies.

A reading of Wästerfors et al. (2013) reveals both the strengths and weaknesses of working with reanalysis of qualitative secondary empirical material. Strengths include the following: a) secondary empirical material is relatively free from the perspective of the previous study, allowing the theory in the new analysis analytical space for advancement; b) economies are made in that the time spent on gathering empirical data can instead be used for reanalysis; and c) basic traditions and principles in qualitative research (Flick, 2013; Silverman, 2015) are strengthened through reanalysis of secondary empirical material. Weaknesses include the distance between the empirical data and the researcher that characterises some reanalyses. The original context,

as well as the empirical material as a whole, that provided the empirical basis for the previous study is entirely or partially unknown to the researcher conducting the reanalysis of qualitative secondary empirical material (Wästerfors et al., 2013). This fact steers the content of reanalysis and limits it to relatively few empirical sequences. At the same time, even an isolated empirical sequence is a snapshot of reality that can be repeatedly reanalysed (Potter, 1996/2007, pp. 97-98).

Through their previous work, Linnaeus University students Johnsson and Blivik, as well as Basic as their supervisor, have come into contact with Bouakaz (2007) and Bouakaz & Persson (2007). The study, in combination with our previous experiences, has created an interest in and fascination with the field and the context. Wästerfors et al. (2013) contend that empirical material from already published analyses can be repeatedly reanalysed even if the analyst did not participate in collecting the primary empirical material. The new analysis—whether through the same or a different analytical lens when compared to the previous effort—further develops the earlier analyses, theories, and methods. In this sense, reanalysis of qualitative secondary empirical material always contributes something new to future work. The present study analyzes empirical sequences that are already presented and analyzed in Bouakaz (2007) and Bouakaz & Persson (2007) and which include interview quotes from interviewees Rahban, Bahia, Zahia, and Nader.

Limitation

In this study, the authors do not have access to all the empirical material gathered during field work that forms the basis of the analysis in Bouakaz (2007) and Bouakaz & Persson (2007). This has partially hindered the authors' ability to analyse aspects of the school context (and also aspects in the context of wider society) such as the views of newly

arrived parents on their children's schooling, their views on teachers and on other pupils, their views on the significance of learning a new language, the significance of any traumatic experiences in conjunction with war and social conflict before arriving in the new country, as well their views on the significance of ethnicity, gender and class in (and for) interactions between actors in the school context (see more on these phenomena in the sections *Home- and school-focused collaboration* and *Conclusion: Newly arrived parents and collaboration in Swedish school context*).

The empirical material that has already been analysed and published in Bouakaz (2007) and Bouakaz & Persson (2007) provides a stable analytical basis for achieving the purpose of this study, which is to analyse 1) newly arrived parents' accounts of collaboration in Swedish school context and 2) depicted triads and alliance constellations presented during interviews with recently arrived parents regarding collaboration in Swedish school context.

Bouakaz (2007) and Bouakaz & Persson's (2007) review with its specific analytical focus on published empirical sequences (quotes) provided a good basis for documenting and commenting on details in the published empirical sequences. Commenting on the empirical material in Bouakaz (2007) and Bouakaz & Persson (2007) enabled the material to be recategorized (see further regarding "data analysis" in Silverman 2015; "thematic analysis" in Guest, MacQueen, and Namey 2012). The empirical sequences that have been re-analysed in this study are categorized as: "collaboration identity—distancing," "collaboration alliance," "collaboration—home" and "collaboration—school."

Analysis

For collaboration in school context to be successful, clear objectives and a well-defined purpose of the collaboration are required

(Jakobsson & Lundgren, 2013; Røkenes & Hanssen, 2007; Basic, 2018a-b, 2019). Previous research shows that cooperation and collaboration are not spoken about in the school and that the meaning of the concept appears to be unclear to both parents and teachers. It is important to define the concept of "collaboration" in the interaction between parents and teachers to achieve a consensus on the common responsibility for collaboration to be successful for everyone involved and especially for the children in the school context (Simmel, 1950/1964; Caplow 1968; Blumer, 1969/1986; Gubrium and Holstein 1997; Garfinkel, 2002; Andersson, 2004; Røkenes & Hanssen, 2007).

Collaboration identity through distancing

The interviewed parents in Bouakaz (2007) depict the collaboration with the school as important, and they demand more contact and cooperation with the school. Collaboration concepts are unclear to the parents, including that the school's focus for the collaboration is on distanced participation of the parents and not on a face-to-face interaction. In the description of Rahban, a parent, the collaboration alliance is construed to consist of him and his family members and the collaboration identity that is created and re-created through the alliance's distancing from the school and teachers. Rahban says during the interview:

As a minority parent, I am in a weak position and lack knowledge, and the school should realise that we are not here as tourists. We came here under difficult conditions, and most of us still suffer from psychological depression and have lost everything we had. The school should be the leader in such action, and it is the school that can pull the parents ahead and help them understand things better. As a parent who lacks the language and the codes of the

society, I don't dare to go to the school myself and ask. I see myself not only as an immigrant but also as a citizen, and I want to know my rights and duties towards my children and how I can be a part of this society without feeling that I am of lesser value than anyone else. I feel the school should take the initiative to inform us parents about its work and about our rights and duties as citizens and not as immigrants. We believe that the teachers and the school administrators do their job very well, and we expect to be informed so that we know what we can and should do (Rahban; Bouakaz, 2007, p. 180).

Rahban's description above depicts several members in the interaction. These members are "teachers" and a "we" constellation of family members (this "we" constellation can in practice mean two parents, two parents and one child, two parents and two children, one parent and one child). The above quote dramatises needs for collaboration between teachers and a we-constellation in that Rahban describes the practical aspects that are done and not done in the described school practice. The statement, "We believe that the teachers and the school administrators do their job very well, and we expect to be informed so that we know what we can and should do," creates the view of a strong We, an alliance that wants collaboration with the teachers who are outside the collaboration at the moment.

The social actor Rahban provides above a description of a given action in connection with the collaboration with the school. Rahban notes that the described circumstance, even the situation, deviates from his expectations. That Rahban says, "I feel the school should take the initiative," implicitly constructs a desired reality—that he wants to interact more with the teachers in the school context.

It appears as if Rahban calls attention to what deviates from his expectations. His accounts can be analysed as responses to spoken and unspoken issues that are present or assumed to be present in the situation. Through his remark, Rahban is attempting to repair doubts during a conversation by neutralising deficiencies in the collaboration or possible consequences of deficient collaboration (Scott & Lyman, 1968; Blumer, 1969/1986; Gubrium and Holstein 1997; Garfinkel, 2002).

Snow and Anderson (1987, pp. 1336-1371) believe that identity creation among other things takes place through a distinction from the others. Inspired by interactionist and ethnomethodological perspectives (Blumer, 1969/1986; Garfinkel, 2002), the authors distinguish several ways to distance oneself and thereby conduct one's identity work. One way to distance oneself is to present a category and show that one does not belong to it, such as through the job one has or does not have, or by taking distance from institutions. A similar distinction is made by Rahban in the quotes above. In Rahban's account, the collaboration identity ("we") in contrast to the others ("teachers") is created, re-created, and preserved. The we-constellation is depicted as being interested in and eager for the collaboration with the school and is implicitly critical of the teachers' collaboration efforts, which are limited.

Invitation to collaboration alliance

During the interview with parents Bahia, Zahia, and Nader, the triad constellation is depicted as consisting of "parents," "teachers," and "children." In the accounts, an invitation to a collaboration alliance is also construed consisting of teachers and parents. Bahia, Zahia and Nader formulate a wish during the interview for greater cooperation in becoming involved:

I have to say that the teachers are very good at this school and that I have no problems with them. I think the teachers are parents like us and want the children to succeed as much as we parents want our children to. They often talk nicely to us and welcome us when we are at school (Bahia; Bouakaz, 2007, p. 164).

My involvement has always been minimal, and that made me feel guilty about it all the time. I don't know anything about how to get involved or whether I'm allowed to get involved. I haven't had so much contact with the school except for the progress discussion meetings, where we sit and listen to what the teacher tells us about our children. I often hear the same things again and again. I know what I'm going to hear. I'll go and hear "He's wonderful, he does this, and he's good at that. He's sometimes talkative." Well, I knew all of that. I sometimes feel it's a waste of time to listen to the same thing repeatedly, but I go there for the sake of my children. I want to make my children feel I'm involved (Zahia; Bouakaz, 2007, p. 167).

The only meetings I go to are those about my children, at which I often get information about my children's school situation. I have to say that about all they do is to inform us. They don't give us much time for deeper discussions of this sort. I had hoped the teachers would tell us more about what's going on in the school and would do this frequently (Nader; Bouakaz, 2007, p. 167).

The constellation that Bahia, Zahia, and Nader describes consists of "parents," "teachers," and "children." By emphasising the importance of the parents' participation,

informants in Bouakaz (2007) construe an invitation to an alliance with the teachers, an alliance that appears to strengthen the stability in the triad with the goal of a successful collaboration.

The specific characteristic of Bahia, Zahia, and Nader is that they are not members of any bureaucratic organisation, as are, for example, the teachers. Nonetheless, Bahia, Zahia, and Nader appear to seek an alliance with the teachers. When Nader says, "They don't give us much time for deeper discussions," he implicitly dramatises criticism that circles around an important point of interest in the collaboration interaction, namely the parents' deficient participation.

Triad and alliance constellations present and participating in the interaction (Simmel, 1950/1964; Caplow 1968; Blumer, 1969/1986; Garfinkel, 2002) also exist outside bureaucratic organisations and have been analysed before. Caplow (1968, p. 136) writes the following about so-called boundary alliances:

In some other types of organization, triads involving outsiders are much more conspicuous and important. These may be called boundary triads. From one point of view the sine qua non of an organization—its fundamental and essential characteristic—is that any two of its members interacting with an outsider in the performance of their organizational roles tend to form an automatic coalition of we against you-and-your-associates.

In the quotes above, we have the parents (Rahban, Bahia, Zahia, and Nader) and their children who are actors outside the school as a bureaucratic organisation, and "the teachers" are a part of the bureaucratic organisation. Parents appear to seek out an alliance with the teachers. Nothing in the interaction indicates that the alliance would exclude the parents'

children. A successful collaboration in the school context that parents seek would create good conditions for developing an agreeing triad consisting of “parents,” “teachers,” and “children.” Such an agreeing triad is an important prerequisite for successful collaboration that is also beneficial even for the children in the school context (Willumsen, 2007, pp. 192-197; Tallberg Broman, 2013).

The category “cooperation” is charged with meaning in Rahban, Bahia, Zahia, and Nader’s accounts. Two nuances can be distinguished in the accounts—the teachers’ effect on the children and the importance of the parents’ participation and involvement for successful cooperation. In actors’ descriptions, an invitation is formed to the teachers to an alliance partnership with parents (“My involvement has always been minimal, and that made me feel guilty about it all the time”). In the alliance depiction, different pictures of teachers and parents are shown. Teachers are depicted as welcoming and repetitive actors. Parents are depicted as competent actors who realise the importance of collaboration in the school context. In addition, parents are depicted as drivers in the issue in connection with noting the need to involve the parents.

Parents who participate in Bouakaz (2007) point to the importance of cooperation between parents and teachers. The collaboration between parents and teachers in the school context is depicted as favourable despite a lack of support in research that collaboration is always successful and good for the children in question (Basic, 2012, 2018a-b, 2019).

Accounts analysed in this study present an image of the teachers as focusing on parents’ participation in school practice, but at a distance and not in everyday school interactions (Jakobsson & Lundgren, 2013). Earlier research indicates that interaction between parents and teachers and the parents’ participation are important to create relationships that build on confidence, trust, and recognition,

important dimensions of successful collaboration (Røkenes & Hanssen, 2007; Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Willumsen, 2007, pp. 192-197). In Rahban, Bahia, Zahia, and Nader’s accounts, a reality is constructed where the importance of parents being involved more in a school context is emphasised.

Home- and school-focused collaboration

In Bouakaz (2007), the difference between home-focused and school-focused collaboration is noted. Some of the parents interviewed in this study tell about an authoritarian-controlled school (from their home country) characterised by a lack of interactions with parents. In that school context, we can assume that a school-focused collaboration is not so obvious for parents. This interpretation is supported by Bouakaz’ (2007) analytical discoveries that experiences from authoritarian school cultures lead to the school being seen as the teacher’s affair. With this as the starting point, it can be considered surprising that Rahban, Bahia, Zahia, and Nader emphasise collaboration with the teachers. Zahia and Nader emphasise difficulties the parents faced in efforts to help their children with homework:

Children have so many leisure-time activities today that they are often busy playing computer games or watching TV rather than working with their homework. They often try to escape and make me forget about their homework. You see! We mothers have a lot to do, cooking food, cleaning, shopping, and doing our own homework. They often throw their bags as soon as they come home, and say, “Mother, we are going to our friends at our neighbour’s house.” They sit and play games as they decided to do after school. They often forget about their homework (Zahia; Bouakaz, 2007, p. 229).

Difficulties in controlling the child in connection with carrying out of homework show the importance of gender aspect in interaction (Zahia: “We mothers have a lot to do”). Nader says during the interview “Their mother was better than I was”:

I tried to help them many times but it was difficult. They don't listen to me, and the relations became bad. They seemed to not grasp what I said to them. Their mother was better than I was. She is more patient than I am. Anyhow, I think it's better that someone else helps them and does this in a place where they can be together with their friends (Nader; Bouakaz, 2007 p. 228; Bouakaz & Persson, 2007, p. 103).

The home-focused collaboration present in earlier research highlights that the teachers use traditional communication channels, such as development talks and weekly or monthly letters. The teachers' lack of time and stressful days can be an obstacle to the collaboration. Personally meeting and talking with an individual who has a different ethnic background than the teacher appears to be more time-consuming than presenting information by letter. However, it requires greater knowledge among teachers about other cultures, which can be viewed in light of the fact that teachers in studies request training and suggestions of strategies to use in the interaction and collaboration with recently arrived students and families (Bouakaz, 2007; Bouakaz & Persson, 2007).

Parental collaboration is described in Bouakaz (2007) as a long-term, continuous, and carefully planned process where there is no right method to meet parents. Every parent is a unique individual, and the teachers' challenge is to constructively note differences and similarities and see contradictions but not evaluate negatively based on the actors' ethnic

background (Røkenes & Hanssen, 2007; Basic, 2015). Collaborating with parents with a different ethnic background from the teacher creates a further dimension in the educational work. By taking advantage of differences and seeing them as opportunities, the teachers can learn the codes of several cultures. An effect of this learning can be that the interaction that arises is evaluated and re-creates traditional methods of collaboration to benefit all parties in the interaction.

Successful collaboration between teachers who have different ethnic backgrounds from parents establishes the preconditions for the creation and re-creation of joint collaborative identities. In this interactive process, both home- and school-focused collaborations are important to the success of the interactive dynamic. Achieving collaborative success implies that all stakeholders in the interaction receive affirmation of their identities through participation in the community. Successful collaboration between teachers and parents seems to be a basic prerequisite for the successful involvement and integration of parents from different ethnic backgrounds, both in the context of the schools and in society as a whole.

Several parents interviewed in Bouakaz (2007) appear to have brought their experience of war and social conflict with them to Sweden (“We came here under difficult conditions, and most of us still suffer from psychological depression and have lost everything we had” Rahban, Bouakaz, 2007, p. 180). Björk, Danielsson, & Basic (2019, p. 18) consider the predominant standard explanations of this category of pupils (and parents) appear to concern psychiatric or medical needs. For example, the diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder is a commonly used explanation of the categories “pupil with experience of war” and “parent with experience of war” while competing explanations appear to have been afforded relatively less

attention, such as: 1) established inequalities in society and at school, 2) material and institutional difficulties in societal and school contexts, 3) bureaucratic hurdles in school and in the rest of society, 4) ethnic monitoring and social control in society and at school, 5) the humiliated identity of the actors in a societal and school context, 6) victimization in relation to the majority groups in the context; 7) demeaning ethnic categorizations in society and at school, 8) discrimination in the school context and an overall societal context (Hamilton et al., 2000/2007; Bhopal & Preston, 2012; Bunar, 2015; Basic 2015; Fuller, 2018; Basic, 2018c; Björk, Danielsson, & Basic, 2019). Further competing explanations that appear to have been relatively less emphasized in relation to the diagnosis aspect are the interpretations of pupils and parents themselves of the war and social conflict they experienced in their homeland, of the type: 1) “I have unique experience that I can benefit from in the new country,” 2) “I have learned to cope with difficulties ,” 3) “I am stronger now.” There are many interactive pathways to recognition in the school and societal context (Foster 2012). There is no one single formula that always or most commonly applies. Recognition in a school and societal context, as well as recognition of the actors in successful cooperation, is created and recreated in the culture through a series of interactions in which actors firstly are involved in identifications founded on ethnicity, class and gender in different ways and, secondly, make use of/or suffer from their own identification streams or those of others in such interactions at school, at home or in wider society.

Conclusion: Newly Arrived Parents and Collaboration in Swedish School Context

The purpose of the study is to analyse newly arrived parents’ accounts of collaboration in Swedish school context and depicted triads and alliance constellations presented during

interviews with recently arrived parents regarding collaboration in Swedish school context. The study shows that the collaboration between parents and teachers is important and that collaboration is sought after even if there is uncertainty about what the concept of collaboration involves. This uncertainty is probably also the reason for deficient success in the implementation of the collaboration task. This applies both in schools and pre-schools even if the daily contact between pre-school teachers and parents provides a natural opportunity to create relationships and develop successful collaborations.

The study’s analysis is based on secondary empirical material (empirical sequences from previously published qualitative analyses, i.e., Bouakaz, 2007). The analysis shows that the parents construct and reconstruct collaboration alliances and triads in their accounts. In the analysed accounts about the cooperation, however, an invitation to the teachers to the alliance partnership is formed. The alliance partnership appears to reinforce the stability of the triad with the goal of a successful collaboration for the children in the school context. In these accounts, teachers are interpreted as actors who welcome and repeat information. Parents are interpreted as competent actors who are well aware of the importance of collaboration in the school context. They note the need for the parents’ involvement in the school context and are construed as driving forces in the collaboration issue.

The parents are not members of any bureaucratic organisation, like the teachers are a part of the school organisation. It is an interesting discovery in this study that the parents nonetheless seek an alliance with the teachers. In these accounts, the parents dramatise implicit criticism that revolves around an important point of interest in the collaboration interaction, namely the parents’ deficient participation.

Pedagogy and educational sciences are two of the perspectives within social sciences

that emphasise the importance of including newly arrived parents and their children in the community. Both parents and children receive affirmation of their identities through participation in the community, with successful interaction between individuals in the school context being a prerequisite for the successful involvement and integration of newly arrived parents and their children. One of the important dimensions for future research in the fields of pedagogy and educational sciences is an analytical investigation of the relationships between newly arrived families, who in many regards can be categorised as weaker and in need of help, and stakeholders in education who, within the framework of their professional roles, are tasked with helping these individuals.

One question that could not be answered within the framework of this study is, Do alliances create conflict or do conflicts create alliances in relationships between parents and teachers? One need not exclude the other; conflicts seem to trigger alliances in the same way as alliances seem to trigger conflicts. These conflicts and alliances may also disadvantage students and other partners. We therefore seek further research into those alliances that consist of one member of the bureaucratic organisation in the school context (such as a teacher) and one stakeholder outside the organisation (a parent or student). These alliances appear to be sought out by stakeholders outside of the bureaucratic organisation, indicating among other things the desire on the part of the stakeholder to fight for improvement. The willingness of students and/or parents to continue this fight

for improvement can be viewed as a significant dimension that may improve conditions for the implementation of various pedagogic initiatives. Our perspective of the student's and/or parent's fight refers to the willingness of the individual to fight for an improved school and life situation, something that in our opinion can be viewed as productive rather than problematic.

Another important aspect for future analyses is to examine the perspectives of newly arrived parents at the point when their children (newly arrived pupils) start and going to school. It would be interesting from an analytical perspective to study the views of the parents on: 1) their children's schooling, 2) teachers, 3) other pupils, (4) the significance of learning a new language, (5) the significance of any traumatic experiences of war and social conflict before arriving in the new country, (6) the significance of ethnicity, gender and class during (and for) interactions between actors in a school context.

We assert that it is extremely important that these aspects are further investigated in future analyses (with appropriate theoretical starting points which, in combination with previous research on the phenomenon, could contribute to a nuanced analysis of the new empirical material that has been gathered). One appropriate theoretical starting point could be *the theory of intercultural communication* (Wiseman, 1995) which has, for example, the capacity to successfully highlight new empirical evidence with a focus on creating and recreating collective and individual identities that are a prerequisite for all interpersonal communication.

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