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# The Invisible: On Problematic School Absenteeism and Institutional Responses in a Local Context

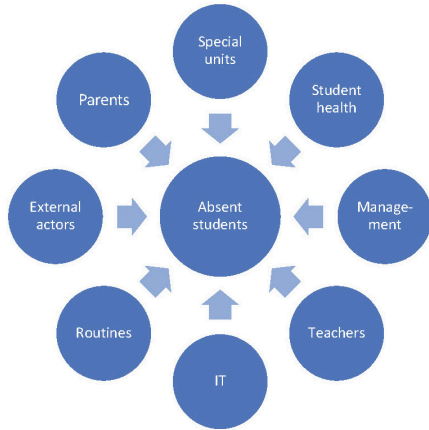
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# Background, the project

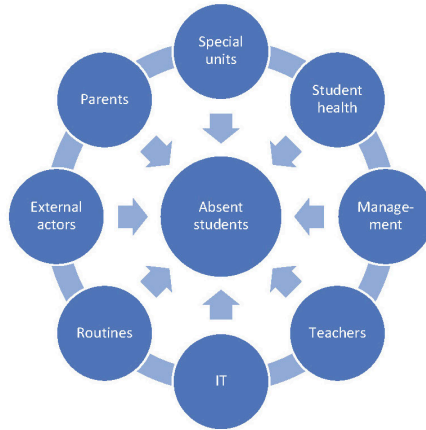
- An epidemic of "Homesitting" (?)
- A problem that attracts more resources, actors and attention
- Case study: "Lake-school" (secondary)
  - 5 students/ class with problematic school absence
- Collaborative research project
- Aim: mapping and analyzing the **school's work**

# Design

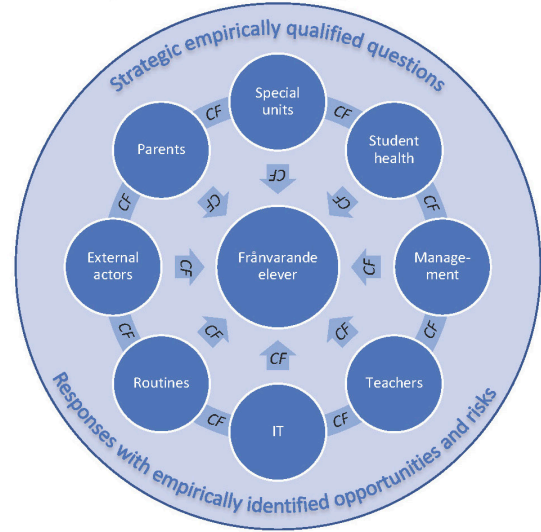
Phase 1: Mapping actors, actions and perceptions



Phase 2: Analysis of relationships, institutional logics and action repertoires

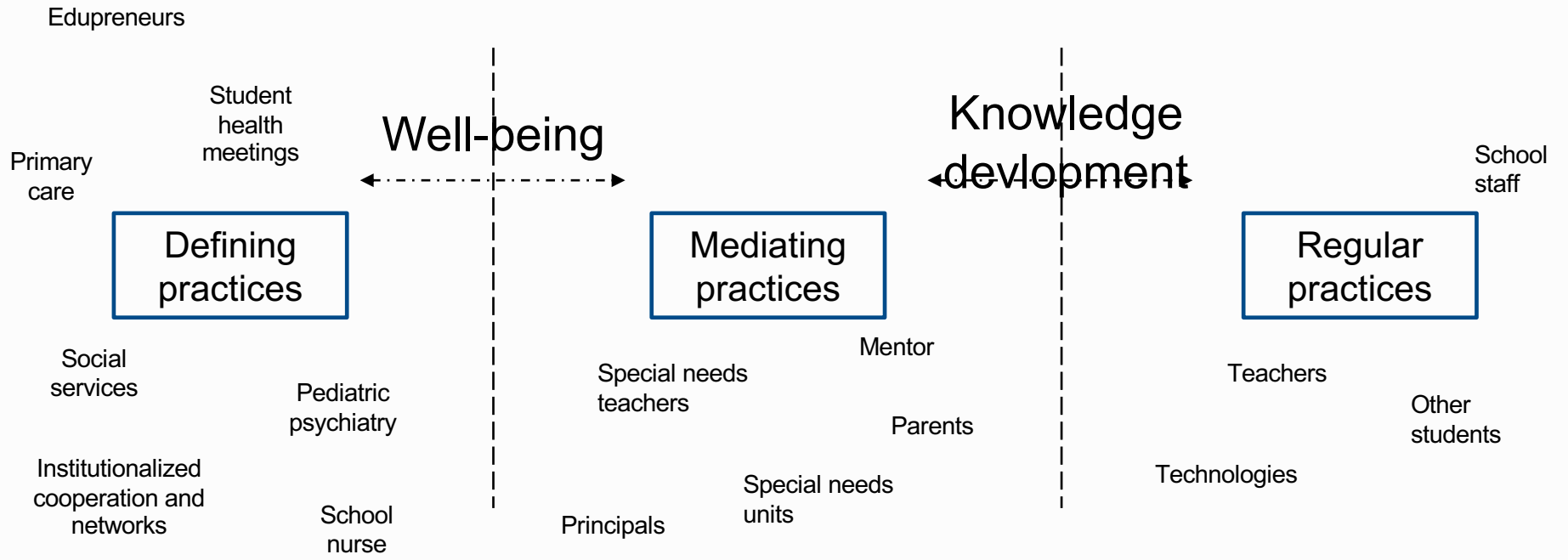


Phase 3: Tools – Identification of critical factors (CF), strategic issues and potential opportunities / risks



# Theory

- Focus is on the *institutional* work with the phenomenon of problematic school absenteeism
- Neo-institutionalism
  - Institutional logics empower and constrain actions
  - Habits, rules, norms and negotiations
- Actors (eg school, social services and student care) “translate”, negotiate and give meaning to problematic school absenteeism in relation to other actors.



# The three practices – in tension

[i]t was the student health team that we met. And it was decided that we should try to lower the requirements a bit, in consultation with pediatric psychiatry, that was probably the first thing that happened /.../ that he, that Ludvig felt very bad, and that **pediatric psychiatry made the student health team aware, that it might be that the demands were a bit too high**. There were also some problems with /... / he got a lot of stuff back home, because he was falling behind so he got, like, a whole school week of work with him, more or less.

Interview, Ludvigs' father

# Conclusions

- Well-being and knowledge development are divided into the practices we studied
- Knowledge conditional on wellbeing
- Student health becomes the main responsibility, the teachers are involved to a lesser degree
- Makes preventive, institutional presence-work more difficult
- The development of knowledge is postponed to the future, absent students become "invisible".
- A completed education is crucial for life chances



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