education sciences

MDPI

Article

Enculturating a Protective Professional Community—Processes of Teacher Retention in a Swedish Hard-to-Staff School

Jeffrey Casely-Hayford [1,*], Per Lindqvist [2], Christina Björklund [1], Gunnar Bergström [1,3] and Lydia Kwak [1]

[1] Unit of Intervention and Implementation Research for Worker Health, Karolinska Institutet, 171 77 Stockholm, Sweden; christina.bjorklund@ki.se (C.B.); gunnar.bergstrom@ki.se (G.B.); lydia.kwak@ki.se (L.K.)
[2] Department of Didactics and Teachers' Practice, Linnaeus University, 391 82 Kalmar, Sweden; per.lindqvist@lnu.se
[3] Department of Occupational Health Sciences and Psychology, Centre for Musculoskeletal Research, University of Gävle, 801 76 Gävle, Sweden
* Correspondence: jeffrey.caselyhayford@ki.se

Abstract: This study presented a positive deviant case: a Swedish hard-to-staff school which has had a low rate of teacher turnover over time. In line with the purpose of studying positive deviance in organisations, our exploratory inquiry was geared towards understanding how and why 'at-risk' teachers, i.e., teachers who teach in subjects which are known to have high levels of staffing difficulties in Sweden, stayed at this particular school. Using a modified grounded theory approach, our results suggested that teachers remained at the school due to being embedded in a protective professional community that was enculturated by different expressions of collegiality. Finally, these findings are discussed in relation to the theoretical concepts of teachers' job embeddedness and social capital.

Keywords: teacher retention; hard-to-staff school; teacher turnover; collegiality; teacher community; job embeddedness

check for updates

Citation: Casely-Hayford, J.; Lindqvist, P.; Björklund, C.; Bergström, G.; Kwak, L. Enculturating a Protective Professional Community—Processes of Teacher Retention in a Swedish Hard-to-Staff School. *Educ. Sci.* **2024**, *14*, 114. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14010114

Academic Editor: Bracha Kramarski

Received: 20 December 2023
Revised: 19 January 2024
Accepted: 21 January 2024
Published: 22 January 2024

Copyright: © 2024 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

1. Introduction

Although some level of teacher turnover is expected, high levels of turnover disrupt the social and relational continuity needed in schools and have long-lasting negative effects on instructional quality and student achievement [1,2]. Studies have shown that schools situated in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas are disproportionately affected by turnover [3] and struggle to recruit and retain qualified teachers [4,5]. This unequal distribution of qualified teachers has led to the emergence of 'hard-to-staff schools', which refers to schools with perpetual staffing difficulties [6]. Although the retention literature has uncovered protective factors that can help teachers stay in the profession and at their schools, more research is needed to explain how components of the school environment can facilitate retention in hard-to-staff schools [7]. This study aims to contribute to the literature by presenting a positive deviant case: a Swedish school that possesses the contextual characteristics of a hard-to-staff school but which has had a low teacher turnover rate over time. Positive deviance is defined as 'intentional behaviors that depart from the norms of a referent group in honourable ways' [8] (p. 209). We use the term positive deviance to highlight how teacher retention at this particular school departs from what one would expect to see in a school of a similar profile [9]. We describe the teachers' reasons for remaining at the school and the potential determinants that give rise to the observed phenomena. We add further nuance to our inquiry by focusing on 'at-risk' teachers, i.e., teachers certified in subjects with known staffing difficulties. By doing so, we aim to provide novel insights that can further our understanding of teacher retention in hard-to-staff schools.

2. Background

2.1. Teacher Retention in Hard-to-Staff Schools: A Matter of Collegiality

The literature commonly uses the term hard-to-staff to refer to inner-city schools situated in deprived neighbourhoods with a high proportion of minority students and low levels of student achievement [6]. Studies exploring the reasons behind teachers' migration from hard-to-staff schools have attributed the teacher exodus to untenable work environments, which prevent them from practising good teaching [10]. These teachers are subject to a flurry of push and pull factors, as despite being highly committed and feeling a sense of obligation to the student population found in these schools [11,12], the dysfunctional conditions and context in which they work cause them to seek pastures anew [13–15]. In a study conducted by Glazer [16], analysis of the narratives of 12 teachers who migrated from hard-to-staff schools revealed that chaotic work environments, insufficient and ineffective support from the school leadership and the inability to exercise their professional autonomy made teaching practices cumbersome and drove them away from their schools. Similarly, Simon and Johnson [7] reviewed six studies examining teacher turnover in hard-to-staff schools and concluded that teachers migrated due to poor working conditions rather than student demographics.

By refocusing the attention towards the teachers who remain, the retention literature has aimed to identify job resources that can mitigate job demands and facilitate retention (e.g., [17]). It has consistently pointed to the importance of vertical and horizontal support processes and the congruence between teachers and the social ecosystem they find themselves in [18,19]. In a school context, the concept of collegiality captures the quality of relationships and underlies the scope and nature of collaborative efforts in a teaching group [20]. Collegiality can be defined as a concept with normative and relational dimensions which influence ideas about reciprocity, teacher cohesion and mechanisms for internal control among a teacher group [21]. It has been found to be a buffering factor against quantitative workload [22] that provides teachers with a social ecosystem of support wherein they can access instructional and affective support, which facilitates positive job attitudes, job satisfaction and retention [23,24]. It is also an important factor that can facilitate retention in hard-to-staff schools, which underlines the malleability of factors influencing retention in these schools [7,25]. Supportive collegial relationships can enable teachers to practice high-quality teaching by fostering a positive environment in which teachers can engage in peer learning and collective problem-solving [10]. Moreover, it also provides the conditions for teacher resilience [26], which can be broadly defined as the process of, or ability to, successfully adapt to one's surroundings despite difficult circumstances [27]. Studies have found that teachers who remain in hard-to-staff schools tend to use a range of strategies, such as help-seeking and problem-solving, which enables them to build up resources and overcome day-to-day challenges [28,29].

2.2. Contextualising the Study

There are several studies focusing on the challenges that hard-to-staff schools face. However, most studies in this section of the teacher retention literature have been conducted in an American or British setting. Although informative, these studies are set within societal landscapes and structures that differ from the Swedish context. As such, it is important to contextualise the present study before proceeding. Formal education in Sweden consists of a 10-year compulsory education which is free of charge and funded by municipal and state grants based on the voucher programme. The state sets national objectives and learning outcomes, which are implemented by the local municipalities [30]. The state is also responsible for the financial steering of the school system and ensures that the principles of educational equity and compensatory education are upheld [31,32]. However, municipalities are responsible for the financial management and resource allocation to municipal schools. Most schools in Sweden are public schools; however, there is a large and expanding independent school sector as the comprehensive school voucher system enables free entry of new independent schools. These independent schools are subject to

the same regulation as public schools and can be profit-driven or non-profit as well as secular or religious [33]. The Swedish school system is a highly decentralised market-based educational system characterised by neoliberal market mechanisms such as freedom of choice, individualism and competition between schools. In this system, education has essentially become a commodity, with families and students taking the role of consumers. The efficacy of the system primarily relies on the provision of information needed for consumers to make informed choices [30].

The teaching profession in Sweden is highly regulated and characterised by national objectives, formative assessments, testing, quality assurance practices, documentation and demands of transparency and accountability from the general public [30]. Public school teachers are employed by the municipalities, but teacher recruitment and employment are commonly made at the school level by the principals. Principals are given free rein in hiring and employment decisions; however, all employment is regulated by employment protection laws and collective agreements [33]. Since 2011, teachers must be certified if they are to be employed on a permanent contract and unqualified teachers can only be employed on fixed-term contracts. Teachers' job opportunities are determined by their local school market. Teachers search for vacancies, apply for positions and undergo an interview process, after which an employment offer is made on a competitive basis determined by collective bargaining agreements. Teachers' wage setting can potentially vary quite substantially between schools. However, the wage dispersion among Swedish teachers is quite compressed and among the lowest in the OECD [34]. Teachers are also free to terminate their employment contract with a notice period of between one to three months, depending on the length of employment.

Some studies have suggested that the market-based system diminishes the egalitarianism of schools through the facilitation of segregation [35–37], whereas others have heralded the competition between schools as a way of enhancing educational quality and achievement by streamlining inefficiency [38]. According to the Swedish National Agency for Education, the differences in student achievement between schools in affluent and less-affluent areas are becoming more pronounced [39]. The reasons for the observed increase in school segregation are complex as it is partially driven by school competition policies, which have provided the conditions for increased stratification of the school market, but also by societal factors such as increased immigration and residential segregation [36,37,40–42]. The effects of school competition on school segregation and student achievement mirror this complexity as it interacts with school, neighbourhood and family effects [40,43]. This stratification of the school market, in terms of student composition and student achievement, has also influenced teacher mobility and led to an inequitable distribution of qualified teachers [34,39,44]. The compensatory funding scheme of the Swedish system, in which municipalities can allocate resources based on the specific conditions of schools, is a mechanism used to even the playing field among schools and has led to a general increase in teacher density in hard-to-staff schools [45]. However, as the implementation of this compensatory mechanism varies between municipalities and is only loosely linked to schools' student composition in practice, it has not prevented the inequitable distribution of qualified teachers observed between schools [45]. As such, there has been a rise in schools which align with the definition of a hard-to-staff school. The retention and recruitment difficulties facing these schools have mainly been attributed to the symbolic position these schools hold in the school market with regard to their perceived educational status by students, teachers and the surrounding community [5]. Our selected definition of a hard-to-staff school mainly captures a particular profile of schools with perpetual staffing difficulties; however, we also acknowledge that labour market factors, such as geographical location and proximity to teacher education institutions, also have a significant influence on teacher staffing difficulties [39].

2.3. Aims of the Study

Although some studies have provided insight into Swedish teachers' occupational mobility (e.g., [46,47]), to the best of our knowledge, no previous study has explored teacher retention in hard-to-staff schools in Sweden. In this study, we present a positive deviant case which we use to explore the reasons why 'at-risk' teachers have chosen to stay at this particular hard-to-staff school. The identified school aligns with the literature's definition of a hard-to-staff school and thus represents an exception to the rule, 'a champion of stability' [48]. We believe this is of great interest as it can provide insights into potential mechanisms that can facilitate teacher retention in hard-to-staff schools. Additionally, exploring this positive deviant case within the highly decentralised market-based education system found in Sweden provides us with the opportunity to make a unique contribution to the teacher retention literature.

3. Research Design

3.1. Case Selection

We chose to use a case study research design as it is useful for exploratory investigations [49] and complements the normative approach to studying positive deviance in organisations [9]. Recent reports have shown that the national annual turnover between 2014–2021 ranged from 26–30% [50]. However, it can reach as high as 30–40% in hard-to-staff schools [51], although the degree of teacher turnover in these schools varies [52]. The positive deviation observed at the school was identified through contact with the municipality (municipal Human Resource department, personal communication, 10 September 2021; vice-school director, personal communication, 22 September 2021) and by inspecting municipal turnover data (see Table 1). The average turnover rate at the positive deviant school between 2015–2021 has been 12.6%. Municipal turnover data was only provided from school years 2017–2018 until 2020–2021. The average turnover for municipal public schools during this period was 17.4% (excluding the positive deviant school), which is higher than the average turnover at the positive deviant school during the same time period (14.2%). The positive deviance observed at this school is further compounded by the proportion of qualified teachers working at the school, ~75% compared to 62% for schools sharing a similar profile [53], and by the wealth of job opportunities available to the 'at-risk' teachers at the school as they have access to a large school market in which they are attractive candidates as they teach in subjects where the municipal teacher certification level ranges from 37% to 55%.

Table 1. Overview of teacher turnover and teacher certification level at the school.

School Year	2015–2016	2016–2017	2017–2018	2018–2019	2019–2020	2020–2021
Turnover rate (%) [a]	2.9	16.0	20.6	13.5	13.9	8.6
Teacher certification (%) [a]	77.4	72.5	78.1	71.1	76.5	77.1
Teacher density [a]	12.4	11.1	15.5	12.2	12.8	13.3
Municipal turnover rate (%) [b]	-	-	20.1	14.5	14.6	20.4
Municipal teacher certification (%) [b]	79.4	88.3	88.4	81.7	82	82
Municipal teacher density [b]	12.5	12.6	13.1	12.7	13.2	13.5

Note: [a] = Data for positive deviant school; [b] = Municipal averages for public schools excluding the positive deviant school. Municipal turnover data for 2015–2016 and 2016–2017 were not provided by the municipality due to the restructuring of several schools.

3.2. About the School

The school is a large urban lower-secondary public school with ~400 students attending. The average public school in Sweden consists of 223 students and only 10–20% of the student population attends schools with 500 students or more [54]. Compared to other schools in the municipality, this school has a high proportion of students with immigrant backgrounds (~40% compared to the municipal average of ~30% and a national average of 27%), a low proportion of student's parents possessing a post-secondary schooling educa-

tion (~60% compared to the municipal average of ~70% and a national average of 62%); low proportion of students achieving the knowledge outcomes in all subjects (~70% compared to the municipal average of ~80% and a national average of ~85%); and a low grade point average. Compared to schools with a similar student composition on the national level, student achievement at the school is at the top end for hard-to-staff schools but still below the national average [55].

3.3. Data Collection and Participants

The Swedish Ethical Review Authority issued an ethical advisory opinion in April 2021 (Dnr 2021-01345). Data collection began with the school leadership, who were viewed as key informants due to their ability to provide us with contextual information about the school the stability of the teaching staff and direct us to further key informants. The school leadership provided the research team with a list of teachers, which guided our initial teacher interviews; however, subsequent participant selections were based on participant referrals from teachers. As the study focuses on 'at-risk' teachers, purposive sampling was used to ensure that the participant referrals fit our selection criteria [56]. Participant referrals met the selection criteria if they had worked at the school for a long time (≥5 years) and qualified as '*at-risk*' teachers based on their taught subject area. Examinations of municipal and national certification levels between the school years 2015/16–2020/21 were made to inform the selection criteria of 'at-risk' teachers. A chain-referral sampling procedure was repeated after each interview, and participant referrals were assessed using the selection criteria. It is important to note that we decided to include one teacher who had only been at the school for four years due to the teacher being certified in a subject with prominent municipal staffing difficulties. The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide developed by the research team. In-person interviews were conducted with five participants, and the remaining six interviews were conducted digitally using Microsoft Zoom or Microsoft Teams due to COVID-19 restrictions. Each interview was audio-recorded and lasted up to 1 h. The interviews were transcribed verbatim, and the main author kept a reflective journal log of thoughts, observations and memos [57]. Interviews began with an open question: "According to reports by the municipality and municipal statistics, this school has had a low teacher turnover rate over time, do you agree (which everyone did)?". This was followed up by asking: "Why do you think this is the case?". The answers to the latter question were then followed up by further questions relating to the low teacher turnover at the school, teachers' perceptions about the school, their working situation and career decision-making. In line with the inclusion criteria, the research team agreed to conclude data collection after 11 interviews. The study sample consisted of three school leadership members and eight teachers certified to teach in subjects such as textiles, art, science, technology, Swedish as a second language, home economics and social science. An overview of the sample demographics is provided in Table 2.

Table 2. Sample demographics.

Age	Teaching Experience	Time at Current School
41–62 years [a] 59.5 years [b]	9–38 years [a] 21 years [b]	4–26 years [a] 15.5 years [b]

Note: [a] = presented as a range value; [b] = presented as a median value.

3.4. Data Analysis

According to Mertens et al. [9] the purpose of studying positive deviance in organisations is to achieve a deeper understanding of the observed complex phenomena, its determinants and consequences. Herington and van de Fliert [48] (p. 666) further describe how positive deviance can be used to promote positive social change by stating that:

> Positive deviance employed as a practical strategy is about looking for "champions" for change—outliers who succeed against all odds. It is a method of social inquiry grounded on the premise that in every community there are certain individuals or groups whose uncommon behavior and strategies enable them to find better solutions to the same problems facing their peers.

In line with this, we chose to conduct our data analysis using a modified grounded theory technique, including the constant-comparison method [58]. Using these methods provided us with the tools to explore the possible determinants and make descriptive inferences of the observed positive deviance, focusing on theorising rather than generating a theory. This analytical strategy also informed the structure of the paper, and in order to prevent the forcing of data into pre-selected theoretical frameworks, we omitted theoretical discussions in the background section. The constant comparative method permeated all stages of the data analysis. First, constant comparisons were made between data within each individual interview and shaped the generation of codes and categories by supporting the interpretation of the conceptual similarities and differences. Following this, we compared codes and categories between interviews. This guided us in the process of determining whether similar experiences and narratives were allocated the same codes and categories and enabled nuanced descriptions of the dimensions of the categories, i.e., the generation of sub-categories. As such, the first stage of our analysis consisted of open coding of the interview transcripts in which codes were assigned to meaning units to generate categories and sub-categories. The second stage of the analysis consisted of selective coding specifying the major relationships between categories, paving the way for the generation of a core category around which all other categories seem to be organised. The core category conceptualised the integrated idea of what is going on and formed a coherent explanation of why the teachers choose to remain at this school [59]. Lastly, comparisons and contrasts were made with the scholarly literature to bring further theoretical understanding of the core category and identify gaps in the literature that the study addresses.

4. Research Findings

The analysis yielded three categories: supportive collegiality, visible collegiality and constrained collegiality, which were further divided into five sub-categories (see Figure 1). Examples of the meaning units and codes used to develop the categories and sub-categories can be found in Table 3. The comparisons between these categories generated a core category that we titled 'Enculturating a Protective Professional Community'.

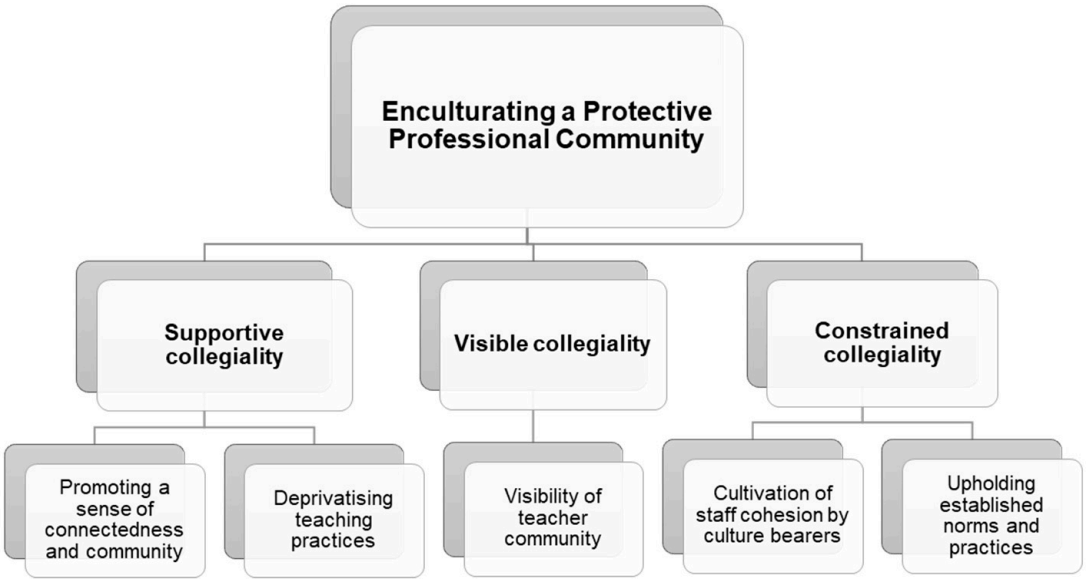

Figure 1. The core category, categories and sub-categories.

Table 3. Examples of meaning units and codes informing sub-categories and categories.

Meaning Units	Codes	Sub-Categories	Categories
We try to follow one direction with common structures but within this we can still control and organise our teaching as we want. What keeps us together is the students and our co-operation around the students. We have mutual strategies for our students. We talk in our teacher teams: "Now we have this student, how should we work with him", "what is the best way to work with this student?". That's what keeps us together.	Teachers make their teaching visible to colleagues and share instructional material	**Deprivatising teaching practices**	**Supportive collegiality**
It's not just me that has worked here for many years, we have a big group of teachers who have become like a group of friends. We're like a big family	Teacher group is like a family	**Promoting a sense of connectedness and community**	
It's a place for everyone. Everyone working at the school meets in the staff room. You see people passing by and you greet them. You know everyone in one way or another.	Common workspaces	**Visibility of teacher community**	**Visible collegiality**
Security is important for me. It's to do with knowing about how things are done. If you come in new to a school then you have to adapt to the school, you have to adapt to how things are done at the school. It has always been like that. We've had some continuity in our teacher group and in the school leadership for some years, so things have just flowed, and we've had a great atmosphere. But I feel it is important for people to know how things are done. There has to be a clear structure. You should know how things are done.	There is an established way of doing things	**Upholding established norms and practices**	**Constrained collegiality**
If anything, it was drilled into us because the older colleagues would tell us "At this school we have a positive atmosphere", "things are great here" and "this is the best school".	There are culture bearers within the teacher group who dictate terms and ensure that the established norms and practices are upheld	**Cultivation of staff cohesion by culture bearers**	

In summary, the core category captures different expressions of teacher collegiality, i.e., the relational and normative processes that combine to enculturate a protective professional community. We use the term protective to illustrate how this community represents a safety net for the teachers at the school. It also highlights how these established norms and practices have been safeguarded by culture bearers at the school. Quotes are used to bring in the voice of the informants and to support the generation of the categories [60]. The presented quotes are selected because they, in explicit ways, illustrate or display the meaning of the categories.

4.1. Supportive Collegiality

The narratives from the teachers' stories paint a picture of a close-knit teacher community characterised by warm and caring interpersonal interactions. It was at times difficult for the teachers to describe this expression of collegiality, exemplified by a quote from Teacher 4: 'Sometimes I can't even explain it with words but something nice is in the walls'. Further probing of this elusive niceness suggested that it was made visible by the warm social interactions that occurred in the teacher community: 'The first thing I think about is the warmth, the warmth shown between people' (Teacher 6).

> There has always been a very pleasant tone at the school. I have never experienced any other than that, but you hear from people how it can be at other schools. There can be a lot of negativity and stuff like that. But here it has always been very welcoming and pleasant. (Teacher 4)

As we continued our interviews, we noticed how the teachers' narratives revealed a concerted willingness to promote a sense of connectedness and community at the school. Further investigations revealed that this promotion of connectedness and community had been an important cornerstone of the school community for a long period of time. Our interviews with the school leadership informed us of how traditions at the school were used to promote this sense of connectedness among the teachers.

> It has continued. However, I do feel like it's not as much as it was before, before we really did a lot. We spent time doing activities together. Back then we often travelled... of course we had more money to do so then, we went away on conferences and spent time together before the term started and stuff like that. We would go on skiing trips and these activities were very important... we always had our "Tuesday sandwich" before a conference. In the beginning we also took turns buying food for each other before we would go on conferences. We always had a Friday "fika" [a Swedish custom, a social gathering during which people drink coffee and eat a small meal] during the morning break as most of us would be free then. We also took turns baking cakes and treats and the older [teachers], who retired a while ago, made sure that the tables [in the staff room] was set nicely and that everything was very inviting and welcoming. It was their way of showing that they cared about their colleagues. (School Leadership 1)

The teachers also spoke about how important it was for teachers to feel welcome and taken care of at the school and how they engaged in supportive behaviours to materialise and consolidate this sense of connectedness within the teacher community.

> I think it is important that when new [teachers] come to the school... that we take care of them, help them with whatever they need help with and show them that they are welcome. (Teacher 3)

> I went through a difficult time for various reasons, but I still felt that I could continue being at the school because I felt taken care of. I was supported even during these periods in my life which gave me a sense of security and made me want to stay. I have always felt that its ok to feel bad even if I'm here, there is nothing wrong with that. And during these periods of burnout, I have always felt that people acknowledge it and approach it in a supportive way. I don't

> feel the need to move. I have it good here and as I said, people take care of me. (Teacher 6)

The teachers also described how this sense of connectedness also extended to their students.

> I was speaking to a colleague, and she said 'oh, they are like my children, I love them like my children. They are really obnoxious, the ones in 9th grade, they are so obnoxious, but they are sweet and friendly'. I also felt that I shared the same feeling, that I like them a lot. They are really sweet, and it can happen that they, that they feel this from the teachers and that it becomes like this, like we are a big family, maybe, I'm just speculating. (Teacher 5)

This sense of community seemed to provide the conditions for collaborative behaviours as the teachers described a concerted effort to deprivatise their teaching. Deprivatisation of teaching practices refers to teachers tearing down the walls surrounding their classroom practices, which provides the opportunity for pedagogical inquiries and allows their colleagues to learn with and through each other. The teachers described how they are able to improve their own teaching in the company of their peers by engaging in pedagogical conversations about effective teaching practices.

> We try to follow one direction with common structures but within this we can still control and organise our teaching as we want. What keeps us together is the students and our co-operation around the students. We have mutual strategies for our students. We talk in our teacher teams: "Now we have this student, how should we work with him?", "what is the best way to work with this student?". That's what keeps us together. (Teacher 1)

Teacher 1 described how this unmasking of teaching practices provides teachers with the opportunity to engage in knowledge-sharing and helps the teachers form common strategies for their students, which may foster a sense of teaching cohesion. It also provides evidence for how teachers at the school view teaching as something that is not done in isolation. The following excerpt by Teacher 2 illustrates how this prevents teachers from feeling isolated in their endeavours and how it can be viewed as a safety net for teachers.

> Everyone supports and sticks up for each other. We try to support each other when someone is going through a tough time. We might share advice about how to structure lessons like 'I have this material, I used it in the previous year group, you can use this' and we provide each other with educational material and teaching advice. I just switched year groups and I'm now working with the year fours for the first time in 20 years. I feel rusty but I get a lot of advice from my colleagues who have a lot of experience teaching this year group. Even the teachers who had the current year fours last year in year three want to help so I feel like I can always ask people for support. They bombard my desk with books and folders 'Here you go, we did this last year, and we don't need it now, take it' because they taught this year previously but are now teaching in year five or six. You get a lot of unconditional support which makes things easier to get going. (Teacher 2)

The teachers also described how the purpose of these expressions of supportive collegiality seemed to go beyond facilitating teaching cohesion as it also represented a source of relational resilience that safeguarded teachers from the emotional demands of their day-to-day working lives and facilitated their retention at the school.

> We have the students that we have, and we want to make it as good as we can for them. That's how we think, and we have a good sense of togetherness. We help and support each other during the good times and bad times because it's, it's a tough job. We have students who have it tough and sometimes you feel like you are not enough. That can be difficult and can make you feel low. That's when

we support each other, and I think that's a reason for why many choose to stay because it's not just a job it's a calling. (Teacher 6)

4.2. Visible Collegiality

Our interviews revealed the importance of the structural features of the school and how it encourages social interaction. Several teachers described an inability to hide or remain anonymous at the school due to being constantly surrounded by their peers. Indeed, two common expressions uttered by the teachers were 'everybody knows who everybody is at the school' and 'you can't be anonymous here'. The staff room in particular and its proximity to the teacher work rooms, seemed to play an important role in making the teacher community visible. All the teacher work rooms were adjacent to the staff room, a big open-plan space centrally located at the school and furnished with a large rectangular conference-like table, a kitchen front and sofas arranged in a U-shaped pattern (see Figure 2). From the teachers' accounts, it became evident that the visibility of the teacher community held an important symbolic value and contributed to the sense of connectedness and community at the school. As Teacher 4 explains, being able to meet each other is important for the sense of community at the school as it can prevent divisions within the teacher community.

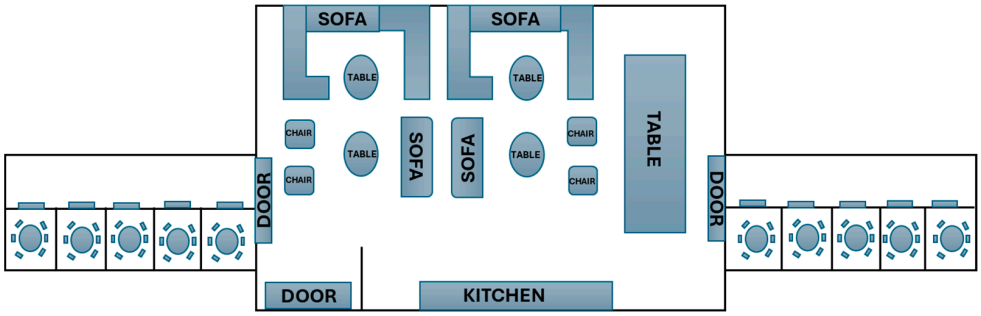

Figure 2. A graphical representation of the staff room.

The physical, I mean how the school is built. That's number one, I think. Everyone doesn't have that insight but I'm pretty sure of it. From the staff room you can see all the work rooms. So, what happens? Firstly, you have your teacher team work rooms where everyone sits together, that's number one. If you are a new teacher at the school, you will never feel alone, you can ask anyone who is sitting close to you. Because we are so close to each other... if I suddenly need to speak to someone in year 4, let's say I'm teaching year 6 and I need to get hold of the teacher for year 4, then all I need to do is to take a short walk from the staff room through the corridor and I can get hold of that teacher instantly. This is where the staff room comes in. Because the staff room is situated in the middle [of the school] it means that whenever I walk past the staff room, I'll see a few colleagues who I will then greet or 'hey by the way, that thing, I need to speak to you quickly, just a quick word'. You can easily have a quick word with your colleague and then move on. That is where the sense of community is built, you can carry out your job, it is quick, and it is easy. (Teacher 4)

As suggested by the comments provided by the teachers, the visibility of the teacher community creates an open and transparent environment and seems important for facilitating informal and formal social interactions. It also seemed to be an important condition for the positive and supportive atmosphere, as Teacher 3 explained:

It can't be that there are better people or better teachers here. It's the same people, do you understand what I mean? It's not that the teachers at other schools are meaner and more boring it's different here because we have other conditions

> here to be successful. It doesn't matter if you think your principal is bad or if everything [at the school] is bad, being able to meet one's colleagues all the time, to be around each other all the time, to be able to have someone to speak and share experiences with creates a positive atmosphere. (Teacher 3)

4.3. Constrained Collegiality

The teachers' narratives suggested that some aspects of the collegial atmosphere at the school were not only passed on and willingly inherited but also actively upheld and enforced by a section of the teacher community. Somewhat contrastingly to the descriptions of a teacher community characterised by supportive behaviours, the teachers described an implicit and explicit expectation for teachers to understand and act according to what is expected of them. Teacher 7 explained how these established norms and practices have been cemented into the school's walls and how the implicit and explicit upholding of said norms contributes to a tough teacher culture.

> It's quite tough. At this school there is a certain culture that's stuck in the walls. We've had meetings among the teachers where the tone has been quite tough. (Teacher 7)

A member of the school leadership also recalled how noticeable this tough culture was as it meant that new teachers had to prove themselves before being accepted into the teacher community at the school.

> It hasn't been a problem in general although it can make it difficult for new teachers who come to the school. It can be hard for a new teacher who comes with all these strong personalities doing their own thing. When I started, I met a teacher who refused to greet me until I had proved what I went for. Naturally I was careful and tried to avoid her. You wanted to make sure that you were in their good books. (School leadership 2)

Teacher 8 described how the teachers who enforce this alignment to the established way of doing things all possess strong personalities and how they represent an unspoken teacher hierarchy:

> At a school there will always be people who are perceived as being very brusque, having strong personalities. You can be sitting in a meeting and this person will completely take over and say things like 'You can't do it like that' or 'You can't say that', these things have happened and continue to happen. And then there can be a culture among these strong personalities and if you belong to this group, it can be hard to break that culture. (Teacher 8)

This conscious desire to uphold the established norms and practices seemed to be driven by the culture bearers at the school, who personify the norms and practices found in the teacher community and describe themselves as having an affinity to the established ways of doing things at the school. This affinity stems from these teachers having seen these established norms and practices grow and develop over time as well as their first-hand experience of how it has benefitted the teacher community at the school. For these teachers, it is particularly important that these norms and practices are preserved.

> Security is important for me. It's to do with knowing about how things are done. If you come in new to a school then you have to adapt to the school, you have to adapt to how things are done at the school. It has always been like that. We've had some continuity in our teacher group and in the school leadership for some years so things have just flowed, and we've had a great atmosphere. But I feel it is important for people to know how things are done. There has to be a clear structure. You should know how things are done. (Teacher 4)

The abovementioned quote illustrates how the established ways of doing things signify a source of security and continuity for these teachers. It also highlights how this

upholding of the established ways of doing things has been something that has been sustained over time as 'it has always been like that', i.e., an expectation for teachers to align with the norms and practices at the school. The teachers describe how these culture bearers engage in protective behaviours to cultivate staff cohesion and safeguard the established ways of doing things at the school. This occurs indirectly through the implicit enactment of the norms and practices expected of teachers, which are made visible in their behaviours and actions, but also directly by enforcing the adherence to these established norms and practices. As Teacher 4 recalled their first days at the school, they explained how they were met by the culture bearers who were present at that time:

> If anything, it was drilled into us because the older colleagues would tell us 'At this school we have a positive atmosphere', 'things are great here' and 'this is the best school'. (Teacher 4)

This seems to represent an initial socialisation into the school wherein teachers are informed about the established norms and practices at the school and are expected to buy into them. Teacher 4 further illustrated the pressure teachers face to align with what is expected of them:

> If there has always been a good atmosphere and there is an expectation that the atmosphere remains good, then you can't be the odd one out who doesn't contribute to this good atmosphere because that's the culture at the school. (Teacher 4)

However, these teachers acknowledge that not every teacher is willing to conform to the established ways of doing things, resulting in them being at the periphery of the teacher community. The following quote by Teacher 5, who represented one of the culture bearers at the school, illustrates the result of not adhering to these established norms and practices.

> This is my family and there is something special about our culture because we're a family. Sometimes new teachers would come and some of them would find a place in our family without any issues. But for some others, and there is nothing wrong with them of course, they just never really came into the family in the same way. (Teacher 5)

Teacher 6 further described the difficulties that new teachers could face when being introduced to this teaching culture.

> You just have to accept the situation and do as well as you can. I can understand the teachers who are new to the job, that it can be hard. But I feel comfortable with it [the established ways of doing things]. (Teacher 6)

4.4. Enculturating a Protective Professional Community: Conditions, Processes and Outcomes

The visible collegiality observed at the school appears to provide the conditions for meaningful informal and formal social interactions between the teachers. The expressions of supportive collegiality and constrained collegiality can also be viewed as social and relational processes that enculturate this protective professional community. The processes convey the norms, practices and organisational culture that permeates this community and enhance its protective element by providing teachers with access to the relational resilience garnered within the community [61]. Belonging to this protective professional community results in several teacher outcomes indicated by the teachers' narratives. However, the primary outcome is the facilitation of teacher retention at the school.

> I don't feel a need to change schools. I have it quite good here and as I said before, my colleagues care about me. (Teacher 2)

> Security is important for me. I know what I have but not what I get. I have learned a lot about this area and about the municipality during these years and I want to make use of that knowledge. (Teacher 4)

> Of course, the thought of moving schools crosses your mind, but it feels difficult because then you come to a place and you're a nobody. (Teacher 2)

> I feel appreciated by my colleagues. I feel liked. I feel liked and appreciated by the school leadership. People know who I am. Should I then leave and go to a new school where I will have to start over and build up this trust? (Teacher 3)

> What shall I say? I feel welcome. People care about and help each other. You feel like you belong to this school. People are nice and yeah, no it's hard to explain actually. Being at this school has always been a sense of security for me. (Teacher 6)

As such, this Enculturation of a Protective Professional Community, underpinned by expressions of teacher collegiality, captures social and relational processes which appear to embed teachers in the school, which subsequently influences their decision to remain at the school.

5. Discussion

The core category—enculturating a protective professional community—has up to now been generated by comparisons between data. In the text below, a theoretical discussion of the core category is provided, and our findings are discussed in relation to the scholarly literature. Finally, the limitations of the study will be recognised, and a conclusion from our results will be drawn.

5.1. Theoretical Understanding of the Core Category

Theories and conceptual frameworks explaining how collegial relationships can facilitate retention tend to either view collegiality as a job resource that enhances motivation and engagement (e.g., work-stress models) or emphasise the importance of congruence of values between teachers and their schools and colleagues (e.g., person-organisation fit). Although useful for examining retention, these theories do not fully capture the components of the underlying social and relational processes observed at the school. The job embeddedness theory provides a framework for understanding how the core category and its underlying processes may facilitate teacher retention. The job embeddedness construct represents a broad constellation of organisational, psychological, social and financial influences that encourage the probability of employee retention in organisations [62]. Job embeddedness is assessed by three aspects of the employee-organisation relationship: links, fit and sacrifice. Links refer to the formal or informal connections between an individual and an organisation, whereas fit refers to the employee's perceived compatibility or comfort with their job and surrounding environment. Sacrifice refers to the perceived forfeiture of social, psychological and financial benefits that the employee might incur if they were to leave the organisation. The job embeddedness construct is upheld by several theoretical mechanisms which provide explanations for why employees are less likely to leave their jobs if they are embedded within them [63]. The theory states that individuals can be embedded in different ways and that it is the overall degree of embeddedness that facilitates retention rather than specific elements of embeddedness. It goes beyond other theories by providing a framework for understanding the social processes that facilitate embeddedness through its links to teacher social capital [63]. Teacher social capital provides a framework for understanding the resources that can be accessed through social relationships, thus illuminating the potential outcomes derived from being embedded in this protective professional community [64]. Teacher social capital can be defined as:

> The wealth of relationships that are embedded in teachers' meaningful interactions with peers inside and outside of groups, that contribute to trusting relationships which promote learning and a sense of belonging, shape shared languages

and understandings, and give access to new knowledge and information that encourage creativity and career advancement [64] (p. 3).

The literature has associated social capital with several positive teacher outcomes [64], and the inability to harness teacher social capital has been highlighted as a factor contributing to the difficulties hard-to-staff schools face in retaining qualified teachers [4]. Interpreting our results from these theoretical viewpoints may suggest that teacher retention for '*at-risk*' teachers at this school was facilitated by collegial embeddedness and access to teacher social capital. The collegial embeddedness, reflected by the processes that encultured this protective community, was the means to how teachers learned and assimilated the norms, practices and culture in the teacher community. Taking part in these processes may have strengthened the teachers' links by encouraging meaningful relationships and collaboration. The relational process in which culture bearers cultivated staff cohesion could be understood as a way to influence the teachers' perceived fit at the school. The teachers described how being embedded into this protective community yielded several beneficial outcomes, such as a sense of security and belonging, well-being, relational resilience and professional learning. As these teacher outcomes were derived from meaningful social interactions, it may indicate the acquisition of teacher social capital. As such, it seems that the more teachers were embedded into this protective professional community, the more teacher social capital they were able to acquire and utilise. Therefore, it is plausible that the combination of collegial embeddedness and access to teacher social capital could lead to teachers perceiving the sacrifice, i.e., opportunity cost, of leaving as too high, which could subsequently facilitate their decision to remain at the school [63].

5.2. Contribution to Research

We acknowledge the uniqueness of the presented deviant case and that our findings are based on a small sample of 'at-risk' teachers from one school that possesses the characteristics of a hard-to-staff school. However, we believe that it would seem short-sighted to disregard the nuance that our results add to our understanding of the potential protective factors that can facilitate teacher retention in hard-to-staff schools beyond this category of teachers. Our core category is in line with findings from previous studies demonstrating the protective properties collegial support has for teacher retention [24,25,65]. However, our results provide additional nuance by suggesting that the balancing of supportive and constrained expressions of collegiality may play a role in influencing teacher retention in these schools. These processes appeared to facilitate meaningful relationships, which enabled teachers to mobilise their resources through collaborative behaviours. Previous research has shown that the presence of trusting relationships influences the formation of teachers' collegial networks [24] and teachers views on collegiality [21] and may reflect active caring [66], which can further the emotional and professional understanding between teachers and provide the impetus for teacher collaboration [20]. It also aligns with previous studies showing that resilient teachers in hard-to-staff schools engage in resource-building to support and enrich themselves as practitioners [67] and studies associating resilience with teacher retention [68]. The expressions of constrained collegiality were described as a hierarchically driven relational process, underpinned by teacher authority, that resembled a blend of what Hargreaves [69] referred to as contrived collegiality and that of arranged collegiality proposed by Klette [70]. Whereas arranged collegiality can be viewed as a form of nudging that instigates collaborative behaviours through the bringing together of teachers under common norms and a sense of shared responsibility, contrived collegiality captures the other end of the spectrum wherein collaboration is imposed, which creates a degree of inflexibility and diminishes teachers' discretionary judgement [71]. The teachers' narratives capture both ends of this collegial spectrum as this relational process seemed to intersect positive peer pressure and peer-induced compliance. Although social hierarchies have been reported to be a constraining factor for the formation of

social networks [72], studies have found that hierarchies can also be supportive of the formation of social ties between teachers [24]. Hargreaves and Fullan [73] also acknowledged that some degree of constrained expressions of collegiality may be required to establish collaborative cultures.

The message that seems to emanate from our findings points to the need to further our understanding of the underlying processes that constitute the protective properties of collegial support for teacher retention and tentatively suggests steering away from simplistic interpretations of collegiality. One could argue whether the findings of a unique positive deviance case can be applied to other schools in general. For instance, to what extent are these categories applicable to any school employing collegial work procedures? We argue that the success of any collegial work procedures is dependent upon the local context and culture that is "stuck in the walls". In line with previous studies, we argue that successful organisational practices are dependent on whether the local organisational routines, structures and conditions are congruent with ideas held by the organisation's members [74,75]. Our inquiry also identified structural features of the school as a facilitator of social interaction that augmented the protective element of this teacher community. The supposition that spatial features are inherently involved in the constitution and reproduction of social interaction [76] has been applied in studies highlighting the importance of spatial features for the development of teacher communities [77], collegial relationships [24,78] and knowledge exchanges [79]. It could be fruitful to view this interaction as a form of social materiality, which Dale [80] (p. 651) described as a concept 'whereby social processes and structural processes are viewed as mutually enacting'. The relational-spatial model also involves viewing space and social processes as mutually enacting and is a promising concept of space that can enable the exploration of how space, teaching and social relationship structures are intertwined in schools and interact to influence school and teacher cultures [81]. However, more research is needed to fully understand the interaction between spatial features and social processes in schools. Larsson & Löwstedt [82] show, for example, that it is only when the design of the staff room is consistent with the dominant idea of what is best for the student's learning that the design becomes significant for teachers' work in classrooms.

5.3. Limitations

Although this study was based on a positive deviant case, the size of our study sample could be viewed as a limitation. However, our exclusion criteria was influenced by our acknowledgement of the nuances of teacher turnover as evidence points to staffing difficulties in specific subjects and in specific types of schools [83]. As such, focusing on this subset of teachers represents a targeting of the true shortage areas, which can be of interest to the research literature and policymakers. We also acknowledge that the age of our sample could be viewed as a limitation as it is possible that the nearing of retirement age could influence teachers 'horizon for action' and thus their decision to remain [84]. The research design could also be viewed as a limitation as it does not enable us to infer causality. However, the purpose of our inquiry was not to infer causality but rather to highlight and explore a positive deviant case by examining the associations that underlie the observed positive deviance. It is possible that other contextual factors, such as selective recruitment based on person-organisation fit, also may play a role in teacher retention at the school [18]. The absence of a student perspective could also be viewed as a limitation. However, our inquiry is geared towards teacher retention and incorporating a student perspective would represent an intersection of teacher quality and teacher retention [85], which is beyond the scope of the present study. We do, however, acknowledge the need to urge careful interpretation of the results with regard to the possible association with student outcomes.

6. Conclusions

The teachers, in this case study, attributed their decision to remain at their school to being embedded in a protective professional community that was enculturated by different expressions of collegiality. These different expressions of collegiality provided teachers with teacher social capital which subsequently further embedded them into their school. The present study provides insight into how protective teacher communities can be encultured and the processes that can promote teachers' enculturation. However, more research is needed to investigate the various expressions of collegiality. Social network analysis could be useful for delineating nuances of teacher collegiality and for exploring how teachers are influenced by and leverage teacher social capital [86]. This can further the understanding of how nuanced expressions of collegiality interact to foster a sense of belonging and resilience that can help teachers stay at their school.

Lastly, our study demonstrates how positive deviant cases can be a useful tool that can help stop the revolving door of teachers coming and going from hard-to-staff schools. Our results suggest that hard-to-staff schools should pay attention to the social infrastructure and social ecology of support as it can help teachers improve, feel more effective and remain at their school [25,87]. Although our inquiry was geared towards teacher retention, our findings also pave the way for additional considerations of how far the protective elements of this teacher community extend. Does it also encompass the students, and can it contribute to their learning and well-being? It also leaves us wondering how protective communities interact with the intentions of curricular policies in terms of how they can shape the enactment of curricular policies in the local school environment. Moreover, although the data did not point to support from the school leadership being a dominant stand-alone category in the teachers' narratives, our results do provide some indication for a contributory role of the school leadership in the emergence and sustaining of this protective community. Although the expression of constrained collegiality appears to contribute to the protective element of this community, there is also a risk of it leading to factionalism and exclusionary behaviours. It is a question of balancing these various expressions of collegiality, and it would be interesting to explore the moderating role of the school leadership in this balancing act. Furthermore, we are left to wonder: what type of school leadership could benefit these kinds of teacher communities?

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, C.B., G.B. and L.K.; Formal analysis, J.C.-H. and P.L.; Funding acquisition, L.K.; Methodology, J.C.-H. and P.L.; Project administration, L.K.; Supervision, L.K.; Writing—original draft, J.C.-H.; Writing—review & editing, P.L., C.B., G.B. and L.K. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research was funded by the Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare, grant number: STYA-2019/0004.

Institutional Review Board Statement: The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, and an ethical advisory opinion was provided by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority in April 2021 (Dnr 2021-01345).

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: Data is unavailable due to privacy and ethical restrictions.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest. The funders had no role in the design of the study, in the collection, analyses, or interpretation of data, in the writing of the manuscript or in the decision to publish the results.

References

1. Gibbons, S.; Scrutinio, V.; Telhaj, S. Teacher turnover: Effects, mechanisms and organisational responses. *Labour Econ.* **2021**, *73*, 102079. [CrossRef]
2. Sorensen, L.C.; Ladd, H.F. The Hidden Costs of Teacher Turnover. *AERA Open* **2020**, *6*, 1–24. [CrossRef]
3. Allen, R.; Burgess, S.; Mayo, J. The teacher labour market, teacher turnover and disadvantaged schools: New evidence for England. *Educ. Econ.* **2017**, *26*, 4–23. [CrossRef]
4. Allen, R.; Sims, S. Do pupils from low-income families get low-quality teachers? Indirect evidence from English schools. *Oxf. Rev. Educ.* **2018**, *44*, 441–458. [CrossRef]
5. Bunar, N. Multicultural Urban Schools in Sweden and Their Communities: Social Predicaments, the Power of Stigma, and Relational Dilemmas. *Urban Educ.* **2011**, *46*, 141–164. [CrossRef]
6. Opfer, D. Defining and Identifying Hard-to-Staff Schools: The Role of School Demographics and Conditions. *Educ. Adm. Q.* **2011**, *47*, 582–619. [CrossRef]
7. Simon, N.S.; Johnson, S. Teacher Turnover in High-Poverty Schools: What We Know and Can Do. *Teach. Coll. Rec.* **2015**, *117*, 1–36. [CrossRef]
8. Spreitzer, G.M.; Sonenshein, S. Positive Deviance and Extraordinary Organizing. In *Positive Organizational Scholarship*; Cameron, K., Dutton, J., Quinn, R., Eds.; Berrett-Koehler: San Francisco, CA, USA, 2003; pp. 207–224.
9. Mertens, W.; Recker, J.; Kohlborn, T.; Kummer, T.-F. A Framework for the Study of Positive Deviance in Organizations. *Deviant Behav.* **2016**, *37*, 1288–1307. [CrossRef]
10. Johnson, S.M.; Kraft, M.A.; Papay, J.P. How context matters in high-need schools: The effects of teachers' working conditions on their professional satisfaction and their students' achievement. *Teach. Coll. Rec.* **2011**, *114*, 1–39. [CrossRef]
11. Ado, K. Keeping Them on the Bus: Retaining Early Career Teachers in a Successful Urban School. *New Educ.* **2013**, *9*, 135–151. [CrossRef]
12. Whipp, J.L.; Geronime, L. Experiences That Predict Early Career Teacher Commitment to and Retention in High-Poverty Urban Schools. *Urban Educ.* **2017**, *52*, 799–828. [CrossRef]
13. Towers, E.; Maguire, M. Leaving or staying in teaching: A 'vignette' of an experienced urban teacher 'leaver' of a London primary school. *Teach. Teach.* **2017**, *23*, 946–960. [CrossRef]
14. Glazer, J. A devil's bargain: Teachers' decision to transfer and moral injury. *Teach. Teach.* **2022**, *28*, 118–129. [CrossRef]
15. Hurst, C.; Brantlinger, A. Patterns in critical incidents: Understanding teacher retention through career decision making. *Teach. Teach. Educ.* **2022**, *109*, 103557. [CrossRef]
16. Glazer, J. The well-worn path: Learning from teachers who moved from hard-to-staff to easy-to-staff schools. *Teach. Teach. Educ.* **2021**, *105*, 103399. [CrossRef]
17. Björk, L.; Stengård, J.; Söderberg, M.; Andersson, E.; Wastensson, G. Beginning teachers' work satisfaction, self-efficacy and willingness to stay in the profession: A question of job demands-resources balance? *Teach. Teach.* **2019**, *25*, 955–971. [CrossRef]
18. Miller, J.M.; Youngs, P. Person-organization fit and first-year teacher retention in the United States. *Teach. Teach. Educ.* **2021**, *97*, 103226. [CrossRef]
19. Miller, J.M.; Youngs, P.; Perrone, F.; Grogan, E. Using Measures of Fit to Predict Beginning Teacher Retention. *Elementary Sch. J.* **2020**, *120*, 399–421. [CrossRef]
20. Kelchtermans, G. Teacher collaboration and collegiality as workplace conditions. A review. *Z. Pädagog.* **2006**, *52*, 220–237.
21. Löfgren, H.; Karlsson, M. Emotional aspects of teacher collegiality: A narrative approach. *Teach. Teach. Educ.* **2016**, *60*, 270–280. [CrossRef]
22. Pomaki, G.; DeLongis, A.; Frey, D.; Short, K.; Woehrle, T. When the going gets tough: Direct, buffering and indirect effects of social support on turnover intention. *Teach. Teach. Educ.* **2010**, *26*, 1340–1346. [CrossRef]
23. Struyve, C.; Daly, A.; Vandecandelaere, M.; Meredith, C.; Hannes, K.; De Fraine, B. More than a mentor: The role of social connectedness in early career and experienced teachers' intention to leave. *J. Prof. Cap. Community* **2016**, *1*, 198–218. [CrossRef]
24. Thomas, L.; Rienties, B.; Tuytens, M.; Devos, G.; Kelchtermans, G.; Vanderlinde, R. Unpacking the dynamics of collegial networks in relation to beginning teachers' job attitudes. *Res. Pap. Educ.* **2021**, *36*, 611–636. [CrossRef]
25. Arthur, L.; Bradley, S. Teacher retention in challenging schools: Please don't say goodbye! *Teach. Teach.* **2023**, 1–19. [CrossRef]
26. Gu, Q.; Day, C. Challenges to teacher resilience: Conditions count. *Br. Educ. Res. J.* **2013**, *39*, 22–44. [CrossRef]
27. Bobek, B. Teacher Resiliency: A Key to Career Longevity. *Clear. House* **2002**, *75*, 202–205. [CrossRef]
28. Brunetti, G.J. Resilience under fire: Perspectives on the work of experienced, inner city high school teachers in the United States. *Teach. Teach. Educ.* **2006**, *22*, 812–825. [CrossRef]
29. Castro, A.; Kelly, J.; Shih, M. Resilience strategies for new teachers in high-needs areas. *Teach. Teach. Educ.* **2010**, *26*, 622–629. [CrossRef]
30. Dahlstedt, M.; Fejes, A. Skolan och marknaden. In *Skolan, Marknaden och Framtiden*; Dahlstedt, M., Fejes, A., Eds.; Studentlitteratur: Lund, Sweden, 2019; pp. 15–30.
31. Lundahl, L. From Centralisation to Decentralisation: Governance of Education in Sweden. *Eur. Educ. Res. J.* **2002**, *1*, 625–636. [CrossRef]
32. Lundahl, L. A Matter of Self-Governance and Control The Reconstruction of Swedish Education Policy: 1980–2003. *Eur. Educ.* **2005**, *37*, 10–25. [CrossRef]

33. Böhlmark, A.; Grönqvist, E.; Vlachos, J. *The Headmaster Ritual: The Importance of Management for School Outcomes*; 16; The Institute for Evaluation of Labour Market and Education Policy (IFAU): Uppsala, Sweden, 2012; Available online: https://www.ifau.se/Forskning/Publikationer/Working-papers/2012/The-headmaster-ritual-the-importance-of-management-for-school-outcomes/ (accessed on 2 May 2022).
34. Karbownik, K. The effects of student composition on teacher turnover: Evidence from an admission reform. *Econ. Educ. Rev.* **2020**, *75*, 101960. [CrossRef]
35. Bunar, N. The Controlled School Market and Urban Schools in Sweden. *J. Sch. Choice* **2010**, *4*, 47–73. [CrossRef]
36. Yang-Hansen, K.; Gustafsson, J.-E. Causes of educational segregation in Sweden—School choice or residential segregation. *Educ. Res. Eval.* **2016**, *22*, 23–44. [CrossRef]
37. Lindbom, A. School Choice in Sweden: Effects on Student Performance, School Costs, and Segregation. *Scand. J. Educ. Res.* **2010**, *54*, 615–630. [CrossRef]
38. Sahlgren, G.H. *Schooling for Money: Swedish Education Reform and the Role of the Profit Motive*; Institute of Economic Affairs: London, UK, 2010.
39. Skolverket. *Skolverkets Lägesbedömning 2020*; Skolverket: Stockholm, Sweden, 2020; Available online: https://www.skolverket.se/publikationsserier/rapporter/2020/skolverkets-lagesbedomning-2020 (accessed on 2 May 2022).
40. Trumberg, A.; Urban, S. School Choice and Its Long-Term Impact on Social Mobility in Sweden. *Scand. J. Educ. Res.* **2021**, *65*, 569–583. [CrossRef]
41. Sahlgren, G.H. *Dis-Location: School Choice, Residential Segregation and Educational Equality*; Centre for Market Reform of Education: London, UK, 2013; Available online: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2379527 (accessed on 17 January 2024).
42. Brandén, M.; Bygren, M. The opportunity structure of segregation: School choice and school segregation in Sweden. *Acta Sociol.* **2022**, *65*, 420–438. [CrossRef]
43. Hennerdal, P.; Malmberg, B.; Andersson, E.K. Competition and School Performance: Swedish School Leavers from 1991–2012. *Scand. J. Educ. Res.* **2020**, *64*, 70–86. [CrossRef]
44. Swedish Schools Inspectorate. *Lärarresurser—Att Verka för Likvärdighet i Utbildningen*; Swedish Schools Inspectorate: Stockholm, Sweden, 2017; Available online: https://www.skolinspektionen.se/beslut-rapporter-statistik/publikationer/kvalitetsgranskning/2017/lararresurser--att-verka-for-likvardighet-i-utbildningen/ (accessed on 17 January 2024).
45. Hansson, Å.; Gustafsson, J.-E. Pedagogisk segregation: Lärarkompetens i den svenska grundskolan ur ett likvärdighetsperspektiv. *Pedagog. Forsk. Sver.* **2017**, *21*, 56–78.
46. Casely-Hayford, J.; Björklund, C.; Bergström, G.; Lindqvist, P.; Kwak, L. What makes teachers stay? A cross-sectional exploration of the individual and contextual factors associated with teacher retention in Sweden. *Teach. Teach. Educ.* **2022**, *113*, 103664. [CrossRef]
47. Dannefjord, P.; Persson, M.; Bertilsson, E. The immobility of the mobile teacher: How teachers change jobs in a segregated local school-market. *Scand. J. Educ. Res.* **2022**, *67*, 1013–1026. [CrossRef]
48. Herington, M.J.; van de Fliert, E. Positive Deviance in Theory and Practice: A Conceptual Review. *Deviant Behav.* **2018**, *39*, 664–678. [CrossRef]
49. Gerring, J. What is a Case Study and What is it Good For? *Am. Political Sci. Rev.* **2004**, *98*, 341–354. [CrossRef]
50. Lindvall, J. Lärarflykt På Landets Skolor: En Av Fyra Byter Jobb Varje Läsår; in SVT Nyheter. 2022. Available online: https://www.svt.se/nyheter/inrikes/lararflykt-pa-landets-skolor-en-av-fyra-slutar-varje-lasar (accessed on 17 January 2024).
51. Helmersson, K. Särskilda insatser ska få Malmölärare att stanna; in Sveriges Radio. 2018. Available online: https://sverigesradio.se/artikel/7036999 (accessed on 17 January 2024).
52. Holmlund, H.; Sjögren, A.; Öckert, B. *Jämlikhet i Möjligheter Och Utfall i Den Svenska Skolan*; The Institute for Evaluation of Labour Market and Education Policy: Uppsala, Sweden, 2020; Available online: https://www.ifau.se/Forskning/Publikationer/Rapporter/2020/jamlikhet-i-mojligheter-och-utfall-i-den-svenska-skolan/ (accessed on 2 May 2022).
53. Guibourg, C.; Helmerson, K.; Runblom, K. Gapet ökar mellan skolor i utsatta och välbärgade områden. Sveriges Radio. 2022. Available online: https://sverigesradio.se/artikel/gapet-okar-mellan-skolor-i-utsatta-och-valbargade-omraden (accessed on 8 April 2022).
54. The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions. *Om Sambandet Mellan Skolstorlek Och Utbildningsresultat*; The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions: Stockholm, Sweden, 2018; Available online: https://skr.se/skr/tjanster/rapporterochskrifter/publikationer/omsambandetmellanskolstorlekochutbildningsresultat.65328.html (accessed on 2 May 2022).
55. Skolverket. SALSA—Skolverkets Analysverktyg för Lokala Sambandsanalyser. Available online: https://www.skolverket.se/skolutveckling/statistik/salsa-statistisk-modell (accessed on 2 May 2022).
56. Morse, J.M.; Field, P.A. *Qualitative Research Methods for Health Professionals*, 2nd ed.; Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA, USA, 1995.
57. Glaser, B.G. *Theoretical Sensitivity: Advances in the Methodology of Grounded Theory*; Sociology Press: Mill Valley, CA, USA, 1978.
58. Glaser, B.G.; Strauss, A.L.; Press, S. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*; Aldine Publishing Company: Chicago, IL, USA, 1967.
59. Gibson, B.; Hartman, J. *Rediscovering Grounded Theory*; Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA, USA, 2014.
60. Creswell, J.W.; Poth, C.N. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*; SAGE Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA, USA, 2017.

61. Gu, Q. The role of relational resilience in teachers' career-long commitment and effectiveness. *Teach. Teach.* **2014**, *20*, 502–529. [CrossRef]
62. Mitchell, T.; Holtom, B.; Lee, T.; Sablynski, C.; Erez, M. Why People Stay: Using Job Embeddedness to Predict Voluntary Turnover. *Acad. Manag. J.* **2001**, *44*, 1102–1121. [CrossRef]
63. Kiazad, K.; Holtom, B.C.; Hom, P.W.; Newman, A. Job Embeddedness: A Multifoci Theoretical Extension. *J. Appl. Psychol.* **2015**, *100*, 641–659. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
64. Demir, E.K. The role of social capital for teacher professional learning and student achievement: A systematic literature review. *Educ. Res. Rev.* **2021**, *33*, 100391. [CrossRef]
65. Grillo, M.; Kier, M. Why do they stay? An exploratory analysis of identities and commitment factors associated with teaching retention in high-need school contexts. *Teach. Teach. Educ.* **2021**, *105*, 103423. [CrossRef]
66. Noddings, N. *The Challenge to Care in Schools an Alternative Approach to Education*; Teachers College Press: New York, NY, USA, 1992.
67. Tricarico, K.M.; Jacobs, J.; Yendol-Hoppey, D. Reflection on their first five years of teaching: Understanding staying and impact power. *Teach. Teach.* **2015**, *21*, 237–259. [CrossRef]
68. Yonezawa, S.; Jones, M.; Singer, N.R. Teacher Resilience in Urban Schools: The Importance of Technical Knowledge, Professional Community, and Leadership Opportunities. *Urban Educ.* **2011**, *46*, 913–931. [CrossRef]
69. Hargreaves, A. *Changing Teachers, Changing Times: Teachers' Work and Culture in the Postmodern Age*; Cassell: London, UK, 1994.
70. Klette, K. Teacher Individuality, Teacher Collaboration and Repertoire-Building: Some principal dilemmas. *Teach. Teach.* **1997**, *3*, 243–256. [CrossRef]
71. Hargreaves, A. Push, Pull and Nudge: The Future of Teaching and Educational Change. In *Preparing Teachers for the 21st Century*; Zhu, K., Zeichner, K., Eds.; Springer: Berlin/Heidelberg, Germany, 2013; pp. 217–236.
72. Cross, R.; Parker, A.; Prusak, L.; Borgatti, S. Knowing What We Know: Supporting Knowledge Creation and Sharing in Social Networks. *Organ. Dyn.* **2001**, *30*, 100–120. [CrossRef]
73. Hargreaves, A.; Fullan, M. *Professional Capital: Transforming Teaching in Every School*; Teachers College Press: New York, NY, USA, 2012.
74. Diamond, J.B.; Spillane, J.P. School leadership and management from a distributed perspective: A 2016 retrospective and prospective. *Manag. Educ.* **2016**, *30*, 147–154. [CrossRef]
75. Leithwood, K.; Harris, A.; Hopkins, D. Seven strong claims about successful school leadership revisited. *Sch. Leadersh. Manag.* **2020**, *40*, 5–22. [CrossRef]
76. Gieryn, T.F. What Buildings Do. *Theory Soc.* **2002**, *31*, 35–74. [CrossRef]
77. Vangrieken, K.; Meredith, C.; Packer, T.; Kyndt, E. Teacher communities as a context for professional development: A systematic review. *Teach. Teach. Educ.* **2017**, *61*, 47–59. [CrossRef]
78. McIntyre, J. Why they sat still: The ideas and values of long-serving teachers in challenging inner-city schools in England. *Teach. Teach.* **2010**, *16*, 595–614. [CrossRef]
79. Appel-Meulenbroek, R.; de Vries, B.; Weggeman, M. Knowledge Sharing Behavior: The Role of Spatial Design in Buildings. *Environ. Behav.* **2016**, *49*, 874–903. [CrossRef]
80. Dale, K. Building a Social Materiality: Spatial and Embodied Politics in Organizational Control. *Organization* **2005**, *12*, 649–678. [CrossRef]
81. Rißler, G.; Bossen, A.; Blasse, N. School as Space: Spatial Alterations, Teaching, Social Motives, and Practices. *Stud. Paedagog.* **2014**, *19*, 145–160. [CrossRef]
82. Larsson, P.; Löwstedt, J. *Skolledning Som Undervisningens Metapraktik: Aktörer, Strukturer Och Idéer*; Studentlitteratur AB: Lund, Sweden, 2023.
83. Cowan, J.; Goldhaber, D.; Hayes, K.; Theobald, R. Missing Elements in the Discussion of Teacher Shortages. *Educ. Res.* **2016**, *45*, 460–462. [CrossRef]
84. Hodkinson, P.; Sparkes, A.C. Careership: A sociological theory of career decision making. *Br. J. Soc. Educ.* **1997**, *18*, 29–44. [CrossRef]
85. Kelchtermans, G. 'Should I stay or should I go?': Unpacking teacher attrition/retention as an educational issue. *Teach. Teach.* **2017**, *23*, 961–977. [CrossRef]
86. Baker-Doyle, K. Beyond the Labor Market Paradigm: A Social Network Perspective on Teacher Recruitment and Retention. *Educ. Policy Anal. Arch.* **2010**, *18*, 26. [CrossRef]
87. Papay, J.P.; Kraft, M.K. Developing Workplaces Where Teachers Stay, Improve, and Succeed. In *Teaching in Context: How Social Aspects of School and School Systems Shape Teachers' Development & Effectiveness*; Harvard Education Press: Cambridge, UK, 2017; pp. 15–35.

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.