

# Intra-professional collaboration and organization of work among teachers: How entangled institutional logics shape connectivity

Karolina Parding<sup>1\*</sup>, Mihajla Gavin<sup>2</sup>, Rachel Wilson<sup>3</sup>, Scott Fitzgerald<sup>4</sup>, Mats Jakobsson<sup>5</sup> and Susan McGrath-Champ<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Human Work Sciences, Department of Social Sciences, Technology, and Arts, Luleå University of Technology, 97187 Luleå, Sweden

<sup>2</sup>Department of Management, UTS Business School, University of Technology Sydney, Sydney, NSW 2007, Australia

<sup>3</sup>Department of Management, UTS Business School, University of Technology Sydney, Sydney, NSW 2007, Australia

<sup>4</sup>School of Management and Marketing, Curtin University, Perth, WA 6845, Australia

<sup>5</sup>Human Work Sciences, Department of Social Sciences, Technology and Arts, Luleå University of Technology, 97187 Luleå, Sweden

<sup>6</sup>Work and Organisational Studies, University of Sydney Business School, The University of Sydney, Sydney, NSW 2006, Australia

\*Corresponding author. Email: [karolina.parding@ltu.se](mailto:karolina.parding@ltu.se)

Intra-professional collaboration is essential as it enables professionals to learn, develop, and define the terms of the profession in their own way. Yet conditions for collaboration are shaped by how work is organized and governed. This article examines how conditions for intra-professional collaboration, where work takes place with colleagues within the same profession in same or similar roles, are perceived by teachers, in relation to how work is organized, by drawing on empirical insights from a study on teachers working in education systems defined by market-driven reforms. Our findings nuance ideas of professional connectedness by showing how the organization of work, affected by ‘entangled institutional logics’ (Blomgren and Waks 2015; Alvehus and Andersson 2018) and market-based governance reforms, shapes intra-professional collaboration. Our contribution is thus to take departure from established understandings of connectivity, that is, ‘related to others and outsiders’ (Noordegraaf 2020) by examining connectivity *within* professions, showing how there continues to be a struggle between the profession, organization, and market which shapes conditions for intra-professional work within the teaching profession. Our analysis of intra-professional collaboration holds significance for emergent understandings of connectivity (see Adams et al. 2020a; Alvehus, Avoon and Oliver 2021: 201; Kanon and Andersson 2023) by underscoring how the contemporary organization and management of work shape the conditions that enable, or augment, inwards connectivity and the ability for professionals to collaborate in meaningful ways.

**KEYWORDS:** *collaboration; working conditions; teachers; professionalism; institutional logics; intra-professional.*

## INTRODUCTION

Connectivity and interconnectedness are a crucial part of professional work. In light of recent debates in the sociology of professions literature on protective and connective professionalism (see Adams et al. 2020a; Noordegraaf 2020; Alvehus, Avoon and Oliver 2021: 201; Kanon and Andersson 2023), this article examines a key profession in democratic societies—teaching—experiencing institutional change and implications for intra-professional work. Within scholarly debates

around the reconfiguration of professionalism, our article nuances interpretations of connectivity typified by greater professional connectedness to, and interdependency with, others and outsiders such as clients, stakeholders, managers, and other professionals (Noordegraaf 2020), by examining connectivity *within* professional groups. Our examination of professional connectedness within one professional group (school teaching) shows how the organization of work, affected by entangled institutional logics and governance reforms, shapes

connectivity between professionals. We therefore contribute to debates on the reconfiguration of professionalism by showing how interconnectedness may be shaped not only through professionals' interactions with others and outsiders in wider environments, but through institutional logics which shape the organization and conditions of professional work and relations between professionals. Thus, policy and context also serve to shape professional connectedness and the ability of professionals to collaborate intra-professionally in meaningful ways.

This article examines professional connectedness through a specific focus on intra-professional collaboration, in which colleagues in same or similar roles within the same profession share and build knowledge and experience together, and thus are able to negotiate and determine the terms of their profession together. Intra-professional collaboration provides an intersubjective path by which professionals engage in sense-making so as to interpret, enact, and reproduce institutions (Everitt 2013). We take teaching as a distinct form of professional work, one defined by professional connectedness and where intra-professional collaboration is both valued and sought by teachers and is a policy goal. Yet, we show how interconnections within a profession are being affected through entangled institutional logics which undermine the type of collaboration valued and sought. Thus, teachers struggle with being able to work in accordance with their own values, compared to values and structures emanating from outside or above. This article therefore presents a case for more nuanced investigations of connectivity *within* professional groups and understanding of the ways in which policy and context shape the organization of contemporary professional work and professional connectedness.

We acknowledge the legacy debate on teachers' work marked by complex processes of professionalization and occupational struggle (cf. Lawn and Ozga 1981; Fayard, Stigliani and Bechky 2017). While sociological definitions of a profession (Etzioni 1969) look to specific criteria for defining a profession (e.g. autonomy, accountability, oversight of entry, specialized knowledge base), we also acknowledge the 'contrasting (even contradictory) interpretations [of professionalism] in the sociological literature' (Evetts 2003: 399). Rather than 'draw[ing] a hard and fast line between professions and occupations', Evetts (2006: 134) encourages us to 'regard both as similar social forms that share many common characteristics'. With this in mind, our study takes a case of intra-professional collaboration to explore the conditions which shape individuals' capacity to negotiate and determine the terms of their profession together. Our analysis of intra-professional collaboration in teachers'

work holds significance for understanding how the contemporary organization and management of work shape the conditions that enable, or affect, connectivity. This article investigates the following research questions:

1. What are teachers' views of the benefits of intra-professional collaboration?
2. What organizational conditions shape teachers' views on the benefits of intra-professional collaboration?
3. How can intra-professional collaboration be perceived in relation to current institutional logics?

To address these questions, we draw on unique survey data collected in two countries and educational settings—Sweden and Australia. Both countries have seen similar system-level reform efforts, guided by market-driven governance reforms, which have shaped their schooling systems (Fittock, Cunningham and Striepe 2021). As few studies have examined teacher collaboration enacted in different national systems of education (Milner, Browes and Murphy 2020), this article offers value in analysing teachers' professional work across different contexts, as well as helping to erode the scarcity of comparative and international studies in the sociology of professions field. Our study also responds directly to calls for more empirically grounded analyses of how professional fields are changing and understanding how organizational contexts shape types and forms of connectivity (see Adams et al. 2020a; Alvehus, Avoon and Oliver 2021: 201; Noordegraaf and Brock 2021: 234; Kanon and Andersson 2023: 62). By examining connectivity *within* professions (not only *in-between* profession(al)s and 'outside worlds'), we also add an important contribution to the sociology of professions literature which has, to date, focussed on *intraagency* collaboration (e.g. Gotzsche-Astrup et al. 2023 on social workers, teachers, and police) and *cross-occupational* collaboration (e.g. Truelove and Kellogg 2016 on engineers and marketers). Little empirical or theoretical attention has been paid to *intra-professional* collaboration, that is, by workers occupying same or similar roles within the same profession, and organization of work which shapes connectivity between professionals. In doing so, we further expand the chorus of voices which argue for examining 'varieties of professionalism' (Noordegraaf and Brock 2021: 231), as well as further research on how connectivity is shaped and experienced in professional work.

In this article, we first present existing literature on conditions for intra-professional collaboration among teachers in schools, then overview key debates on protective and connective professionalism. This is followed by

an overview of current governance reform, institutional logics, and organization of work in Sweden and Australia shaping teachers' work. After detailing the context of the study and methodology, we present findings from two large-scale surveys of teachers' work in these countries, followed by a discussion of key findings on intra-professional collaboration and connectivity. We conclude by identifying avenues for future research, as well as limitations of the study.

### INTRA-PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION AMONG TEACHERS AND CONNECTIVITY

Intra-professional collaboration is an essential part of professional work and, as such, a key dimension in the analysis of professional groups. In a context where 'the political, social and workplace landscapes that professionals navigate are becoming more complex and demanding' (Adams 2020: 234), intra-professional collaboration can offer support, learning, and resources. On a collective level, intra-professional collaboration provides the capacity to develop the profession and, on an individual level, a way for professionals to continuously learn relevant knowledge and skills, and supports socialization of new graduates (e.g. Freidson 2001). Collaborative cultures within schooling also generate benefits at the school and teacher level, including higher student outcomes and improved self-efficacy and job satisfaction (Lomos, Hofman and Bosker 2011; Moolenaar, Slegers and Daly 2011; Hargreaves 2019). Indeed, intra-professional collaboration is sought after among teachers (Vangrieken et al. 2015) and is an ever more prominent feature within education policy recommendations (Moolenaar, Slegers and Daly 2011; Samuelsson 2018).

However, in working within market-driven settings, it is suggested that certain conditions furnished by these settings may hinder the capacity to foster the type of intra-professional collaboration that is desired by teachers. In seeking to assess these conditions, we note that there is some conceptual confusion around meanings of collaboration within professional work, with collaboration taking on various forms or modes, from Professional Learning Communities to peer review processes and collaborative inquiry (Vangrieken et al. 2015). The definition of 'collaboration' adopted in this article is drawn from Klechtermans (2006) and means the cooperative, task-related actions that teachers undertake, where individuals work and reflect together for job-related purposes. An example in practice may include developing effective lesson plan material together and interpreting and enacting more abstract curriculum requirements. For teachers,

this also means interaction around interests and activities that are occasional, informal, and spontaneous, and a process that is created by teachers themselves and which is flexibly organized in time and space (Hargreaves 2019).

Our previous research has shown that intra-professional collaboration (particularly that which is established informally and spontaneously around professionals' interests) is essential for sharing professional knowledge and experience as well as for developing emotional support, and that teachers value learning from and with colleagues in their daily work (Jansson and Parding 2011; Parding et al. 2017; Parding and Berg-Jansson 2018). Moreover, within professions, members share specific knowledge, a common culture and ethics, and make decisions through joint discussions (Freidson 2001). This illustrates what, how and why teachers, as an example of a professional group, value intra-professional collaboration; as a process in which to learn and develop, and also as a resource through which to negotiate conditions, mirroring the ideals upon which the logic of the profession is based (e.g. Freidson 2001).

However, when collaboration does take place between teachers, research finds that the experience is often not realized in the way it is desired (Vangrieken et al. 2015). According to the OECD (Schleicher 2018: 96), teachers 'rarely do work...in the collaborative work culture that people in other knowledge-based professions take for granted'. While cooperation between teachers may be possible, the kind of collaboration desired seems to be unrealized due to entangled institutional logics (Blomgren and Waks 2015; Alvehus and Andersson 2018) which can be argued to shape the organization of teachers' work, including collaborative practice (Samuelsson 2018). Where collaboration is seemingly forced upon teachers—instructing them on where, when, and what to collaborate about via processes of administrative regulation and control—this produces contrived collegiality—what Hargreaves (2019) considers the opposite of true collaboration. Milner, Browes and Murphy's (2020: 239) cross-country analysis of education policy also finds a similar phenomenon, describing how 'collaboration is being done *to* teachers, not *by* teachers' (original emphasis). Contrived collegiality can therefore produce superficial rather than deep-level collaboration and prompt teachers to feel recalcitrant and apprehensive towards collaboration (Vangrieken et al. 2015). As a practice, this runs counter to the ability for professionals to define the terms of the profession in their own way and develop the profession from within.

Effective, desirable teacher collaboration does not come about by itself—certain conditions need to be fulfilled (Vangrieken et al. 2015). However, less is known around

how work can be governed and organized to enable genuine, informal, and meaningful intra-professional collaboration as valued and desired by teachers. Klechtermans (2006) and Vangrieken et al. (2015) conceptualize collaboration as a working condition that is embedded in, and determined and mediated by, the organizational (school) context, meaning it is imperative that the structural and cultural working conditions of schools are considered when analysing intra-professional collaboration. Indeed, some existing research has highlighted how important structural characteristics—including lack of time, work pressure, pressure of standardization, and unsupportive leadership—can constrain genuine collaborative practice (e.g. Westheimer 2008; Hargreaves 2019).

Examining the conditions and context shaping the organization of professional work and implications for professional connectedness is important given recent debates on a reconfiguration of professionalism. Without reiterating these debates on a reconfiguration of ideal types of professionalism in fine detail (indeed, many scholars in the sociology of professions have extensively critiqued Noordegraaf's established claims around ideal types e.g. Adams et al. 2020a,b; Alvehus, Avoon and Oliver 2021; Faulconbridge, Henriksen and Seabrooke 2021), we identify some of the main tensions of these debates in their appraisal of connectivity and contemporary professional connectedness. Noordegraaf (2020) argues that we are witnessing a reconfiguration of professionalism, away from protective forms of professionalism (marked by expertise, autonomy, independent decision-making, and working within specialized segments, for example; see Adams et al. 2020b) towards new connective forms of professionalism. Due to 'heterogeneity and fragmentation within professional fields, the interweaving of professional fields, and dependencies of professional actions on outside worlds', as well as the need for new forms of expertise required to solve increasingly complex cases, Noordegraaf (2020: 205) perceives that protected professionals are becoming 'outdated'. Instead, a new 'interconnectedness' is emerging where professionals are more strongly connected to clients, stakeholders, and other organizational actors (Noordegraaf 2020). This 'interdependency' is arguably necessary for 'strengthening professionalism's protective shields' (Alvehus, Avoon and Oliver 2021: 200).

This established view on the reconfiguration of professionalism, however, has been the subject of much critique. Scholars have argued that instead of looking (solely) at 'dichotomies' of professionalism, there is greater value in considering the 'types and degrees' of connections that exist (Oliver and Avnoon in Alvehus, Avoon and Oliver 2021: 207), what forms of connectivity are emerging, how these connections can take on forms simultaneously on

various levels (individual, occupational, workplace, organizational), and how they may evolve over time with changing conditions in order to explain how professions are changing (Adams et al. 2020b; Alvehus, Avoon and Oliver 2021: 208; Faulconbridge, Henriksen and Seabrooke 2021). As argued by Faulconbridge, Henriksen and Seabrooke (2021: 221), 'connectivity cannot be meaningfully used as a catch-all term', that is, in the way interpreted by Noordegraaf (2020). While scholars argue for broadened understandings of connectivity to facilitate explanation of how professions are changing, there remains limited theorizing of connectivity in these debates, namely, the processes or forms of connectivity, the conditions which shape the experience and practice of connectivity, and implications for professional work. How the organization of work is shaped and augments connectivity between professionals is therefore crucial to understanding contemporary professional work. Indeed, this is something acknowledged as under-developed in Noordegraaf's original thesis, needing further theorization ('I struggled with clarifying the nature of connectivity, and its effects on expertise, autonomy and authority' [Noordegraaf and Brock 2021: 230]).

In this way, we reiterate Alvehus and Andersson's (2018: 35) claims for looking more deeply at intra-professional work to explain changes in professional work: 'It is... not only jurisdictions between professions that are of importance. In order to understand changes in a profession, we must simultaneously look at processes within professions'. We also appreciate, in the struggle to theorize connectivity, there is a risk of accepting simplistic definitions, acknowledging that: 'Connectivity is more than "crossing boundaries", "collaborating" with others, and/or "coproducing" services' (Noordegraaf and Brock 2021: 230). We argue connectivity is not only a phenomenon *in-between* professional action and the outside world, but produced *within* professions which can be complexly shaped and affected by external environments and the organization of work, to which we now turn.

### GOVERNANCE REFORM, INSTITUTIONAL LOGICS, AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Public education governance reform has seen a shifting balance of institutional logics which is shaping the organization of teachers' work. Governance reforms, that is, political decisions about how to govern and organize the public sector and its professionals, have meant that professionals working in public sector organizations, including teachers, encounter complex, articulated structures that exhibit multiple logics. Business-like ways of organizing and governing teachers' work based on principles of New Public



Management (NPM) were introduced some three decades ago in Sweden and Australia aiming to achieve greater efficiency, effectiveness, and competitiveness in the public sector (Samuelsson 2018). A shift in governance of teachers' work from bureaucratic to market principles has spurred individualism and competition, rather than collaborative practice (Samuelsson 2018). Such governance reforms have shifted the balance between logics, which are viewed as 'organizing principles' (Friedland and Alford 1991) or 'rules of the game' (Thornton and Ocasio 1999) which underpin shared assumptions, symbolic constructions, and material practices that shape institutional behaviour and social action within organizational fields.

In the field of institutional logics, Freidson (2001) discussed three ideal type logics, focussing on the organization, and control of work processes. They continue to be influential in the sociology of professions field (see Alvehus and Andersson 2018). The logic of the *profession* is defined by occupational control, expertise, and professional autonomy. In education, when this logic prevails, teachers enjoy high professional autonomy and educational authorities defer control over the content and organization of work to professionals' individual and collective expertise. Collegiality, shared ethics, ideals of trust and responsibility, and an emphasis on tacit knowledge are characteristics of such professionalism (Freidson 2001). The logic of *bureaucracy* is organized by the search for efficiency, calculability, and control through standardized and centralized procedures, practices, and external evaluations of quality and performance. Managerial hierarchy of the bureaucracy determines the organization and performance of work. The predominating form of accountability focusses on input control and on compliance with bureaucratic rules (Freidson 2001). In the logic of the *market*, regulation of teachers' work and quality are determined by an assessment of value and performance by 'customers' in the 'market', such as students, parents, or the state (Freidson 2001). Providers (schools) 'compete' to satisfy the needs of customers (students). Here, collaboration is promoted through accountability. This logic is reflected in NPM reforms centred on increasing competition through outcomes-based management and test-based accountabilities, which have been implemented for decades as part of neoliberal educational reforms.

In recent years, scholars have noted that professionals' work may be shaped by these institutional logics simultaneously (Alvehus and Andersson 2018). Earlier assumptions that organizations are governed by a single dominant institutional logic, or that the coexistence of different logics in an organization leads simply to incompatibility and conflict, have been questioned (Blomgren and Waks 2015; Alvehus and Andersson 2018). Rather,

organizations may be characterized by 'entangled logics' that are 'simultaneously at play' and which produce a 'new professional landscape' (Alvehus and Andersson 2018: 91). While NPM reforms, such as the privatization and marketization of school education, have been underscored by a market agenda, some of the outcomes for teachers, such as work intensification, distrust, and diminished autonomy (e.g. Fitzgerald et al. 2019a) cannot be reduced to the dominance of a market logic. Rather, market and bureaucracy logics have concurrently expanded and have displaced and transformed the logic of professionalism (Freidson 2001). As Alvehus (2022: 122) observes, '[m]anagerial discourses enter the professional vocabulary and slowly, almost imperceptibly, transform it, driving the development towards "organizational professionalism" (Evetts 2011), where the values of professionalism are all in the hands of the bureaucracy'. However, institutions are 'material, not merely cognitive phenomena' and shifting logics are also reflected in the 'changes in intra-professional relations and the material basis of work processes' (Alvehus, Eklund and Kastberg 2019: 34).

Alvehus and Andersson (2018: 36) observe how teachers work in a complex environment of 'entangled' institutional logics, explaining how market-inspired governance reforms 'have replaced professional autonomy with management' and where 'politicians and policy-makers want their say more often than not'. NPM and managerialism become objectified in the organization of work, shaping the conditions for collaboration and pushing the basis of learning away from intra-professional collaboration to an 'organizational pedagogy' that is shaped more fully by a bureaucratic logic. How 'entangled' logics shape the organization of work and connectivity within professions warrants further attention. As argued by Alvehus and Andersson (2018: 36): 'we still know little about how changes in institutional logics become manifest in everyday work'. Yet, while some neoinstitutional perspectives (Meyer and Rowan 1977; Czarniawska and Joerges 1995) see institutional changes as loosely coupled to what happens at the level of everyday work, we follow the line of argument by scholars such as Evetts (2003, 2006, 2011) who explore how professional ideals/ideologies are appropriated by organizations and used as tools for management (i.e. in the service of the logic of bureaucracy). This perspective sees a mediated relationship between changes in institutional logics and professional work (not least due to the interpretive agency of professionals, see Everitt 2012, 2013), yet one that can be in part discerned through the experiences of how work is organized and managed. To summarize, current literature on institutional logics shows that there are a number of

different institutional logics at play in the organizations in which professionals work. The implications of ‘entangled’ logics in shaping the conditions for professional work and connectivity is less known. This article thus contributes to understanding how the current institutional environment of teachers in the education sector shapes the organization of work and perceived implications for intra-professional collaboration.

## CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

This article is based on a large-scale study drawing upon two surveys of teachers’ work in Sweden and Australia. While comparisons of institutional phenomena are often undertaken at a national level, [Bureau \(2007\)](#) depicts a shift from macro-levels of analysis to meso-levels, where the organizations in which professionals’ work have priority focus. In this vein, [Ellem, Sandström and Persson \(2019\)](#) argue the merits of taking a regional or sectoral approach to comparison, which is sensitive to geography and history, as well as institutional function and form. In comparing ‘systems’ of education across both countries, while Sweden has one (national) ‘system’ of school education, in Australia school education is a State-based constitutional responsibility, meaning there is no single ‘Australian’ school education system and that aspects of governance reform have been implemented at different times and with varying intensity. It is thus appropriate to compare the Swedish system with one Australian state system—Western Australia (WA). With this in mind, we set out the rationale for comparing these two case sites for our study.

Studies of teachers’ intra-professional collaborative work have predominantly focussed on student achievement, subject-specific benefit, and school contexts (e.g. [Ronfeldt et al. 2015](#); [Shiraz and Qaisar 2017](#); [Milner, Browes and Murphy 2020](#)), with little theoretical understanding of how teachers’ perceive governance reforms shape intra-professional collaboration. Despite difficulty comparing conditions for professionals’ work in different countries, due to history, culture, and politics, there are benefits of doing so ([Forsey, Davies and Walford 2008](#)). Indeed, theories of comparison suggest that choosing cases that are similar in certain respects but different in others is helpful in exploring and explaining phenomena ([Bureau 2007](#)). Moreover, there is a shortage of comparative and international studies in the field of sociology of professions ([Adams 2015](#)), a gap which this article addresses.

A brief overview of the governance systems of education across Australia and Sweden shows a common underlying rationale across both contexts, although we cannot here fully depict the complex features of these case sites. [Fittock, Cunningham and Striepe \(2021: 3\)](#) note that ‘[a]t first

glance, it may seem that Australia and Sweden are an odd couple for the purposes of comparing and contrasting education systems’. However, in terms of theoretical rationale, [Fittock, Cunningham and Striepe \(2021\)](#) counter this, recognizing that both have enacted neoliberal policies defined by a shift towards privatization, marketization, choice, and competition (see also [Ladd and Fiske 2019](#)), which shapes the institutional context and conditions for intra-professional collaboration, as examined in this article.

Both countries are globally unusual, having rather extreme versions of marketization and dual public and private systems, but in different ways ([Ladd and Fiske 2019](#)). Whilst non-public (independent) schools in Sweden are a relatively recent phenomenon, being only some 30 years since the school choice reform was introduced there (but now considered to have ‘the most market-oriented school system in the world’; [Alvehus and Andersson 2018: 92](#)), by contrast, choice has been long established in Australia. Australia’s schooling is quite diverse in its composition with a mix of government and independent (including religiously founded) schools existing for a long time; however, the expansion of the private sector hastened from the 1980s onwards in the neoliberal era ([Campbell and Proctor 2014](#)). Nonetheless, this was without such dramatic shift as occurred through the Swedish school reforms, where a right-wing coalition government that gained power in 1991 restructured its centrally organized and uniform education system to one with full parental choice among both public and non-public schools ([Parding and Lundström 2011](#)). The growth in private schools in Australia largely reflects the national government’s 1972 decision to provide needs-based funding not only to public, but also to private schools, predominantly driven by the government’s desire to capture more Catholic votes ([Ladd and Fiske 2019](#)). Student outcomes are also similar across both countries, with evidence showing declines in academic excellence during this time of neoliberal reform (OECD 2019 cited in [Fittock, Cunningham and Striepe 2021](#)), as well as equity problems with an increasing gap in educational attainment and excellence between advantaged and disadvantaged students evidenced over the last two decades.

## METHOD

The two large-scale surveys focussed on teachers’ self-reported perceptions about their working conditions in relation to governance reforms in school education. In Sweden, the survey was distributed to 4,733 upper secondary teachers in public as well as non-public employment settings and received 2,388 responses (50%). The sample was stratified and nationally representative. In WA, the survey was distributed to 13,959 public school teachers and school leaders (e.g. principals) and received 1,717 responses (12.3%).

The survey in Sweden was broader in scope and consideration of teachers' work environment and working conditions in relation to governance reforms, while the WA survey had a stronger focus on work intensification in teaching. While there are some differences in the questions from the surveys and the sample size, we can compare responses from upper secondary teachers employed in the public sector across both surveys and focus on questions concerning intra-professional collaboration in relation to governance reforms. Additional background on the survey participants, questionnaire construction, sample representativeness, and full findings are contained in the primary survey reports (Parding et al. 2018; Fitzgerald et al. 2019a, b). The two surveys had several identical items relating to collaboration. We report findings from five closed questions and two open-ended questions related to intra-professional collaboration.

Three indicators of teachers' views of collaboration were collected in both surveys. These items were summed to create an index of *Perceived Benefits from Collaborative Practice (PBCP)*. Component items include:

- I. I benefit from my interaction with my colleagues in my day-to-day work.
- II. I feel I can benefit my colleagues through sharing my knowledge and experience.
- III. Collaborating with fellow teachers helps me develop my professional skills.

In the WA survey, Likert scale responses to the above statements were framed by five levels of agreement (agree strongly, agree, neutral, disagree, disagree strongly). In the Swedish survey they were framed by four levels of accuracy (accurate, fairly accurate, not very accurate, not at all accurate). Thus, the range of possible scores varied between WA (3–15) and Sweden (3–12), but the index scores reflect a common construct.

The PBCP index is an indicator of teachers' perceptions of the benefits and value of collaboration. While this may also constitute a proxy for the likelihood of productive collaboration, it is important to note our findings are tempered by the limitation that the PBCP does not measure the frequency or actual productivity of collaborative practice. Moreover, we examine teachers' perceptions of their professional work within the contemporary institutional environments of two contexts shaped by governance reforms, and we are therefore limited in our capacity to report exogenous variables inferring institutional change. However, the PBCP index provides a useful construct for exploring teachers' reported perceptions about collaboration in relation to the organizational and institutional conditions they are embedded in.

Other data available to explore the institutional conditions for collaboration included:

- I. *Opportunity*: I have the *opportunity to discuss* current professional issues with my colleagues (Sweden and WA, quantitative and qualitative).
- II. *Organization*: My day-to-day work is *organized* in a way that allows me to learn from and together with my colleagues (Sweden and WA, quantitative and qualitative).
- III. *Time*: I have enough *time* to collaborate with colleagues (WA only quantitative, Sweden and WA qualitative).

Furthermore, data reflecting the intensity of teachers' work and their level of professional engagement were available, and these were included as covariates in the regression analyses. These are both recognized as important factors in relation to how teachers may perceive, engage in, and report on intra-professional collaboration. However, it should be noted that the data for professional engagement used different items/wording for Sweden and WA, per below:

- *Intensity of work*: Does your work require you to work very hard? (Sweden and WA)
- *Professional engagement*: I am constantly developing in my daily work as a teacher (Sweden only) and I value the work I do (WA only)

The quantitative data from the closed questions are analysed descriptively and using multiple linear regression models. Open-response comments in both surveys are used to further develop and nuance the quantitative analysis, enabling thematic presentation of the findings. In terms of the steps used for qualitative data analysis of the responses to the open-ended questions, we have deployed well-known qualitative research methods based on coding (Gioia, Corley and Hamilton 2012), including identifying informant terms, codes, and theoretical level of themes, but have followed an abductive approach which requires 'extensive familiarity with existing theories at the outset... so as to become informed theoretical agnostics' (Timmermans and Tavory 2012: 173). Through processes of defamiliarization and revisiting, this allows for recognizing and identifying anomalies that may lead to new theoretical insights and understanding (Tavory and Timmermans 2014). Concretely, the first order terms in the qualitative comments on teacher collaboration were distilled into seven categories which included the perceived benefits of teacher-led collaboration to professional decision-making, the managerial and work constraints on collaboration, and teacher perceptions of effects of changes in school governance (see Fig. 1).

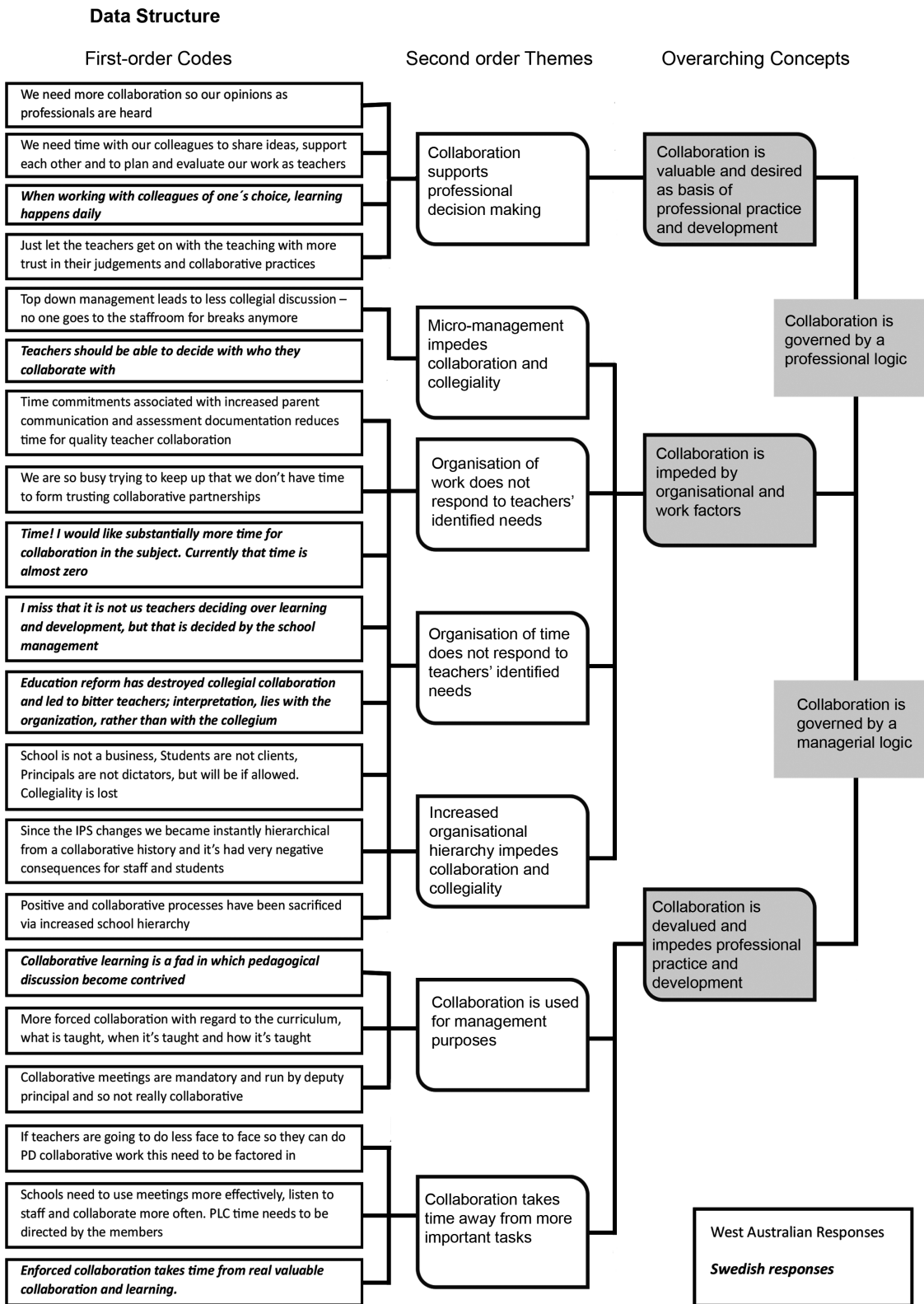


Figure 1 Qualitative data analysis



## FINDINGS

In this section, we present thematic findings related to teachers' views on the benefits of, and conditions for, intra-professional collaboration and what predicts teachers' reports of benefits from their collaborative practice.

### What are teachers' views on intra-professional collaboration?

Teachers in Sweden and WA expressed similar views about the value and benefit of collaboration. Most respondents in both countries reported high levels of agreement in relation to the benefits that collaboration provides for day-to-day work, knowledge and experience, and professional skills. These self-reported data suggest that most teachers in both countries feel that they benefit substantially from intra-professional collaboration.

Although the PBCP index response scales were slightly different in Sweden and WA, extremely similar patterns are observed in relation to the three variables in the PBCP index, as indicated in [Table 1](#).<sup>1</sup> Partitioning (or bucketing) of the neutral/disagree/strongly disagree responses in WA shows almost identical proportions of responses when compared to the 'not very accurate/not accurate at all' responses in Sweden; although this is less so on the item relating to development of professional skills.

Qualitative responses show teachers highly valuing intra-professional collaboration. Teacher-respondents in Sweden expressed that they value sharing and reflecting together, and that they most value sharing with colleagues in the same subject realm. One teacher expressed that: 'prior to the introduction of [cross-disciplinary] work teams, I worked in subject-based work teams. Then, every day was a learning and development process'. Also mirroring the subject focus, when asked to comment on whether respondents miss anything in terms of professional development, 'to develop subject specific knowledge' and 'the subject' were the most common comments. Another teacher stated: '[w]e need time with our colleagues to share ideas, support each other and to plan and evaluate our work as teachers'. These quotes together show the importance of collaboration for learning and developing the profession, as well as that teachers want to be able to decide themselves with whom to collaborate, for it to be useful.

### What predicts teachers' report of benefits from their collaborative practice?

Multiple linear regression modelling was used to examine the predictive power of the institutional variables in relation to teachers' reported benefits from their collaborative practice. PBCP was entered as the dependent variable and the other variables were entered as independent

**Table 1** Swedish and Australian teachers' responses to items in the PBCP index.

Sweden %	Australia (WA)%		
I benefit from my interaction with my colleagues in my day-to-day work			
Accurate	38	41	Agree strongly
Fairly accurate	51	47	Agree
		8	Neutral
Not very accurate	10	3	Disagree
Not accurate at all	1	1	Disagree strongly
I feel I can benefit my colleagues through sharing my knowledge and experience			
Accurate	39	42	Agree strongly
Fairly accurate	53	51	Agree
		6	Neutral
Not very accurate	7	1	Disagree
Not accurate at all	1	<0.5	Disagree strongly
Collaborating with fellow teachers helps me develop my professional skills			
Accurate	29	48	Agree strongly
Fairly accurate	48	45	Agree
		5	Neutral
Not very accurate	18	1	Disagree
Not accurate at all	5	<1	Disagree strongly

variables (see [Table 2](#)). The analysis was repeated with residual analysis and plots to confirm that the statistical assumptions of linear regression were fulfilled.

As noted, there was minor variation in the data. Variables in bold are not available in the Swedish data set. The variable in *italics*, 'I am constantly developing in my daily work as a teacher', available only in the Swedish data, was chosen to correspond to the item: 'I value the work I do' as both these variables reflect aspects of professional engagement and pride. These two variables were included as covariates, as the analysis was designed to examine the predictivity of the institutional factors, but recognized the need to control for teachers' report on the overall demands of the work and also their personal level of professional engagement.

The regression models confirm that, providing time, organization, and opportunity for collaboration, within school system design are important to generating teachers' perceived benefits from collaboration. The corollary of this is that schools where those institutional characteristics are not present will find it difficult to generate positive views of collaboration—and presumably collaborative practice.

**Table 2** Regression models for PBCP in Sweden and WA.

	Australia		Sweden	
	B	Beta	B	Beta
<i>Work intensity</i> Does your work require you to work very hard?	0.399***	0.131	0.099*	0.039
<i>Opportunity4C</i> I have the opportunity to discuss current professional issues with my colleagues	0.748***	0.422	1.185***	0.436
<i>Organisation4C</i> My day-to-day work is organized in a way that allows me to learn from and together with my colleagues	0.176***	0.107	0.371***	0.175
<i>Time4C</i> I have enough time to collaborate with colleagues	-0.183**	-0.099	Not available	Not available
<i>Professional engagement</i> I value the work I do	0.536***	0.184	Not available	Not available
I am constantly developing in my daily work as a teacher	Not available	Not available	0.458***	0.192
Constant	5,837		2,903	
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	26.5		37.0	

\*P ≤ 0.05.

\*\*P ≤ 0.01.

\*\*\*P ≤ 0.001.

The models for Sweden and WA are remarkably similar in relation to the direction and relative magnitude of the coefficients. The significant effect of each of these variables is estimated while controlling for each of the other factors in the model. For instance, the effect of work intensity is estimated while controlling for the impact of other variables like opportunity, organization, and time for collaboration.

Together, the institutional factors, work intensity and professional engagement predict substantial amounts of variance in the PBCP index—26.5% in WA and 37% in Sweden. In both jurisdictions, Opportunity is the strongest predictor of PBCP, with large standardized-Beta coefficients of above 0.4. This suggests that the provision of opportunities for timely, day-to-day professional discussion is a key driver in how teachers view collaborative practice. Such opportunities are likely to include informal, daily discussions relating to students, school and system-level policy, pedagogical insights, and so forth.

Teachers' levels of professional engagement present the second strongest predictive effects: Sweden 0.19 and WA 0.18. Organization is also a significant predictor of teachers' positive views on collaboration. Both Sweden and WA show similar, relatively small positive effects for Organization. This suggests that there is significant variation in 'day-to-day work organization' that can explain additional variation in views on collaboration—over and

beyond the significant impact of time for discussion with colleagues (Opportunity). Such organization practices may include the provision and preservation of teachers' meal breaks, or organization for team teaching and paired teacher work.

One area where the Swedish and WA models vary is on impact of work intensity, where the coefficient for Australia is three times that in the Swedish data. It is likely that work intensity affects the time that teachers then have available to engage in activities perceived as important for professional work, such as informal collaboration with colleagues. For instance, time for collaboration (Time) is also a predictor, although this is only available in the WA survey, and shows slightly surprising results, with a small, negative effect upon PBCP (Beta approx. 0.1). The WA qualitative data add insights relating to time allocation for formal professional collaboration activities—currently these are often related to Professional Learning Communities. In interpreting the qualitative responses regarding the conditions for collaboration in relation to time, the picture is clear; lack of time is a recurrent comment, and work intensity may compound the insufficient opportunity teachers' have to engage in timely, day-to-day professional discussion. Responses from WA teachers particularly support this argument. In WA, teachers argued 'we are so busy trying to keep up that we don't really have time to form trusting

partnerships and share our successes and failures, share resources'. What was needed, according to one respondent, was 'time with our colleagues to share ideas, support each other and to plan and evaluate our work as teachers, and student work'. Another WA teacher said 'we need more time for teachers to collaborate in the moderation of, and reflection on, students work'. Single-word expressions from Swedish teachers in the open-ended questions similarly commented on lack of time as a barrier for intra-professional collaboration; 'time', or even 'time!'; also 'I would want substantially more time for collaboration within the subject'.

The most substantive finding from the comparative regression models is that opportunity for collaboration (Opportunity) is highly influential in how teachers report on their PBCP. This relationship is of a large magnitude. While teachers in both WA and Sweden report relatively high levels of PBCP (see Table 1), there is not universal agreement on PBCP, and those who report fewer opportunities to collaborate have a less positive view of the benefits it may bring. Similarly, teachers who report collaboration as positive but not enthusiastically so, are also more likely to report fewer opportunities for collaboration than those who agree strongly on the benefits of collaboration. We cannot be sure of the causality of this situation; it may be that positive views emerge from opportunities—or that opportunities to collaborate lead to positive views of it.

What is more certain is that while the rhetoric for collaborative practice has pervaded educational discourse, there appears to be less attention on institutional and organizational conditions to support it—perhaps suggesting school organizations are informed by other institutional logics than the logic of the profession. While teachers' rating for PBCP were high across all three indicators, their responses on institutional conditions were less enthusiastic, as is seen in Table 3. Organization of work, and opportunity to collaborate are aspects that seem to go hand-in-hand. In the qualitative Swedish responses, we see that respondents were not satisfied with how work is organized, in relation to the opportunities for collaboration. Apart from lack of time, there is also indication that the way collaboration is currently organized is perceived by respondents as merely another top-down management ideal: a Swedish respondent noted that 'so called pedagogical discussions become better if they are not contrived. Collegial learning is currently a fad'.

There are other organizational aspects too that seem to constrain possibilities for useful collaboration. One aspect, specific to Sweden, is the recently implemented 'first teacher' role, an initiative aimed at increasing teacher professionalism and status by rewarding 'elite'

**Table 3** Swedish and Australian teachers' responses to items on the institutional conditions for collaborative practice.

Sweden %	Australia (WA)%		
<b>Opportunity4C: I have the opportunity to discuss current professional issues with my colleagues</b>			
Accurate	46	13	Agree strongly
Fairly accurate	45	58	Agree
		12	Neutral
Not very accurate	8	13	Disagree
Not accurate at all	1	4	Disagree strongly
<b>Organisation4C: My day-to-day work is organized in a way that allows me to learn from and together with my colleagues</b>			
Accurate	8	4	Agree strongly
Fairly accurate	30	18	Agree
		23	Neutral
Not very accurate	43	40	Disagree
Not accurate at all	18	16	Disagree strongly
<b>Time4C: I have enough time to collaborate with colleagues</b>			
Not available		2	Agree strongly
		12	Agree
		12	Neutral
		53	Disagree
		22	Disagree strongly

teachers who take on extra responsibilities and who also have increased representation in school management (Alvehus and Andersson 2018). Alvehus and Andersson (2018: 98) observe how this initiative has increased 'stratification' within the teaching profession. Our data similarly show teacher-respondents reporting confusion with this role, with a perception that 'first teachers' enjoyed higher salaries but without it being clear to all staff what additional tasks or responsibilities were taken on (as to warrant extra remuneration). This was perceived as having negative consequences for collaboration within schools with many respondents arguing that the 'reform currently brings fragmentation within the profession, as many ["first teachers" are perceived to] have exactly the same tasks as other teachers' while being rewarded higher. Others explain how this new role 'has destroyed collegial collaboration [between 'first teachers' and other teachers] and led to bitter teachers' and 'is deeply unfair collegially, and has hit a wedge in the collegial collaboration'.

This is just one example of how current institutional logics, as they play out in the organization of work, appear

to have negative effects on teachers' views on conditions for intra-professional collaboration. It seems the conditions that shape intra-professional collaboration lie with the organization, rather than with the profession, with collaboration orchestrated as a managerial tool. A Swedish response, 'I miss that it is not us teachers deciding over learning and development, but that that is decided by the school management', exemplifies this. In WA, teachers referred to the effects of reform and stated that, for example, 'increased hierarchy has affected our collaborative history and it's had very negative consequences for staff and students.' Another teacher noted that 'top down management leads to less collegial discussion – no one goes to the staffroom for breaks anymore'.

Our data show that large proportions of teachers report low levels of the key organizational conditions that promote positive views of collaboration. In WA, nearly one-in-three (29%) teachers do not agree that they have the opportunity to discuss current professional issues with their colleagues. While a substantial proportion do agree with this statement (58%), only 14% agree strongly. This picture contrasts with Sweden where a large majority feel the statement is accurate (46%) or fairly accurate (45%), and only 9% disagree and feel they do not have the opportunity for collegial discussion.

WA and Sweden are more similar when it comes to teachers' reports on organization for collaboration. Responses are decidedly negative. Some 61% of Swedish teachers and 56% of WA teachers report that their work is not organized in a way that enables a form of collaboration desired by teachers. In WA, a further 23% feel neutral about this, leaving only 22% who feel '*My day-to-day work is organized in a way that allows me to learn from and together with my colleagues*', while 38% of Swedish counterparts also report this.

Additional data on time to collaborate were only available for WA, although Swedish open-ended responses also commented on time (the responses of which were of a similar sentiment to WA teachers). Among WA teachers, only 13% agree or strongly agree that they have enough time to collaborate, while 75% disagree.

In conclusion, our exploratory study suggests relatively high proportions of WA and Swedish teachers report having the opportunity to work collaboratively with their colleagues, there are significant proportions who are missing those opportunities. Of the organizational characteristics, Opportunity is the most aligned to PBCP. Thus, it appears that the fairly positive views of teachers in both countries are buoyed by the possibilities of finding time for meaningful collaboration. However, the noted lack of Organization and Time for collaboration suggest that governance systems are not making a

positive contribution to school cultures that support intra-professional collaboration.

## DISCUSSION

In this section, we revisit the study's research questions, providing thematic analysis of the findings on teachers' views on intra-professional collaboration in light of the context of entangled institutional logics and the current organization of work. Regarding teachers' views on the benefits of collaboration (RQ1), we find a high level of agreement that teachers value intra-professional collaboration and perceive various benefits arising from it, including for knowledge and skill development, and the capacity to share and reflect together, particularly learning with those in the same subject area. Regarding the organizational conditions that inform teachers' view of the benefits of collaboration (RQ2), crucially, teachers want to be able to decide for themselves with whom they collaborate and how. However, work does not currently seem to be organized in ways that are desired by teachers for collaboration. Large proportions of teachers reported low levels of the key organizational characteristics that promote positive views of collaboration. The findings show that providing time, organization, and opportunity for collaboration, within school system design, is important to teachers perceiving benefits from collaboration—where these are lacking in schools, so too are positive views by teachers of collaboration. The provision of *opportunities* for timely, daily professional discussion is a key driver in how teachers view collaboration. The opportunity for collaboration is highly influential in how teachers report the benefits of collaboration and is a substantive finding from this study. The evidence shows there are small, but significant, proportions of teachers who are missing out on opportunities for meaningful collaboration, with teachers in WA particularly lacking in their opportunity to discuss professional issues. This suggests that while collaboration is highly promoted in policy and discourse, some teachers, who have less opportunity for collaboration, are yet to be convinced of the benefits of it. This may also have knock-on effects on teachers' motivation to collaborate.

*Organization* of work conditions is also a significant predictor of teachers' positive views of collaboration. Put simply, work needs to be organized in a way that allows for collaboration (in the form desired by teachers). Compared to insights around the *opportunity* for collaboration, teachers in both Sweden and Australia were very similar in their views that work is not currently organized in ways to enable collaboration to occur in the manner desired by teachers. Moreover, teachers need *time* for professional interaction and engagement. Work



intensity particularly affects intra-professional collaboration in WA, where very high proportions of teachers strongly disagree that they have enough time to collaborate with colleagues. Ineffective organization of work and lack of time for collaboration suggest that the enactment of ‘entangled’ institutional logics is not making a positive contribution to school cultures or conditions of work that support collaboration (RQ3). Rather, due to these entangled logics, certain kinds of collaboration are being ‘forced’ on teachers. The differences in teachers’ responses around *time* for collaboration across these case sites may reflect different institutional conditions within schools in the two countries. While there is long-standing acknowledgement of ‘intensification’ in teachers’ work internationally, including in Sweden (Parding and Lundström 2011), this difference may be explained through extant research which points to a more acute problem with a rapid intensification of teachers’ work in Australia over the last 10 years which is ‘crowding out’ the time available for teachers to engage in more valuable activities that support the profession, including informal collaboration with colleagues and opportunities for discussion (Gavin et al. 2022). Wider findings from the WA survey (Fitzgerald et al. 2019b), and from those in other Australian states (Gavin et al. 2022), show increases in hours, complexity, and conflicting demands. When asked what teachers would suggest to alleviate this intensification, the most common response was time to collaborate with colleagues (Gavin et al. 2022).

Public education governance reform has produced ‘entangled’ institutional logics (Blomgren and Waks 2015; Alvehus and Andersson 2018). The findings from this study underscore that teachers do not desire collaboration where it is seen to be driven by a managerial or bureaucratic logic, that is, when it is imposed, and teachers have little capacity to collaborate in the way they desire. But in line with current global governance trends, intra-professional collaboration has been reoriented to fit new forms of hierarchical and market controls, signifying the teaching profession as having little priority of interpretation in how work is organized (Freidson 2001). There is a tension then between what teacher-professionals want, and what they perceive work is organized for—indicating other logics being at play simultaneously, that seemingly have the priority of interpretation in work organizations.

In emergent debates on connectivity in professions (Noordegraaf 2020), our findings show how an entanglement of logics may affect local work conditions, as perceived by the study participants, and thus shape connectivity within a profession. Intra-professional collaboration is a key means by which professionals can set and negotiate the terms of their profession. The

intersubjectivity between professionals allow them to define their work and engage in relational activities that builds mutual recognition and legitimacy for professional autonomy, authority, and respect. If teachers cannot collaborate on their own terms, they cannot define how they want to act (versus being ‘acted upon’) in response to the contextual influences of market and bureaucratic logics. ‘Connectedness of individuals is...a significant part of professional work and professional life’ (Noordegraaf and Brock 2021: 234), yet understanding what conditions may shape, or indeed, constrain, such connectedness is vital in our investigation of how professions are changing. Our study provides an example of a profession that is interconnected and eager to collaborate, but where interconnections seem to be altered through ‘entangled’ institutional logics that drive teachers away from organizing work on their own terms, thus highlighting the role of policy and context in shaping the ability of professionals to collaborate in a meaningful way. Therefore, understanding management and organization of work, and how it may shape connectivity, has important implications for professionals in terms of the development of their knowledge, exercise of expertise, and garnering of professional respect. The role institutional logics may play in shaping contemporary professional work, and appreciation of policy and governance environments shaping professional work, thus, is crucial.

With comparison of two cases, in different yet fairly complementary contexts, the similarities in the findings are likely to indicate a more general trend, where professionals (teachers) seem to be situated in tension between institutional logics. Despite some differences between case sites, we see, through this example, current global governance trends in education having the effect of bringing the same result across the globe. While the pace of change and its trajectory across countries may result in different market-based systems, they seem to pave the way for similar outcomes. This reflects the isomorphic pressures from the global education reform movement (GERM) which appear to enact blanketing effects across countries, thus bringing about more similarities than differences in terms of possible outcomes for professionals’ work, even though contextually historical and institutional traits differ (Sahlberg 2016). A point of distinction in the empirical findings between the two case sites, however, is around the *opportunity* for collaboration, with teachers in Australia reporting they particularly lack the opportunity to discuss professional issues with colleagues, compared to this being more moderate for teachers in Sweden. We explain this nuance through a unique outcome of NPM reform in Australia which has promoted a devolutionary agenda across Australian states in recent years. This has

had the effect of adding heavy administrative burdens to teachers work, which has been well documented in literature (e.g. Fitzgerald et al. 2019a), limiting the *opportunity* for teachers to work collaboratively. This distinction is important and invites a pathway for future research to examine how the configuration of market-based reforms, while producing broadly similar outcomes across contexts, also shape professionals' work in local settings.

## CONCLUSION

In this exploratory study, we have examined how one professional group—teachers—seek to work collaboratively as a way to build the profession from within and develop needed resources for the profession; yet there seem to be organizational and/or institutional barriers to the desired possibilities to collaborate intra-professionally. In contemporary debates in the sociology of professions exploring the 'reconfiguration of professions' and which call for further empirical research on 'how and why professional fields are changing' (Noordegraaf 2020: 219), we offer a contemporary example of how connectivity is shaped within a profession and by the context and policy environment within which professionals work. While global governance reforms have produced variegated market-led education systems, by going beyond findings from a single case, we show the (similar) effects of such reforms for understanding the contemporary condition of teachers' professional work and contribute to the dearth of cross-comparative studies on intra-professional collaboration.

Collaborating with others within a profession remains crucial, and our findings extend contemporary debates on the reconfiguration of professions that call for deeper theorizing on connectivity as a concept and practice in professions (Adams et al. 2020a; Alvehus, Avon and Oliver 2021: 201; Kanon and Andersson 2023). Our findings nuance the idea of professional connectedness further, particularly in the investigation of those professions that continue to seek and value intra-professional collaboration, emphasizing the conditions within which professionals work and which shape their connectivity. We encourage future research which seeks to investigate the context within which professionals work and the conditions shaping work intra-professionally, particularly in settings where governance reforms or entangled logics shape professional work, which may reveal further insights about connectivity within professions, not only how professional action can relate to others and outsiders, and implications for developing the profession from within. However, equally, understanding how teachers connect with other actors and groups (e.g. parents,

policymakers) in market-based systems may reveal further insights around the types and forms of connectivity emerging and implications for teachers' work in comparison to different professions.

## Methodological limitations

Finally, we note some methodological limitations in this study which provide important caveats to the findings and identify opportunities for further research. First, the statistical modelling presented was constrained to a narrow set of variables available in both Swedish and WA data sets. Equivalent, proxy variables for 'professional engagement' were included, and 'time for collaboration' data were only available in WA. The relationships are correlational and, with few temporal dimensions, cannot make claims to causality. Future studies may include other sources of empirical data, such as observations at schools or follow-up studies, to discern actual patterns of collaboration.

Second, there are limitations in the development of the PBCP construct. The PBCP reflects teachers' own assessment of the benefits of their collaborative practice and cannot confirm the degree or frequency of productive collaborative practice actually occurring, nor its effectiveness. While a large body of extant literature has documented substantial changes in teachers' work over recent decades arising from governance reforms across these two case sites, the data upon which this article is based rests on teachers' own views and perceptions about their current conditions for work and, to some extent, their reflections on any changes observed from this institutional environment. This is in keeping with the view that through 'sense-making processes [teachers]...actively reinvent, reproduce, and legitimate pervasive institutional logics in educational institutions' (Everitt 2013: 193). As our study is cross-sectional and exploratory, we acknowledge a significant limitation in the lack of specific exogenous variables which measure institutional change, and that analysis of teachers' contemporary experience of professional work is based on self-reported perceived changes. Additional observation studies are needed to confirm collaborative practice and its association with our self-reported PBCP construct (see Summers and Volet 2010). Questionnaire items linked to exogenous variables would also assist to strengthen claims of causal impacts of institutional phenomena on teachers' professional work.

Finally, the cross-sectional design means we cannot make claims about actual changes, but the focus is on portraying how teachers themselves reflect on their conditions for work inside organizational settings. As with Everitt's (2012) study, our data were collected solely from

teachers as opposed to, for example, Alvehus, Eklund and Kastberg's (2019) study which included the insights of principals and municipality school managers. As such, it can be argued that the data are on the level of discursive consciousness, where the teachers in this case reflect upon their conditions for work and the constraints and opportunities created by the institutional environment in which they are embedded (Giddens 1984). Gathering of data from a wider array of stakeholders would complement the current teacher-sample.

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## NOTES

- 1 Data on collaboration items, and the perceived benefits of collaborative practice (PBCP), was also examined in relation to a range of teacher background factors (gender, age, years teaching). In WA, there were no significant relationships with these factors. In Sweden, with a larger sample and greater statistical power, a small significant relationship was found between collaboration and age, collaboration, and type of school—older teachers are less positive about collaboration; and teachers in public schools are more positive about collaboration compared to teachers in private schools. Other background factors (gender, teaching experience, level of competence, type of employment, working hours) did not have any significant effects.

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