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Curriculum vs. Didaktik revisited.
Towards a transnational curriculum theory.

Special issue editors
Daniel Pettersson, Tine S. Prøitz,
Henrik Román & Wieland Wermke

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Curriculum vs. Didaktik revisited. Towards a transnational curriculum theory

Special issue editors

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Preface

The *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy* – *NordSTEP* – may be a new journal, but it does have a history. Its history is closely connected with the STEP – *Studies in Educational Policy and Educational Philosophy* – research group. This group was founded by Ulf P. Lundgren when he was professor at Uppsala University and after he left his position as general director of the National Agency of Education.

STEP has initiated several projects, among them the *Nordic Curriculum Theory* network, with a biannual Nordic conference, and a scientific journal that was founded in 2001, *Studies in Educational Policy and Philosophy: E-journal*. The journal broke new ground as a fully open access, online journal on education, and for seven years it provided a fertile forum for analysing curriculum issues and educational policy at different levels of public education. In autumn 2013, in relation to the fifth *Nordic Curriculum Theory* conference, it was decided to revive the journal.

NordSTEP bases its work on a Nordic consortium of three universities, Uppsala University in partnership with University of Gävle in Sweden, and University College of Buskerud and Vestfold in Norway. The aim is to enlarge the consortium by bringing in other Nordic partners in the near future.

The journal still focuses on studies in educational policy, though it now does so from an explicitly Nordic perspective and with philosophical aspects included in the understanding of educational policy research. This is in the morphology of the name of the journal: The *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*, abbreviated to *NordSTEP*.

NordSTEP aims to analyse and discuss educational policy-making, transactions and impacts. It offers an

arena for theories of educational policy, as well as policy and evaluation analyses from different points of view. In particular, historical and comparative studies are welcome. The journal examines the relationship among educational policy, educational practice and the educational sciences and sheds light on important debates and controversies within the field, making it a valuable resource for researchers, educators, policy makers, administrators and graduate students.

From a Nordic perspective, *NordSTEP* makes a significant contribution to education science as a specific forum for the discussion of educational policy and reform as well as curriculum research and evaluation both from a comparative and a historical vantage point. The journal aims to further develop the theorising of curriculum as well as to provide an elaborated opportunity for academic discussions in this particular field.

Finally, *NordSTEP* aims to provide a forum which would be characterised by contextual knowledge and awareness of the particularities of Nordic countries as well as continental Europe in relation to international education. The intention is to contribute to a further strengthening of the Nordic voice in a world dominated by Anglo-American research journals. The context of time and space is a crucial analytical device for understanding the questions in focus. This is mirrored in the explicit historical and comparative perspective.

Petter Aasen

Eva Forsberg

Daniel Pettersson

General editors, *NordSTEP*

EDITORIAL

Curriculum versus Didaktik revisited: towards a transnational curriculum theory

This special issue collects papers presented at the Fifth Nordic Curriculum Theory Conference that took place at Uppsala University, Sweden, on 23 and 24 October 2013. Around 60 researchers from all the Nordic countries gathered to discuss the challenges presented by the emergence of curriculum theory over the past 20 years. This issue is devoted to approaches which theorise curriculum from both novel and revitalised perspectives. In doing so, it aims to elaborate on analytical instruments for the understanding of our object of study in a globalising world. There have been explicit expressions of desire for a *transnational curriculum theory* which might satisfy a need for devices that contribute to an understanding of how public education is reshaped, at a time when earlier reference frames, such as the nation state systems which took a Westphalian form, are undergoing transformation within highly interdependent transnational spaces. This issue presents, in particular, approaches that on the one hand provide possible analytical as well as empirical means which have the potential to sharpen our arguments and deepen the discussion on curriculum from a transnational perspective. On the contrary, the approaches illustrate the value of curriculum theory to other fields of research, such as comparative and international education.

First, we focus on the relation between the phenomena of curriculum theory and didaktik, which in some way recalls the origins of our field, a recollection of the relationship between curriculum and didaktik, or as further on and synonymously, called Didaktik, as interrelated research interests. Both betray the complexity of the phenomenon on which they focus, that is, public education. In recent years, there have been several endeavours which have attempted to contribute to the understanding of the political factors which influence public education. We have witnessed the ongoing observation of transnational spaces and fields, the expression of a convergence, a reassembling of the world, built on the foundations of transnational policy, and indeed scientific networks (Nordin & Sundberg, 2014). However, a complementary focus on Didaktik also reminds us that while policy might change, the practice often remains static, and vice versa (Anderson-Levitt, 2007). The *Didaktik versus Curriculum Network* was established over 20 years ago by Stefan Hopmann, Ian Westbury, Björg Gundem and colleagues to improve understanding and to develop analytical

instruments concerning the relation between the organisation of schooling in its nation-specific context. Their ideas and their subsequent development were a primary focus of the conference.

Education takes place through curriculum enacted in specific classrooms in specific schools and universities, in specific neighbourhoods in specific municipalities. We must therefore conceptualise curriculum in relation to the different sites where it takes place. Here, we can also return to a historical recollection of the Nordic field, in particular, of curriculum theory, which draws significantly on the work of Basil Bernstein. His thoughts on how instruction is controlled by pace, sequence and selection (Bernstein, 1971) relate to the idea of didactical planning (Klafki, 2000). Moreover, the reasoning of Bernstein (1971) on code and message systems, that is, pedagogy, curriculum and evaluation can contribute to a further understanding of how different sites, from a national and transnational perspective, are interrelated.

The ideas of Bernstein (1971) about framing and classifying finally lead us to the second theme of this special issue: the matter of spacing and scaling. In times where, through globalisation, the space of schooling is apparently being stretched and extended, our theorising needs to demonstrate a deep awareness of the concepts and devices which we apply when we consider this issue, in particular, the spatial aspects of the term ‘transnational’. Stated differently, we need strong analytical devices to theorise where public education takes place, where it is governed from, or where it takes its inspiration from. However, we must also consider how spaces are constructed beyond a transnational policy sphere (cf. Nordin & Sundberg, 2014), which also points to the relational aspect of ‘transnational’, who decides in favour of whom, about what and why?

One final aspect of this issue should also be mentioned here. We are not concerned with the question of whether certain modes of coping with transnational curriculum issues are more or less sophisticated. We theorise rather how something takes form: which problems are identified, which solutions are preferred in which contexts and why? The use of the term context here covers all the levels, spaces, fields and spheres of public education: transnational, national, municipal, school or university level.

The issue is divided into three sections: First we present the *keynotes of the conference* (Section 1), followed by

Section 2, which concerns the *revitalisation of the curriculum/didaktik relations*. Section 3, *Space reconsidered: Reframing curriculum theory*, is the final part of this issue.

For the sake of clarification, the terms *Didaktik* and *didactics* are used synonymously in the articles of this issue.

Keynotes

Part I presents the three invited keynotes of the conference. They were presented by persons deeply involved in the emergence, development and discussions on the curriculum and Didaktik research field. It is also worth noting that they have each been involved from different national contexts, illuminated in how they describe borrowing and lending in curriculum and Didaktik. Each of the contexts they represent has a different history and perspective, but they have a common interest in discussing curriculum and Didaktik. As such, the invited keynote speakers prepared papers for their speeches held at this same conference. Each has contributed, bringing with them a rich set of personal experiences and perspectives, to the evolution of curriculum theory and Didaktik – historically, in its present state and into the future.

Ulf P. Lundgren, a long time professor and theorist within curriculum theory in Sweden, describes the development of the Swedish educational system from an explicit personal experience and perspective. Drawing on an analysis of the Swedish development, he elucidates the emergence of curriculum research in Sweden, focusing especially on curriculum theory and how it was formed by borrowing from the Anglo-American research context. In his historical exposé, he asserts that curriculum theory has had a strong impact on the educational field in Sweden, both among policymakers and researchers, but concludes by highlighting the risk that educational and curriculum research may become a mere tool used to assist in the design of a manual on how to teach a specific set of knowledge.

Stefan Hopmann is one of the researchers who have helped to shift the research focus and develop new questions within curriculum research. Hopmann currently sits as professor in Vienna, but was for a considerable time active in Norway, and is thus very familiar with the Nordic educational field. The article is somewhat personal, focusing on the points of contact between Didaktik and curriculum theory within a continental European perspective, where Didaktik is more commonly used than curriculum for describing the issues under scrutiny. By highlighting these points of contact between a continental European description of Didaktik and an Anglo-American description in curriculum, Hopmann looks into the future, discussing some probable developments within education.

Michael Uljens is professor at Åbo Academy in Vasa, Sweden. In his recent research, he has reshaped and

reframed some of the historical limits and limitations of curriculum theory. By drawing on a recognition-based tradition of education and a continental European conceptualisation of *Bildung*, he outlines the foundations of a critical but non-affirmative educational leadership theory with traditions in both curriculum and Didaktik. In doing so, Uljens describes how the classical pedagogical paradox takes a new form and asserts that educational leadership now means paradoxically to recognise the Other as if he or she was already capable of what he or she might become capable of through his or her own activity, and to act accordingly.

Revitalisation of the curriculum/Didaktik relations

The three papers in this section concern the relation between curriculum and Didaktik. Agneta Linné, Tomas Englund and Jonathan Lilliedahl deliver three different proposals for revitalising this relationship.

Agneta Linné's starting point is the evolution of the Swedish curriculum theory tradition and its implications for her own research, emphasising the importance of temporal and cultural concepts and theories for understanding change and stability, focusing especially on Koselleck's concepts of temporal layers of past, present and future which form our horizons of expectation and spaces of experience. According to Linné, the uses of temporal and cultural concepts from other theoretical traditions have contributed to the strengthening of the socio-historical and socio-cultural aspects of curriculum theory and educational science. This leads to a concluding discussion of the boundaries between curriculum theory and Didaktik where Linné argues that the socio-historical and socio-cultural approaches could help to bridge the two, contextualising Didaktik and updating curriculum theory.

Tomas Englund aims to introduce a deliberative understanding of curriculum and school subject formation, which he argues might allow for a more deliberate process of curriculum making. The ideal deliberate curriculum-making process, according to Englund, involves a wide range of actors, allowing teachers and professionals primarily to decide upon matters of content and teaching in different subjects and leaving a scope for deliberation in the classroom. Englund claims that the curriculum researchers of the 1970s and 1980s identified the political and ideological components involved in curriculum making but did so at the expense of recognising different subject content interpretations, that is, didactic typologies. He also rejects Deng's notion (2009) that school subjects are distinctive, purpose-built enterprises for being deterministic and thereby ignoring the possibility of different interpretations, especially the ones taking place within classrooms.

Jonathan Lilliedahl investigates the curriculum/didactic relation from the social realist perspective, in a neo-Bernsteinian tradition. From this point of view, the selection of educational content and its organisation involves both curriculum and Didaktik as interrelated recontextualisation stages. From a social realist approach, education is regarded not only as socially constructed but also as something more than an expression of power. Social realism, according to Lilliedahl, recognises objective knowledge as an entity which is in constant interaction with critical Didaktik. He argues for social realism as a theoretical platform for amalgamating curriculum and Didaktik, as it implies that knowledge is internally given and externally regulated at the same time.

Space reconsidered: reframing curriculum theory

The three contributions presented in this section consider the issue of space in education curriculum, assessment and education policy through three different lenses.

Wieland Warmke, *Daniel Pettersson* and *Eva Forsberg* illuminate the current thematic of globalisation in contemporary education and discuss its consequences for theorising curriculum. Drawing on an analysis and comparison of the issue of globalisation as presented in social science textbooks from three countries, they argue for a turn from *what* to *how* in curriculum theorising. Based on an overwhelming proliferation of new borders, spaces and relations in a globalised world of curriculum, the authors underscore the importance of examining how a particular matter is constructed within a transnational curriculum, theorising rather than focusing on what particular curriculum matter is or means in different contexts.

Tine S. Proitz discusses another aspect of space in education. Drawing on a study of OECD recommendations, she considers the perspectives of Nordic education research and the potential for adopting a broader viewpoint in education research that uses the theoretical and

analytical key concepts of uploading and downloading which are employed within European integration studies.

With contributions by *Henrik Román*, *Stina Hallsén*, *Johanna Ringarp* and *Andreas Nordin*, a third approach to the investigation of space in education is discussed. They present a comprehensive historic and comparative investigation through the analysis of municipal school policy in Sweden over a period of six decades of persistent school reforms. The study portrays municipal school policy as dealing with national and transnational school initiatives which affect local school actions. The authors argue that local school policy studies make an important contribution to the development of a historically oriented and transnationally informed curriculum theory.

Daniel Pettersson

Tine S. Proitz

Henrik Román

Wieland Warmke

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When curriculum theory came to Sweden

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Curricula have been used in Sweden as the instrument for state governance and control in the school system. In the early 20th century when a progressive pedagogy emerged, curricula were modernised and became the focus of public debates. Sweden, which did not take part in World War II, had in its wake a head start and thus a fast growing economy. A welfare state was established with education as one of its cornerstones. These post-war reforms involved educational researchers who carried out empirically based curriculum research. However, in the 1970s, a critical empirical and theoretical research emerged. This article describes this emergence of curriculum research in Sweden, focusing particularly on curriculum theory, told from my personal experience and perspective.

Keywords: *curriculum; educational history; educational theory*

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In every education system, there is a curriculum, that is, a plan that outlines goals, content and outcomes. No school has existed which was not ruled by goals and results, or if it has, it has not lasted. The *words* used for describing the curriculum have certainly varied. In the Anglo-Saxon world, the term curriculum is used, stemming from the Latin word ‘currere’ (to drive, move on). It is related to ‘cursus’, which means ‘track’. Petrus Ramus (1515–1572) was probably the first to use the word curriculum to signify goals and content for teaching. Ramus argued for a logic constructed from how cognitive processes work. Hence, logic must be based on language, and thereby logic and rhetoric are unified. In truth, this was an admirable idea which provided an alternative to scholasticism. Ramus’ programme influenced educational thinking in protestant Germany and in England. It is interesting to note that what could be called the first curriculum theory debate in Sweden revolved around the ideas of Ramus. Johan Skytte (1577–1645), Chancellor of Uppsala University, and Laurentius Gothus (1565–1646), Archbishop and Rector Magnificus at Uppsala University represented Ramus’ arguments, while Professor Jonas Magni (1583–1651) represented the alternative Aristotelian philosophy. The establishment of the Educational Act of 1611, which was the first act of this kind in Sweden, was the catalyst for the discussion. Earlier, the educational system was regulated within the Church Act of 1571.

If we see to how the *concept* of Curriculum has been constituted over time, we can follow the fundamental lines

of education and schooling. Various phases in this development are mirrored in the words used. In medieval times, the terms ‘stadium’ or ‘ordo’ dominated, and later ‘ratio’, ‘formula’ and ‘institution’ were used. During the 16th and 17th centuries, the word curriculum came to be used more and more to indicate the sequential arrangement of material in time; this usage is returning into fashion. At the University of Glasgow, curriculum was used during the 17th century to designate a course. Within the Jesuit order, a special organisation of studies was formed, for which Ignatius of Loyola (Íñigo López Oñaz y Loyola, 1491–1556) constructed a curriculum for the education of servants of the Jesuit order (*Ratio atque Institutio Studiorum*). This was composed as a plan/scheme (*ratio*) for selection (*institutio*) that had to be composed from a set, or canon, of knowledge (*studiorum*). During the 19th century, curriculum was used in many universities around Europe. However, in Germany curriculum came, during the Enlightenment, to be replaced by ‘Lehrplan’. In most European nations the curriculum is decided by the state. But, in the United States, where there is no common curriculum and where there is local control over the school systems, it is therefore important in teacher education to educate in curriculum construction and curriculum theory.

Over the years, several different names have been used in Sweden for curriculum as a document. The word *Läroplan* was first used when the comprehensive nine-year school was implemented in the 1960s. ‘Läroplan’ (cf. German ‘Lehrplan’) means literally a plan for learning.

Hitherto, several terms had been used for documents containing rules and advice concerning goals, content and control of outcomes. The Swedish Church Act had earlier had a chapter for the schools of the church (Cathedral and convent schools), while for public education there were already some regulations related to baptising and confirmation during the Catholic era. During Reformation, and with Luther's proclamation; 'Reading is a way to direct contact with the words of God', public education came to be a necessity both for the Nation and the Church. Indeed, with Reformation a new education for clergymen also had to be developed.

The education of priests and the organisation of the public school system were of considerable importance after the Swedish Reformation. A new Church Act was established by the Parliament of 1527, and in this act there was a chapter on the regulation of schools called 'Skolordning'. The word was taken from the regulation of schools in Hamburg (1529) and later Mecklenburg (Hall, 1921). The new act was at first in fact a rather poor translation of the Saxon Education Act of 1528. In 1572, a new Church Act was decided upon, in which a chapter was named 'Skolordning'. During the 19th century, the successors of the early church schools – 'läroverken' were regulated in special acts – *Kongl. maj:ts nådiga stadga för rikets allmänna elementar – läroverk* (The Royal Majesty's gracious Charter for national public elementary grammar schools).

After the Royal decision in 1842 to implement a public school system, another form of regulation was established. In the first phase, the curriculum was more or less the same for the schools and for teacher education. With time, new curricula entered into the schools under the name of 'normalplane' (Normal plans). The first of these was instituted in 1878, followed by revisions in 1889 and 1900. In 1919, a radically revised curriculum was decided upon – *1919 års undervisningsplan för folkskolan* (The 1919 teaching plan for elementary schools). This plan was a curriculum inspired by the early progressive movement. The most debated change was the abolition of the catechesis. The governing documents were now the Charter for the public schools, the teaching plan of 1919 and the rules for the district (Hildinger, 1944, p. 185).

Curriculum theory and didactics: the context

Education is the genetics of society. As Dewey (1916) says that as we not live forever we must it is a necessity to educate the new generation (Dewey, 1916, p. 3; compare Durkheim, 1893/1933, 1938/1977). What is to be reproduced is always related to power and control. To answer the fundamental questions in education always requires the integration of a perspective of power:

The reproduction of tradition and hence pedagogy is related to the issues of power. Any analysis of an educational methodology, practice or theory, must include a perspective on power. In whose interest is

this activity happening? Who are the winners and who are the (possible) losers? There is a difference between a majority and a minority situation. Is it the tradition of the "Great society" to be reproduced in the next generation, or is it the tradition of the single (minority) group? Or is it, indeed, a combination of both? A strategy for survival in the form of isolation, or a quest for a functioning symbiosis? (Hjärpe, 2011, p. 130, my translation)

The roots in the absolutist state and the church creates another power structure which exercises control over curricula, and which stands in contrast to the 'new world' – in North America – where the various immigrant traditions formed a local power. The 'pedagogical mentality' (if that word can be used) becomes quite different. The concept of curriculum will have a slightly different meaning in European research compared to research in the US.

In 1968, I worked in the US with a comparative research project headed by Professor Ursula Springer. I translated curricula from the Nordic countries, France, Germany and the Netherlands. My interest in curriculum research started with this study of the differences of meaning in curricula, differences in meaning that many times in comparative studies were not detected and thus not analysed.

My suggestion for the title of my doctoral dissertation (Lundgren, 1972) was: 'Frame Factors and the Teaching Process: A contribution to Curriculum Theory and Didactics'. I was advised to remove the word didactics, the argument being that few would understand what didactics was and that it did not make sense in English. It was strange enough to use curriculum theory in a Swedish context. The title became: 'Frame Factors and the Teaching Process: A contribution to Curriculum Theory and Theory on Teaching'. And my supervisor was right. Curriculum theory caused much mirth, especially in the corridors of the Royal Board of Education. Curriculum theory was perceived as a theory about daily work done at the board. Experts and civil servants wrote curricula with support from educators and psychologists. There *was* no theory behind curricula.

Pedagogy as a science

The moment of birth of education or pedagogy as a science can always be disputed. With the Enlightenment and the second industrial revolution a new mentality was formed. The natural sciences emerged and research became not only the elaboration of concepts, but also considered empirical methods and empirical data. It is in this new world that a comprehensive structure for educational questions was formed by Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776–1841). He made a distinction between socialisation and education, where socialisation meant to subordinate and education was to develop a critical mind and from that establish self-dependence. In this, we can

see the definition of enlightenment as Kant formulated it: 'as the escape from authority' ('Aufklärung ist der der Ausgang des Menschen aus seiner selbstverschuldeten Unmündigkeit', Kant, 1784).

Herbart discussed three different ways of teaching: One of education without teaching (*Erziehung ohne Unterricht*), in which teachers educate with disciplinary methods, another is teaching without education (*Unterricht ohne Erziehung*), where the student is a passive receiver, and there is a third possibility, education by teaching (*Erziehung durch Unterricht*), where the process will take place as a formation (*Bildung*) of the child directed towards dealing with an unknown future. This means not only to have a critical attitude towards new knowledge but also to acquire a form of plasticity (*Bildsamkeit*). This idea of 'Bildsamkeit' is close to Wilhelm von Humboldt's idea of 'Bildung'. A similar idea can be found also in the work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who uses the term 'perfectibilité' about the ability to learn in all areas of life (Rousseau, 1762, 1977; cf. English, 2013, p. 11).

The study of Pedagogy is, according to Herbart, divided into two main parts – curriculum and didactics. These two parts are interrelated in a mutually supporting way, and each part is distinguished by structural questions: What are the aims and content of education? What are the methods for teaching? The answer to the latter has to be grounded in psychology. For Herbart it became 'apperception psychology'.

The structure Herbart created for the study of pedagogy has survived and is still noticeable in the field. The conception of 'Bildung' as education by teaching and the ability to address new knowledge with a critical attitude (*Bildsamkeit*) are but two examples. A prevailing notion in didactics is that psychology provides the basis for teaching methods, and for Herbart, this did not simply mean that methods of teaching could be derived from psychology: Learning had to do with students' interest. For Herbart, a central concept which linked education to teaching was the concept of 'interest'. The word stems from the Latin words 'inter-esse' (to be in between), which means a state between observation and achievement. To acquire an interest is thus the essence of learning. But it remains important that teaching does not merely follow the threads, but that it has an order – a rhythm. This notion interest is also found in the work of Dewey discussed in an article from 1895, published in the *First Yearbook of the National Herbart Society*. Here the concept of interest is discussed in relation to the concept of will (Dewey, 1895/1907).

Herbart was not an empiricist instead, what he constructed was a systematic view and a conceptual system that provided a basis for the development of an empirically based pedagogy and psychology. The 'light' version of Herbart's standpoint of using learning psychology as the basis for didactics was firmly established. One

example: At the beginning of the 20th century the argument delivered in the Swedish parliament as a motive for financing a professor chair in education was that the science of psychology had developed to the point that it could be applied in teacher education (Fransson & Lundgren, 2003; Lindberg & Berge, 1988; Lundgren, 2009). Another example is found in the discussion between the American scientists Judd and Thorndike about learning theory. Thorndike argued for the notion of general laws for learning and also that teaching methods thus represent an application of learning theory. Judd took the standpoint that the content of what is learned always influences how learning processes are formed (cf. Shulman, 1976).

The story about curriculum theory in Sweden started in 19th century with the import of the pedagogical ideas of Herbart and von Humboldt. Herbart succeeded Kant on the chair of philosophy in Königsberg. The philosophy of Kant was in Sweden introduced by Daniel Boëthius (1751–1810) professor in philosophy at Uppsala University. Boëthius cannot have been ignorant of the work of Kant's successor. From 1788 and during the coming four years, Boëthius together with his students studied basic pedagogical questions and concepts. Altogether nineteen theses were published under the title *Primæ Scientiæ Educationis Lineæ, Præsidiæ Mag. Dan. Boëthio, Eth. Et Polit. Prof. Reg. et Ord* (cf. Annerstedt, 1913). Even though Herbart was translated to Swedish rather late, his thinking seems to have had an influence before that. We can, for instance, see traces in the literature used in teacher education (cf. Hildinger, 1944) where especially teaching methods (didactics) are addressed. Curriculum seems at this time not relevant to either teachers or teacher education.

During the 20th century, there was therefore a development of didactics-oriented research. This was established in a series of books, the *Pedagogiska skrifter* (Pedagogical writings), in the late 19th century, which were crucial to educational research above all in Germany, but also in France and England (Duprez, 1977). During the first decades of the 20th century, the word didactics became less prominent and was replaced by the term teaching methods or just methods. This is evident after World War II, when German influence was replaced with an Anglo-Saxon influence. But even if the word didactics vanished from the lexicon, didactical research was nevertheless carried out.

One of the first doctoral theses in mathematics didactics was defended in 1890 (Jonsson, 1919, cf. Johansson, 1985). It focused on strategies for problem solving. There is also one earlier historical study on textbooks in mathematics (Dahlin, 1875). During the 1950s, several studies came to be published. If didactics oriented studies in mathematics are taken as an illustrative example, we can see that they were often oriented

towards psychology and basically dealt with numeracy skills and mathematical ability.

Empirically oriented curriculum studies

Going back to the late 1960s, and starting with a sketch of the North American landscape, there was an overwhelming surge in the production of texts about curriculum, curriculum design and curriculum principles based on conceptual development and prescription. As Foshay and Beilin stated: 'Much of the literature, however, discuss what a theory should be about, rather than actually attempting to state comprehensive theories' (Foshay & Beilin, 1969). More outspoken was Goodlad (1960) in his characterisation from 1960, stating that curriculum theorising 'is best described as abstract speculations; curriculum research as dust bowl empiricism; and curriculum practice as a rule of thumb guesswork (often a wet thumb, at that) held aloft to test the direction of the prevailing breeze' (pp. 185–196). On one hand, there is a long tradition which has existed since the beginning of the century, launched by the work of John Dewey and consolidated and developed by a number of philosophers. These works followed several lines of thought. One clear line was to develop a pragmatic perspective, which focused on the construction of goals. We find here important studies from the works of Bobbitt and Charters in the 1920s through Tyler's rationale in the 1950s and the taxonomies of Bloom and Krathwool in the 1960s, to the goal and outcome-based curricula of today. Other early important lines of thought are the works of Brameld and his reconstructionist theory (Brameld, 1956, 1965) from the 1950s, Broudy's realistic theory (Broudy, 1961) and Phenix' science-oriented theory (Phenix, 1961) from the 1960s. The work by Taba (1952, cf. Lundgren, 2014) and Bruner (1960) provide other excellent contributions to curriculum theory.

Empirical curriculum studies were less common or, in Eisner's (1971) words: 'its empirical aspects, that is, the study of processes central to curriculum as a field of study, has been neglected' (p. 5). An outstanding exception was the classroom studies carried out at Teachers College, Columbia University in New York by Arno Bellack and his research team. One member was Kliebard, who later contributed to the field of curriculum history.

The first empirical curriculum studies in Sweden

If we compare the development of curriculum research in Sweden we will find more or less the opposite picture to the one given above. In Sweden, empirical research laid the groundwork for a theoretical development. One background to these empirical studies was the reform of the entire school system after the Second World War.

At the beginning of the 20th century there were two parallel school systems in Sweden: one public school system (folkskola) and one academic system (realskola).

The dominating political question was how to construct a common comprehensive school. When this question was answered in the political sense, the next question concerned how long the comprehensive schooling would last? In other words, when was the differentiation according to ability most appropriate? For educational research, the question focused on the effects of ability-grouping after different years of schooling. In 1940, a School Committee was established with the aim of reaching an overall view of future school planning and providing an answer to the question of ability grouping.

Six years later, in 1946, a parliamentary School Commission superseded the Committee. They delivered a report which provided a basis for the coming reforms, but they could not agree on when a differentiation of the students into various study tracks should take place. In 1950, a School Bill was introduced into Parliament, and the establishment of a 10-year experimental period was decided upon. The status of the role of the experiment was, however, unclear. Should the decision on a comprehensive school be based on the experiment or should the experiments simply guide the form of a comprehensive school? In 1956, the Parliament voted for the latter interpretation. The year after Parliament established a new Preparatory Committee to draw up the plans for the comprehensive school on the basis of the experiences of the experimental period. In relation to this Committee, curriculum studies were carried out by a group of researchers at Teachers College, Stockholm, headed by Torsten Husén.

One focus of these studies was the content of various school subjects. A study in mathematics and the national language was carried out by Urban Dahllöf (1960). Later, Dahllöf (1963) conducted a new curriculum study on the demands on curricula for the upper secondary school system. These studies laid the groundwork for curriculum research which was of considerable importance for the later development of curriculum theory in Sweden. It is obvious that the research design was inspired by American studies such as those by Bobbitt, Charters and Tyler, mentioned above.

During the experimental period several minor studies on the effects of various types of ability grouping were carried out. Most of them showed that early differentiation according to ability gave positive results. However, these studies were small and hard to make generalisations from.

There was one major study done in Stockholm. The Local Board of Education divided, in the 1950s, the school district of Stockholm into two districts, one with differentiated classes, and the other with undifferentiated classes. This situation was used for the study of the effects of differentiation (Svensson, 1962). Achievement was measured by ordinary standardised tests, and covariance analysis was used to keep the students' social background

constant. The main conclusions were that there are no demonstrable effects of grouping the students differently: 'A slight tendency towards the superiority of pupils in early differentiated classes observed in the final phase of the study was erased in grade 8 and 9' (Svensson, 1962, p. 182). Ahlström (1962) later noted that the data could not be used for comparisons in grade 9. The comparable results, nevertheless, showed an insignificant difference between types of grouping.

Later, a more comprehensive study was carried out in the school district of Göteborg, using a more advanced statistical method than the one used in the Stockholm study. The results were similar to the ones reached in the Stockholm study (Bengtsson & Lundgren, 1968, 1969).

The Frame Factor Model

By using data from his earlier curriculum studies, Dahllöf (1967, 1971) was able to re-analyse the Stockholm study. By comparing time used to reach the same results, Dahllöf showed that positively differentiated classes required less time than negatively differentiated or undifferentiated groups. Furthermore, he pointed out that it seemed like the student at around the 25th percentile on the ability scale steered the pace of teaching – the steering group was introduced into science. Dahllöf used these empirical data to formulate the outlines of a model – The Frame Factor Model.

The Frame Factor Model brought a new paradigm into educational research in general and curriculum research in particular in the sense that it modelled the relations between prerequisites, processes and results from the point of view of what was possible and was not possible within given frames. At that time, the dominating paradigm was a simple one-dimensional relation between independent and dependent variables.

In my dissertation, I tested the steering group hypothesis in a macro study and a micro study. The latter built on classroom observation using the classification system developed by Bellack and his research team (1967). In doing so my research was linked into a network of researchers who worked on classroom processes with an interest in curriculum theory.

In the dissertation, the steering group hypothesis was confirmed. Furthermore there was a relation between time frames and how pedagogical roles were formed (Gustafsson, 1977; Lundgren, 1973a, 1973b). These first studies were later developed into a new empirical study in which the classroom discourse was analysed in relation to the learning of the students (Lundgren, 1981). Here the variations in frame conditions were related to teaching strategies, like *piloting*. Piloting occurred when the frames forced the teacher to pilot a student around problems.

The point of these studies was that they focused on the interrelation between the teaching process and the learning process, and by doing so they could account for

time as a frame for the organisation of the content and thus for the construction of the curriculum. The new questions focused in the next phase on how the curriculum, the syllabi and the timetable were constructed.

In the late 1960s there was a rather intensive discussion concerning education/pedagogy as a science. The discussion in the US was focused on the relation between theory and practice, while the one taking place in Sweden was more concerned with the independence of education as a science.

The first chair in education (Pedagogy) was established at Uppsala in 1910. The first chair in psychology came 40 years later. Thus, psychological research was carried out within pedagogy. Theory construction within education as a science accounted mostly for psychological constructions. The discussion in the 1960s was thus concerned with how to create a scientific discipline in its own right with its own central concepts. A similar discussion had taken place within sociology (cf. Zetterberg, 1965) after Russell's (1948) idea that a discipline is characterised by its central and discipline-unique concepts.

Curriculum was one of these central and unique concepts for education as a science (Lundgren, 1973a, 1973b; Lundgren & Wallin, 1973; Kallös & Lundgren, 1975). Thus, the research process described above has also to be placed in this epistemological discourse (Kallös & Lundgren, 1979).

Curriculum codes

In the classroom studies (Lundgren, 1981) mentioned above, we developed a diagnostic test in arithmetic. When the lesson started, we mapped where the students were in arithmetic learning. For each teaching moment, we could determine which students were able to understand what was taught. After the lesson, the test was used again and the learning progress was analysed as an effect of how time framed the teaching process. When time was limited, the teacher piloted the students around the problem by giving clues toward the right answer. Furthermore, we were able to describe how tight timeframes had an impact on the language used, which in turn had consequences for students from different socio-economic backgrounds. These studies were later developed using Bernstein's work with sociolinguistic codes (Bernstein, 1973; Bernstein & Lundgren, 1983). These studies raised new questions about the power and control over education, questions about how the educational system was governed, how curriculum goals were established and content selected.

The frame factor theory built on empirical studies of classroom teaching formed a foundation from which more comprehensive studies about political governance had historically been shaped and reproduced limits and possibilities of schooling. The implications of these close studies of classroom language came to more and more focus on the study of the classical issues in education

concerning how cultural patterns and thinking were reproduced.

The first perspectives (Lundgren, 1979, 1983, 1991, 1992) were historical and an attempt to identify sustaining curriculum codes. A curriculum code is constituted by the spoken and unspoken principles that guide how goals are formed and content selected and organised for learning. In constructing the curriculum codes in relation to frames and the organisation of schooling, the question of how schools as institutions were constituted became more and more crucial.

There are two possible occasions for the birth of schools as institutions (Lundgren, 1991, 1992). One takes place when a state is established and judicially regulated. To conserve, interpret and execute the law, it is necessary to have an educated class. Moreover, laws have to be legitimated and conserved. Texts become central for education as institutions. Schools for the education of civil servants and for the servants of the church have formed their own traditions, which over time have been reproduced. The other possible occasion of birth occurs when reproduction and production are separated. This happened during the 19th century, when education and upbringing has increasingly become the task of schools as institutions (Lundgren, 1985, 1987). When schools as institutions for all citizens are constituted, there is already a pattern for how schools are organised, what content is taught and how it should be organised and mediated.

At the beginning of the 1990s there was a rather solid and consistent theory construction built on three cornerstones: organisation as frames setting the limits, curriculum codes organising what counts as legitimate knowledge and schools as institutions that have a double reproductive function, including the reproduction of the school itself (diachronic and synchronic reproduction).

Curriculum research

In the first classroom studies, one of the effects of the frames was, as mentioned, the formation of pedagogical roles (cf. Lundgren, 1974). These observations were further analysed by Gustafsson (1977). Emilia Pedro carried out a similar classroom study in Portugal and by also using data from Australia she was able to make comparative analysis (Ribeiro Pedro, 1981). A research group headed by Basil Bernstein at London University, (cf. Bernstein & Lundgren, 1983) elaborated on this work both theoretically and methodologically. Within this cooperative framework, Gunilla Dahlberg (1985) focused on contextual conditions and orientation to meaning within pedagogical processes.

Kerstin Mattsson further cultivated the curriculum history aspect of this field in a study of career education (Mattsson, 1984), and Kerstin Skog-Östlin extended this in a study of teacher education (Skog-Östlin, 1984). The analysis of pedagogical texts was carried further by

Staffan Selander (1984) and Garefalakis (1994). Analysis was extended in studies of the culture of schools and the implementation of curricula by Gerhard Arfwedson (Arfwedson, 1983) and Lars Lundman (Arfwedson & Lundman, 1984).

The analysis of codes – curriculum codes and school codes – was enriched by cooperation with French researchers within the research team headed by Pierre Bourdieu. Donald Broady since the 1980s has developed research on educational sociology built on the foundations of cultural studies laid down by Bourdieu (Broady, 1990). In the 1980s, the Frame Factor Model was developed even further by being placed into a wider framework of political governance of education (Lindensjö & Lundgren, 1986, 2000).

The curriculum field

There has been an important development in the philosophical and critical aspects of the field, achieved by Tomas Englund and research at the University of Örebro. Englund (1986) developed further the concept of the curriculum code. Agneta Linné (1996), meanwhile, used and cultivated the concept of curriculum code in historical analysis of teacher education and Garefalakis (2004) achieved the same in the study of the concept of formation (*Bildung*) in early Greek education. The concept of curriculum code has also been used in research on pre-school education (Tallberg Broman, 1995; Vallberg Roth, 2002).

The Swedish Council for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences conducted an International evaluation of Swedish research in education (Achtenhagen, Bjerg, Entwistle, Popkewitz, & Vislie, 1997). The conclusion concerning curriculum research and curriculum theory was:

The research is theoretically sophisticated, historically nuanced, and methodologically complex. The different research programs, we believe, contribute substantively to theoretically considering the social/political complexities of school practices. The methodological contributions are varied — from the diverse paradigmatic and interdisciplinary qualities of the studies to the sophisticated techniques used to interrogate survey data, from correspondence analysis to the “textual” analyses that draw on literary theory in analysing school textbooks and historical “sources”.

International studies of pedagogical practices have been dominated by psychological and organizational theories that are often instrumental in outlook. The Swedish research reported in this chapter, in contrast, provides systematic and intellectually important studies about the relation of State policy to the “inner core” of the school: its curriculum practices, classroom processes, and professional education. The studies are exemplars of the pragmatic

relation between theoretical interests and empirical investigation. The analyses illustrate an interactive process between schooling and external social conditions rather than the school “merely” responding to social conditions. (Achtenhagen et al., 1997, pp. 60–61)

I have described in this presentation some trends, which I believe, have been of importance for the development of curriculum theory in Sweden. But this presentation is of course my story, my picture. There are many stories to be told and many pictures to be painted.

Education and educational research in the new millennium

Throughout the beginning of the century, the landscape for educational research policy has changed its character. During the reform period in the 1960s and 1970s, educational research had an influence on policymaking and on educational planning and evaluation. The National Board of Education had a specific budget provided for research.

When the National Board was replaced by the national Agency for Education the budget for research was moved into the administration budget. The Agency, which was charged with responsibility for national evaluation, required research resources. A research policy was established based on the relation between inspection, evaluation and research. Signals from inspection could lead to evaluation which in turn could provide questions to deeper research studies. The research resources were later abolished. At the end of the 1990s a new structure and policy for state-financed research was established with the foundation of the Swedish Research Council in which research money was allocated to educational research. Within the council, a committee for research in educational sciences was appointed for a period of three years (Fransson & Lundgren, 2003). The money allocated to research meant a substantial increase compared to earlier resources. The definition of what counted as educational science was wider than education as a science or pedagogy as a science. The term educational science was used to indicate that the resources should be disciplinary, but could also cover all kinds of research on education. Besides pedagogy, new academic disciplines were established. These were called didactics, teachers work, educational science, adult education etc.

During the 1990s, the reform of tertiary education included a reform of the professor system. To earn the title of professor it was no longer necessary to have a university chair. The number of professors in education has grown to more than six times what they had been at the beginning of the 1990s. The new university colleges were based on the teacher education institutions, meaning that professors of education (pedagogy or didactic) are found in most tertiary institutions.

Education or pedagogy as a discipline was fragmented. The discussion around education as a discipline that had formed one root of curriculum theory in Sweden seemed to disappear. These changes reflect a fundamental change in politics in general, and in the politics of education in particular. At the beginning of the 1990s, reforms were implemented that opened up the choice of schools and the established an education *market*. An independent school system was also established, while the market for educational research also provided a new form of competition. Curiosity-driven, speculative research vanished and the relationship with policy changed its character. The Swedish committee system changed from a rather large investigative panel with an open mandate which included many experts, to narrower, short-term mandates for studies of consequences of reforms. The role of giving a research-base for planning and policy research now reflects on-going reforms. A market driven educational system must, to be efficient, provide good information about alternatives to this increase in assessment of various forms, which in turn attracts research on assessment. Research will then become a part of the evaluation of reforms, but will also be an instrument for the implementation of reform by focusing normative questions related to on-going implementation of reforms. In this context, curriculum research will not bring about new perspectives on basic curriculum questions, but instead it will be scaled down to questions of how to implement various teaching methods within a given political framework.

From the 1970s and onwards there has been a transformation of production and economy that can be compared with a third industrial revolution. Knowledge and education have become more and more important for economic growth in a globalised world, and what this means for educational systems and for the goals and content of education is one of the key contemporary issues. In Sweden, this challenge has been met by curriculum reforms which aimed to build on a school system built for another economy and another kind of production.

To bring my reflections to a close, I would like to use a metaphor. The Danish toy system LEGO, which can be used to build the most fantastic, imaginative creations, has today become a box with an instruction manual for building a pre-designed product (a spacecraft from a movie, for example). Imagination is replaced with a finished product, which is incorporated in a finished history. The risk becomes that this is what happens with the knowledge which is taught in our schools. Curricula is what can be measured, not an encounter with a wide variety of knowledge, values and abilities which prepare us to manage the future. In this metaphor, educational research and curriculum research is, I am afraid, simply assisting in the design of the manual.

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'Didaktik meets Curriculum' revisited: historical encounters, systematic experience, empirical limits

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From a personal perspective, the article focuses on the points of contact between Didaktik and curriculum theory within a continental European perspective, where Didaktik is more commonly used than curriculum for describing the issues under scrutiny. By highlighting these points of contact between a continental European description of Didaktik and an Anglo-American description in curriculum, it also looks into the future, discussing some probable developments within education.

Keywords: *didactics; curriculum; history; comparative education*

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A little over 20 years ago, I had an encounter that, as so often happens in academic careers, proved to be critical. At an international conference dinner in Oslo, I found myself in conversation with an Australian-American colleague, Ian Westbury. After a long discussion on Australian crime fiction, he suddenly asked me a question I found very difficult to answer. He had read a fascinating text by a German author on the teaching of mathematics, and had frequently come across the German term 'Didaktik'. He asked me what the word meant, and so I made a humble attempt to explain the term and its origin in a nutshell. After a short time we were joined by our Norwegian host, Bjørg Gudem, who had the advantage of having been exposed to discussions on Didaktik as well as to various American curriculum theories, and was thus accustomed to switching from one discourse to the other. This conversation led to the idea of a 'dialogue project', which came to be called 'Didaktik meets Curriculum', in which notable representatives of both discourses would be invited to come together and explain the discourses in which they worked.

In retrospect, our little idea from that soirée has been very effective. From Wolfgang Klafki to Lee Shulman, nearly everyone took up our invitation to attend the dialogue conferences, which for almost all the participants enabled the first personal contacts. These conferences led to countless exchange visits and guest lectures, several dozen monographs and journal issues – all together more than 1000 scientific articles – which in some way continue to pull on the threads we picked up. Some found

agreement, while others were more adversarial, almost attacking the manner and content of the dialogue, a matter which we shall return to in due course. This success, and the criticism, of course also had something to do with the timing and context of the dialogues. At the time, it was already clear, at least to me, what would ultimately happen: namely, that each side, as a result of a chronic crisis in each of their respective traditions, would be open to adopting the tools and methods of the other. More specifically, the continental European education systems would seek their salvation in copying US reform strategies, not least in the adoption of the tests culture, while conversely, elements of European quality control strategies, particularly state based curricular formats, would spread in the US and most of the Common Wealth (c.f. Hopmann, 2001). Looking at earlier meetings, I suspected that each would serve as a kind of 'toolbox' for the other, even while the adopters largely ignored the *experiences* and empirical *limits* of the sources. This prognosis, at the time only shared by few, has since been confirmed on a scale that, for me, is quite alarming, and so we continue to work at limiting the collateral damage.

It was certainly not the intention of the dialogue project to bring all conceivable variants of Didaktik and curriculum theory into play, and it was not primarily a theory comparison, even if it was often *misunderstood* as such. For me, at least, it was primarily an opportunity to investigate Didaktik and curriculum theory as *historically evolved forms of reflection within the social system* and so identify the nature of the tasks performed within the

separate contexts of these two traditions and discover how such tasks were performed. Questions raised included what distinguished each of the prevailing modes of describing the relationship between teaching and schools, or the 'inner workings of schooling', as my colleague Ian Westbury liked to call it. Or, as Brian Simons asked in 1981, 'Why no pedagogy in England?' Connected questions probed why, for instance, Didaktik, despite a fleeting popularity, had not been able to establish itself in Anglo-Saxon cultures, or why, conversely, the curriculum wave of the 1960s and 1970s had ebbed so quickly in the German-speaking space. With this in mind, it is understandable that at conferences at the time discussions such as those on a comparison of the background justifications of lesson plans (Christine Keitel, Peter Pereira) or interpretations of the pedagogical 'clock' (Peter Metz, Max von Manen), brought a discourse to the table which was more dynamic than the monologic arguments which usually acknowledged the 'opposing side' with little more than incomprehension (such as was the case with respect to Hilbert Meyer, Erling Lars Dale or Bill Pinar; c.f. Gundem & Hopmann, 1998; Hopmann & Riquarts 1995).

In this context, I shall summarise encounters, experiences and limits in the mutual influencing of these two traditions. My concern is not to make an epistemological evaluation of the two theoretical traditions or an observation of teaching practices, but to examine how these dominant modes of the understanding of schooling have established themselves as practices of social regulation and how they have interacted when they have come into contact with one another. Methodologically, such an analysis 'questions' '... structural design problems in socio-cultural spheres right through to each respective available (positive) design resource or (restrictive) limiting decision scope' (Schriewer, 1999, p. 99; my translation). It neither can be disputed nor denied that there were many other modes of comparison and countless different attempts to understand schooling. As Anatoli Rakhkockhine (2012) recently demonstrated in a clever survey, the object of a comparative study of Didaktik could well be anything from teaching sequence to a 'world society'. This may be the case, for example with the TIMSS video studies (e.g. Givvin, Hiebert, Jacobs, Hollingsworth, & Gallimore, 2005) or with an analysis of global curriculum alignment (e.g. in Meyer, Kamens, & Benavot, 1992). Conversely, any Didaktik positioning or any 'reconceptualization' of curriculum (Pinar, 1978ff.) is always necessarily comparative. Moreover, this history must also be seen in the context not only of the history of schooling, but also in terms of 'historical process' (Leschinsky & Roeder, 1976), and not least as a history of the transformation of mechanisms of social self-control (c.f. Hopmann, 2008). In the current context, however, it is only possible to outline by way of example some developmental threads in the history of

encounters that could undoubtedly be further differentiated and discussed at every juncture.

Encounters

From the point of view of the history of ideas, Didaktik and curriculum, in this sense, can be traced at least to Antiquity, while the concepts themselves can be traced back to the early modern period. As clearly distinguishable traditions of understanding schooling they have developed, of course, only since the implementation of public mass schooling in the late 18th century.

For Didaktik, the pietistic understanding of schooling, on the one hand, and the implementation of a national curriculum regime, on the other, were key elements (for the following history of Didaktik, c.f. Hopmann, 1988 2007). Since August Herman Francke, the former has led to a realisation that teaching is more than mere knowledge, but is rather an enactment of teaching and learning that touches on all the senses and powers; this in turn has led to the development and spread of teacher seminars where teaching was studied as an independent form of action. The latter then established a framework in which these profession-creating characteristics were able to develop. Organisationally, Didaktik nestled in a niche between the compacted state regulations for the provision of schooling and the various local schooling practices. Anyone who has studied the explosive growth of teaching textbooks in the late 18th and early 19th centuries will have been confronted with a huge mass of examples of how to bridge the gap between these regulations and local teaching.

The curricula of the early 19th century already assume this niche to be a kind of 'freedom of method' or 'pedagogical freedom' among teachers. Only in this way could 'what is valid in teaching' (Weniger 1932/1952) be satisfactorily defined. Each element of curricular matter (content: *Inhalte*) first had to be transformed into local teaching (meaning: *Gehalte*; c.f. Hopmann, 2007). How to interpret this educational transformation, to bring it to bear, was essentially left to the teachers themselves. This includes the specific instructional design as well as the process of performance assessment. Didaktik teaches us precisely how to do this.

In the second half of the 19th century, Didaktik, especially in the wake of Herbartianism, was consolidated as academic knowledge, reaching into higher schools. It was not accidental that the primary starting point of this trend was the transformation of Herbart's levels of articulation (describing the logic of learning) into stages of teaching, which thus led to the methodical organisation of lessons by curricular content. There were even attempts to generate complete curricula genetically, according to Herbartian principles, although these had significantly less impact. In contrast, Herbartian instructional schemes were able to be reconciled with any state curriculum as long as they met the bureaucratic requirements

(Rein, 1893) and particularities of the lesson design. During the 19th century, the sum of these efforts led to an increasingly self-confident teaching profession that was able to assert priority over other social forces in determining what would occur in schools (c.f. Rein, 1893). It is no wonder, then, that foreign visitors, especially, soon noticed that at any time these teachers were able to explain didactically what they had just done and why (c.f. Tilden Prince, 1891).

With hindsight, it is easy to overlook that this line of development was not without an alternative. At the close of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century (from Felbiger to Pestalozzi), there were numerous other attempts, not only to regulate educational content, but also to regulate the detailed methodological implementation of that content. The most successful attempt was the one which came to be called, 'monitorial instruction', translated into German as 'wechselseitiger Unterricht' (c.f. Hopmann, 1990). This approach was championed by Bell, Lancaster and their followers 'on all five continents' (Zschokke, 1822). If one is to believe contemporary sources, this was probably the first global reform movement in the history of schooling.

The main thrust of monitorial instruction is the meticulous categorisation of teaching materials in conjunction with a rigid discipline, which is intended to allow for the provision of one single teacher for thousands of students. Its task is then limited to the technical implementation of these rules which can be easily learned in a single course limited to a few weeks' standardised training at a model school. On the one hand, monitorial instruction provided teachers with high-quality teaching materials and an independent technical language with which to describe school teaching which was somewhat demarcated from ecclesiastical teaching. On the other hand, teachers already had a much broader arsenal of established methods, compared to which the rigid processes of monitorial instruction would surely act as a drastic reduction of their pedagogical freedom. Here, as we saw in Sweden and Schleswig-Holstein where the monitorial-instruction method was proscribed, teachers responded with the same didactical skill that they continue today to bring to any form of programmatic learning. They used the material offered as a quarry from which they carved out the elements which suited their didactical self-will (Hopmann, 1990).

However, in places where these methods were exposed to as yet unexplored didactical terrain (such as in England and the USA), they might have nipped in the bud the emergence of a broadly-understood pedagogical freedom or, at least, postponed its development for some time. This can be discerned in these systems in the history of 'pedagogy', the functional equivalent of Didaktik. In elementary schools, a differentiated understanding of method based on local decisions had no place in a program limited to the technical mastery of reading,

writing and arithmetic (three Rs). In secondary schools, which are primarily focused on the building of character and not on imparting specific knowledge, this braking power was more evident (c.f. Alexander, 2004; Simon, 1981, 1994). There was a lack of the intermediate and thus freedom-constituting aspects of a state curriculum system, in which a didactical sense of self-understanding as an empowered profession would have been able to develop.

One should of course be wary of painting an excessively one-sided picture. On the one hand, in the then well-established, state-supporting Didaktik of the late 19th century, little could be felt of the aspirations for autonomy of a Herbart or even a Diesterweg. On the other hand, in the 19th century there were also quite successful pedagogical exports across the channel and overseas. Traces of Pestalozzi and Froebel can be found everywhere, albeit in methodology rather than as Didaktik (c.f. Dunkel, 1970). The most successful export of Didaktik was the Herbartian doctrine of formal stages or levels, whose traces can be found from Russia, China and Japan to the Americas, and which today are still apparent in the DNA of local teaching practice almost everywhere, right through to the current globally successful lesson-study movement founded in Japan. In the USA, towards the end of the 19th century, there was a veritable boom in Herbartianism as shown in the history of the still active National Society for the Study of Education, originally established, under Dewey's influence, as a Herbart society (c.f. Cruikshank, 1993). Without a curriculum regime and corresponding teacher education, however, it was unable to maintain a lasting foothold.

From the 'Great War', the first World War, until the end of the second World War, there were no other epoch-making encounters. Beyond isolated, often misunderstood approaches (such as the reform-pedagogical appropriation of Dewey) there were, to my knowledge, no system-relevant appropriations from the other tradition. While, in continental Europe, the twin forces of 'Lehrplan' and 'Didaktik' remained the predominant modes for describing teaching, 'curriculum', developed under independent premises, became the central variable in the Anglo-Saxon context. Works which could be mentioned here as groundbreaking were especially Dewey's, *The Child and the Curriculum* (1902) and Bobbitt's *The Curriculum* (1918) and *How to Make a Curriculum* (1924). This led fairly directly from Ralph Tyler's *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* (1949) through to Joseph J. Schwab's *Practicals* (1970). What unites these approaches, despite their many dissimilarities, is a different locating of the curriculum compared to the curriculum guidelines [Lehrplan]. In curriculum there is no systematic distinction between curricular 'matter' (Inhalte) and lesson 'meaning' (Gehalte) or between teaching and lesson planning; instead, both are seen as unity. Accordingly, during the 20th century, increasingly

supervening state control was not connected to the fixing of content, but instead extended from the requirements of the leading universities (Committee of the Ten, 1892) and the criteria pupils in transition to subsequent higher education were expected to have met. Since the starting point was not teaching itself, but rather learning results, it is hardly surprising that the related academic fields developed more towards the psychology of learning than towards Didaktik or a more comprehensive education science: in the words of Ellen C. Lagemann (1989): ‘Edward L. Thorndike won and John Dewey lost’ (p. 185).

It was all the more astounding to see how this curriculum movement was then exported during the 1960s into the continental European context, neither as a strategy of local school development, nor as the business of the psychology of learning, but as a ‘better’ form of education planning. A paradigm for this was Saul B. Robinsohn’s (1967) ‘Education reform as revision of the curriculum’. This form of education planning promised to identify, codify and implement on a scientific basis efforts for which there were social learning requirements. It was never implemented so literally, but it gave the state teaching planning effort a new language and an extended mandate that allowed teaching planners to introduce the loose specification of teaching content into the particularities of individual lessons. This then culminated in somewhat complex, learning-goal-oriented ‘Curricular lesson plans [Lehrplänen]’ as in Bavaria in 1980 (Westphalen, 1985). In this context, then, the profession-creating semantics of the modern private and public school improvement industry still in place today established itself through evaluation paradigms and competence metaphors as distinct from traditional general Didaktik.

However, the first attempt to eliminate the twin pairing of ‘Lehrplan’ and ‘Didaktik’ failed so comprehensively that up until the early 1990s it was possible to speak of a Renaissance of Didaktik (Hopmann & Künzli, 1992). Once again, the old routines and rules of state ‘teaching work as an administrative action’ were reinforced (Hopmann, 1988). With hindsight, this was presumably because while the semantics had been replaced, the approach to the regulation of teaching had remained the same. In the teaching profession, it was not until a new attempt at a PISA-inspired shift to perceived learning outcomes of pupils, that it was possible to marginalise traditional generalised Didaktik and replace it with a concoction of subject Didaktik (Fachdidaktik) and educational psychology. So-called ‘empirical educational research’ (‘Unterrichtsforschung’) was then able to almost effortlessly conquer terrain which hitherto had been the heartland of the didactic autonomy of teachers: the concrete structure of the lesson.

The irony of this story is that curriculum research was now being used to solve local educational crises at a time when the first wave of reception in the late 1960s, at home

in the USA, was ‘terminally ill’ (Schwab, 1969), while the still on-going second wave of reception at home faced massive criticism, threatening to destroy the American education system at its core (Hopmann, 2013; Ravitch, 2010, 2013). Between them lay the double reconstruction process of ‘curriculum studies’. On the one hand, a combined movement developed after Schwab, soon labelled ‘re-conceptualization’ (Pinar, 1978), provoked sustained questioning of the conceptual and methodological premises of curriculum theories. On the other hand, the public declaration of the bankruptcy of American Education (A Nation At Risk, 1983) led to an accelerated introduction of more standards and testing to measure student performance, culminating in the *No Child Left Behind Act* and the introduction of a national control regime (2002). Of course, after this massive intervention also failed to produce the desired results, one saw the entry of something which has been apparent since the early nineties: the first introduction of national curricula in the form of so-called ‘core curricula’ (Common Core standards; see www.corestandards.org). Today, in the USA, we see the emergence of all the problems to which such curriculum regimes lead, and with which continental Europe has been familiar for 200 years. Moreover, similar stories are emerging from England, Australia and many other ‘Curriculum countries’ (see, e.g. Fensham, 2013; Jenkins, 2013).

Experiences

Thus far, we have ‘fast forwarded’ through several important stages of the encounter between both traditions insofar as they have influenced the respective paths of school development. One can easily extend and deepen this framework. For example, China provides an instructive example of how the advent of curriculum theory has been perceived as a breath of fresh air wafting through a rigid Herbartianism and a stale Didaktik (c.f. Deng, 2009). One could also take the education–biographical perspective which has been dominant in recent years as a litmus test, as addressed by the respective reference systems with educational programs [Bildungsgängen] (Meyer, 2005) or educational biographies (Pinar, 2011). Is it possible, however, to glean something systematic from this and similar experiences? Not much, it would seem, in terms of a theory–systematic comparison: Didaktik and Curriculum theories come in so many colours and shapes, that any comparison would necessarily be limited to a few more or less random examples, if one is not to succumb to the danger of working with untenable summary stereotypes. Indeed, we might find here both critical and affirmative voices of almost every possible persuasion imaginable: post-structuralist, post-feminist, post-conceptualist, constructivist, phenomenological, empirical, etc.

For me, it did not and does not come down to an epistemological systematisation of the respective traditions’

stocks or to the necessity for praising one at the expense of the other. What fascinates me in the perspectives of comparative Didaktik in these encounters is rather how little either succeed in changing of what I have elsewhere referred to as ‘constitutional mindsets’ (Hopmann, 2008), that is, the well-established, basic social patterns of the understanding of schooling that have sedimented in the respective traditions. When both approaches shall get connected, this leads to serious problems.

The implementation of Didaktik as a profession-creating semantics was closely linked to the implementation of the state monopoly on school oversight and its curriculum [Lehrplan] regime. As mentioned earlier, Didaktik established itself within the gap between teaching and lesson planning, in the difference between disciplinarily combined curricular matter [Inhalt] and the situational meaning [Gehalt] to be acquired. So, too ‘didactical analysis’ became ‘the core of lesson preparation’ (Klafki, 1958). Thus, in the Didaktik triangle (of content, teacher and pupil), the teacher-content axis was said to be the central gateway. With some didactical dexterity, a teacher in this context could explain almost everything which was relevant to teaching, as long they did not manifestly transgress the rather weak framing of the content requirements. Accordingly, until a few years ago that which was ultimately learned in the classroom as the curriculum was implemented was not a subject of systematic control (c.f. Hopmann, 2003).

Nevertheless, Dewey’s *The Child and the Curriculum* (1902) is not alone in constructing the curriculum historically in terms of the student-content axis with regard to questions concerning mainly locally determined learning arrangements and their more or less measureable consequences. Dewey aims explicitly to revoke the separation assumed in Didaktik of ‘subject matter’, that is, the given lesson content, and the child’s learning ‘experience’ which can only succeed if the educational content is not imposed from the outside, but rather anchored in the child’s experience. From Dewey to Tyler and beyond, these plausible, school-internal experiences should be representations of socially relevant experiences. This bridging is achieved by the elementarisation of social patterns of experience in school-based tasks. The dispute which has occurred since then within the field of curriculum has been about which of these tasks are considered relevant and why, and not about the basic assumption of the bridging itself. This in turn eventually allowed for the measurement of lesson quality in terms of the way tasks were handled, and from this, the evaluation of teachers.

But what happens if one wants to do both without neglecting either? This is precisely the question that arises when an encounter of the two traditions is used as a means for school development. The teachers from the tradition of monitorial instruction quickly learned that such

blending negates the situatedness of teaching, amounting to a prejudice against implementing each as a given ‘best practice’ routine of local circumstances and individual needs. Otherwise they would run the risk of being held liable for any differences between established expectations and actual results. As Diesterweg (1836) claimed, in considering an appropriate model of monitorial instruction, teaching becomes a ‘soul-destroying mechanism’ (p. 173). The teachers involved set this against the added value which they aimed to achieve through their respective instructional design above and beyond the basically set mechanical instruction (c.f. Hopmann, 1990). Then, as now, this was difficult to prove.

The situation with today’s teachers is no different if they are still under the delusion that they can exercise substantial autonomy when all is handed down by the curriculum, from lesson planning and teaching through to a system of performance assessment based on identical competence catalogues. Teachers, it is said, would still possess the freedom to select content where the situation requires the respective competences to be. However, since the competence-based curricula are nevertheless still curricula, and so dictate even more precisely than before the disciplinary sequence of lesson content, the autonomy of teachers is ultimately limited to their accountability for any gaps in the competence chain or unwanted side effects. Seen from the Didaktik point of view, this competence attribution is nothing more than an attempt to suspend the contingent connection of curricular matter to instructional meaning. (Which is nothing more than an attempt to nail jelly to the wall. All that gets stuck is the nail, the test, which in this case represents the yardstick, which then unabashedly becomes the actual goal of teaching.) At its core it becomes no different to the monitorial instruction of its time: requirements regulate ‘cognitive’ competence development (as it is called today), that is, the sequence of tasks. Teachers are made accountable for both: the fulfilment of such tasks as well as all other educational expectations, which might be assigned to schooling.

In analogy, the new core curricula (Common Core Standards), in the USA and elsewhere, exacerbate the accountability problems of local teachers. They threaten to force what was not possible under the pure test regime, namely continuous ‘teaching to the test’ using predetermined lesson plans. Seen from the point of view of curriculum theory, the aforementioned bridge between intra- and extracurricular tasks is suspended, deprived of that very local freedom which was, for Dewey, constitutive of a successful teaching experience (see, e.g. Darling-Hammond, 2009; Ravitch, 2013). There is already an extensive, partly private and partly public industry that prepares appropriate lesson plans for each standard. Here again, everything which cannot be seamlessly integrated

into the value chain is marginalised, or more precisely, passed off as a residual problem of the accountability of teachers, threatening them with the loss of employment if they cannot keep up with this production process. Is it any wonder then that the average duration of activity in the teaching profession is rapidly falling (c.f. Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014).

Limits/borders

The one and the other strategy would at least be more comprehensible if there were any empirical evidence able to demonstrate that these dual strategies were in some way successful, even if only in relation to their own objectives. As far as I know, this has yet to be sustainably demonstrated. On the contrary, rich contemporary empirical educational research shows that temporary gains can more likely be attributed to a Lake Wobegon effect, or superiority bias, than to any actual learning gains (see Amrein & Berliner, 2002; Berliner, 2009; Nichols, Glass, & Berliner, 2012, etc.). In contrast, there is considerable evidence from countries such as England or Norway which have lengthy experience with such dual strategies, that such an approach leads to increasing segregation, decreasing inclusion, growing power differences and social inequality, indicating the opposite effect to that for which they were supposed to be created (c.f. summary Hopmann, 2013). Quite the opposite is indicated by successful countries such as Finland, which, immediately after the introduction of the new standards stubbornly held to existing traditions, in this case a rather loose-knit national curriculum system without mandatory time controls (c.f. e.g. Sahlberg, 2012).

Even more interesting in the context discussed here are the long-term structural effects of the encounter. General Didaktik is in danger of being lost to its constituencies, as Gerd Biesta (2012) has recently shown in a brilliant article on the 'disappearance of the teacher' ('Giving teaching back to education: Responding to the disappearance of the teacher'). Squeezed by the double regime of standards and tests, the gap which was constitutive for the development of one's professionalism vanishes. General Didaktik then remains at best the task of holding Sunday sermons on 'forgotten contexts'. The situation is no better for curriculum research which played no significant role in the development of the new core curriculum. And so standards and tests are being implemented from England to the USA and Australia through the interaction of bureaucracies and the curriculum industries (see Fensham, 2013; Jenkins, 2013; Tienken & Zhao, 2013).

From the perspective of a comparative Didaktik, I wonder what the limits of this development might be, even though I can already hear objections that a coarse mesh problem description such as this one is unable to detect the slumbering potential of the dual strategies described. Admittedly, it is also true that suspicions

developed on a similar basis led to the outbreak of the test culture in 'Lehrplan' countries and the transition to the 'Lehrplan' regime in curriculum systems has certainly proven to be viable.

In this sense, I would like to suggest three possible scenarios:

1. When I look at the flood of publications lamenting the still insufficient development of competence strategies as well as the new core curricula, I fear that it will be many years before the situation improves and it becomes generally accepted that these strategies, judged also on their own claims, are unable to achieve what they intended. The toolbox of the court of accountability is far from exhausted. One only needs to read the annual report of the German Education Commission (Aktionrats Bildung) to see that there is more in store (<http://www.aktionsrat-bildung.de>). It is most likely that the implementation will be well supported by national institutes, education research circles and in other milieux of the institutionalised competence industry, if only to avoid having to answer for their own lack of success. If we take as our benchmark the history of the similarly functioning model of monitorial instruction, we can expect at least one or, more likely, two decades of massive and increasing interventions.
2. Under these conditions, the pressure on schools, teachers and pupils is mounting to such an extent that cracks in the public school systems are beginning to show. When I look at developments in Sweden, through to England and the US West Coast, and even China or Japan, I fear that the public school as a common good will, through programs and lobbies, become increasingly fragmented to such an extent that the traditionally structured school system will one day appear as a mild form of social segregation (c.f. Hopmann, 2013).
3. It seems rather unlikely that there will be a return to the past much hoped for by some colleagues (c.f. Labaree, 2012). The pressure of conflicting social interests currently being exerted on the school system is too great. I also cannot see any effective coalition of democratic forces that might be able to stop the train in its tracks (as Apple, 2013 hoped).

Whether and how all this will happen, of course, depends not only on developments within the education system but also on how globalised society deals with the growing problems of self-control and power distribution as a whole (c.f. for a summary Hopmann, 2008). However, all in all, I assume that the double game of curricula and testing is far from over, and will keep us busy for years, no matter how often comparative Didaktik is able to show that we are racing full steam ahead into a dead end. This

places general Didaktik as well as independent curriculum research before an almost insoluble dilemma. If they involve themselves, they will have legitimised and perpetuated a process whose collateral damage is foreseeable. If they refuse involvement, they will be marginalised and will let down those to whom they were accountable in the first place, the teachers and their pupils. So they must try painstakingly to operate between two extremes, searching continuously within the framework of the double game for gaps and counter-movements through which it is still possible to act in a manner that is didactically responsible. This leads us, perhaps surprisingly, to the conclusion that it is not *less*, but much *more* Didaktik and curriculum theoretical efforts and even more dialogue – the international exchange of experiences – that is needed in order not to lose our orientation on this rocky path.

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Curriculum work as educational leadership – paradoxes and theoretical foundations

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This article outlines the foundations of a critical but non-affirmative educational leadership theory. The adopted approach draws on a recognition-based tradition of education and *Bildung*. It is argued that every theory of educational leadership must deal with two fundamental questions as well as with their internal relations. These questions are, first, how institutional education is related to politics, economy and culture in a democratic society and, second, how leadership as a professional, moral practice is explained in terms of power and influence, that is, as an ethical and epistemological relation between individuals. On the first issue, this non-affirmative educational leadership theory accepts a non-hierarchical view of the relation between societal forms of practice, thus holding to a Western democratic tradition of citizenship and social transformation. Concerning the second problem, a non-affirmative position is adopted, according to which pure intersubjective or subject-centred (egological) approaches to explaining human intentional and cultural action and consciousness are considered insufficient. Rather, a specific version of relationism is advocated. In this theory, the classical pedagogical paradox takes a new form: educational leadership now means paradoxically to recognise the Other as if he or she was already capable of what he or she might become capable of through own activity – and to act accordingly.

Keywords: *educational leadership theory; curriculum theory; critical education*

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The aim of this article is to highlight issues related to the theoretical foundations for educational leadership research. There are many reasons why it is relevant to engage in the development of educational leadership theory and to do so from a curricular perspective. First, from a Nordic perspective, educational leadership is clearly an underrepresented field of educational research, especially when compared to the existing, extensive private and public education sectors and the number of professionals working in the field of leadership. The same also holds true from an international perspective. Compared to the United States, in particular, Europe has seen limited interest in educational leadership research. A third reason for engaging in this field is that approaches to educational leadership are surprisingly many, diverse and, more often than we might expect, research is carried out without solid foundations. Fourth, many leadership models are normative or prescriptive – they aim at providing practitioners

with models for good leadership practices, thus aiming more at recommendations for practitioners and policy makers than at contributing to the scientific development of this field of research. In education, this dilemma is well known – educational research is expected to demonstrate a critical approach as well as a constructive one. Policy and most curriculum research, for example, often represents more critical approaches which are aimed at understanding the mechanisms, processes and tensions underlying education, while leadership research is more often more closely linked to an interest in constructive and guiding knowledge. A dilemma in both orientations is that the alternative approach is neglected. The question is then how to combine a critical and constructive approach. An additional dilemma concerns the fact that representatives of both camps tend to be normative in unreflective ways. Fifth, disciplines other than education often seem to provide the basis or frame for educational

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leadership research. Organisational theory, policy research or social-psychological research, ethical theories and neo-institutionalist theories are but a few examples. Contributions such as these are often well argued, yet they remain limited, since they address only one perspective at a time without consciously relating each to the other. Also, accepting other disciplines as the point of departure tends to produce results close to prescriptive proposals for educational leadership. One of the problems arising from such a complicated situation is that practitioners are expected to navigate between these unrelated offerings by trying to fulfil the neglected task of the researchers. In addition, we may question what the concept of 'education' refers to in educational leadership. Is it about applying general, context-neutral leadership principles to educational settings, such as schools, or does educational leadership concern a specific, pedagogical dimension of leadership irrespective of where it is carried out, for example, pointing out how leadership may support individual growth or competence development?

Finally, the observable increase in interest in leadership research has clearly happened against the backdrop of an accountability-oriented educational policy period in Europe (Uljen & Nyman, 2013). The ongoing professionalisation of school and educational leadership is therefore primarily framed and led by these policy interests. Moreover, the agenda is now somewhat different to that (more recent) of framing of the academisation of the teaching profession from the 1970s onwards. Academisation of the teaching profession corresponded in general with an increased level of education in Western societies which had to be matched by education providers, but this reflection-oriented and research-based teacher education also more clearly emphasised the ideal of the teacher as a client-oriented, autonomous and semi-professional civil servant in public institutions. The difference between these two professional paradigms, that is, the research-based teacher education and the more policy-based principal education approach, is also made clear in education programmes for teachers and principals. Principal education is still much more closely connected to and directed by the state administration. Given the new neo-liberal policy agenda, emphasising leaders' responsibilities, principals' profession may run the risk of drifting even further from a teacher and curriculum agenda. In addition, while this accountability agenda is today accompanied by economic regression in many countries – leading to expectations to achieve more and better results with fewer resources – this contributes to increasing tensions between teachers and the municipalities and state.

From the points made above, we can see that there is a need to develop new, more holistic, and at the same time more fundamental approaches that are able to bring together educational leadership of different kinds, carried out at different levels, with teaching. There is a need for

a foundation that views educational leadership as an organic part of the administrative and governance system for public, institutional education, operating in and for democratic societies, and where leadership and teaching are seen as necessary dimensions operating for a shared purpose. It also means that theory and research on leadership and the teaching profession have to be reconceptualised, moving from an understanding of these as individual capacities, towards systemic, cultural, historical, institutional and shared practices borne by a shared conceptual system.

There is also reason to ask critically whether it really is the case that curriculum research cannot be viewed as a form of educational leadership research. Should research on the selection and treatment of cultural content for educational settings not count as educational leadership? As a practice, curriculum making, on different levels, must clearly be understood as a form of educational leadership. The same is true for research on the construction, implementation and evaluation of one of the most crucial documents, that is, the curriculum, in the direction of the core activity in schools, teaching. Should that not count as educational leadership research? We would argue that indeed it does, and moreover that it should. This research has been carried out in multiple ways and from various theoretical points of view. In fact, much curriculum research may perfectly well be defined as a form of educational leadership research. The same question can be asked regarding research on educational evaluation. Are issues of how evaluation is organised and used not pertinent examples of how a school system is led? Here, studies on what motivates certain types of evaluation procedures, how they are put into practice and how they affect practitioners' professional identities and practices clearly should be considered as educational leadership research. In fact, the same, *mutatis mutandis*, holds true for policy research and research on educational legislation or financing in education. These fields are not traditionally identified as forms of educational leadership research, but they do indeed deal with the leadership and governance of schools. The concept of educational leadership needs to be reconceptualised.

One reason as to why curriculum, evaluation, legislation and policy research, for example, have not been considered examples of educational leadership research is that leadership research, in contrast to the above-mentioned fields, is traditionally dominated by studying individual agency in the application of an interactional actor's perspective, often driven by a technical knowledge interest that is policy sensitive, improvement oriented and normative in nature. Do we have to choose one or the other? Does it make sense to choose one over the other? We argue that it does not. For many, both perspectives make sense. To say that we cannot do without either of these means that traditional education leadership research must be

expanded to include systemic, policy and structural questions, while evaluation, curriculum and policy research may benefit from including an actor's perspective. Hence, the title of this article: curriculum work as educational leadership.

Multi-level perspective as an initial step for mediating leadership

It is clear that recent societal changes, especially the move away from a social-democratic welfare state model (old public administration), to a more neoliberal competition-oriented model (new public management), have made many aware of the fact that changes at the system level have had profound consequences for the activities, identities and development of professionals. Replacing one bureaucracy with another has turned attention towards understanding educational leadership as a multi-level project. Leadership in institutionalised education does indeed take many forms; it is horizontally distributed within and over many locations and professional groups and carried out at several, interconnected levels. The influences between these levels operate often indirectly and diagonally, as in the case of PISA where the *evaluation* results are communicated directly to the school bypassing the national authorities influencing curriculum work. This also means that *educational leadership on different levels may be seen as a mediating activity* between different epistemic practices (economy, law, education, media and culture) and value spheres (collective politics and inter-subjective ethics). In these mediating practices, leaders typically have certain degrees of freedom to contribute to the reconstruction of social reality.

However, educational leadership at different levels is not the same. We may, for a start, identify a so-called *first order educational leadership* referring to teachers' leadership of the students' study activities. *Second-order educational leadership* concerns the principals' leadership of teachers' teaching activities. Here, leadership shifts theme (from studying to teaching), population (from students to teachers) and responsibility (from child and youth to adults). Obviously, a principal must not only have some idea about how teaching affects students' learning activities but also how teachers' professionalism develops and how that professional agency may be supported and enhanced. Finally, *third-order educational leadership* again shifts its level and focus, concerning *leaders who lead other leaders*. An example would be district superintendents who lead principals in their work, with another shift of theme (from teaching to leadership). What it means to lead leaders (principals) is obviously different to what it means to lead teachers. Further, developing and deciding on new national policies, curricula and the like is clearly a very different kind of educational leadership to the former three, and this may be called *fourth-order educational leadership*. As a result of political and economic aggregation processes during the second half of 20th

century, the nation-state no longer suffices as the final unit of analysis. How the transnational level operates must be worked into leadership research.

It is more than obvious that such levels and processes have been approached by different types of theories and disciplines over the years. Didaktik typically explains teachers' activities, while much leadership research focuses on principals' activities. The contextual, or cultural-historical, turn in learning psychology has affected leadership and school development research which, for example, now talks about *communities of practice*. This is a welcome change. Policy research and institutional theories investigate and deliver insights into how the administration works, while curriculum theory often has a special interest in the selection and treatment of cultural content in relation to educational aims at the national level. The question is, however, whether operating with many and different disciplines create difficulties in theories and fields of research, all of which focus on their respective professional groups, such as teachers, principals, administrators and politicians. It is clear that we cannot empirically investigate all different kinds of leadership carried out on these levels simultaneously, but a general and common framework for educational leadership, in a broad sense, may be both possible and beneficial.

In the approach to curriculum work as educational leadership outlined here, a preliminary question for a theory of educational leadership concerns how an approach might appear which is able to unite different levels without treating educational leadership in a reductionist manner and thereby turning it into sociology, organisational or institutional theory, ethics, politics or the like. The aim would be to view these perspectives as valuable and necessary aspects which must be addressed in order to understand educational leadership, in the broad sense, in institutionalised settings framed by a political, economical and cultural system.

Outlining the argument

How might an approach to 'curriculum work as educational leadership' then look? In this article, the foundations of a critical but non-affirmative educational leadership theory are outlined. The approach draws on a recognition-based tradition of education and Bildung (Fichte, Hegel and Honneth). As theories are always answers to certain questions, the first task is to argue what questions an educational leadership theory addresses and why these questions are relevant in the first place.

Consequently, in laying out the arguments for the current approach, it is claimed that every theory of education must deal with, in principle, *two* fundamental questions, as well as their internal relations, in a coherent way (Uljens, 1998). These questions concern, first, how institutional education is considered to be related to, for example, politics, economy and culture in a democratic

society and, second, what kind of human activity educational leadership concerns with as a professional and moral practice. How is the practice of leadership, carried out at different levels and in different contexts, explained in terms of power and influence, that is, as an ethical and experiential (cognitive) relation between individuals, both with respect to how human freedom and awareness is explained?

On the first issue, this approach accepts a *non-hierarchical position* on the relation between societal forms of practice, thus holding to a Western democratic tradition of citizenship and social transformation. The point of this non-hierarchical leadership theory is that it explains the paradoxical relation among modern democracy, dynamic culture and (critical) education, each of which presupposes the others.

Concerning the second problem, a *non-affirmative approach* is advanced (Benner, 1991). Affirmative education and teaching means that the practitioner either confirms the present situation and the needs of the learner, or the aims and content of schooling reflecting contemporary needs of society, in a rather unproblematic fashion. Confirming the given present reality, the given values or future ideals can mean to uncritically relate one's professional practice to these while the task of education is considered a meditational practice between these interests. A version of affirmative teaching would be to be concerned with the learners absorbing the given content of teaching as such, without paying attention to the fact that content in educational settings primarily serves as an example of something more general, something for which the content is exemplary as such. An affirmative attitude ends up having two dilemmas. First, to the extent that aims are given and accepted, educational leadership and teaching is expected to follow a technical rationale. Such a (Tyler) rationale measures quality in terms of efficiency and efficacy. But we must ask how much and how often? Non-affirmative theory of education (NATED) expands this territory into the realm of the practitioner. NATED views educational leadership and teaching as moral practices. Teaching and leadership are not devoid of values. On the contrary, in moral professions, practitioners make continuous value decisions. Somewhat unique and of utmost importance to any kind of educational leadership is also the fact that it includes decisions on how the development of the learners' moral reasoning may be supported. Affirmative approaches typically intend to transform given values, while a non-affirmative approach allows for critical discussion on also the values lying at the foundation of democratic education. Finally, practitioners in moral professions fulfil their professional roles in concrete individual tasks. This means that practitioners stand as moral subjects behind assigned professional roles and tasks. The role is loaded with personhood or moral agency. To establish professional identity is a process of coordinating one's individual values in relation

to professional task description and other collectively decided questions framing the work.

Further, the approach developed here considers insufficient, purely intersubjective or subject-centred (egological) approaches to explaining human awareness, intentional and cultural action. Rather, a specific version of relationism is advanced which acknowledges both intersubjective and subject-philosophical approaches (Uljen, 2007). One of the conclusions of this theory is a reinterpretation of the classical pedagogical paradox or the paradox of learning. Here, it takes a new form: educational leadership now means to recognize the Other as if he or she were capable of what he or she is expected to become capable of through own activity – and to act accordingly. This paradox will be partially addressed by the concepts of *recognition*, *summoning to self-activity* and *Bildung*.

In addition to these philosophical assumptions of human freedom and societal indeterminism, leadership in and of institutionalised education is viewed as a culturally, historically and politically embedded phenomenon. To make such a statement is to make a theoretical claim, meaning that when we explain educational leadership on a theoretical level using core concepts, we have to take seriously and incorporate the open dynamics between education and politics, between education and economy, and between education and culture. These relations are not determined but open. To see these as open means that these relations may change over time and that they are historically developed. Educational leadership is thus to be understood as an activity carried out in a historically developed cultural and societal institution. If we aim to understand educational leadership through research, this historicity cannot be overlooked.

Taken together, these perspectives can be claimed to broaden, deepen and unite contemporary curriculum theory, Didaktik and leadership research without disregarding existing contributions from these fields, thus offering practitioners a more coherent conceptual framework for practical pedagogical work from classrooms to national institutions.

Two questions as core topics

The many levels, activities and themes above can be reduced to two rather general but interrelated questions:

1. How do we define the relation between school and society, that is, the relation between institutional education and other societal forms of practice, for example, politics, economics, culture? How are the dynamics between, for example, education and politics explained?
2. How does an educational leadership theory explain the relation between individuals in terms of pedagogical influence? That is, if leadership is to influence somebody else, then what kind of influence are we addressing?

The relevance of these questions are well acknowledged in continental and Nordic general education and general Didaktik (e.g. Wolfgang Klafki). The first question concerns how a theory explains the relation between education and politics, economy and culture, respectively. Through what processes societal interests transform themselves into practices of schooling? What are the mechanisms and degrees of freedom involved in these transformational processes at different levels? More generally, the question concerns the reasons and aims for which (liberal) education is promoted by the political system. But the converse perspective is also crucial: what kind of education is considered necessary or valuable in order for Western democracies to survive? In essence, we focus here on how societal reproduction and transformation should be understood and organised as a relation between generations. It is difficult to think of educational leadership theory neglecting such a question, especially when the previous levels are widely identified as relevant. In this respect, educational leadership touches upon theories of schools and schooling.

The second question may be identified as a core aspect of the issue of individual *freedom* in education. How do we explain theoretically the kind of influence leadership has? Obviously, few would consider leadership to have causal effects, for the reason that typically the individual being influenced is considered to be free to make sense of influencing acts. However, if we accept a view according to which the subject is radically free, then then we must explain how influence is nevertheless possible. A radical interpretation of freedom would mean that everything was in the hands of the individual so to speak. The individual alone would determine the extent to which leadership has an influence. In educational theory, this problem is not new. In fact it belongs to the fundamental core questions in any educational theory and many attempts have been made over the centuries to establish a position between external determinism and internal freedom from influence.

A quick look into the history of the problem reveals that different philosophical positions typically solve some problems, but not all. So, according to, for example, Kantian transcendental philosophy of freedom, the individual is free to establish its relation to the world alone. The theoretical problem which arises from such a position is that it does not seem possible to influence somebody from outside, rendering leadership impossible in principle. Instead, the individual would be radically free to determine the meaning of his/her dynamic and open relation (*Bildung*) to others, to the world and to himself/herself. In this subjectivity-based tradition, it becomes theoretically difficult to explain why the presence and activity of the Other would be necessary for learning to occur, for example. The alternative approach has been to start from a pure intersubjective position, meaning that the individual, from the beginning so to speak, shares

something (language, practices and values) before a self may be established. The problem for such a position is that to the extent the world is shared it cannot be the object of reaching a shared world. Pushing the argument would lead to a situation wherein education is not a necessary activity.

In the following sections, I will elaborate on these two questions and propose how they might be answered and then related. The analysis is carried out in relation to the modern history of education and contemporary versions. The point made is that in order to describe how the aforementioned two dilemmas or questions are related, we must, for a moment, turn our attention to a philosophical level of analysis and the history of ideas.

A non-hierarchical relation between education and politics, economy and culture

In an attempt to understand how educational leadership is related to politics, economy and culture, we must first negotiate a path through the various extant explanations in the history of education.

First, a premodern mode of thought understands education as being located *within* the existing society or culture. This socialisation-oriented model of education emphasises the task of education as preparing the individual for an *existing* society and culture wherein societal practices and norms function as the guiding principles. In this model, educational leadership is subordinated to societal practices. Education does not have any developmental or transformative role with respect to the existing society but rather is preparatory in character. The power of societal transformation lies beyond education, and as a consequence, education is reduced to socialisation.

Second, in contrast to the reproduction-oriented model, we have been familiar, since Rousseau, with the idea of education as a *revolutionary* force with respect to societal practices. In its most radical form, revolutionary or transformation-oriented education is not only disconnected from society but also allows itself to be positioned as superordinated with respect to societal interests. According to Rousseau, there is not much point in educating individuals for an *existing* society, since education would then only reproduce unacceptable constellations. Rather, the role of education would be to develop something new, something which does not yet exist. Education would work towards ideals, which may, in the future, become realities as a new generation enters society after having undergone education. In this model, education is superordinated with respect to societal interests. More recently, this position has gained renewed traction within an approach called ‘critical pedagogy’, as seen in the work of Henri Giroux and Peter McLaren, but is in principle accepted by all educational theories that propose determined, normative ideals about how the

future should be. These ‘critical’ theories do not place any critical distance between the values and norms they themselves represent.

For a third group of theories, these educational models are, taken alone, considered insufficient as such. It is thus considered that the strength of the reproduction-oriented model is that cultural content which is considered valuable is transferred to the next generation. The strength of the second, transformation-oriented, model would be that education would function as an instrument for the development of the society. If current affairs lead to unfortunate results, then a new course may have to be established with the help of education. To combine the two models would be to decide upon what is valuable and what is not. The valuable aspects of a culture would be passed on, while the less valuable would be replaced by ideals, with the hope that they would become future realities. According to this third line of reasoning, we should not choose either the first or the second, but take both together.

The similarity between these three positions is their normativity, meaning that a predetermined set of values guides educational practice. In addition, these values are defined irrespective of the educational leader’s own interests. In the third model, the same arrangement of norms (existing practices or future ideals) should guide both reproduction and transformation.

A fourth line of reasoning opposes all the above-mentioned ones by criticising them for their normative nature. Both the reproduction and the transformation-oriented models are normative in the sense that what is either valuable or ideal in society is decided upon in advance. Therefore, it is supposed that the previous models, taken seriously, in fact run the risk of indoctrination and of turning educational leadership into a technological profession where results are related to values external to the profession. Another problem with the previously described models is that they do not leave room for developing the ability of the principal, the teacher or the learner to decide upon what is to be considered valuable and meaningful. Pushed to an extreme, these approaches do not prepare the individual for self-reflective decision making about the future, either for the self or society.

In contrast, in this fourth position, since the future is thought to be undetermined and the question of morality is something that cannot ultimately be decided in advance, the individual’s reflective ability – self-awareness and self-determination – is seen as an ability which must be developed. In this last model, education is seen in a non-hierarchical relation to politics, culture and economy. Education is not solely placed either ‘outside’ or ‘inside’ the society and is thus not either super- or subordinated with respect to society but attempts to mediate between the two. In this non-hierarchical conceptualisation,

educational institutions are given relative independence with respect to societal and other interests. It is this space that both allows for and requires reflective, professional educational leaders on each level of the education system. It should be observed that a non-hierarchical understanding accepts that hegemonic political interests influence education but recognises that if educational leadership were to be reduced in the service of some political ideology, it would be in conflict with democratic principles. Thus, political democracy requires a certain form of critical educational leadership, that is, relative independence should be guaranteed by the political system itself. From a non-hierarchical perspective, educational leadership is leadership which sustains democracy, related to an image of citizenship. From this point of view, education is allowed to critically examine the political system within which it operates, but it also leaves room for politics to be reflective and critical about contemporary education and educational leaders. The same relation occurs between education and economics: education must prepare individuals for an existing working life, but in such a way that the individual may transcend existing ways of working.

According to this view, educational leadership is seen as a vertically, horizontally and ‘diagonally’ distributed system which embraces interconnected professionalities and institutional practices and emphasises questions about, for instance, how educational leaders cooperate, learn and lend horizontally, or what kind and degree of freedom/influence exists between levels?

The non-hierarchical position to the relation between school and society accepts that:

1. School prepares individuals for an existing world – though it does so in a problematising, non-affirmative fashion, not confirming to the present state of affairs.
2. Democratic ideals are defended: education prepares individuals for participation in societal *political practices and change*.
3. Human freedom is assumed – from provocation (intervention) to self-activity.
4. The question of the good life remains an *open* question.
5. A relative degree of freedom is guaranteed for the state, district, principal, teacher and ultimately for the student.

Educational leadership and the pedagogical paradox

The second question which must be addressed by educational leadership theory deals with *what kind of influence educational leadership has and how this influence is related to the person being influenced*. In order to answer this question from a leadership perspective, it is argued that we may make use of some core concepts in classical (modern)

education theory. These are recognition, summoning to self-activity and *Bildsamkeit* (Benner, 1991). It is argued that these concepts may be used to deal with the *paradox of educational leadership*.

The history of education may be read as a history of paradoxes. Regardless of the prevailing cosmology, the learning or the pedagogical paradoxes seem to reappear in different versions. Here, I refer only to Meno's paradox on learning. Plato asks us to consider how we should explain learning, given that we cannot search for knowledge if we do not know what to look for. But, on the contrary, if we had knowledge it would obviously no longer be necessary to search for it. Plato's answer to this dilemma was a nativist one, but paradoxical: the condition for reaching knowledge is to have knowledge. We must have access to knowledge in order to look for knowledge. How does he construct his case? According to this form of nativism, a soul is attached to the individual by birth. This soul contains all eternal knowledge but the individual is unaware that they possess this knowledge. Given this, an individual's knowledge cannot come from outside, for example, from a teacher. The learner, according to Plato, must learn only one thing – to remember that they already possess the knowledge required. When the learner has learned to remember, they can start to strive to achieve 'in-sight', they can begin the search for something that they already possess. In other words, in this paradox, the learner must reach out for something they already have. The teacher's role is to direct the learner's attention so that the learner may access what they already possess.

The paradox of learning changes when it leaves such a predetermined cosmology. The shift from a premodern to a modern, ateleological view of individual and societal change is a move towards a view of the future as indeterminate and not oriented towards a given end, a view where the individual or the world is no longer seen as predetermined. The paradox of learning changes in parallel, with freedom and autonomy becoming the key concepts around which the modern paradox evolves.

In modern thought, knowledge is not believed to exist within the individual before experience, but nor does it come from the outside. Rather, education is often viewed as provocation to self-reflection. However, in order for the individual to transcend their present state, to reach autonomy, become self-directed or achieve the ability to reflect, they must, according to this line of reasoning, already be perceived as autonomous, free and self-reflecting. The act of educating thus seems to presuppose the very existence of that which is a necessary condition of education (autonomy). In other words, in order for education to be possible, there must *be* a somebody whose reflection is provoked, but simultaneously it is thought that the individual *becomes* a somebody through the process triggered by a provocation. Stated differently

again, the pedagogical paradox concerns the following dilemma: in order for education to be possible, the individual must *be* free and self-active, and, simultaneously, in order for the individual to *become* free and self-active, education is necessary. Again, we are faced with the problem of how the individual can *become* something that it already *is*. The answer provided by modern education (Fichte) of this paradox is to consider the learners as already able to do what they may *become* able to do (Benner, 1991, p. 71). Using this argument for developing an understanding of educational leadership, it is assumed that individuals can reach cultural, productive freedom (the ability to act) only by being recognised and treated as if they are already free (or reflective, capable, trustworthy). Educational leadership is therefore understood as an invitation, intervention or provocation, a violation, disturbance or expectation concerning the Other's relation to itself, the world and others. Educational leadership is then to *recognise* somebody *as if* he/she is *already* capable of doing what he/she is supposed to *become* capable of – and to act accordingly.

In order to conceptually clarify the modern version of the educational leadership paradox, three concepts established in the infancy of modern educational thought (Kant, Fichte, Herbart and Schleiermacher) can be used. The first is the concept of recognition. This Fichtean and Hegelian concept has been interpreted differently by different philosophers, and holds an important position in contemporary social philosophy through the work of Axel Honneth, Nancy Fraser, Charles Taylor and many others. Here, recognition, in short, refers to how the Self is aware of the Other as being indetermined or free (ontological assumption), not only as an awareness of the Other's situation or reality (epistemological relation) but also to a moral relation in terms of the Self's responsibility for the Other's worth, dignity and inviolability as person and individual (ethical relation). In addition to viewing recognition as a kind of position of the Self and an orientation or attitude towards the Other and his/her future, two additional concepts are considered necessary for unpacking the modern paradox of being and becoming. These are summoning to self-activity ('*Aufforderung zur Selbsttätigkeit*') and '*Bildsamkeit*'. *Bildsamkeit* refers to the individual's own conscious efforts aimed at making sense of the world and his/her experiences while 'summoning' may be seen as the leader's or the teacher's invitation of the Other to become engaged in a self-transcending process. These principles, introduced by Fichte and Herbart, are considered to be dialectically related. In other words, while the concept of recognition is here considered as both an ontological concept and empirical orientation, which refers to a cognitive, emotional, moral and political acknowledgement of the Other on an individual, institutional and cultural-societal level, we see that the concept is in fact differentiated into various forms of recognition.

It is obvious that all these forms of recognising the subject influences how the individual constructs and reconstructs itself, how its self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem develops (Honneth). However, from a pedagogical perspective, it is difficult to see self-respect and self-esteem as categories to be accepted as points of departure. Rather, all versions of self-relations may be seen as resulting from contingent, experience-based concrete actions and conditions. The question is then, how do we, for example, explain the individual development of self-respect, if having self-respect means to have a sense of oneself as a morally responsible agent or person? Recognition-based social philosophy typically accepts that the experiencing of oneself as autonomous, for example, is *mediated* by *other* individuals or conditions. In order to identify pedagogical and educational leadership actions among all possible mediating instances, circumstances or activities which influence the subject's construction of self, autonomy or personhood, there is reason to make use of the concepts of summoning to self-activity and *Bildsamkeit*. These concepts leave room for genuine educational acts in terms of summoning (inviting) the Other to self-activity. The concepts of summoning and *Bildsamkeit* then explain how a teacher or a principal has a mediating role with respect to the Other in the maintenance and development of the Other's self-relations.

We should note, then, that the very same core concepts may be laid out as foundational for both teaching and educational leadership as human interpersonal practice. In fact, educational leadership as management, for example, is a process of intentionally creating working conditions and circumstances for colleagues in relation to which individuals may reconstruct their professional identity. Such institutional perspectives may be included into an extended concept of summoning to self-activity. Consequently, non-affirmative school leadership would be focused on creating a professional school culture where individual learners learn about what it means to find a voice of their own and what it means to develop towards democratic citizenship. Here, the learners learn to make use of their own productive freedom. Insofar as district leaders and school principals act accordingly, they mediate between governance mechanisms, interpreting and translating them in dialogue with teachers. In such a process, the use of positive knowledge of, for example, new legislation or curricula may be focused towards not only understanding them as such but also towards reaching the *questions* or *interests* to which existing policies, norms or practices are seen as answers or responses. An educational leader in this case invites (summons) colleagues or even the public to engage in reflective self-activity (*Bildsamkeit*) in order for them to transcend what is given. An educational leadership which supports the identification of questions behind provided answers may result in the development of an ability to formulate alternative questions and agendas.

Finally, it is to be observed that 'summoning to self-activity' operates horizontally, diagonally and vertically in institutional settings.

Conclusion – What is educational leadership?

This article argued that every theory of educational leadership must deal with two fundamental questions as well as their internal relations. These questions concern, first, how institutional education is related to politics, economy and culture in a democratic society and, second, how leadership as a professional, moral practice is explained in terms of power and influence, that is, as an ethical and epistemological relation between individuals in professional settings. On the first issue, this approach argues for a non-hierarchical view of the relation between societal forms of practice, thus holding to a Western democratic tradition of citizenship and social transformation, allowing evolution and revolution. This non-hierarchical leadership theory explains the paradoxical relation between modern democracy, dynamic culture and education that are each mutual preconditions. The claim that educational leadership is simultaneously a dynamic, institutional, multi-level, diagonal, horizontal and vertical process, operating between different epistemologies and value spheres, where the intersections between levels and interests may be described as negotiated discursive spaces (Schmidt), ultimately returns us to a theoretical definition according to which education stands in a non-hierarchical relation to politics, economy and culture. The very same structure explains how curriculum works, since educational leadership is meaningful as a dynamic relation between different levels. To the second, interactive problem concerning the kind of influence educational leadership has, a non-affirmative approach was adopted. The article argued for a recognition-based social philosophy, but one avoiding reducing everything to recognition and thus arguing for genuine pedagogical activity and educational leadership using the concepts of summoning to self-activity and *Bildsamkeit*.

Educational leadership, including curriculum work, was thus defined as:

a non-affirmative, critical-interpretative and cultural-historical practice carried out on different levels of the educational system, operating between different epistemologies (knowledge practices) and value-spheres (ethics and politics) where professional actors, through their roles (tasks) and persons, based on a recognition of the Other's potentiality, reality and possibility, aim at supporting teachers/principals/students by summoning (inviting, intervening, demanding, supporting provocation) to engage in the transcendence of one's current pedagogical work (*Bildsamkeit*), which may be done by e.g. developing routines and cultures of change, in order to create dynamic and reflected teaching opportunities, so that

students become able to grow into an existing world while being prepared to change it according to their interests.

In addition to these philosophical assumptions concerning human freedom and societal indeterminism, leadership in institutionalised education is viewed as a culturally, historically and politically embedded and developed phenomenon which point at hermeneutically oriented research methods. In addition to these theoretical and cultural-historical perspectives, we emphasised that leadership in politically framed public institutions may draw upon discursive institutionalism and policy research. These perspectives broaden, deepen and bring together contemporary curriculum theory, Didaktik and leadership research without disregarding existing contributions from these fields, thus offering practitioners and policymakers

a more coherent conceptual framework for practical pedagogical work from classrooms to national institutions.

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Curriculum theory and didactics – towards a theoretical rethinking

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The objective of this paper is to contribute to an ongoing theoretical discussion on rethinking curriculum theory. Various meanings of time and history, culture and agency in curriculum studies are discussed and comments made on didactics as a possible link between socio-historical and curriculum-theory approaches. Theoretical and methodological framework includes the curriculum-theory perspectives rooted in frame factor theory and highlights historical and theoretical analysis. I explore challenges evoked when concepts originating in one educational perspective confront a different theoretical strand, and I argue that such boundary work offers prolific means to rethink curriculum theory. I suggest that allowing Reinhart Koselleck's conceptual history, in addition to James V. Wertsch's reasoning on voices of collective remembering, to influence a vocabulary of curriculum theory would strengthen the theoretical tradition. I ground my arguments in empirical data and theoretical discussions within a number of research projects which I have been recently involved in.

Keywords: *curriculum theory; didactics; philosophy of education; educational science; educational history; teacher education*

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The objective of this paper is to contribute to an ongoing theoretical discussion on rethinking curriculum theory, while identifying some of its challenges and promises. I explore time and history as well as culture and agency in curriculum studies and discuss challenges embedded in the shift from a frame factor perspective to a programme of curriculum inquiry within the curriculum-theory tradition inspired by Ulf P. Lundgren; one ambition is to open a dialogue between concepts that belong to different theoretical frameworks. The paper also comments on the historical boundaries between curriculum theory and didactics. The text highlights a number of theoretical issues in curriculum theory, originating in the discussions initiated at the first, second and third conferences on curriculum theory in 2005, 2007 and 2009, respectively. The theme of the 2005 conference was *curriculum theory revisited* (Forsberg ed., 2007). Curriculum as an epistemic object was discussed (Forsberg, 2007), and concerns were put forward regarding an increased vagueness embedded in the use of the concept curriculum, together with a growing fragmentation of education as a science (Lundgren, 2007). A revitalised curriculum theory was seen as a tradition that might be able to constitute an amalgamation between an educational science with its own inherent

concepts and other traditions which invaded education without such an amalgamation (Lundgren, 2007), and with this in mind, important revitalisations rooted in the linguistic and pragmatic turns were discussed (Englund, 2007). In his contribution, Westbury (2007) challenged the field of curriculum studies by envisioning a curriculum research that addresses 'the practical' as a meta-theory of schooling, rather than theorising texts. In the second and third conferences, curriculum as an epistemic object was clearly the focus (Englund, Forsberg, & Sundberg, 2012).

Choosing a curriculum-theory perspective as the point of departure for educational research means questioning how knowledge transmitted in an educational context is selected, valued and organised and how such processes can be understood. It means being curious about what kind of knowledge is at stake, its possible content and how transmission and valuation take shape. It means seeing the curriculum question as a problem. Thereafter, however, different leads may be followed.

One strand highlights a historical perspective – what were the historical processes, events and circumstances that made certain selections, organisations and evaluations of knowledge dominate an educational context? Another perspective focuses on the social space in a broad

sense – what social, cultural and material facts realise and form parts of a curriculum? What meanings are embedded in the specific spaces of schooling? School buildings, classrooms, laboratories, schoolyards, textbooks, data media, furniture equipment, and so on, mediate significance; artefacts take part in building a knowledge vocabulary. And, third, the last trace leads to studying actions in the classroom, speech acts, communication and interaction (Linné, 2011, 2012b). These analytical levels or leads – leads that of course may be combined in various ways, inspire the text that follows.¹ Comments are made on the first strand under the heading ‘Time and history, continuity and change’, while the section headed ‘Culture and agency’ focuses on both space and action; I touch upon places, localities and material objects in the course of representation. The final part of the paper explores some relations between curriculum theory and didactics. My intention is to choose empirical cases that respond to Westbury’s (2007) appeal for a revitalised curriculum theory that addresses ‘the practical’, the actual educational context, rather than theorising texts.

Time and history, continuity and change

Time and history are concepts from which it is hard to escape when discussing curriculum theory, its history, positions and future challenges (Linné, 2007a). Let me begin with the shift from frame factor theory to a curriculum-theory perspective initiated by Lundgren (1983a, 1983b, 1991) in the 1980s and the early 1990s. On the move from frames to curriculum, Lundgren (1984) emphasises the provisional character of the theoretical perspective – a programme of inquiry rather than a coherent deductive theory. Step-by-step the programme was developed further – new questions were asked and new concepts added. In the following, I include some of my own studies to illustrate the step-wise and circuitous moves.

Continuity, change and a social theory

One challenge that confronted the development of the programme concerned its shift from a structural to a socio-historical approach, from a structural way of analysing classroom discourse, where history was seen as a more or less external process, to a stance wherein questions were asked about how the historical and societal conditions which caused frames to take a certain shape were constituted, and how traditions were built and maintained (Lundgren, 1984, p. 78). My doctoral dissertation on tradition and change in teacher education (Linné, 1996, 1999a) responded to that challenge. The challenge boiled down to analysing the field of tension between continuity/tradition and change over time, and to interpret periods of transformation using historical

data on changing relations between state and the civic society (Linné, 1999b). My ambition was to explore the contradictory pattern of forces, the bricolage of strivings, the struggles for power and control in the socio-historical context of teacher education. In the course of representation, a number of didactical approaches were documented as an aspect of the struggles and fields of tension.

The shift and widening of the perspective to include a more dynamic way of dealing with the socio-historical facts called upon a theory that related statements on social, economic and cultural processes to statements on how those processes were transformed and mediated in educational contexts. The work of Bernstein (1977, 1990, 2000) represents one of the few theoretical approaches that relates macro to micro, that links assumptions on state and society, production, division of labour and class relations to power and control in curriculum, to classroom work and communication processes – and, indirectly, to didactics. As analytic tools, Bernstein’s entwined concepts of classification and framing make it possible to explore both the educational scene and the play that is staged. Power and control speaks through classification and framing, ‘insulation is the means whereby the cultural is transformed into the natural, the contingent into the necessary, the past into the present, the present into the future’ (Bernstein, 1980, p. 11).²

The concept of frame, as well as the concepts of framing and classification, touches upon a basic theoretical problem in social science – the question of how human beings categorise their world and divide the world into what is inside and what is outside, what is sacred and what is profane, what belongs to one phenomenon and what belongs to another. This was one of Émile Durkheim’s (1912) pivotal problems, a problem that has challenged scientific theory over and over again. Boundaries mean closure, defence of what is and what struggles to advance positions, but also struggles to cross borders, to see something new on the other side, to capture new symbolic or material assets – boundary marks design the contours of a social field (cf. Bourdieu, 1984/1996, 1992).

Time as restriction and time boundaries

The fact that the perspective grew from roots where constraints, boundary maintenance and framing were fundamental contributed to highlight time in its sense of *restriction*. Time constrains the number of actions possible in an educational context; time restricts vocabularies and communicative turn taking. The ways in which time is divided and classified give important clues

²The collaboration that Lundgren and Bernstein established in the 1970s and 1980s proved important to the field of curriculum theory; at the time, it was most inspiring to recurrently take part in small-scale seminars where Basil Bernstein discussed the progress of his theory with Lundgren and colleagues (cf. Bernstein, 1990, preface, Bernstein & Lundgren, 1983).

¹For a more elaborate discussion of the strands, see Linné (2012b).

to the selection, organisation and evaluation of knowledge. Time sets boundaries for action.

However, the notion of time as restriction approaches the notion of *time boundaries*, periods of time in history – boundaries between something old and something new, boundaries between past and future, between analytically created historical periods. Bourdieu (1984/1996, pp. 187–221) talks about critical moments in history, when the habitual order begins to waver and spaces of possibilities for an instant appear undefined. Such critical moments appear when boundaries are deeply challenged – boundaries between private and public, between state and civic society, between gender positions and social classes. And, certainly, some such critical moments appeared in the history of Swedish teacher education – critical moments at the outbreak of modernity. The order of discourse was, for a while, open to negotiation.³ New voices were heard and new positions awaited their owners. Battles were fought in Parliament in the 1840s and 1850s concerning knowledge selection and instruction technologies as well as degree and character of state control and admission rules. Given the deep social transformations around the turn of the century, profound reformulations of goals, principles of content selection as well as ideas and technologies of instruction took place, while new groups paved their paths into an educational elite and teachers were assigned broader professional positions.⁴ Bernstein's concepts of classification and framing as tokens of power and control proved useful as generative tools in my analysis of stability and change, as did Pierre Bourdieu's concept of social field – a concept used to understand conflicting curriculum principles being proposed or enacted, and to help identify the new voices and new positions.

At the time, Bernstein's theory was criticised for not offering conceptual tools to include change, transformation and social complexities. Several researchers belonging to the Swedish field of curriculum theory took part in the discussion. T. Englund (1986) developed his conceptual scheme, which assigned conflict and change an important role in curriculum history; B. Englund (1997) elaborated upon the concept of change and the meaning of cultural reproduction. Bernstein (1990, p. 199 onwards) stresses that the main principles of his model refer to an arena of conflict rather than to a stable set of relations, and points out the potential sources of conflict and resistance between political and administrative agents, between what he calls the official recontextualising field and the pedagogic recontextualising field, as well as among family, local community and school. In his

later development of the model, he uses conceptual tools such as modalities to capture varying combinations of classification and framing and advances concepts such as horizontal and vertical discourse as devices to bring the analysis of complex epistemic contents one step further (Bernstein, 1999, 2000). He repeatedly refers to the dialectics between what is said or thought and what is yet to be said, yet to be thought; here lies a summoning to establish control, maintain order, constrain admittance – but *also* a potential for struggle, resistance, defence and change. Highlighting these aspects of the theory and putting them at stake appeared inspiring (cf. Linné, 1996, pp. 34–35).⁵

Interestingly enough, you may notice an increasing tendency in contemporary curriculum studies to bring the 'grand', coherent theories back into the discussion – and with them, an interest in historical analyses, time and time boundaries.⁶

Time and history

How time is used in curriculum studies may be further discussed in numerous ways.⁷ Curriculum studies may be structured in the form of diachronic narratives, organised along state curriculum texts over time in order to discover textual variations, to give a historical background or a context of the present – what becomes of time in such an approach? Time may be referred to in general terms, as an abstract, but empty, phenomenon that includes conflicting ideas and struggles, while little is said about how historical events and processes influenced the practical curriculum transformations. Time becomes invisible; it turns into a black box. History becomes something that once was.

Another, more dynamic approach highlights the critical potential of history. Bourdieu (1998) emphasises the importance of giving back to *doxa* its paradoxical character, and to take apart the processes that convert history to nature, that transform the cultural and arbitrary into something given by nature. A critical historical analysis can open argumentative deliberations in order to uncover the ways in which what appears necessary or natural has come about as an answer to a certain problem in a certain historical context – and, consequently, may be seen as contingent. Westbury and Milburn (2007) advocate this use of history in their appeal for a curriculum research that contributes to 'making curriculum strange' – a 'knowledge of "strange curricula" estranges the familiar,

³cf. Hirdman (2001) who shows that the outbreak of modernity momentarily threatened the core of the existing gender order.

⁴For thick descriptions of these transformations which focus on teacher education, see Linné (1996); for special analyses and case studies, see Linné (1999a, 1999b, 2007b, 2012a, 2012b).

⁵A number of curriculum studies inspired by Bernstein have provided data on such conflicts and resistance processes (cf. Eliasson, 2012). In his doctoral dissertation, Nylund (2013) draws upon Basil Bernstein's theory together with Tomas Englund's in an analysis of Swedish vocational education.

⁶Apart from Bernstein and others, see Margaret S. Archer's theory on educational systems that has attracted considerable attention. As for an example that sets out to further develop parts of Archer's theory, see Skinningsrud (2012); see also Wermke (2013).

⁷See also Sundberg's doctoral dissertation (2005) on time and schooling.

giving us the capacity to look at the familiar in new ways' (p. 4).⁸

Still another challenging way of viewing time and history is offered by Koselleck (2004). His concepts of *Erfahrungsraum* (space of experience) and *Erwartungshorizont* (horizons of expectation) form basic categories of knowledge that make history come into existence – history is constituted by experience and expectations made by acting and suffering humans. The two concepts are categories of knowledge that contribute to the potentials of history (or histories, cf. Jordheim in Koselleck, 2004). Both are intimately intertwined: one presupposes the other. History is not only past time; it consists of memory and hope, experience and expectation. Through their capacity to hook on to each other, experience and expectation appear to be excellent concepts to use in analysing history (Koselleck, 2004, pp. 167–170). In pointing at man's temporality, they also refer to the temporality of history (p. 170).

In defining the two concepts, Koselleck (2004, pp. 171–173 and *passim*) emphasises that layers of time gone by are present in the entity made up by experience, without any indications of before or after. Experience is past time being present, appropriated and containing the experience of others. A moment of time contains layers of past and present as well as horizons of future. Accordingly, temporal layers impregnate written curriculum texts. Temporal layers load curriculum concepts with displaced meanings, possible to reconstruct in curriculum analyses.⁹ The layers of the past will reflect transforming relations between state and civic society, as well as between private and public. And layers of past experience will form future horizons.

Accordingly, teachers' narratives, teachers' notions of their professional world, can be seen as fabricated of layers of what once was; layers of professional experiences, communicative actions and layers of agency, conceptions and judgments once made. They might be inscribed in the present and become part of collective memories, and so help shape the future. Different voices speak, link together or confront each other. The same applies to textbooks. Using such a perspective, a vocabulary may be developed to elaborate on the meaning of tradition in curriculum theory.

⁸cf. Linné (2012b). In the next two paragraphs, I revisit an earlier discussion (Linné, 2007b, pp. 183–184).

⁹Bergh (2010) has drawn upon Koselleck's theory in his doctoral thesis on the concept of quality and its various uses and meanings in educational contexts, and Román (2006) discusses Koselleck's idea of an increasing asymmetry between space of experience and horizon of expectations during modernity in this doctoral dissertation on conceptions of literary instruction in upper secondary education. In her analysis of dialogue and dialogicity, Englund (2012) refers to Koselleck's (and others') analyses of how concepts over time become loaded with different meanings – politically, emotionally and existentially.

Culture and agency

Another challenge, rarely referred to in the programmatic texts, was also at stake in the shift from frame factor theory to a curriculum-theory perspective: the role of the agents in history, or the field of tension between structure and agency. In the history of Swedish teacher education, for instance, agents at both central and local levels reformulated, carried and transformed fundamental traditions in highly important ways. It was even possible to identify generations of teacher educators, and shifts of generations, having an impact on the curriculum content. In particular, important shifts of generations took place parallel to the main transformation periods. Using Mannheim's (1952) words on the role of generations in history: through their similar location in a historical process of time, members of a generation acquire a common, limited set of possible experiences that creates conditions for certain common forms of thinking and acting. Generations take part in similar social and intellectual movements; they share to some extent the same destiny.¹⁰ And, apart from a broader picture of basic patterns and their transformations over time, variations regarding principles of knowledge selection, organisation and evaluation took place at different educational locations. Local arenas as well as local agents strongly influenced the curriculum and the didactical ideas and practices.

In that study, however, no particular reasoning on local cultures was made – primarily, a local level of analysis was discerned in relation to a central level, although movements and influences between levels were noted. In other words, a hierarchical model reflecting a structural-technical approach still prevailed. The theoretical perspective required a vocabulary that in a more elaborate way highlighted local voices, places and localities in their own rights, as social facts *sui generis*.

Local cultures, places and voices

Since the shift from frame factors to curriculum, a number of curriculum-theory studies set out to explore the meaning of local educational cultures, as well as to make the voices of teachers and students heard. In an early study of schools in different municipalities, Arfwedson (1985) elaborates upon the concept school code in an analysis of different school cultures. Ödman (1995) refers to curriculum theory in his history of mentalities and education, *Kontrasternas spel*, where history on macro and micro level is outlined. Ödman's and Hayek's (2004) rich study of life and education at the orphanage 'Stora Barnhuset'¹¹ in

¹⁰In the project, *Shaping the public sphere* (cf. Broady et al., 1999, Englund & Kåreland, 2008, Linné, 2006, 2010, Skog-Östlin, 2005, Ullman, 2004), supported by the Swedish Foundation for Humanities and Social Sciences, we studied a generation of Stockholm women around 1900, their strategies in shaping the public sphere and their contributions to the development of modern public life – including schools, curriculum and teacher education.

¹¹Stora Barnhuset was a large orphanage in Stockholm in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries; it had its own school, its own teachers and its own workshops.

the 18th century, *Främlingar i vardagen*, grows out of deep hermeneutical roots and focuses on life as lived at a local institutional context. The text embodies the pedagogical and didactical practices at the orphanage, and its social institution that legitimated the practices. It brings to life the meaning of being a child or a teacher at the orphanage and demonstrates how they were both prisoners of the institution, and it interprets governmentalities and immanent pedagogy.¹² Systematic discretion synthesises the prevailing principle of governing.

Ödman and Hayek let broad sets of data speak, including material objects, buildings, furnishing, and so on. Such an approach certainly concerns 'the practical', concerns data as embedded in their context, and helps us to understand what happens in the inner work of schools under certain circumstances (cf. Westbury, 2007). It demonstrates the need for including concepts that manage to bring thick descriptions of institutional culture, its governing principles and material artefacts, into curriculum theory.¹³ Turning to studies of such qualities, concepts and arguments originating in different theoretical positions open up the opportunity for a prolific rethinking and revitalisation of curriculum theory.

In the project, *Practical knowledge meets academia*, the research group (Linné, Englund, Eliasson, Holmberg, Tellgren, Sandström, 2011) inquired into knowledge production and core values over time within three predominantly female teacher education traditions, rooted in private enterprises and attracting limited attention within curriculum studies: those of early childhood teachers, nursing teachers and teachers of textile craft.¹⁴ We explored the transformation of practices and notions as these knowledge cultures were incorporated into the academic system of higher education in Sweden. The study meant inquiring into relations among power, knowledge and gender. We used the concept of 'knowledge culture' as an analytical tool to grasp the contextual and collective character of knowledge formation. A knowledge culture builds a context of collectively shared practices, a web of shared meanings, values and norms, including shared disagreements. A knowledge culture is conveyed in cultural tools: spoken language, including categories and metaphors, ways of classifying and ordering time and space, objects such as texts and pedagogic devices. We found Wertsch's (2002) thinking helpful in understanding how epistemic cultures are constructed and reconstructed, continually over time, as webs of voices of collective

remembering. Wertsch's reasoning on this point appears consistent with Koselleck's thinking of history as memory and hope, experience and expectation, and to include such a vocabulary in a curriculum study could help reinvigorate the initial theoretical constructions.

Materiality, artefacts and mediational tools

An epistemic culture includes technologies and artefacts. Meanings are embedded in the specific places and materialities of schooling. School buildings take part in teaching students who they are and who they are expected to become,¹⁵ classroom designs frame a pedagogic space and its interaction, artefacts and technologies contribute to an epistemic vocabulary. The intelligence tests and observation boxes in the history of early childhood teacher education represent a different epistemic discourse than the looms and sewing machines of the teacher education of textile craft. The organisation of the room and the spatial positioning of the teacher according to the recitation method certainly imply different relations of power and control of instruction as compared to monitorial technology (cf. Landahl, 2013b; Linné, 2007b).

In the field of the history of education, a growing interest in the material aspects of schooling has emerged over the past decade (cf. Lawn & Grosvenor, 2005).¹⁶ Already in the 1980s, Westbury (1980), Hamilton (1989), Reid (2007) and others introduced important analyses of the material space of schooling as part of a curriculum-theory perspective. And last but not least, the frame factor theory grew out of deep concerns with the material conditions of education. To revitalise and further develop such an emphasis on the material basis of education and didactics in rethinking curriculum theory appears most promising. At the same time, another conversation with the socio-cultural tradition would be opened (cf. Wertsch, 1998).

Curriculum theory and didactics – some further notes

So far, I have explored some challenges embedded in the shift from a frame factor perspective to a programme of curriculum inquiry within the curriculum-theory tradition inspired by Ulf P. Lundgren. I have emphasised challenges that confronted some of my own studies. I have highlighted time and history as well as continuity and change in curriculum studies and made some comments on conceptual tools to help explore tensions between tradition and transformation, between what is stable and what is on the move. I have highlighted boundary work that opens a dialogue between concepts and thoughts that belong to different theoretical perspectives – hopefully some of my

¹²A concept developed by Ödman (cf. 1995) to indicate the didactics inherent in a pedagogical situation.

¹³For a study influenced by curriculum theory that explores life and text at the learned school in the 18th century, see Rimm's doctoral dissertation (2011); for a study that analyses the culture at a special experimental educational institution around the mid-20th century, see Landahl (2013a).

¹⁴See Eliasson (2012), Englund and Linné (2008), Holmberg (2009), Linné et al. (2011), Tellgren (2008); the Swedish Research Council supported the project.

¹⁵Just one example: above the boys' entrance at a Stockholm elementary school, consecrated in 1902, was the maxim 'Knowledge is power', and above the girls' entrance could be read 'Exercise makes the master' (Linné, 2004).

¹⁶See also a number of articles in the History of Education and the Paedagogica Historica over the past few years.

examples may be helpful in such an amalgamation between an educational science with its own inherent concepts and other traditions as called for at the first curriculum-theory conference. I have discussed three different analytical layers of curriculum studies – layers that in one sense go beyond the linguistic turn in terms of highlighting material objects and cultural aspects of agency and action.

I have repeatedly touched upon didactical matters. To be explicit: didactics in the sense of a critical research approach evidently bears much resemblance to the curriculum-theory perspective discussed in the paper. With didactics as an emerging research discipline in Scandinavia, questions concerning the legitimacy of a school or subject content, its problems of selection, its historical traditions and its problem of mediation are brought to the fore. Selective traditions of school subjects or content areas are analysed, historical content emphases as well as instructional practices and their roots are studied and analyses of lesson dialogues are used with the purpose of discovering meaning dimensions. In addition, representatives of the didactic research field include studies of institutions, as well as analyses of spatial designs and multimodal approaches to communication, within the boundaries of didactics.

So why do we need curriculum theory? Or, alternatively, is didactics necessary as a research discipline, when curriculum theory exists? To partly understand the blurred boundaries, I think you need to look into the socio-historical contexts of education as a science and teacher education as a field of practice – to look back into the spaces of experience and horizons of expectations of their histories. A few glimpses from the Swedish scene might contextualise the discussion.

When the first university chair in educational science in Sweden was established at the beginning of the 20th century, the demands of teacher education, the teaching profession and the teaching practice were emphasised as arguments for the chair; leading teacher representatives acted inside and outside Parliament to bring it to fruition. When Wilhelm Rein, professor of education at Jena and a prominent disciple of Herbart, visited Stockholm in 1895 for a series of lectures on Herbart's educational philosophy and the more formalised Herbartian didactics developed by Herbart's successors, the auditorium became crowded, educational journals quoted the lectures at length and voices representing both an older education elite and its opponents found Rein's ideas most worthy of taking into consideration (cf. Berg, 1894; Kastman, 1895).¹⁷

At the same time, however, hopes grew for a future that would take a different turn. It was not Herbart's

philosophical theory as to what a human is and how education turns one into a cultural and social being – a theory beyond both applied ethics and applied psychology – that outlined the horizon of expectations. The territory of educational science in the shape of systematic philosophical reasoning had been challenged. In his inaugural lecture, Hammer (1910) as the first chair holder balanced between describing education as a philosophical, historical, psychological and social science. However, he devoted the major part of the lecture to psychology – and educational psychology with its focus on learning became the core of the newly established discipline. Empirical psychology placed the soul of the child in the laboratory, and a new, promising future appeared to lie ahead. Great expectations were directed towards a vision of the child at the centre of curriculum; Key (1900) proclaimed the century of the child, Helga Eng testified to the importance of the child psychologist William Preyer's thought 'Vom Kinde aus' for her embarkation upon a research career – a career that made her the first woman to achieve a chair as professor of education in Scandinavia (Lønnå, 2002). Representatives of a new generation of teacher educators visited the United States, at Teachers' College at Columbia University, and saw a whole new research area on the soul of the child which had achieved important results that ought to be included in Swedish teacher education.¹⁸ Empirical psychology – later including testing – became the science that was expected to further develop schooling and pedagogic practice.

Meanwhile, didactics in the sense of a narrower school technology lived on in textbooks and at teacher training colleges. Didactical handbooks of the 19th and early 20th centuries focused on the basic questions of selection – of content, of methods and on the legitimate reasons for schooling and school subjects. The answers were, however, highly normative. References were made to authorities such as God, nature, the child's development, the evolution of mankind, the nature of a school subject and theories of perception and learning. Struggles took place for and against various teaching models in the discursive field of teacher training; teacher educators built their identities around recognised values on the didactical arena. Classic didactical ideas of restrained teaching (Hopmann, 2007) hardly dominated the space of experience, although references were made to the nature of the child and to the necessity of relying upon the child's own active work when teaching subject content. To behold the world – teaching by object lessons, together with recitation methods, had replaced monitorial technology as the legitimate framing of the classroom but rules guiding a

¹⁷Only 7 years earlier, Carl Kastman, high public officer representing the educational sector, was more critical of Herbart's didactical ideas (cf. Kastman, 1888) – obviously he partly considered them too radical. Herbart had been introduced to a broader Swedish public in the 1870s by way of an edited translation of Hermann Kern's work from 1873.

¹⁸In 1903–1905, Otto W. Sundén, head of a Swedish teachers' college and later involved in reforming teacher education, wrote a series of articles based on such an experience; he looked forward to experimental psychology as a basis for selection of curriculum content and methods of transmission (Sundén, 1903, 1904–1905).

craft, and providing teachers with model lessons as well as with training to write lesson drafts in the form of word-by-word manuscripts, were fundamental in the education of elementary school teachers throughout the 19th century (Linné, 2007b). A practical theory, based on techniques of questions and answers, and general rules on how to phrase a question in order to initiate clear perceptions – separate inner pictures of different contents – amalgamated with abstract ideas of *Bildung* as the goal of education. Only step-by-step, and following major societal transformation, did replication of strict models become less frequent in favour of more open narratives.

Didactics as a science of today enters such a space of experience. It confronts expectations of finding the ‘best’ way of teaching subject content, of producing the right answer to students’ success or failure to learn something, of saying something relevant when it comes to the results of international knowledge testing. Didactics as a critical science needs analytic tools to capture the meaning of its histories, and conceptual tools to explore selection and meaning-making processes as research problems. Its continental roots in a philosophical tradition have provided some. Curriculum theory, with a different space of experience has provided others – tools that respond to the appeal for contextuality (Hopmann, 2007) that is embedded in continental didactics as a science.

With the frame factor perspective – later to develop into the programme of curriculum inquiry referred to above, important steps were taken to broaden the horizon of expectation of educational science beyond empirical psychology. In the footsteps of reforms that led to the comprehensive school, the classroom came into focus as a place for educational research. The classroom as a place for pedagogy, and the pedagogic process as an epistemic object, called for a number of new empirical research questions. This relocation of epistemic object cleared the way for a genuinely pedagogic research approach. Steps were taken away from educational science as applied psychology – the existing reductionism came to be deeply questioned (cf. Kallós & Lundgren, 1975, 1979). Taking such a history into account throws light upon why this curriculum-theory tradition amalgamated with socio-linguistic theories that focused on classroom communication and with sociological theories that set out to explain the conditions of the classroom processes – approaches that hardly used the word didactics when analysing what took place in schooling, its selection processes or modes of transmission.

Exploring their both diversified and common historical, theoretical and practical spaces of experience and horizons of expectations would, I believe, strengthen the dialogue between curriculum theory and didactics. The appeal for contextuality embedded in didactics as a science calls for analyses of institutional and cultural conditions that frame pedagogic action. I have argued for

some such boundary work from a curriculum-theory perspective. I have also discussed conceptual tools of hermeneutic and socio-cultural traditions that would be helpful in reinvigorating the vocabulary of curriculum theory. Perhaps didactics, with its roots in continental philosophical traditions, constitutes an excellent link between epistemic and socio-cultural studies on one hand and curriculum theory on the other.

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The recontextualisation of knowledge: towards a social realist approach to curriculum and didactics

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This article examines the relationship of curriculum and didactics through a social realist lens. Curriculum and didactics are viewed as linked and integrated by the common issue of educational content. The author argues that the selection of educational content and its organisation is a matter of recontextualising principles and that curriculum and didactics may be understood as interrelated stages of such recontextualisation. Educational policy and the organisation of pedagogic practice are considered as distinct although closely related practices of ‘curricularisation’ and ‘pedagogisation’. Neo-Bernsteinian social realism implies a sociological approach by which educational knowledge is recognised as something socially constructed, but irreducible to power struggles in policy arenas. More precisely, curriculum and didactics are not only matters of extrinsic standpoints. Recontextualising practices may also involve intrinsic features, that is, some kind of relatively generative logics that regulate curriculum design as well as pedagogic practice. In order to highlight certain implications for both curriculum and didactic theory, the author develops a typology that is analytically framed by principles of extrinsic relations *to* and intrinsic relations *within* curriculum or didactics.

Keywords: *curriculum theory; didactics; social realism; recontextualisation*

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In the current ‘knowledge society’, economic increase and the improvement of human condition are to a great extent dependent on the flow of knowledge: its creation, exchange and reproduction. The transmission of knowledge is a highly topical issue, standing at the centre of educational policy and posing such questions as ‘What knowledge is the most valuable?’ and ‘How should knowledge be organised for learning?’ At the same time, knowledge is somewhat problematic for curriculum theory. Ever since the ‘new’ sociology of education emerged in the 1970s, knowledge has been recognised as socially constructed knowledges. Since social constructions are ideologically saturated, educational knowledge is arbitrary, and therefore a curriculum will reflect the power struggles that formed it. Constructivist approaches to teaching and learning have affected the field of didactics in a similar manner. We are increasingly inclined to focus on the knowing of knowers than on the knowledge of the known (cf. Maton, 2014). These tendencies point to the critical relationship between educational content and knowledge, the theme of this paper.

The issue of educational knowledge and content will be addressed from a social realist point of view.

Social realism, however, rather than being a defined *ism*, is a heterogeneous school of thought or ‘coalition of minds’ (Maton & Moore, 2010). Thus, what follows is a non-empiricist investigation of principles established by a social realist approach to curriculum and didactics. First, the correlation of curriculum and didactics will be examined in order to designate a common denominator: the issue of educational content.¹ Second, Basil Bernstein’s description of recontextualisation will be explored as an aid to further conceptualisation and reasoning. We will also consider arguments of the social realist movement and give voice to its founders. Then the implications of those concepts examined will be demonstrated by means of a typological analysis (Fig. 1). The aim of the latter is to present an organising framework that will conceptualise types of substantive studies.

Curriculum and didactics

Curriculum theory is concerned with how knowledge is selected and organised for learning under historical,

¹Others have also understood content as a focal point of curriculum and didactics (cf. Gundem & Hopmann, 1998; Hopmann & Riquarts, 2000). It is hoped that this article may renew the discussion of curriculum and didactics by presenting a social realist approach to educational knowledge.

cultural and social conditions. In such a content-oriented curriculum theory, the focus is on the selection and legitimisation of knowledge, the ways in which this knowledge is distributed and how the regulation of knowledge is associated with educational identities, consciousness and power.

Curriculum as Content raises questions like: ‘what knowledge is of most worth’, ‘what counts as knowledge’ and ‘what kind of knowing, learning or abilities do various pedagogic texts and practices promote or prevent?’ The selection of knowledge, the arguments and principles used for inclusion or exclusion, content organization, and the consequences of various selections and arrangement are at the centre. (Forsberg, 2007, p. 11)

‘What counts as knowledge’ is also an issue of ‘whose knowledge’, since knowledge is always ‘someone’s knowledge’ (Englund, Forsberg, & Sundberg, 2012). Therefore, educational knowledge consists of symbols that carry meaning, and a curriculum is the medium of conveying meaning, liberation, reproduction, inclusion and exclusion. Since curriculum theory commonly interrelates questions about content with other practice-oriented issues, such as how objectives and pedagogies are formed in given societies and cultures (Lundgren, 1979), curriculum theory is at the same time the knowledge practice of didactics.

*Didaktik*² (in the German sense) comprises the professional knowledge of teaching and learning (Gundem & Hopmann, 1998). The field of Didaktik research includes descriptive analyses of pedagogic practice as well as prescriptive principles for planning and instruction (Jank & Meyer, 1997/1991). One of the fundamental issues concerns content as a meaningful body of knowledge. Content says something, that is, it carries a certain potential of meaning through associations with a selective tradition. Choosing a content involves selecting an offer of meaning (Englund, 1998). In this way, curriculum and Didaktik are interconnected by the content that is at their core. Using this integrated approach, content may be considered in terms of rationale, aims and objectives within a particular social and historical context (Englund & Svingby, 1986).

However, there are differences between curriculum and Didaktik. While curriculum theory has largely been focused on the social construction of educational knowledge, Didaktik has been concerned with sites of teaching and learning (Hopmann & Riquarts, 2000). Curriculum theory recognises content as the result of a power play; Didaktik understands it as an outgrowth of teachers’ reflective practice. On the one hand, content is organised by system of social and epistemic relations. On the other,

there is a professional, interpretative, reflective agent in the person of the teacher (Westbury, 1998, 2000). The system prescribes educational policy, while the teacher draws upon knowledge practices. The dividing line may be the differences in orientation towards subjects or knowers. While curriculum theory is oriented to the collective (e.g., in a Durkheimian sense), Didaktik tends to focus upon the individual (e.g., according to a Kantian tradition) (cf. Gellner, 1992; Young, 2008).

One might argue that curriculum theory and Didaktik vary by their separate perspectives, although these are mostly due to different ‘languages of description’ (cf. Bernstein, 2000). Despite their conceptual differences, they may be addressed in a generally integrated manner in order to avoid implying that curriculum and didactics are isolated entities. It would be incorrect to view curriculum as a symbolic order of norms and values versus didactics as the hub for theories of teaching and learning. On the contrary, both regulative and instructional discourses should be considered under the order of an integrated pedagogic discourse.

In elucidating curriculum and didactics, useful guidance is provided by Bernstein’s ‘On the classification and framing of educational knowledge’. Its appearance in *Knowledge and Control* (1971) represented the ‘new’ sociology of education. However, Bernstein’s article may also be regarded as a decisive departure from the Anglo-Saxon recognition of didactics as instruction. Bernstein acknowledges being influenced by the German tradition, especially Klafki’s and Huppauf’s ‘constructive criticism’ (p. 68). This observation can be compared with a statement in the last volume of Bernstein’s *CCC* (2000). In the introduction to chapters 6 and 8, he refers to the German philosopher Ernst Cassirer as one of his most significant influences (Durkheim was the other). Thus, although Bernstein did not use the concept of Didaktik or didactics, we can interpret his theories of pedagogic practice against the background of the German tradition of Didaktik (cf. Young, 2008).

The recontextualisation of knowledge and educational content

Issues of educational knowledge, that is, what the content of curriculum and didactics should consist of, is a matter of discourse. Bernstein (2000) suggests that ‘*pedagogic discourse is a recontextualising principle ... which selectively appropriates, relocates, refocuses, and relates other discourses to constitute its own order*’ (p. 33 [italics in original]). Thus, pedagogic discourse removes other discourses from their substantive contexts and relocates them in accordance with specific principles. In this way, strongly classified discourses from various types of practices can be intertwined and integrated to a particular order of pedagogic discourse. Recontextualising processes express educational policy and hence are commonly framed as

²Didaktik is used when the text refers to its continental/German tradition, while didactics is employed in all other instances.

processes of curriculum formation. However, in recontextualising processes, one also confronts didactic issues, not the least of which is the question of ‘what’ (that is, the classification of content) and ‘how’ – matters of framing due to different kinds of theories (Bernstein, 1990).

In the classical model of the pedagogic device (Bernstein, 1990, 2000), recontextualising processes are emplaced within an intermediate field between (knowledge) production and (educational) reproduction.³ In a reformulated version, Maton (2014) suggests that knowledge is ‘curricularised’ from fields of knowledge production and that educational knowledge is in turn ‘pedagogised’ into sites of teaching and learning. But Maton also indicates reverse processes, namely, that educational knowledge is ‘recurrularised’ by the field of pedagogic practice. More precisely, recurrularisation may occur as a consequence of enacted educational knowledge.

One could, therefore, reconceptualise curriculum and didactics as two interrelated types of recontextualising practices, with both having their respective logics:

- *Curricular logics* regulate how knowledge is selected, transformed, relocated and defined as official educational knowledge.
- *Didactic logics* regulate educational content by frames of teaching and learning in formal pedagogic practice.

Whereas the curricularisation of knowledge is affected by struggles between recontextualising fields, pedagogisation refocuses selected knowledge taking into account principles and strategies of teaching and learning.

Since pedagogic discourse is a recontextualising principle, curriculum structure cannot solely rest upon knowledge structures. Furthermore, subject matter didactics are neither physics, history, nor any other specific academic discipline. They are processes by agents within fields of recontextualisation (Bernstein, 1990). In addition, ‘every time a discourse moves from one position to another, there is a space in which ideology can play. No discourse ever moves without ideology at play’ (Bernstein, 2000, p. 32). This is crucial to curriculum and didactics because if there is always a discursive gap, there will never be a curricula or didactic approach beyond ideology. However, this recognition does not mean that curriculum and didactics, in general, and educational knowledge, in particular, must be reduced to standpoint theories.

³Bernstein (2000) conceptualises recontextualisation as a site of the pedagogic device. This device ‘provides the intrinsic grammar of pedagogic discourse’ (p. 28) and thus regulates educational policy as well as pedagogic practice. Following Maton (2014), we use logics here instead of what Bernstein terms rules, avoiding the conception of the device as a deterministic system. In addition, what Bernstein calls ‘distributive rules’ are no longer framed under the field of production. Distributive logics now pervade processes within the entire device.

Extrinsic or intrinsic?

Since the early 1970s, the ‘new’ sociology of education has considered educational knowledge in terms of power struggles between social groups with contending interests. Curriculum theorists have, therefore, been occupied with ‘identifying the interests of those with power to select knowledge for the curriculum’ (Young, 2008, p. 81).

For instance, a so-called ‘dominant’ or ‘hegemonic’ form of knowledge, represented in the school curriculum, is identified as ‘bourgeois’, ‘male’, or ‘white’ – as reflecting the perspectives, standpoints and interests of dominant social groups . . . Knowledge forms and knowledge relations are translated as social standpoints and power relationships between groups. This is more a sociology of knowers and their relationships than of knowledge. (Moore & Muller, 1999, p. 190)

The above authors argue that both reproduction and standpoint theories, wherein curriculum *is* class, ethnicity and gender, lead to the recognition of knowledge as arbitrary claims and to the reduction of knowledge to knowers. The rationale behind it is found in underlying principles of post-structuralism, postmodernism and constructivism. Despite the fundamental differences between the three approaches above, there is a pervasive tendency to establish and maintain what Alexander (1995) has termed the ‘epistemological dilemma’, that is, a false dichotomy between positivist absolutism and constructivist relativism. The dichotomy seems to be between educational knowledge as universal, disinterested and decontextualised, or educational knowledge as socially constructed by historical, cultural and ideological conditions (Maton & Moore, 2010). Choosing the latter will result in relativism and perspectivism (Moore & Young, 2001). What distinguishes the use of relativism and perspectivism in the sociology of education is the questioning of the origins and the legitimacy of objectified school knowledge.

Since the millennium, social realists have been seeking an alternative approach to the sociology of education and to the related yet distinct discipline of the sociology of knowledge, where the legitimisation of educational knowledge can be understood as something more than a power play between dominating and subordinated groups (Young, 2008). A social realist approach to curriculum and didactics is ‘social’ because it recognises knowledge as socially constructed in practice. Knowledge is neither universal, nor is it a given, unmediated representation of the world; rather, it is a fallible product under social, cultural and historical constraints. At the same time, social realism is ‘realist’ in the sense that knowledge is about something independently real in an objective world beyond discourse (Maton, 2014; Wheelahan, 2010; Young, 2008). Epistemological relativism as used here does not have to slip into judgmental relativism and imply that

knowledges are ‘equally related’. Instead, there could be principles ‘for determining the relative merits of competing claims to insight’ (Maton, 2014, p. 10). In sum, we do not construct knowledge by ourselves; it is intersubjectively created, recontextualised and reproduced by agents in knowledge practices (Maton, 2014). One could derive the underlying concept of objectivity from Durkheimian thought that knowledge has an objectivity bestowed on it by its ‘sacredness’, since collective representations go beyond the experiences of particular individuals. In this sense, knowledge is ‘what society has demonstrated to be true’ (Young & Muller, 2007, p. 185).

Social realist approaches to knowledge stress that although all knowledge is historical and social in origins, it is its particular social origins that give it its objectivity. It is this objectivity that enables knowledge to transcend the conditions of its production. It follows that the task of social theory is to identify these conditions. (Young, 2008, p. 146)

The consequence of the above reasoning is that the sociology of education would have to take into account an equipoise of views, for example, increasingly focus on the intrinsic features of knowledge.

In addition to showing the socially and historically located nature of knowledge practices, the way power shapes knowledge, one needs also to show how knowledge shapes power and that the power of knowledge is not just social but also epistemic. (Maton, 2014, p. 41)

Following Bernstein (1990, 2000), we can distinguish between theories of relations *to* and relations *within* education. From this point of view, sociological analyses of education have largely been focused on different kinds of ‘relations to’ education, typically relations of class, ethnicity and gender to curriculum and pedagogic practice. By contrast, ‘relations within’ education, its intrinsic structures, have rarely been taken into account. Nevertheless, such a ‘social realist statement’ should be treated with caution, particularly in regard to frame factor theory, which brought together external sociologies of education and analyses of relations within pedagogic practice.⁴

[T]heories of cultural reproduction, resistance, or transformation offer relatively strong analyses of ‘relation to’, that is, of the consequences of class, gender, race in the unequal and invidious positioning of pedagogic subjects with respect to the ‘privileging text’, but they are relatively weak of analyses of ‘relations within’ (perhaps with some exceptions, e.g., U. Lundgren). (Bernstein, 1990, p. 178)

One curricular and didactic implication of bringing ‘relations to’ and ‘relations within’ together is the creation of frameworks that not only analyse contextual aspects

of education but also content in relation to its contexts. In doing so, it may be seen that ‘knowledge is *emergent from but irreducible to* the practices and contexts of its production and recontextualization, teaching and learning’ (Maton & Moore, 2010, p. 5 [italics in original]). Therefore, curriculum theory and didactics must comprise both the internal ordering of knowledge production and the logics of recontextualisation: curricularisation – pedagogisation – recurricularisation (cf. Bernstein, 2000; Maton, 2014; Wheelahan, 2010; Young, 2008).

Implications for curriculum and didactics

	Curriculum	Didactics
Extrinsic ‘relations to’	A	C
Intrinsic ‘relations within’	B	D

Fig. 1. Typology of curricular–didactic relations.

Extrinsic ‘relations to’ curriculum and didactics are concerned with how extrinsic ideas (inter alia ~isms) affect these fields, and how social groups (e.g., political parties, researchers and teachers) are positioned in their relations to curricular or didactic design. Intrinsic ‘relations within’ are the logics whereby curricula and didactic conceptions are internally regulated.

Extrinsic relations to curriculum

Sociopolitical groups have their respective ideological interests and thus diverse relations to curriculum as symbolic structure and control. Relations are in this case external because the principle of recontextualisation is itself in a sense external to curriculum. This may be illustrated by two contemporary ~isms in educational policy: neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism. The core recontextualising principle of neo-liberalism can be called marketisation because the selection of content is regulated by market demands. Neo-liberalism desires a relatively weak classification between the fields of education and socio-economic production so that the latter may control the output of the former. Neo-conservative discourses similarly focus on the exchange value of educational content, at the same time that control over the selection of content is stronger in accordance with the conservative view of knowledge as autonomous (Bernstein, 2000; Moore, 2013). The point is twofold: First, if there are different ~isms, there will be different recontextualising principles. The issue of ‘what counts as knowledge in curriculum’ depends on the underlying principle. Second, since the pedagogic discourse integrates discourses according to its own order, it may consist of seemingly disparate discourses (or ways of counting) under an integrated order of discourse (Fairclough, 2010), for example, the integrated order of ‘the New Right’ (cf. Apple, 2004, 2006; Ball, 1998; Beck, 2006).

⁴Cf. Bernstein and Lundgren, 1983; Lundgren, 1984, 1999.

The above example points to interrelated relations of extrinsic character. Initially, as marketisation becomes the recontextualising principle, the relative autonomy of educational knowledge will be weakened (Beck, 1999). Second, such an instrumentally extrinsic relation to education must be conveyed by recontextualising agents related to education. There are not only principles in operation here, but sociopolitical groups as well. Moreover, recontextualising principles are also associated with logics of distribution.

How knowledge should be distributed is among the most frequently asked questions in educational policy because access to knowledge is intertwined with the division of labour, inclusion and inequality (Maton & Muller, 2007). Externalist sociological theories are concerned with privileged knowledge – the legitimisation and distribution of knowledge – but less so with the distinctive features of that knowledge (Bernstein, 1990).

Intrinsic relations within a curriculum

No matter which government is in office, or how sociopolitical groups relate to education, there will still be some kind of intrinsic relations within a curriculum as a relatively generic structure. In order to outline such an intrinsic logic, Bernstein (1999) distinguishes between two fundamental classes of knowledge: sacred/esoteric or principled knowledge and profane/mundane or everyday knowledge. This classification is recontextualised through societies, although the content of the sacred and the profane varies with time and context. Sacred knowledge, which Bernstein terms vertical discourse, is esoteric due to its structure and potential. While everyday knowledge, or horizontal discourse, is segmented and context-dependent, esoteric knowledge is systematised and may by its principled character be recontextualised across meanings and practices. Verticality in knowledge would thus provide opportunities for enlightenment and emancipation (cf. Muller, 2007; Wheelahan, 2010; Young, 2008). Since this theoretical division has been expanded in a variety of theories, it is difficult to circumscribe its full meaning. However, through this kind of conceptualisation, social realists have investigated ways of conceptualising *powerful knowledge* and have discussed consequences of the differentiated distribution of that knowledge, rather than restricting educational knowledge so that it remains the *knowledge of the powerful* (Young, 1998).

If one compares curricula from different periods, some recurring elements will probably be found. Such features include basic classifications *between* phenomena, *inter alia* ages (knowers) or school subjects (knowledge practices). Divisions of this kind are central to curriculum formation because they represent the intrinsic grammar of curriculum design (cf. Bernstein, 2000). The pedagogic discourse that social groups structure by means of recontextualising processes is therefore to some extent determined by prescriptive conceptions.

Boundaries between school subjects may be set by a predefined order that acts selectively on the recontextualisation of knowledge. When educational knowledge is legitimised within educational policy, it is concerned with specific disciplines, rather than knowledge itself. Once school subjects are legitimated, processes of organisation within given subjects will begin. Whereas the distribution of knowledge is divided and regulated by socio-economic structures, subject-oriented content is distributed and framed according to age. Since students are divided by age, educational content must similarly be divided into stages of knowledge. Or is it that students are organised in accordance with knowledge structures and intrinsic logics of cumulative knowledge-building? However, this is an expression of curricularisation, while the pedagogic practice has more leeway due to didactic logics. We know from the notion of recontextualisation that educational knowledge is not purely knowledge because wherever there is a transmission of discourse ‘there is a place for ideology to play’ (Bernstein, 2000, p. 9). Therefore, the potential or actual interrelationship between social hierarchies and epistemic hierarchies will continue to be a vital issue for the sociology of education.

Extrinsic relations to didactics

Educational policy will always include a pedagogic recontextualising field in which discourses on teaching and learning take place. This type of discursive practice is thus linked by extrinsic relations to didactics. Different ways of relating to didactics are regulated by the discursive order of pedagogic discourse. Conflicting discourses can therefore exist between the official pedagogic discourse promulgated by the state and its administrators, and the pedagogic discourse represented by schools of education (Bernstein, 1990, 2000; cf. Lindensjö & Lundgren, 2000). Thus, there will be dissimilar pedagogic discourses, and various social groups will relate to these discourses in different ways. In each of these groups, there will be tenable forms of didactics, as well as ways that are untenable (cf. Bernstein, 2000).

Depending on one’s orientation to alternate pedagogies and didactic conceptions, different principles of organisation may apply to the governance of pedagogic processes. Such principles can, for example, be the focus of didactics. Didactic conceptions may concentrate differently with regard to ‘the didactic triangle’ (Fig. 2): either on content, on the teacher, or on the learner.⁵

Consideration of the relationship between teacher and learner is a classical one. There is a never ending debate as to whether the teacher or the learner should be the central point of didactics. Conceptions like ‘teacher-centred pedagogy’ and ‘learner-centred pedagogy’ are generally well known, sometimes in terms of ~isms such as

⁵cf. e.g., Hopmann, 1997, 2007; Westbury, 2000.

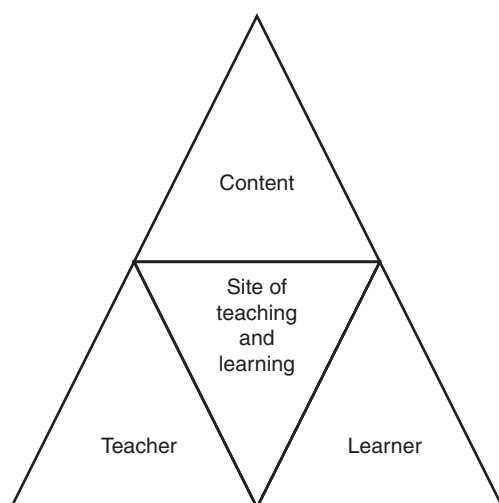


Fig. 2. The didactic triangle.

traditionalism versus progressivism. The former usually sees teaching and learning as processes of transmission and acquisition, while the latter tends to view them in terms of interpretation, construction and meaning-making (Maton, 2014). From a social realist point of view, emphasis on the one or the other could be reductionist. If the focus is on the teacher, recontextualising processes could be reduced to what is individually interpreted by that particular teacher and what fits his or her didactic approach. Moreover, the recontextualisation of knowledge may be limited by the instructional discourse so that it becomes bound by rules of instruction and evaluation. Content is selected on the basis of its potential to be pedagogised and organised as instructional (and evaluated) content. The 'how' will then become the recontextualising principle of 'what'. On the other hand, if the focus is on the learner, the recontextualisation of knowledge might be confined to student input: their interests and experiences taken from everyday life. Content would then be selected from students' 'life-worlds', authentically relocated with regard to their cultures, and situated for the benefit of their experiential learning (cf. Maton, 2014). In this way, the selection of content is not so much about recontextualising knowledge from the field of knowledge production, but more like recontextualising experiences from everyday life. By selecting one of the options presented – teacher-centred or learner-centred – any particular didactic issue of 'what' is in fact an issue of 'who', because rather than a choice of 'what knowledge', there is only a choice of 'whose knowledge' (cf. Moore, 2009). In this way, knowledge is reduced to knowers (either/or) and objectives are reduced to experiences of subjects (teacher/learner).

For a social realist, there is no problem with teacher-centred or learner-centred approaches, except that focusing on a given issue also implies peripheral matters.

While it is problematic if teacher and learner are conceptualised as opposed positions, there is also a tendency to overlook the significance of content. If didactics are presented as either teaching *or* learning, and nothing else, there will be a 'didactic dilemma', and a didactic triangle in a classical sense will no longer exist. The social realist will argue that we have to 'bring knowledge back in' to didactics (Young, 2008), not as instructional content or personal experience, but as esoteric knowledge. It follows that educational content cannot be based primarily on student experiences. Moreover, didactics must differentiate between formal learning in school and informal learning outside an educational institution (Young & Muller, 2010).

Intrinsic relations within didactics

Regardless of our social relations to different types of didactic conceptions, those didactics or pedagogies are inevitably formulated with regard to the 'inner logic' of pedagogic practice. When Bernstein (1990) speaks of inner logic, he is 'referring to a set of rules which are prior to the content to be relayed' (p. 64). In other words, there are ordering principles of pedagogic practice.

Irrespective of didactic ideas there also has to be a hierarchical relationship between teacher and learner (cf. Bernstein, 1990, p. 64). Social relations to didactics may seek to weaken the framing of pedagogic practice – that is, the teacher's control of the processes – but social realism reminds us that there must be hierarchies. Otherwise the distinction between teacher and learner will cease, and then something called schooling cannot exist, nor can there be a concept of didactics in practice. Since teaching has to occur over time, and since learning also requires time 'for some grass to grow', the logics of sequencing and pacing must affect the organisation of pedagogic practice. If there is an intrinsic progression of educational knowledge, and if teaching endeavours to bring about cumulative knowledge-building, then sequencing, pacing, but also evaluation, is necessary (Bernstein, 1990).

Bernstein conceptualised two generic types of logics according to the principle of sight as *visible* and *invisible* pedagogies. The former is explicit with regard to its regulative and instructional rules, while the latter is organised by implicit rules relatively invisible to the learner (Bernstein, 1990). Thus, pedagogies may be described by ordering principles rather than as having different standpoints. Instead of simply distinguishing between two types of ideological 'relations to' didactics – conservatism versus progressivism – Bernstein explored what these standpoints are struggling over: the fundamental grammar and intrinsic relations of pedagogic practice.

According to Bernstein (1990), differences in pedagogies 'will clearly affect both the selection and the organization of what is to be acquired, that is, the recontextualizing principle adopted to create and systematize the contents to be acquired and the context in which

it is acquired' (pp. 71–72). More precisely, if didactic logics regulate matters of 'how', 'then any particular "how" created by any one set of rules acts selectively on the "what" of the practice, the form of its content. The form of the content in turn acts selectively on those who can successfully acquire' (Bernstein, 1990, p. 63). Thus, Bernstein explicitly conceptualises a recontextualising principle for the organisation of general didactics. The rationale of general didactics is a matter of 'how', as well as how social groups relate differently to diverse types of 'how'.

With regard to subject matter didactics, realism specifies that content will be drawn from certain core areas. The content of school subjects is due to Anglo-Saxon curriculum theory frequently understood as de-contextualised knowledge taken from various academic disciplines that has been recontextualised as educational knowledge according to principles of transmission and acquisition. In this view, any particular 'what' in pedagogic practice is structured by the 'what' itself – 'what' associated with fields of knowledge production. However, we know that recontextualising processes are not a given, nor are school subjects simply reflections of academic disciplines. There are several subjects whose bases are multifaceted, and recontextualising processes can serve to integrate both regulative and instructional discourses. As a result, subject matter didactics will diverge because they are conceptualised as different. Moreover, one can assume that the more they differ, the greater the impact of particular contents. Since this difference is due to classification, subject matter didactics are horizontally related. They may be strongly classified (e.g., physics vis-a-vis arts) or weakly classified (e.g., physics relative to mathematics), but as long as there is a subject-related division of knowledge, there will be some kind of 'segmentalism' in subject matter didactics.

In comparing general and subject matter didactics, we are likely to find diverse recontextualising principles. The former is in some sense regulated by the 'how', that is, the framing of how teaching and learning are expected to manifest themselves. The latter is somewhat regulated by the 'what', that is, the classification of 'what', because the basis of subject differentiation lies in such classification, so that there is a realistic space between subject matter didactics (Bernstein, 2000).

Conclusion

The legitimization of educational knowledge is a problem in the sociology of education because 'to say that some knowledge is better than others is to say that some people are better than others – to elevate the perspectives and experiences of some groups over others' (Moore, 2009, p. 9). Through the lens of constructivism we are likely to reduce knowledge to knowing and reduce teaching to learning. In such cases, the didactic issue of

'what content?' may well be replaced by 'whose content?'; or the 'what' may very well cease to exist.

If all standards and criteria are reducible to perspectives and standpoints, no grounds can be offered for teaching any one thing rather than any other (or ultimately, for teaching anything at all!). (Young, 2008, p. 22)

The issue of educational knowledge and its legitimacy is crucial for didactics, since teaching and learning are, by definition, dependent on educational content. Teaching implies teaching *something*, and learning is generally a matter of learning *this* (Maton, 2014). Consequently, curriculum and didactics must be organised on the basis of 'objective knowledge', that is, our best (although fallible) knowledge in the light of disciplinary foundations and proven experience (Wheelahan, 2010; Young & Muller, 2007).

By contrast to a plurality of critical approaches, social realism does not formulate objective knowledge and critical didactics as an either/or, but rather as a fruitful interaction. Social realism intends to lay bare the actual structures underlying the organisation of educational knowledge. Nevertheless, its approaches resist the reduction of knowledge and learning to expressions of those in power. In considering curriculum and didactics, the essential is not to point out that educational knowledge is socially constructed, but rather clarify how we produce and recontextualise educational knowledge – and in particular the underlying principles of curriculum and subject matter didactics. Content-based curriculum theory and content-oriented didactics will thereby have a role in investigating the social nature of knowledge, that is, the sources from which selections are made.

Social realism is closer to the Anglo-Saxon concept of curriculum than that of the German Didaktik. As a school of thought it emphasises the significance of structure and objectified knowledge, while conceptions like interpretation, understanding, meaning and subjectified *Bildung* are of minor concern. Both curriculum and didactic theory share a common focus on educational knowledge and content, but are distinguished by differing perspectives and even more so by different languages of description. Social realism is a theoretical platform where curriculum and didactics can meet, and where knowledge does not have to be relegated to something either internally given or externally regulated, but rather considered as complementary aspects of reality.

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Toward a deliberative curriculum?[†]

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In this paper, I introduce a deliberative understanding of the formation of the curriculum and school subjects, going beyond a view of subjects as distinctive and prescribed purpose-built enterprises. The basic idea of a deliberative curriculum is developed in relation to curriculum theory and didactics (*didaktik*), and the disposition of the paper is as follows: I begin by presenting a short conceptual overview of curriculum history, based on Pinar's (1978) threefold categorization. I then present what I term 'didactic typologies', implying different interpretations concerning the formation of curriculum and the content of school subjects. I exemplify the need for a problematization of curriculum by analyzing a recent article by Zongyi Deng (2009) on how to deal with curriculum questions at different levels with reference to 'liberal studies', in which he claims 'that a school subject is a distinctive purpose-built enterprise'. I then make an extended case for what I call, with reference to Null (2011), a 'deliberative curriculum', and try to analyze some of the characteristics and consequences of this perspective for curriculum making, teachers' professionalism, and classroom activities. Finally, I link and exemplify these three areas to the recent Swedish educational and curriculum history.

Keywords: *deliberative curriculum; didactic typologies; Schwab; Reid; Westbury*

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When thinking about curriculum, we generally – and very soon – arrive at the question of school subjects. And, it is a content-based curriculum, as expressed in school subjects, that has dominated the curriculum scene in most countries' educational histories (cf. Meyer, Kamens, & Benavot, 1992; concerning Sweden, see Morawski, 2010). Are there other possibilities? In this paper, I want to introduce a deliberative understanding of the formation of the curriculum and school subjects, going beyond a view of subjects as distinctive and prescribed purpose-built enterprises.

The basic idea of a deliberative curriculum is developed here in relation to curriculum theory and didactics (*didaktik*), and the disposition of the paper is as follows: I begin by presenting a short conceptual overview of curriculum history, based on Pinar's (1978) threefold categorization. I then present what I term 'didactic typologies', implying different interpretations concerning the formation of curriculum and the content of school subjects. In the following section, I exemplify the need for a problematization of curriculum by analyzing a recent article

by Zongyi Deng (2009) on how to deal with curriculum questions at different levels with reference to 'liberal studies', in which he claims 'that a school subject is a distinctive purpose-built enterprise'. Finally, I will make an extended case for what I call, with reference to Null (2011), a 'deliberative curriculum', and will try to analyze some of the characteristics and consequences of this perspective for curriculum making, teachers' professionalism, and classroom activities.

Curriculum and school subject formation in retrospect: three models of curriculum research and construction

In a classic curriculum theory article, William Pinar (1978) divided curriculum research into 'traditional', 'conceptual-empiricist', and 'reconceptualist' categories. Depending on which of these perspectives we choose to apply to curriculum questions, we will look at the formation of school subjects and curriculum content from different angles. Within the first two perspectives, curriculum content is seen as more or less directly related to the results of scientific disciplines, although in a much more sophisticated

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and developed fashion in the conceptual-empiricist perspective than in the traditional, more administrative approach. Both these perspectives rely on scientific progress and emphasize adjustment of the curriculum to scientifically investigated demands arising from the needs of a technological society. With such an emphasis, school subjects also seem to be created as simplifications of scientific content. Within the traditional perspective, subject experts often have a decisive influence on the framework of an administrative and political compromise. Within the more sophisticated conceptual-empiricist perspective, cognitivism and a discipline-centered curriculum play the primary roles, as after the Woods Hole conference in the United States in the late 1950s.

Within the reconceptualist tradition, closely related in time to the new sociology of education, Goodson (1983, 1988) and Popkewitz (1987) showed in their curriculum history research how school subjects were, instead, legitimized and mythologized by their association with scientific disciplines. Goodson presented a model for the development of school subjects – invention, promotion, legislation and mythologization – and asserted that the representatives of a school subject, once it was established, developed a rhetoric of legitimization that prevented further change.

Popkewitz (1976, 1977) analyzed in some early works how the construction of curriculum content based on the discipline-centered principle (which can be seen as one variant of the conceptualist-empiricist perspective) ignored the social nature of knowledge and the differing approaches existing in different disciplines. He also showed that the scientific logic that was reconstructed did not reflect the conflicts existing in the real-life scientific community. This claim went back to a statement by him that the social sciences ‘involved continual conflict among members about the purpose and direction of study’ (Popkewitz, 1977, p. 42). Popkewitz (1976, 1977) also argued that syllabuses and teaching materials often presented a uniform systems view of the social context, describing society as a closed system whose parts work together in stable harmony. This kind of approach is also realized in the study edited by Popkewitz (1987), and goes together with the more general curriculum history studies presented at the same time by Kliebard (1986) and Franklin (1986; cf. Englund, 1991), as well as the thesis put forward by Meyer et al. (1992). That thesis was that there seems to exist a shared, worldwide primary curriculum, demonstrating that ‘a high proportion of the forces shaping national curricular outlines are to be found at the world rather than the national or subnational levels’ (Meyer et al., 1992, p. 172). However, as Hopmann (1993) stresses in his review of Meyer’s work, ‘the study does not take into account that one and the same heading may have completely different meanings depending on the context in which it is placed’ (p. 481).

So, while the political and ideological character of the curriculum was analyzed and highlighted by educational and curriculum researchers related to the new sociology of education, it was often seen as determined and locked into a bureaucratic rationality (Kliebard, 1975), in terms of mythologized visions (Goodson, 1983, 1988), as being the same all over the world (Meyer et al., 1992), and so on. However, these kinds of analyses were rarely, or not at all, interested in drawing attention to (the possibility of) different interpretations of school subjects or to the potential for an education of another kind than one locked into a pattern of reproduction and social control.

The idea of didactic typologies

In my own dissertation (Englund, 1986), I made use of Pinar’s categorization and of many of the advantages which the new sociology of education offered, but at the same time I rejected what I conceptualized as the over-determined theoretical perspective of that movement, which left no room for, or had only a marginal interest in, different interpretations of the content of school subjects. What I tried to show at that time was that the selective tradition (cf. Apple, 1979; Williams, 1973) was an important part of school subjects, and that there was also room for different choices of content and teaching, both at a more general level, with an ongoing struggle between different educational conceptions, and at a school subject level. Inspired by Barr, Barth, and Shermis’s (1977) analysis of three social studies traditions with respect to their different purposes, methods, and choices of content, I distinguished (in Englund, 1986, ch. 9) five different types of purpose, choice of content, and teaching methods within citizenship education and social studies:

1. Traditional value-based citizenship transmission (national values, obey-oriented), with a concentric principle of teaching.
2. Preparation for the labor market/employability-oriented citizenship transmission for a society in change, focusing on individual competence.
3. Preparation for active, participatory citizenship by means of critical institutional analyses and a manifest/latent perspective of conflict.
4. Social studies based on social science, with the underlying social science disciplines as points of reference.
5. Problem-oriented teaching based on students’ experiences.

Concerning history as a school subject, I proposed a similar typology based on Jensen (1978), who was in turn inspired by Klafki (1963, 1964). I also related these two ‘didactic typologies’ to three different conceptions of education, which gave these school subjects different contexts and meanings: the patriarchal, the scientific-rational, and the democratic conception.

At almost the same time, the Canadian science education researcher Douglas Roberts (1988) developed seven different curriculum emphases for science education (later to be further developed by Östman, 1995): (1) The correct explanation emphasis, (2) The structure of science emphasis, (3) The scientific skill development emphasis, (4) The solid foundation emphasis, (5) An everyday coping emphasis, (6) A science, technology, and decisions emphasis, and (7) The self as explainer emphasis.

What I primarily wish to stress with these examples is that here we have didactic starting points for analyzing different interpretations of school subjects, implying that these can be interpreted and taught in very different ways. Even if there are selective traditions and more or less dominant ways of interpreting school subjects, there are also at all times, in most school subjects, more or less distinctive alternatives constituting different didactic typologies and emphases (cf. Englund, 1997b).

But do we, as researchers and teachers, think and act in this way? How do we deal with questions to do with the interpretation of different school subjects? In one (dominant?) line of reasoning in today's hunt for results in schools – what and how do students learn, what are the best routes to efficient learning, and so on – there seems to be a consensus about the crucial role of the teacher and, in particular, the teacher's didactic competence, but mainly in a perspective of teaching efficiency, with the content of teaching and learning seemingly taken for granted. But should we not also think of this problem in terms of school subjects being – at least potentially – defined and interpreted in very different ways? This also means that they can be and are worked with in different ways, producing different types of knowledge building, capacity for moral judgment, and so on, depending on teaching styles, the scope for active student involvement in discussion which different didactics provide, and so on.

School subject studies today – the need for didactic problematization

A recent article on the formation of school subjects in a curriculum perspective, by Zongyi Deng (2009), reflects the first two traditions from Pinar mentioned above. The first is the traditional, bureaucratic approach, but in this case within the current discourse of educational standards and accountability, which, according to Deng, 'is undergirded by a very narrow and reductive notion of curriculum content' (p. 586). The second, the conceptual-empiricist or discipline-centered tradition, has, according to Deng (2009), become central in the teacher education reform discourse over the two last decades. Deng argues that most of that discourse has been influenced by the conceptual framework of Shulman (1987) and his associates at Stanford University – a framework predicated on the necessity of teachers' understanding and transformation of the content of an academic discipline. However,

what seem to be neglected, according to Deng, are the curriculum-making processes entailed in the formation of a *school* subject – processes that determine and shape the nature and character of curriculum content and, thereby, teachers' understanding of that content (Deng, 2009, pp. 585–586; cf. Deng, 2007a, 2007b). He also suggests that 'Shulman and his associates have failed to see the curriculum content as something with (built-in) formative potential and the need for analyzing and unpacking that content for "educative" values and elements in instructional planning' (Deng, 2009, p. 599).¹

Instead, Deng explores 'the broad and complex meanings of curriculum content surrounding the formation of a school subject' (p. 586). Concluding his analysis, following an examination of the content of liberal studies with reference to the curriculum-making processes involved in the formation of school subjects, the author makes the general claim 'that a school subject is a distinctive purpose-built enterprise, constructed in response to social, cultural, and political demands and challenges toward educative ends' (p. 598).

In the example given, liberal studies as a school subject (?),² formation follows the three 'classic' levels, the institutional, the programmatic, and the classroom, earlier developed by Goodlad et al. (1979) (cf. Doyle, 2008; Hopmann, 1999; Westbury, 2000). The institutional expectations are construed in ambitious terms and translated into specific curriculum aims (cf. Deng, 2009). The content is organized in modules and each module is organized into prologue, key issues and related issues, and finally '*related values and attitudes*' that teachers are supposed to help students develop' (Deng, 2009, p. 590). Deng also stresses that 'an understanding of the theory of content inherent in a school subject is necessary for the disclosure and realization of *educational potential* embodied in the content' (Deng, 2009, p. 595). He also refers to German *Didaktik* (Klafki, 2000) with regard to the significance of interpreting curriculum content for educational potential.

Deng's proposal is of course possible in a specific case such as the one referred to, that of liberal studies, but not necessarily in general. I also want to stress that, to me, such a view (school subjects as purpose-built enterprises, with very detailed prescriptions concerning content and teacher actions) sounds rather deterministic and

¹I find this critique of Shulman a little unjust in the light, for example, of Shulman's intentions with the idea of pedagogical content knowledge and his later work on teacher professionalism within the Carnegie Foundation. However, the idea of pedagogical content knowledge does of course have the potential to be instrumentalized.

²A point that may be noted here is the choice of the broad concept of liberal studies as a school subject. This specific school subject might, in accordance with Deng, be seen 'as a potential invention (Westbury, 1984)', and may have been 'designed to overcome the constraints that typified many secondary academic subjects by providing a "more contextualized and politicized curriculum"' (Deng, 2009, p. 588).

instrumental, referring to a curriculum content with specific prescriptive limits, and thus too linear and evolutionary. This model also seems to seriously underestimate the inherent struggle between different social forces at all levels over both the formation of a school subject such as liberal studies and the different possible interpretations of the curriculum content of a school subject.

Although there is a clear intention to analyze the broad and complex meanings of curriculum content surrounding the formation of a school subject, what this view of subject formation seems to neglect is the different interpretations of how to ‘curricularize’ a specific school subject: what is the most important knowledge, how should the subject perspectivize different things, and so on? It also neglects the fact that these different interpretations seem to be forgotten when school subjects are constructed as ‘purpose-built enterprises’.

However, I may be misinterpreting Deng. If he considers these kinds of differences to be built into his ‘purpose-built enterprises’ (which I find hard to see or discover), his approach might be characterized in a way that I would call deliberative (see the next section), in spite of all his prescriptions.

Nevertheless, I consider that it is necessary once again to analyze the many possible interpretations of different school subjects, and also to leave it to the professional teacher to decide more about their content and about ways of working. This seems even more important today, when there are many new tools, such as communications technology, and so on, and insights into the classroom situation, such as the crucial role of the teacher–student encounter (no education without relation), our recent understanding of the language and communication in use in meaning-creating processes, and different subject-specific ways of learning and knowing.

Toward a need for a deliberative curriculum

What I wish to propose and revitalize through this paper, then, is an approach to the formation of school subjects and curriculum content that rests on a deliberative understanding of education and curriculum content, going beyond a view of school subjects as distinctive and prescribed purpose-built enterprises.³

Thus, I will attempt to (re)develop and restructure a perspective on the formation of curriculum content in which social forces and social groups such as subject teachers’ associations – as well as teachers as professionals – struggle for and defend different purposes of education, and in which different ways of choosing

content and teaching are the result of ongoing struggles and deliberations over the establishment and ‘correct’ interpretation of school subjects and curriculum content, without creating a definite ‘purpose-built school subject’ (Englund, 1986, 1997a, 1997b, 2007a, 2007b). This view of curriculum content and school subjects implies that we see them as contingent moral and political constructions that are constantly reshaped, without definite limits, capable of being interpreted and realized in different ways, politically contested at all levels, and in an ever-changing situation in relation to the struggle between different social forces.

While I regard my didactic typology for social studies and Roberts’s seven emphases of science education, presented above, as possible points of reference for future analyses of this kind, I find it necessary, at the same time, to ask the question how new kinds of didactic typologies can be created for the different school subjects of today.

But how are different school subject intentions – or should we call them different literacy intentions? – to be investigated and distinguished from each other? Some of what has been said up to now would do as a starting point, but I think that understanding different teacher (literacy) intentions is also very much a matter of understanding relations, the pedagogy of relation, and the insights of that perspective (cf. Bingham & Sidorkin, 2004; Englund, 2004b).

The first of these insights concerns the intersubjective and communicative character of the encounter between teachers and students and between students. The second has to do with the potentially different meanings arising through choices (primarily by the teacher) of teaching content as an offer of meaning. The third insight concerns teaching and its ever present and possible relationship with the political and moral dimensions and with the aspect of democracy. The field taking shape concerns the experiences (in a wider sense) which teachers and students have the possibility of gaining in schools, and the importance of democracy as a norm within that field. (Englund, 2004a, p. 14, my tr.; cf. Englund, 1998)

There are examples of studies of this kind – seeking to find different interpretations and different ways of working within a school subject – in Englund (2004b). What should be underlined is that such studies do not just explore the different traditions to be found in curriculum documents, textbooks, and the general school subject debate. They can of course also involve an analysis of teachers in their day-to-day work. Eva Hultin (2006), for example, supplements the dominant didactic typologies of literature teaching by combining a text analysis of curricular documents with a study in which she distinguishes four different conversational genres in the teaching of literature: (1) the teaching examination, (2) text

³Once again, I would underline the uncertainty of my preliminary evaluation of Deng’s example of liberal studies. It should also be noted that Deng seems to be inspired, at least in part, by a tradition which I will characterize in this article as ‘deliberative curriculum’, and my intention is to try to analyze and question the coherence between the example given by Deng and the broad tradition of deliberative curriculum that I will present.

oriented talk, (3) culturally oriented talk, and (4) informal book talk. Such research findings provide a sophisticated collection of different modes of teaching/communicating in their broadest sense – different ways of choosing content, communicating that content, organizing the interplay between teacher and students, and so on. This collection could serve as a base, a reservoir, for didactic discussions among teachers and others.

To summarize this section, I have attempted to show that curriculum content is always socially constructed and may be a result of struggling social forces that pave the way for different interpretations, resting on different political and ideological visions; but also that curriculum and school subjects are in practice interpreted, designed, and performed by unique teachers in ways that we might try to characterize for further comparison and evaluation.

From curriculum studies to didactics to deliberation

An analysis of curriculum and school content as a socially constructed and interpretable outcome of struggles and compromises will show how school subjects can be interpreted and realized in very different ways. Perhaps, the most crucial kind of knowledge for teachers is to get to know their school subjects in such a way – historically, and in terms of the consequences of different choices of content and ways of teaching for different groups of students – that they are able to deliberate (with each other) and make discerning and optimal choices regarding how and what to teach and communicate to their students.

If, as previously observed by Deng (cf. Deng & Luke, 2008), school subjects are ‘uniquely purpose-built educational enterprises, designed with and through an educational imagination toward educational ends’ (Deng & Luke, 2008, p. 83), how open to conflicts and struggles between different interests and social forces over curriculum and school subject formation will future curriculum making be? Curriculum documents and, within them, plans for teaching in different school subjects have to be and always are compromises between different views and perspectives (cf. Englund, 1986), but how much of those different interests and perspectives should they expose and make explicit for future classroom interpretations and deliberations by teachers and students?

Toward a deliberative curriculum

I will refer here to a tradition of ‘deliberative curriculum’ thinking described in a work by Wesley Null (2011), in which he draws attention to some central researchers who have created this tradition and outlines some of its characteristics. Null begins by referring to William Reid (1978), who first underlines that ‘curriculum is a public good to which all citizens can contribute, provided they are willing to think clearly about the types of problems that curriculum poses. He views curriculum problems as

moral, practical problems that are best resolved when numerous constituent groups provide input’ (Null, 2011, p. 151). Reid stresses the public aspect of the curriculum, implying, as I see it, that the ‘public has to define itself’ (Dewey, 1927/1984; cf. Ljunggren, 1996a, 1996b), while ‘acknowledging the views of others who may disagree with our most deeply held beliefs, and strengthening our ability to engage in the kind of practical reasoning that leads to the resolution of curriculum problems’ (Null, 2011, pp. 151–152). Or, as Reid himself puts it:

The method by which most everyday practical problems get solved has been variously called ‘deliberation’ or ‘practical reasoning’. It is an intricate and skilled social process whereby, individually or collectively, we identify the questions to which we must respond, establish grounds for deciding on answers and then choose among the available solutions. (Reid, 1978, p. 43)

The philosophical background to and inspiration for the concept of deliberation developed by Reid was provided by Joseph Schwab (1969) and, before him, the philosopher Richard McKeon, who laid the philosophical foundation through his reading of Aristotle for deliberation, later developed for the curriculum field by Schwab (McKeon, 1947; cf. Englund, 2006, pp. 505–506). In his ‘Philosophy and action’ (1952), McKeon develops the inquiry method as the most desirable for connecting theory and practice; it is ‘a method of resolving problems’ (McKeon, 1952, p. 85) and is close to pragmatism. ‘The difference between the two in practice, however, is that deliberators insist that students reflect on the moral framework that guides their decisions. In this respect, deliberative curriculumists are as much moral philosophers as they are curriculum specialists’ (Null, 2011, p. 175). McKeon also points out that solving problems depends on communication and agreement, that language is the key to building consensus, and ‘that people must be persuaded in order for solutions to be invented and enacted’ (Null, 2011, p. 174). Null also stresses that the modern endeavor to separate ‘facts’ from ‘values’ is rejected by central representatives of the inquiry-based deliberative tradition such as Schwab, Reid, and Westbury.

Joseph Schwab was a long-time professor of natural sciences at the University of Chicago, but also a humanist ‘who integrated all forms of knowledge toward the goal of shaping students morally’ (Null, 2011, p. 164). As Westbury and Wilkof stress in their introduction to Schwab’s collected works, Schwab ‘believed in discussion teaching’ (Westbury & Wilkof, 1978, p. 7), and in 1969 he gave the deliberative tradition a major thrust with his article ‘The practical: a language for curriculum’, in which he argued that deliberation should be the central method for curriculum making. ‘Following the path of deliberative curriculum does not mean that curriculumists cease to be

“scientists”, but it does mean that they subordinate their desire for a systematic science to their role as civic-minded leaders who serve the public interest . . . well-schooled, philosophically informed public servants who shape communities toward civic virtue’ (Null, 2011, p. 168).

Westbury (2000) contrasts the American systematic tradition of seeing teachers as employees, who are expected to ‘implement’ the curriculum, with the German *Didaktik* tradition, in which teachers are ‘guaranteed professional autonomy’ (Westbury, 2000, p. 17). He also underlines that, within the German tradition (building on ‘*Didaktik und Bildung*’), teaching without spiritual formation is not teaching at all. Without the formation of character, training might take place, but not teaching. ‘For *Didaktik* . . . it is the individual teacher who nurtures the *self-formation* that is at the heart of *Bildung*’ (Westbury, 2000, p. 31).

At least two characteristics can be drawn from this short overview of the deliberative tradition: first, curriculum making should be a broad task, hopefully engaging all citizens in creating education for the public good; and second, and at the same time, teachers as professionals should be given a crucial decisive role in choosing content and how to teach it. A third characteristic might be deliberation in the classroom, and one suggestion in this direction is that of deliberative communication, put forward by Englund (2000, 2006, p. 512; cf. Moore, 2013).

Deliberative communication implies communication in which (1) different views are confronted with one another and arguments for these different views are given time and space and are articulated and presented; (2) there is tolerance and respect for the concrete other and participants learn to listen to the other person’s argument; (3) elements of collective will formation are present, that is, an endeavor to reach consensus or at least temporary agreements and/or to draw attention to differences; (4) authorities/traditional views (represented, for example, by parents and tradition) can be questioned and there are opportunities to challenge one’s own tradition; (5) there is scope for students to communicate and deliberate without teacher control, that is, for argumentative discussions between students with the aim of solving problems or shedding light on them from different points of view.

Deliberative curriculum making: Swedish examples

There are at least three periods or movements in Swedish curriculum history that can be seen as related to different kinds of deliberative curriculum. As noted, three different characteristics can be identified concerning the deliberative tradition: first, curriculum making should be a broad task, hopefully engaging all citizens in creating education for the public good; second, teachers as professionals should have a crucial role in choosing content and how to teach it; and third, there should be scope for deliberation

in the classroom. In recent Swedish educational history, these three characteristics have all been clearly present, though without being explicitly related to each other.

1. The decade before the 1980 national curriculum (Lgr 80), a curriculum that is quite citizen-oriented and radical in many respects (cf. Englund, 1986), was actually an attempt to reach many different groups and secure their participation and engagement in curriculum work. During the years immediately following Lgr 80, too, the National Board of Education invited both experts and teachers for deliberations on how to understand and implement the new curriculum. However, this development was cut short by criticism in the late 1980s of the tradition of schools serving the public good, a tradition that rested on a society-centered concept of citizenship. The society-centered tradition of democracy, whose starting point is the idea of a sovereign people, was challenged by an individual-centered idea of democracy (SOU 1990:44; cf. Englund, 1994). This educational policy shift opened up schools to the private good of parental choice and to the new principles of governance in the reforms around 1989/90 (see Englund, 1996; Wahlström, 2002).
2. Later, the national curriculum of 1994 (Lpo 94) included, among its many different, inconsistent, and contradictory directives, another interesting idea that might be seen as partly deliberative, that of participatory management by objectives, which was combined with a social constructivist approach and trust in teachers’ professionalism (cf. Morawski, 2010, ch. 8). From early on, however, this idea was contested by an inbuilt goal system, with ‘goals to be attained’ that left only marginal scope for teachers to act in accordance with the idea of participatory management (cf. Carlgren & Englund, 1996).
3. The ‘value-foundation year’ declared in Sweden in 1999–2000, with the aim of balancing the one-sided tendency to stress ‘facts’ as knowledge, represented another type of investment in a deliberative curriculum as a way of interpreting the basic values of school education through open, deliberative communication in the classroom. In mutual communication, different views and values could be brought face to face, in ‘an endeavor to ensure that each individual takes a stand by listening, deliberating, seeking arguments, and evaluating, while at the same time there is a collective effort to find values that everyone can agree upon’ (National Agency for Education, 2000, p. 6; cf. Englund, 2000, 2006, 2007b; Ministry of Education, 2000). Within the debate on how to implement the value base, an authoritative opening for psychological ‘evidence’-based programs replaced the ideas from 2000 about open, deliberative communication with manual-based ‘communication’ for behavioral modification (KOMET),

pseudo-psychotherapy (SET), and so on (cf. Englund & Englund, 2012; Bergh & Englund, 2014). What is also noticeable, however, is growing (self-)criticism from the authorities (National Agency for Education, 2011a) and a 'renaissance' for open forms of communication (National Agency for Education, 2011b).

Difficulties in establishing a deliberative curriculum

As these three examples show, it is very difficult to make room for and establish different kinds of deliberative curriculum. Traditional philosophies of education such as essentialism and perennialism are still very strong, and movements to revive traditional schooling return again and again. The various deliberative characteristics and ideas of the examples given were, as we have seen, contested in different ways. The democratic offensive of the 1980s was pushed back by private middle-class forces questioning the Swedish comprehensive school system. Or, to put it another way, 'the legal basis for it which had been dominant until then, the idea of school education as a social citizenship right for all children, was questioned by a civil rights-based view, which looked at the right of schooling as a family or parental right' (Englund, 2009, p. 22; cf. Englund, 2010).

The second deliberative movement, built on teachers' professionalism, was upheld by the National Agency for Education for at least a decade, but was progressively weakened, mainly by increasingly strong top-down governance, as management by objectives was gradually displaced by results-based management (SOU 2007:28), standardization, and marketization, with a fast-growing private school sector (cf. Englund, 2012).

This stronger top-down governance, with the gradual shift from management by objectives to results-based management, also exerted an influence over the third deliberative movement. The latter, advocating deliberative communication in schools, was challenged and partly overruled by national authorities outside education introducing psychologically based anti-bullying programs and behavioral and psychotherapy-based programs aimed at promoting self-control. This intervention by authorities outside the schools sector marks a clear break from the earlier tradition in Swedish education, which had the broad aim of promoting democracy and well-being, a public good in the pursuit of which teachers as professionals were given a prominent role.

In conclusion, developing and achieving schools that work on a deliberative basis to strengthen democracy seems a utopian aim (cf. Simon, 2005). However, in this age of massive transformation of communication technologies, nothing seems impossible, and one empirical result is worth citing:

Students on vocational programmes who participated in deliberative teaching increased their knowl-

edge, thoughtful opinions, political efficacy, readiness for political participation and conversation skills more than students who had non-deliberative teaching. (Andersson, 2012, p. 192)

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Approaching the space issue in Nordic curriculum theory: national reflections of globalisation in social studies/citizenship textbook pictures in Sweden, England and Germany

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This article focuses on globalisation in Nordic curriculum theory by investigating the issue of space. It puts forward an increased interest in the practical levels of schooling and argues that globalisation should be investigated not only as a policy phenomenon but also as instructional matter in different contexts. It presents two perspectives of space, a container and a relational perspective. A distinction between the two perspectives contributes to an understanding of how the world is constructed at *different* levels of curriculum. The article tests its argument with an explorative social studies and citizenship textbook study in the national contexts of Sweden, England and Germany. It can be shown that all cases differ in their portrayals of globalisation and in the constructions of space-related issues.

Keywords: *curriculum theory; globalisation; didactics; comparative education; textbooks; social studies; civics*

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This article has as its starting point the challenges posed to curriculum theory by the phenomenon of globalisation. Globalisation is a spatial process (Pohlmann, 2006),¹ which requires that we address the issue of space in our research field theoretically. This means we shall discuss more explicitly different kinds of spaces constructed in the processes related to public education in an era of globalisation. For some time, public education has first and foremost been a national endeavour, with curriculum as the ‘program of the school’ (Fries, Hürlimann, Künzli, & Rosenmund, 2013) by which the state aims to plan what is to be taught to, and learnt by, a nation’s youth in order to secure the continuation of the society (Hopmann, 1999). Consequently, the nation state has been the overall frame of the curriculum, and thus a clear-cut reference space.

This does not mean that the ‘elsewhere’ has never entered the argument (Zymek, 1975) for curriculum development either: both borrowing and lending have always been valid processes. One only needs to recall the Prussian impact on Nordic schooling in the 18th century (Cavonius, 1988; Hartman, 2012) or the role model for progressive

schooling of the Swedish comprehensive school between the 1960s and 1980s (Herrlitz, Weiland, & Winkel, 2003). School systems became increasingly similar even while the starting point for all reasoning was the differentiated national state. The processes were described under the nomenclature of internationalisation. Today, globalisation is a powerful process (Stromquist & Monkman, 2000), which challenges the borders of the nation state, since in this process many different spheres that had hitherto been exclusively national become globally integrated. This is why the overall frame and reference space of curriculum requires a rescaling of what can be considered what is national and what is global (Dale, 1999; Lingard & Rawolle, 2010).

In this article, we argue that we must reconsider theoretically and empirically which and how spaces are constructed in curriculum work. That means how various stakeholders at different levels of schooling are spacing. This we will discuss by drawing on a minor and explorative study that investigates pictures on globalisation in Swedish, English and German social studies and citizenship textbooks. We argue that we know a great deal about the interrelation between global and local on a policy level (for an overview see Waldow, 2012), but we know comparatively little about the level of schooling

¹In opposition to the process of *modernisation*, which is rather a temporal process (Pohlmann, 2006).

practice, where curriculum is enacted and achieved (Anderson-Levitt, 2007). Put simply, how is globalisation dealt with in the classrooms of Gothenburg, Berlin or Birmingham? We approach globalisation as an instructional matter and not as a policy phenomenon. Textbook pictures offer a fertile first entrance into the classrooms. A textbook can be seen as an exemplified curriculum, pedagogically elaborated for the purpose of instruction (Fries et al., 2013; Selander, 2003). We know empirically that textbooks have a significant role in guiding instruction and thereby shaping what is possible for students to learn (Fries et al., 2013; Selander, 2003). In addition, textbooks provide rich empirical evidence of the ‘modus operandi’ of a society in terms of what is considered appropriate knowledge to be learned by citizens (Schissler, 2009). For the purpose of our study, Sweden, England and Germany constitute a strategically comparative sample (Ragin, 1987). In terms of the issue of globalisation, they are interesting to compare, because the three cases represent different traditions of how the world is viewed. Following Esping-Andersen (1990), the Danish researcher, there are different perspectives on the relation of state and individual welfare and regulation. Furthermore, all three cases exemplify various interesting traditions that might have an impact on the issue of globalisation as a textbook topic. The variance will serve as an analytical device for understanding the relation of a national context and the portrayals of globalisation.

The article is structured as follows. We start with a discussion of how globalisation as a spatial process is coped with in curriculum theory. Here, we suggest a greater future emphasis on the more practical levels of schooling by relating curriculum theory to didactics. Textbook research is a first entrance into the complex didactical relations in curriculum work. Moreover, an interest in such material would also represent a historical recollection of the roots of Nordic curriculum theory. Then, we present two perspectives on space that support our analyses of how the global in globalisation can be constructed. This will then be further exemplified by a study of textbook pictures.

Theorising about curriculum and the issue of space

There have recently been a number of works in or inspiring for Nordic curriculum theory, which are of interest for the issue of space construction which are of interest for issue of space construction in curriculum. Sundberg & Wahlström (2012) investigate the most recent Swedish curriculum (*Lgr11*) in a search for the origin of different discourses which emerge in the documents. This distinction is also found in Forsberg’s inquiry into the relation of supra-national texts and Swedish policy on competence-based knowledge discourses (Forsberg, 2009). The authors find both international and genuinely domestic roots for

the discourses. Karseth and Sivesind (2010) investigate the curriculum reform, which took place in Norway in 1997 and 2006. They discuss the consequences of replacement, hybridisation and fragmentation of various knowledge traditions, both domestic and international. ‘Certainly, global perspectives add new dimensions to today’s orientation towards new experiences and systems that differ from before and for this reason need to be regarded as significant. [...] individuals become the agents of a global history [...]. Due to the ignorance of modern institutional boundaries, individuals are not protected against societal demands and are to a large extent expected to be their own care-takers and knowledge-makers. Hence, the nation state and schooling weaken and with this the legitimacy of national curriculum guidelines’ (p. 116). In all three approaches, the conceptualisation of space is implicit and basal, though nevertheless very applicable. It distinguishes between *here* (national, domestic) and *there* (international and/or global).

Prøitz (in this volume) facilitates the *uploading* and *downloading* of policies through a discussion of the relation between the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Norway. It can be said that such information technology (IT)-inspired terms intimate a global space in which various users contribute to a pool of policies that can be downloaded on demand. In recent years, another concept has had considerable influence on curriculum theory: The *European Educational Policy Space* model (EEPS) (Grek et al., 2009; Lawn & Lingard, 2002). These researchers describe the constitution of a particular transnational space in terms of transnational policy agency. Here, the international and the national meet and assemble in something like a new space, which is neither exclusively national nor exclusively international (Sassen, 2006, 2007). This policy space becomes a factor in the governance of national educational systems, by employing either softer policy agreements or harder educational standards constituted by benchmarks and numbers (Grek et al., 2009; Ozga, 2009; Ozga, Dahler-Larsen, Segerholm, & Simola, 2011).

The EEPS is also related to the idea of a *global education policy field* (Lingard & Rawolle, 2010), which emphasises the existence of global and national educational fields that are interrelated by cross-field effects. This work also related to the research of Dale (2005), which claims that the spatial aspect of considerations of educational policy explicitly requires a rescaling of the phenomena from a Westphalian point of view in social science. This means they shift from nation states and their relations to an acknowledgement of parallel interdependent ‘fields’ that condition each other. Policies of comparison are but one example of cross-field relations. They are produced internationally and facilitated nationally. In other words, the argument, in line with the EEPS, claims that international relations, as they are formed through

international organisations such as the OECD, UNESCO or the World Bank, have a life of their own, emerging from an agency beyond the borders of the nation state, and partly detached from them (Lingard & Rawolle, 2010).

However, such conceptualisations mainly concern policy phenomena, which, among other aspects, have also been blamed for a current crisis of international curriculum theory (Young, 2013). Policy is only one dimension or *level* of curriculum work, as it is commonly understood in curriculum theory (Anderson-Levitt, 2007; Fries et al., 2013; Goodlad, 1979; Hopmann, 1999; Lundgren, 1999). Here, we conceptualise distinct interrelated dimensions that not only constrain each other but are also to a certain degree independent. Consequently, thinking in terms of levels is, in curriculum work, necessarily related to the issue of space. Hopmann (1999) is a prominent example of the aforementioned curriculum theorists who presents the following important distinction, which in some way summarises the guiding rationale of curriculum work:

At the top there is the public discourse on education, which results in political decisions about the structure and goals of schooling. It is accompanied by the development of curriculum guidelines. However, this is done by educational experts (most of them chosen by the educational administration and most of them active or former teachers). The public has no direct access to curriculum making. In most cases, it doesn't even know what is going on inside the curriculum making. The experts have to function as a kind of intermediary agency, i.e. their curriculum development has to take into account the public discourse and its results as well as what they believe might work in schools. The school practitioners do their own planning – more or less within the framework of the guidelines provided by the experts. (p. 93)

Accordingly, curriculum work in mass schooling is organised into different *levels* that constrain and also enable each other, setting the borders of what is possible and what is not (Hopmann, 1999). It can be argued that the three levels are distinct, but nevertheless contiguous spaces where agency takes place and these spaces follow discursively distinct logics, but are also hierarchically interrelated. In other words, teachers in schools should at least look upwards in order to determine which expectations they either will or will not live up to, or what they can use as a vehicle of legitimation and as a starting point for their own curriculum making (Fries et al., 2013; Scarth, 1987). Therefore, the question of space construction has to be asked for all levels, and not only for the political.

Examining space construction in curriculum work

Considerations of curriculum in mass schooling cannot deny the existence of levels in their effort to attain a holistic view on schooling. To the same extent that we inves-

tigate the policy dimension of curriculum and its spatial issues, we should also pay attention to the practical levels of curriculum that work in the same way. In other words, we propose a revitalised school practical interest in curriculum research that concerns the issues of globalisation. This would examine what spaces are constituted in the classrooms in residential neighbourhoods of Lund, London or Hamburg. Such sites have remained intact, even in a globalised world of global cities, and might be only weakly correlated with the scientific, political or economic networks that constitute transnational spaces, for example, by way of a lingua franca (English), through conferences or reference strategies. Thinking in levels avoids a logical methodological nationalism (Chernilo, 2006), meaning that the various dimensions of curriculum remain in the background and empirical, for example, national, cases are seen as a natural unity without fragmentation, presented appropriately through policy documents and through the voices of policy makers.

With such a practical turn, we propose a consciousness of curriculum theory's genetic relatedness to didactics (Fries et al., 2013; Hopmann in this volume).² Such a turn means that we investigate the way in which a curriculum issue is dealt with by considering students, their teachers and the teaching materials they use. The trinity of teaching material, teacher and student is of particular interest, since these represent the cornerstones, places or sites of a *didactical triangle* (Fries et al., 2013; Kansanen, Hansén, Sjöberg, & Kroksmark, 2011; Künzli, 2000), while teaching materials such as textbooks represent the content. To a certain extent, the latter can be seen as an elaboration of the curriculum [for a further discussion, cf. Fries et al. (2013)].³ Such a design presents us with the possibility of direct comparisons in terms of the ways in which curricula are handled from different but related perspectives, thereby constituting an educational space in which schooling practice takes place. Moreover, the triangle facilitates the relations between the sites and places involved in the instruction process. These can differ in different contexts. For example, specific content enables a certain kind of learning in every sense. To this content is also correlated the question of evaluation of what is seen

²This would even mean a reversion to a classic Nordic curriculum, which was very much interested in such issues of transfer in school practice and also in teaching material. In order not only to understand transfer but also to intervene and, as was believed, to improve teaching and instruction, see Selander (2003); an example for this kind of 'implementation' research is provided by Wallin (2005).

³At the very least, it provides us with rich empirical evidence of the 'modus operandi' of a society in terms of what is considered appropriate knowledge to be learned by citizens (Schissler, 2009). Although textbooks today are produced by private companies, this relation remains unchanged. Indeed, it has probably even been strengthened. Publishing houses are obliged to sell their products, which is why they relate their books and materials as much as possible to the existing curricula (Fries et al., 2013). In order to illustrate this, the largest publishing houses in Sweden – Liber, Gleerups and Natur & Kultur – market their most recent citizenship books by claiming that they are related to the newest curricula (Lgr 11).

as appropriate knowledge, in the sense of what can be learned and what can be and is assessed (Lundqvist, Almqvist, & Östman, 2009; Selander, 2003). Consequently, the triangle is a fertile analytical model which can be used in order to display the contextuality of educational practice. Context variance, by the same token, will contribute to an understanding of *how* different space, the phenomenon in focus, is constructed where.

‘How’ refers to the processes of assembling different aspects in a space, or in other words the construction of a space where public education is related to. The context variance, globally, nationally and locally, can explain why space is constructed how. Here, the search for the ‘why’ must draw on known comparative education strategies used in the curriculum research focused on policy. It builds on the theoretical sampling of various schooling practice cases that present different assemblages of a space and thereby may negotiate curricula in particular ways, which, in turn, may indicate culturally dependent paths (see Schriewer, 1999). These illustrate the *contingency* of space construction. Contingency indicates that a decision made could also have been made differently, and that the alternative choice(s) should be considered when trying to understand the path ultimately chosen (Hoffmann, 2005).

Perspectives on space

In order to examine how space is constructed in curriculum, we draw on the considerations of Markus Schroer (2012), the German sociologist. In sociology, we can identify two main perspectives on space. One sees space as a *container* which determines all objects *in this container*. The other perspective is one of a *relational understanding of space* constituting the world (Table I). In terms of structure and agency dualism, it can be said that the first displays a structuralist understanding of space, the latter a constructionist one.

The relational perspective emphasises the creative possibilities of the actors who build and maintain spaces. Spaces are fluid and are constituted in a process of communication and in the bargaining over means of communication. This perspective also argues for the power of human agency in building spaces that have not existed previously, such as the EEPS. The latter emerged due to

the processes of Europeanisation and globalisation and deals with the question of how a national endeavour of education can be steered from a transnational level with little more than light administration. The solution here is a process of relation building between different forms of soft and hard governance, such as transnational agreements, comparisons or standards. Spaces are then a kind of work-site [Balibar (2004) in Carlos (2012)] for such operations. They change with their challenges and are better described as ‘multi-level governance, where governance is understood as processes of continuous negotiation across and within various levels (Marks & Hooghe, 2001) and through constant coordination and cooperation in multi-layered networks of relationships (Castells, 2000; Kohler-Koch & Eising, 1999)’ (Carlos, 2012, p. 489). The same logic is valid for global policy fields (Lingard & Rawolle, 2010).

The world-as-*containers* understanding, however, points rather to complexity reduction, instead of increasing complexity through rejecting clear-cut borders (Schroer, 2012). It saves energy by preventing a proliferation of ever-new conceptual definitions. The material aspect of the container is of particular interest at the practical levels of mass schooling, which takes place in classrooms in certain schools in certain neighbourhoods with certain characteristics. All of these condition the social relations being constituted in them. Consequently, the given shape and form of a space helps to cope with contingency (Schroer, 2012), limiting the possibilities for how something can come to be. This also gives us the opportunity to understand the (re)constructions of the world in a different context.

A container view then also provides us with fertile dichotomies, such as *insider/outsider*, *centre/periphery*, *close/distant*, *indigenous/alien* and so forth in order to analyse spacing. Finally, investigating when the illusion of a container is present in curriculum work avails us of another analytical device that of illusions. Which *utopias*, spaces or places that do not actually exist are constructed in particular contexts? When and why are clear-cut borders presented, even when they are not valid? This contributes to an understanding of excluding developments, such as the phenomena of ‘Fortress Europe’ but also geopolitical

Table I. Space as container or relation

	Container perspective	Relational perspective
Rationale	Agency is determined by particular borders of the container Reduces complexity by fixed, clear-cut borders Enables clear distinctions such as centre/periphery, inner/outer, indigenous/alien, close/distant	Constituted by related objects and actors Spaces are multifaceted and complex and cannot be explained by hierarchies or simple international/national dichotomies Spaces are constantly morphing with actions (as one impact the other); therefore, processes are in focus
Example	Nation states in a Westphalian understanding International versus national dichotomies Illusions of space (utopias)	International policy spaces (EEPS), Global cities, Transnational intellectual networks

developments such as those in Ukraine or the increasing nationalism in Europe.

How can we interrelate these perspectives? There is an understanding that a relational view is of a higher order and specifically is much more appropriate to understand a globalised world [see, for example, Sassen who in her 'Global cities' (1991) rejects the idea of nation state containers with hierarchic level structures]. We, however, will not follow such an evolutionary understanding of how space should be viewed. Following Schroer (2012), we argue that both perspectives can exist, but must do so in different contexts, while both have different functions. To illustrate this, we examine the example of the *global cities* or the *EEPS*. Both strictly follow the idea of a relational space, accommodated to the needs of each in a globalised world. This idea is useful in explaining scientific, economic and also political transnational networks, but it might be argued that these are also somewhat elitist, regarding the agency of actors who are, by their socialisation and education, able to cope with global relational spaces which lack clear-cut borders.⁴

Summarising, both perspectives on space, the *container* and the *relational*, are both applicable, but each in different contexts. The concern is not what space is, but *how* it is constructed in different contexts. A multifaceted understanding of space contributes to a comprehension of the contextuality of curriculum work (Anderson-Levitt, 2007).

Approaching the issue of space in curriculum: analyses of depictions of globalisation in citizenship textbooks in Sweden, England and Germany

In the following section, we will apply our ideas to a minor explorative textbook study. Focusing below only on textbooks is indeed a restriction of the practical put forward earlier. However, textbook pictures offer a fertile first entry into the classroom. Textbooks can be seen as an exemplified curriculum, pedagogically elaborated for the purpose of instruction (Fries et al., 2013; Selander, 2003). We know empirically that textbooks have a significant role in guiding instruction and thereby shaping what it is possible for students to learn (Fries et al., 2013; Selander, 2003). In addition, textbooks provide rich evidence of the 'modus operandi' of a society in terms of what is considered appropriate knowledge to be learned by citizens (Schissler, 2009). Moreover, a practical interest could also be understood in terms of textbook production. In this article, we focus only on the 'practical' fact that those books have been *chosen* for schooling practice.

We employ the documentary method with citizenship and social studies textbooks in various national contexts

(Bohnsack, 2010b). This method focuses on how something is constructed and its applicability in different fields. This latter aspect makes it valuable for research on the practical level of curriculum as seen in the sites of the didactical triangle, although this is not applied in this article.⁵

The documentary method: turning from what to how in curriculum investigation

We argue that a conscious shift from *what* an issue means to *how* an issue is (re)constructed in different contexts – in terms of references, means and habits – will simplify our search for an applicable theory of transfer in curriculum. In terms of Luhmann's (1990) observation of second order, our focus is on our reconstruction of the reconstruction (of meaning) by others. Even if a particular subject matter might, in its intended meaning, remain always the same, it can be reconstructed in different ways in different contexts, or perhaps even more clearly in different *lebenswelten*, that is, worlds of lived experience and frames of reference.

We will analyse our curriculum data using the so-called documentary method, developed by Frank Bohnsack and colleagues, which builds on the assumption that there exist two different kinds of knowledge. Not only is there intentional and communicative knowledge in people's actions, which can be described by common sense, but also there is a kind of implicit knowledge, that is, habitual knowledge, that is rooted in a certain practice (Bohnsack, 2010a; Bohnsack, Nentwig-Gesemann, & Nohl, 2013). This method has its roots in Mannheim's (1936) reasoning on the nature of knowledge and in the work of the art historian Panofsky (in Bohnsack, 2010b) on iconographic analysis in pictures.

In first step, the analytical process starts with the so-called *formulating interpretation* (Bohnsack, 2010c). In this step, the content of the material is elaborated and is only to be understood within the particular case under investigation, which means in its communicational or discursive structures. For example, in the case of our interviews, group discussions and instructional situations, this refers to the search for sequences that build one on another and thereby constitute entities of shared or collective meanings. Question and answer sessions are organised in IRE sequences containing *initiation*, *requesting* a response that is *evaluated* in a third step (Bohnsack, 2010c). In teaching material, we search for patterns and triggers, cues or prompts (Selander & Kress, 2010) provided by texts, tasks and pictures.

In the next step, we conduct a *reflective interpretation*, which focuses on the so-called documented meaning, that is, the modus operandi, which emerges in the negotiation of an issue in an action. Here the other (national and

⁴It might also be that such spaces appear empirically when one elite (scientists) interviews and analyses another elite (politicians).

⁵However, there are indeed many other fertile approaches in textbook research related to text and pictures (Pettersson, 2008).

local) cases come into play, and choices in communication and action are contingent, which means that the choices could in fact be different. First, knowledge about other or alternative choices makes *the choice in the case as such* visible. Here, we interpret how a matter is discussed in relation to the other cases: Which methods and styles are used? Which references are made? Finally, we conduct the so-called *sociogenetic interpretation*, in which different types are elaborated from the material, describing the different dimensions of how an issue is processed. Bohnsack (2010a) calls these different dimensions of experience related to different contexts of *lebenswelten*. The interpretation starts with the search for similarities in the *modus operandi* of different cases. The similarity presents a first frame of orientation for the actors, in other words, similar experiences result in similar *modi operandi* in discussing globalisation, and from this vantage point we search for differences that might point to other frames or orientations related to other experiences. With every case, the *tertium comparationis*, the object of interest, increases in complexity, but what is important is that the sum of all dimensions describes the object. Potentially, every dimension exists in each case but might appear (and also not appear) in different forms (Nentwig-Gesemann, 2013; Nohl, 2013). Different national, local and socio-economic factors will be elaborated in order to illuminate the relation of a certain *modus operandi* to its context, that is, realm of experience, socialisation or existential background.

Sample

Our comparative approach is reflected in our sample. The hypothesis is that in different national textbooks, globalisation is depicted in different ways. The theoretical sample builds on the assumption that there exist nation-specific types of elaborations of globalisation in educational practice. This is our main interest in terms of the investigation of the textbooks, which is why we needed to find national cases that differ in a way that allows us to see differences in how globalisation is reconstructed. Here, we follow existing theories of how various countries can be described from the perspective of how the world around should appropriately be constructed. We argue that we need different traditions of how the state regulates the relations between itself and its citizens, by, for example, means of welfare policy, as is described by Esping-Andersen (1990) in his *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*.

England is here an example of a liberal system, providing only basic welfare security to its citizens, but promoting and rewarding people's aspirations for individual wealth. In other words, the English world promotes traditionally strong markets and a liberal policy requiring individual, personal responsibility. Sweden has traditionally been seen as a figurehead of a universal, or social

democratic, type that has provided a high degree of basic security for all at the price of high taxes and uniformity. Here, traditions of policy planning and governance as well as corporatism are strong. It is no coincidence that social phenomena such as social engineering and planning optimism are strongly rooted in Swedish society (Etzemüller, 2010; Hirdman, 2010/1989). Germany, finally, presents the conservative or corporatist–statist type that aims to preserve existing structures in the society and facilitate traditional family structures. Even here the state is strong, but it has a significant role in maintaining existing structures. Regarding education, Germany has proven to be quite inert to change (Wermke, 2013). Furthermore, it might be argued that experiences under two dictatorships left a residue of rather negative connotations concerning planning. However, even if these traditions are undergoing strong transitions, we still assume that the presented logics exist latent in nation-specific views of how the world looks or should look.

In addition, the three countries in our sample all share, by virtue of their place as Western, European and democratic countries, many similarities. For all cases, Europe; the European Union, with all its crises, challenges and changes; and a Euro-central perspective are obviously key to understanding the national global learning curriculum work. Such constants adopt an empirical control function, which would in an experiment be the systematic manipulation or controlling of an independent variable (Jahn, 2007). Consequently, our cases are sufficiently varied to reveal differences while at the same time being sufficiently similar to allow for the controlling of the impact of other variables on the phenomenon in focus (Jahn, 2007).

In our project, the specific content of inquiry will involve *globalisation* and related competences necessary in a globalised world. We argue that this phenomenon is of particular interest. We can observe, due to globalisation, the increasing requirement that today's youth be educated in global literacy (e.g. Baidon & Damico, 2011), global consciousness (Schissler, 2009), global citizenship (e.g. Hinterliter Ortloff, 2011) or cosmopolitanism (e.g. Gunesch, 2004), not only in research but also in current curricula and syllabi, which state that preparation for entry into a world which extends beyond one's own nation is imperative (Seitz, 2005).

Regarding globalisation as a phenomenon, one subject group will be of particular interest. *Citizenship and Social Science Studies* are necessarily related to the international in the themes they cover. In a globalised and internationalised world, international relations and world perspectives, as well as the development of, for example, a 'global literacy', are at the very core of such subjects (Baidon & Damico, 2011). This, by comparison, is not at all straight forward when studying mathematics and science. Today, however, in social studies and citizenship education, the

conceptualisation of the global, in one or another form, is well established (Baidon & Damico, 2011). After deciding to investigate social studies and citizenship education, we finally had to determine which age groups in comprehensive schools experience the evolution and condensation of questions regarding globalisation and also global learning. Since we are interested in curriculum questions, we examined social studies and citizenship syllabi, and were able to determine that globalisation takes a prominent position at the secondary level in particular, increasing up to the end of secondary school (class 9/10).

Consequently, we built a theoretical sample that first of all is interested in nation-specific particularities in the reconstruction of globalisation. For this article, we use a sample of social studies and citizenship textbooks that are sold by the market leaders in each of the three countries.⁶ Drawing on sales figures is then an analytical short cut for finding out which instructional material might actually have been chosen by teachers for practical work in classrooms.

Documentary analysis of lower secondary social science studies/citizenship textbooks in England, Germany and Sweden

We discussed above the necessity of investigating the roles of teachers, students and their textbooks, a practical turn which follows the rationale of the didactic triangle. This will be part of a larger project that investigates teachers, their students and the instructional materials they use, in order to examine the transmission of curriculum content. In this article, we illustrate our ideas regarding space and comparison in curriculum theory by focusing on textbooks.

In the tables of contents of our books (Andersson, Ewert, & Hedengren, 2012; Campbell & Patrick, 2009; Deiseroth & Wolf, 2009; Ernst, 2009; Wales, 2009; Wergel & Hildingson, 2012), we identified the parts that were directly related to globalisation. For the purpose of this paper, we focused only on those parts that directly address globalisation and a globalised world. We then analysed the structure of these sections on globalisation. Textbooks of all three cases quite obviously follow the same style of presentation regarding the structuring of introduction and facts, analysis tasks and discussion tasks. There are, however, different formal styles of presentation, which are nevertheless not exclusively related to the presentation of globalisation. The German books not only present small photos but also figures, diagrams and maps. The content is presented in detail, indicated by a large amount of text. The English textbooks present many pictures that are related to the *lebenswelten* of the students and of people from other places around the world, with considerably less text. In between these two

cases, we can locate the Swedish textbooks, which present a more balanced mixture between text and images in relation to the German and English references.

At this point, it is already clear that differences can be observed between textbook cultures. This is a relevant finding which would validate further investigation to verify the differences through more textbooks from the same subject area. However, the findings fulfil the quality criteria of external validity because they are aligned with other research on textbooks. While there are obviously textbook traditions that might relate to nation-specific particularities (Åström Elmersjö & Lindmark, 2010; Jonker, 2009; Schissler, 2009), the point is that first the comparison of various traditions renders the differences visible and opens them up for analyses which help us to develop an understanding – in terms of Bohnsack's method, *socio-genetically* – of how particular curricular material is handled in different contexts and also why it is handled as it is.

In the next and very important step, we examined the pictures used to illustrate the content. Following the documentary method, we interpreted what impression they transmit in terms of how they describe globalisation. Let us once again start with the German case. As mentioned, there are small photos and the pictures used generate a rather negative feeling. Take, for example, the caricature which displays the forlorn welfare state being churned by the triple pestles of globalisation, as displayed in Fig. 1 (Ernst, 2009). We also see political maps (Deiseroth & Wolf, 2009) and industrial figures such as forklifts (Ernst, 2009). The English case presents photos which illustrate the different perspectives of globalisation. Consumption in the Western world is contrasted to workers in different parts in the world: Asian workers with expressionless faces (Fig. 2) stand in contrast to



Fig. 1. Picture from a German textbook. 'Protestnote' by Gabor Benedek, in Ernst (2009, p. 56).

On the flag it says: 'welfare state'; on the dashers: 'globalisation', 'capitalization' and 'automatisation'.⁷

⁶In Germany: Cornelsen, Klett, Diesterweg; in Sweden: Liber, Natur & Kultur, Bonniers; in England: Pearson, Collins, Oxford University Press.

⁷For this article, all pictures publication rights have been purchased.



Fig. 2. Picture from an English textbook: 'The globalised market', in Campbell and Patrick (2009, p. 158).

an image of a Caucasian consumer critically trying on dresses in a shop. The caption asks, 'Would you buy this dress for 12 pounds?' (Wales, 2009, p. 29). Finally, starving African people are also depicted (Campbell & Patrick, 2009, p. 165ff).

The Swedish case has a more positive perspective on relations in a globalised/globalising world. There is a picture of a world economy summit which might refer to Sassen's global cities (Andersson et al., 2012, p. 273). However, the picture only portrays Caucasian people, and non-Caucasian people are depicted only as banana farmers in another picture in the same book (p. 272). The caption under the picture reads:

Many Swedes are pretty keen on bananas. However, since the climate *we* have is so cold, *we* cannot cultivate bananas on our own, *we* have to buy them elsewhere, from Mexico or Jamaica. Conversely, Swedish companies sell goods *we* are good at producing, e.g. machines, trucks or medicine. (Andersson et. al., 2012, our translation and italics)

However, this Swedish spacing is accomplished through a third picture, a grocery store at Sweden's biggest airport, which is decorated with flags from around the world, as displayed in Fig. 3. Globalisation here means many countries that are very near to each other, as if lined up in a row.

After formulating our interpretations, we can commence reflecting on our interpretations. We see that the

German textbooks display globalisation as something of a threat, perhaps as a threat to their existing structures. Furthermore, considering the Swedish and German perspectives of space, the German textbooks displays depictions of globalisation that represent quite clear examples of a container understanding of space. They tend to use political maps which outline the borders of countries. Meanwhile, there is a stronger focus on traditional import-export pictures, such as, indeed, containers on ships or in harbours, as well as forklifts. Figure 1 portrays the state as a kind of container where globalisation as force (pound of the pestles) desolates the welfare state from outside, squeezing the welfare state from its container, the nation state.

Global relations are crucial, however, in English textbooks. Here, the textbooks emphasise the issue of consumption. In the best case, the consumed products are cheap and of sound quality, which is critically observed by the textbook makers in captions such as 'Would you buy this dress for 12 pound?' (Wales, 2009, p. 29) juxtaposed against the picture of related manufacturing carried out by hardworking people, mostly Asian and people of colour. Globalisation is presented as not entirely positive for other countries [this is also related to poverty in Africa (Campbell & Patrick, 2009)].

Swedish textbooks mostly portray the positive side of globalisation. Globalisation means internationality, openness and possibility. The world is a modern building



Fig. 3. Picture from a Swedish textbook. 'Pressbyrå [a Swedish kiosk chain, here at the largest Swedish Airport, Stockholm Arlanda, DP, WW]', in Wergel and Hildingson (2012, p. 294).

made of glass. Airplanes make the world smaller and the borders more blurry. However, the apparently relational presentation we observe here is quite obviously also a rather naïve container understanding which reinforces the ideas of *we* and *others*: in this case, the third world produces bananas, while in the first world, *we* produce advanced products such as machines, medicine or trucks. There is no consideration of quality or of the reasons for such a distribution of production of goods in a globalised world.

The final step is actually already implied by our comparative design and research interest: we see a nation-specific dimension in textbooks in terms of the *modus operandi* for presenting globalisation. We will stop here, but if we were to continue our interpretation at the text and task level, it can be assumed that a pedagogical dimension could be comparatively elaborated [as shown by *Culture and pedagogy*, a significant work of Alexander (2000)], which would also relate to the nation-specific dimension. This would demonstrate the multidimensionality of presenting globalisation in social studies and citizenship textbooks.

Finally, our findings must be understood in relation to the comparative assumption of our research design. At this point, a relation to Esping-Anderson's model is not

obvious, although the three cases display clear differences, which is the most important finding here. However, we might argue, quite tentatively, that the conservative world of welfare capitalism presented by the German case is represented by a shift, related to globalisation, which threatens its existing structures. In a liberal society such as England, significant social differences, characteristic for such a space, are probably simply common sense. This is why relations of *we* and *other*, or of winners and losers of globalisation and the desire for more social justice are transmitted in social studies/citizenship textbooks. The Swedish universal case, however, might represent a trust in development for the better, probably related to the experiences of a strong philanthropic state (Hopmann, 1999) and civil society. Moreover – and related to the universal type – the positive manner of description may be grounded in a tradition of social engineering that perceives possibilities and believes that risks are manageable by rational and scientific reasoning and planning (Etzemüller, 2010), which might appear somewhat naïve in a contemporary context. Finally, globalisation, as related to openness and renewal, might also be seen as a way out of the uniformity of a universal system (Hirdman, 2010/1989) and a way into a more individualised world.

Conclusion and discussion: space in transnational curriculum theorising

This article aimed to discuss the issue of space in the theorising of curriculum. This is an important issue because, in an era of globalisation, an essentially spatial process, we must reconsider where and within which borders public education takes place. There are several approaches to theorising the complex interrelations between national and international spaces of curriculum. However, we have also argued that curriculum work in public education is more multidimensional than work on national policy documents suggests. The latter are rather not implemented in the manner intended, they are enacted in another manner, and what pupils achieve is another matter altogether. Here, we proposed an emphasised interest in the practical levels of schooling, at least in Nordic curriculum theory's interest in globalisation. This comprises a shift from globalisation as a policy phenomenon to a perspective on globalisation as an instructional matter.

Related to this practical interest, we have suggested an orientation towards the didactical triangle and related didactical research that conceptualises the relation of students, teachers and curriculum content presented in instructional material, such as textbooks. This model should be used as a starting point for the comparison of relevant subject matter such as globalisation itself. The didactical triangle also makes it possible to explain what can be taught, learned and finally evaluated in different contexts. It is a relational device with three sites. If one of these changes, the form of the triangle and with it the form of instruction must also change. In this article, we were able to focus only on one site, the site of content as it is presented in textbooks. These we present as a fertile first entrance into the classrooms, because they significantly condition what is possible to learn and teach. However, this would only be the first step for greater comparative research programmes involving all sites continuously.

For our examination, we have employed the so-called documentary method (Bohnsack, 2010b) which contributes to an identification of various *modi operandi* of how space is reconstructed in curriculum work. Citizenship and social science textbook sections on globalisation were our empirical material. It was most obvious that local particularities are reflected in the presentation of the global. We were able to observe varying nation-specific constructions of globalisation. These varying *modi operandi* can be explained by the different traditions of each case. We were able to identify factors related to national traditions. However, this might only be one dimension that helps us to understand how the global world is reconstructed. Others might exist: for example, different cultures of pedagogy that can be but are not necessarily related to the national dimension. Different possibilities

for making textbooks can be seen. There are textbooks that emphasise more written information and subject matter, as in Germany. There are also textbooks that use more photos, more colours and less text in order to grab the attention of the students, as in Sweden and England.

We have explained national differences in relation to nation-specific particularities of the cases in focus. We explained the variances by situating them in different welfare state traditions, which condition how the world is constructed through citizenship and social science textbooks in public education. The conservative world of Germany relates to globalisation as something which threatens its existing structures. In the liberal world of England, significant social differences are, from the global perspective of such a site, probably simple common sense. Furthermore, the long tradition of the British Commonwealth and England's related history as a multicultural society might condition the experience of globalisation in a more explicit, more advanced way. The Swedish universal case, however, might present trust in development for the better, which is probably related to the experiences of a strong philanthropic state (Hopmann, 1999) and civil society. Moreover, and related to the universal type, the positive manner of description may be grounded in a tradition of social engineering that prefers to see possibilities and believes that risks are manageable by rational and scientific reasoning and planning.

Due to several factors, there are different *modi operandi* in portraying the world as the space in which we *are*. The question, then, is consequently not about what space is, but how it is presented in different contexts. The world can be constructed as various containers which determine agency or as relations shaped by agency. The first perspective, as in the German case, has a clear-cut *we* and other perspective. Physical borders remain obvious in textbooks. The second perspective focuses on the relations appearing in a globalised/globalising world. They question the quality of such relations. Such questions are addressed in English textbooks. In Swedish textbooks, we observed both perspectives side by side. However, empirically we were only able to show a very small glimpse of how space can be handled in curriculum work. Regarding globalisation, the space issue also concerns the levels of curriculum implementation and curriculum achievement, which means that teachers and students are also parts of a globalised world while at the same time they are embedded in local contexts, which are their spaces of experience, their *lebenswelten*. The intended (political and programmatic), enacted and achieved (practical) curriculum levels are assemblages of many impacting factors that confound the identification of a constrained local and global. At the same time, borders remain, but probably exist at different places.

We want to argue for a *turn from what to how* in curriculum theory's interest in globalisation. There is a

plethora of possibilities of new spaces emerging in a globalised world of curriculum. However, we would not attempt to define what particular space is or means, but it would examine *how* a particular matter is constructed by the actors involved in different contexts at all levels of curriculum work. This could be the focus of a *trans-national curriculum* theory. It would also have a specific eye on various *scales*, meaning a graduated range of values forming a standard system for measuring or grading something. This not only concerns whether we think globally or locally, or whether we see the world around us in terms of containers or in the form of relations. It also concerns which scales are relevant to describe the world. Relevant scales can be evaluation, ownership, regulation (Dale, 2006). Modernity as a scale of time might also be relevant. Here, we can open curriculum theorising to post-colonial reasoning [see Anderson-Levitt (2007), as an example Marino (2011)] or modernity theories (see Pohlmann, 2006).

Finally, with this article, we have also presented an argument for the necessity of an increasing consciousness concerning which terms we apply to describe curriculum processes in varying contexts. When we discuss spatial questions, we should agree on what new terms (such as space) can mean and how they relate to the traditional terminology of our field (levels). In doing so, we avoid confusing terms. We would also avoid the development of an understanding that particular concepts are of greater value than others, or the acceptance of conflated descriptions of reality, where everything relates to everything.

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Uploading, downloading and uploading again – concepts for policy integration in education research

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This article focuses on Nordic education policy research, investigating the connections between international and national education policy developments and the consequences of these for curriculum and assessment. Drawing on a study of Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) recommendations for the development of education policy in Norway, supplemented by a document analysis of a comprehensive OECD review of evaluation and assessment frameworks for improving school outcomes this article considers the viewpoint of Nordic education research. The aim of the paper is to discuss the potential of adopting a broader viewpoint in education research that utilises theoretical and analytical concepts employed within European integration studies.

Keywords: *education research; policy borrowing; policy translation; policy integration*

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A central component of global development in educational policy formation during the last 30–40 years is the assessment of learning outcomes to monitor national educational systems (Kellaghan & Greaney, 2001). This development has led to the expanded use of learning outcomes in the curriculum and the assessment of individual achievements (Adam, 2004; Ewell, 2005; Shepard, 2000, 2007). The development has been interpreted as a shift in ideology (Fowler, 2012) and the perception of quality (Adam, 2004; Kellaghan & Greaney, 2001), as well as a change in focus from input indicators to outcome indicators (Fuller, 2009).

These developments can be seen as a response to a globalised world and an economy where production has changed, with new technologies and a society marked by heterogeneity in cultures and beliefs (Lundgren, 2006). In today's knowledge society, traditional ideological and centralised steering of education is challenged by rapid changes in information and knowledge (Aasen, 2012). A growing demand for evidence in decision making and the subsequent continuous need for assessment and data are other aspects of the development of the knowledge society (Lawn, 2011; Lundahl & Waldow, 2009).

As noted by Lundgren (2006), these developments lead to changes in power structures that influence how education is governed. Grounded in an understanding of the

curriculum as '... the basic principles for cultural and social reproduction ...', Lundgren (2006) has pointed out that it is necessary to take current changes into consideration and to form critical concepts for the understanding of how curricula are formed and function today.

Recent changes in European education policy have been described as the development of a *European education space*, shaped by supranational organisations and networks, such as the European Union (EU) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (Grek & Rinne, 2011; Ozga, Dahler-Larsen, Segerholm, & Simola, 2011). A particular feature of the developments in Europe is the increased involvement of the OECD in educational policy during the 1990s, especially the introduction of Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), which has evolved into an important tool for the justification of change or to provide support for chosen policy directions (Hopmann, 2008; Lundgren, 2006; Pettersson, 2008; Simola, Ozga, Segerholm, Varjo, & Andersen, 2011). The EU has played a central role in the development through its attempts to create a uniform education area. Due to the new focus in the EU on measurement and outcomes in education and the OECD's recommendations to enhance education effectiveness, equity and economic wealth (e.g., through PISA), a shared policy agenda has emerged. This has

significantly increased the strength of the OECD in collaboration with the EU, as well as in other parts of the world, resulting in the construction of a *global education policy field* (Grek & Rinne, 2011).

In this globalised education policy arena, the impact of international education policy developments, for example, the developments toward a stronger performance and results orientation in curriculum and assessment, on national educational policy has recently attracted much attention in education research. Studies have addressed questions concerning how international bodies, such as the OECD (Blossing, Imsen, & Moos, 2014; Lundahl & Waldow, 2009), the EU (Lawn, 2011; Ozga et al., 2011) and league leading countries (Steiner-Khamisi, 2014), influence and define national policies. In the majority of the literature, national developments are interpreted as more or less direct or indirect consequences of international influence. These international influences are often discussed in terms of representing a threat to national characteristics, traditions, autonomy and/or integrity (Antikainen, 2006; Blossing et al., 2014; Møller & Skedsmo, 2013; Rinne, Kallo, & Hokka, 2004; Telhaug, Mediås, & Aasen, 2006). Some studies have examined how international education policies introduce particular topics and concepts into domestic policies (Mausethagen, 2013; Prøitz, 2014a, 2014b; Young, 2009) and legitimise or delegitimise national policies (Pettersson, 2008, 2014). Other studies have investigated how international policies are translated into variations of national policies, depending on national historic heritage, culture, traditions and constitutional mindsets (Hopmann, 2008; Forsberg & Pettersson, 2014; Karseth & Sivesind, 2010; Pettersson, 2014).

There seem to be few studies within Nordic education research addressing questions of if and how national education policies are reflected in international policies and whether and how national policies contribute to the shaping of the international education policy agenda. A previous study described how education policies in Europe are fluid, changing and driven by international pressures, being ‘... simultaneously located in and produced by the global, the idea of the European and the national’ (Grek & Rinne, 2011, p. 48). Another study emphasised that interactions between the international and the domestic are complex and seldom unidirectional (Forsberg & Pettersson, 2014). Nevertheless, among researchers in education, the characteristics of this fluidity, complex interchange and multidirectional relationship seem to attract less attention than the more international influences on domestic policy development.

A substantial number of studies have examined how educational reforms transgress boundaries via *reception* (defined as the analysis of reasons for the attractiveness of a reform elsewhere), *translation* (defined as the act of local adaption, modification, or reframing of an imported

reform), and borrowing and lending (Ochs, 2006; Ochs & Phillips, 2002; Steiner-Khamisi, 2014; Steiner-Khamisi & Waldow, 2012). The usefulness of the analytical concepts applied within this line of investigations is also discussed but without any conclusions being made (Ochs & Phillips, 2002; Steiner-Khamisi, 2014). Considering the flow of resources, information, knowledge and people within a globalised education policy field, it seems reasonable to infer that if international policies can influence national education policies through reception, translation or borrowing and lending, then domestic policies may also have an impact on international education policy development. However, these issues seem to be understudied by researchers in education.

Against this backdrop, the purpose of this article is to discuss the need for a two-way lens in the analysis of education policy development within a globalised education policy field. The study is inspired by key concepts used in European policy integration studies that emphasise a sequential perspective on policy development. The approach supplements the traditional concepts of bottom-up and top-down perspectives on policy development processes with the key concepts of *uploading* and *downloading*. The use of concepts mostly associated with ICT can also be considered as a reference to the availability and rapidity of information exchange today, which underscores the complexity of these processes. The study discusses these issues, drawing on OECD documents and using the Norway–OECD relationship as an example.

The article is organised in five sections. This first section introduces the topic, purpose and organisation of the article. The second section presents theoretical and analytical perspectives on policy flows between the international and the national. The methodological approach of the article is also presented in this section. In the third section, policy downloading is illustrated through an overview of OECD recommendations in three OECD thematic reviews considered to have had a considerable impact on Norwegian education policy development in the last 20 years. To illustrate policy uploading, the overview is supplemented with the results of a document analysis of a recent and comprehensive OECD review of evaluation and assessment frameworks for improving school outcomes titled *Synergies for Better Learning* (OECD, 2013). In the fourth section, the results of the study are discussed. The conclusion is presented in the fifth section.

Theoretical perspectives on policy integration

Europeanisation has become a leading concept in studies of the EU and European integration (Börzel & Panke, 2013). The concept generally refers to the interaction between the EU and its member states or third countries and is broadly discussed in terms of two perspectives: bottom-up and top-down Europeanisation.

Bottom-up Europeanisation refers to how the member states and other national actors shape EU policies. This line of research studies whether and how member states are able to upload their preferences to the EU. Within this perspective, the EU is understood as an arena where actors compete and cooperate in the making of EU policies and the shaping of EU integration processes (Börzel & Panke, 2013). Top-down Europeanisation represents the reverse approach where analyses focus on how the EU shapes institutions, processes and political outcomes in member states and third countries. This perspective focuses on the analysis of whether and how states download EU policies that lead to national change, looking for explanations to domestic change (Börzel & Panke, 2013).

Researchers in this field who study policy cycles or long-term interactions between the EU and member states have introduced a third approach, described as a sequential perspective (Börzel & Panke, 2013). In this perspective, member states are considered proactive shapers of EU policies, institutions, and processes by downloading EU policies and adapting to them (Börzel & Panke, 2013). They also exert significant effects at EU level by uploading when member states try to reduce misfits between the EU and domestic systems by shaping EU decisions (Börzel & Panke, 2013). Within this perspective, a successful ‘uploader state’ makes its own preferences heard, so that policy, political processes, or institutions reflects its interests. As such, the sequential perspective can be considered a synthesis of the bottom-up and top-down Europeanisation perspectives.

The previous can be summarised into three broad notions of integration, as outlined below.

- **Uploading:** A bottom-up approach describing how member states shape EU policies (e.g., by ‘uploading’ their preferences to EU institutions), thereby extending policy content and scope.
- **Downloading:** A top-down approach describing how the EU shapes institutions, processes and political outcomes in terms of whether and how EU policies are ‘downloaded’ and require domestic change.
- **Upload – download – upload:** A sequential approach describing how member states shape the EU (by uploading), how the EU feeds back into its member states (by downloading) and how the latter reacts in changing properties of the EU (again uploading).

As shown in Fig. 1, the three approaches can be illustrated as a circular or spiral process.

The literature offers several explanations for how member states become successful uploaders. Studies have shown that the share of votes a member state (their power) has in the EU is important but that this does not determine processes because informal institutional consensus norms



Fig. 1. Sequential approach of downloading and uploading (figure inspired by Börzel & Panke, 2013).

are also at play. Hence, successful uploader states enter into coalitions with other member states (Panke, 2010). Another important aspect of successful uploading is the ability to take part in negotiation and bargaining and to create arguments that resonate with the beliefs and norms of others in ideational processes. Studies have shown that good arguments can be persuasive, even when a less powerful state takes the lead (Panke, 2010).

Method

Recommendations made by the OECD in three thematic reviews on education policy developments in Norway (OECD, 1988, 2002, 2011) and a recent OECD report (OECD, 2013) containing recommendations on how to improve school outcomes based on an evaluation and assessment in 28¹ countries were used to analyse uploading and downloading.

The OECD country reviews, thematic surveys, and evaluations and recommendations related to them are considered as central channels of influence and one of the most substantiated tools of the OECD (Rinne et al., 2004). OECD analyses of countries are reported to be the most quoted expression of views on education policy in several countries (Rinne et al., 2004).

The OECD (1988, 2002, 2011) reports in this study were expressly chosen because they have been consistently referred to in Norwegian education research and in key policy documents. They were also selected due to their scope on the curriculum and assessments. The investigation of recommendations presented forms an overview of the Norwegian education policy development seen in

¹Twenty-five countries were actively involved in the review. Fifteen countries were the focus of country reports and were visited by an external OECD panel.

relation to the three high impact OECD reports and illustrates the phenomenon of *policy downloading*.

The overview was supplemented by a document-based analysis of the OECD (2013) report titled *Synergies for better learning: An International Perspective on Evaluation and Assessment*, which was based on a comprehensive OECD review of evaluation and assessment frameworks for improving school outcomes. This document was chosen because of its extensive coverage of countries and its focus on evaluation and assessment. In total, 28 countries took part in the study, with 25 countries actively engaged in the review. These countries encompass a wide range of economic and social contexts, as well as a variety of approaches to evaluation and assessment in school systems. The countries that actively participated in the review prepared a detailed background report, following a standard set of guidelines to enable comparison between countries. Fifteen countries, including Norway, took part in a detailed review, which was undertaken by a team consisting of members of the OECD secretariat and external experts (OECD, 2013). With this as a backdrop, the document is considered as a suitable source for the investigation into the phenomenon of *policy uploading*.

The present study examined the presence and descriptions of Norwegian (and Nordic) policies in the report. To identify the frequency of specific terms mentioned in the Pdf version of the report, electronic searches were conducted using the key term 'Norway' with the advanced search function of the Acrobat Reader program. The same search was conducted using the names of the other participating countries and one non-participant country (the U.S.). The resulting simple word count was supplemented with in-depth readings of the report. This approach does not provide evidence of the realities of policy or practices, but it offers a systematic approach to which policy problems and goals that are brought forward and which are left aside (Saarinen, 2008). The overview of the discourse in the report illustrates the phenomenon of policy uploading in international educational policy introduced by a supranational authority.

The analysis of the four documents provides a platform to discuss aspects of theoretical and analytical concepts of uploading and downloading in the context of the Norway-OECD relationship.

Context of the study: the Norway–OECD relationship

Norway has been a member of the OECD since 1961. Kjell Eide, a prominent Norwegian government official and OECD official in the mid-1960s, described how Norway and the Nordic countries clearly inspired OECD messages and recommendations at the time (Eide, 1990). Eide described how the ideas were considered in several countries, including the U.K. and U.S., as well as Ireland, Austria, Belgium, Germany, France, New Zealand and Australia.

Eide (1990) noted how the same ideas were valuable to Nordic countries as OECD recommendations and 'OECD blessings' for the underlying policy directions in a period of strong expansion and reform domestically. He also describes an agreement made between the Nordic ministers of education in the 1960s to collaborate in international organisations, with Norway given the role of coordinator in the OECD. He recounts how representatives from the Nordic countries met for discussions prior to every meeting and how these resulted in a conception of a relatively homogeneous Nordic education policy that stayed in the OECD.

Today, the Norwegian permanent delegation in the OECD consists of 10 full-time positions.² The Norwegian delegation is in daily contact with Norwegian authorities, the OECD secretariat and other OECD member countries. The ambassador of the Norwegian delegation is the permanent representative of Norway in the council. The other members of the Norwegian delegation are responsible for following work in specific fields, as well as maintaining daily contact with the Norwegian ministries engaged in the work of the OECD. Within education, Norway has a traditionally strong relationship with the OECD through participation in a wide range of OECD studies and activities, such as the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI),³ the PISA and Indicators of National Education Systems (INES).⁴ The CERI is one of the most important institutions for education in the OECD. It was initially funded by external sources, but today its budget is directly dependent on funding by the member countries. As such the CERI has been described as more vulnerable to pressure than other departments of the OECD because of its reliance on such funding (Rinne et al., 2004). Norway also has several temporary delegates and experts from the education ministry and the Directorate for Education and Training in secondment positions of up to 2 years in the OECD, which is not unique to the education sector but applies to several sectors in Norwegian policy. Thus, Norway participates with Norwegian policy analysts, national experts, and scholars in discussions and decision-making processes in a wide range of arenas in the OECD.

OECD recommendations for Norway 1988, 2002 and 2011

Below, the main points of the OECD reports (1988, 2002, 2011) are described, followed by considerations of Norwegian policy development seen in the light of the OECD recommendations.

²See <http://www.norway-oecd.org/english/members/#.U99SO14-a> for more information. Retrieved August 1, 2014.

³Norway has one representative on the CERI board. Until recently, the director of the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training was the Norwegian representative.

⁴See <http://www.udir.no/Stottemeny/Om-direktoratet/Internasjonalt-arbeid2/> for more information (only in Norwegian). Retrieved August 1, 2014.

Over the past 20 years, considerable efforts have been made to develop and introduce a comprehensive system for monitoring the quality of the education system in Norway. In the Norwegian research literature and policy documents, the starting point for these efforts are considered to be the OECD report published in 1988 titled, *Review of National Policies for Education in Norway* (Aasen et al., 2012; Møller & Skedsmo, 2013; OECD, 2002; Prøitz, 2014a, 2014b; Telhaug et al., 2006; Tveit, 2014).

1988 OECD review of national policies for education in Norway

The recommendations made by the OECD review team in 1988 have been widely used to legitimise a wide range of policy initiatives described in a number of documents, such as the annual national budget, working papers, Official Norwegian Reports and reports to the Storting (the parliament) over the last 20 years.

The report highlighted three main concerns:

1. The OECD panel questioned how the Norwegian education authorities could obtain information that was solid enough for decision making in a system as decentralised as Norway.
2. The OECD panel strongly recommended that Norway should develop a system for evaluation of Norwegian schools that clarified the responsibilities of the different levels of the system.
3. The OECD panel also recommended a shift in focus from changes in structure to the quality of the system (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2011; OECD, 1988, 2002; Official Norwegian Report, 2002 no 10).

The two later OECD reports (2002, 2011) link back to the 1988 report and seem to follow a specific argumentative logic, pointing in the direction of establishing a more outcomes- and results-oriented system.

2002 review of national policies for education – lifelong learning

According to the review team, Norway ‘in the spirit of co-operation and (...) the exchange of views’ invited the OECD to undertake an examination of lifelong learning to share their experience and learn from others (OECD, 2002). By the end of the 1990s, Norway had implemented an extensive lifelong learning reform, securing all adults with incomplete formal education individual rights to adult education (The Competence Reform Report to the Storting No. 42 (1997–1998). At the time, Norway was considered a leader within the field of lifelong learning.

The OECD team conducted a comprehensive examination of the Norwegian education system. In the *OECD Review of National Policies for Education – Lifelong Learning*, the OECD (2002) stated that the 1988 report had a great impact on the development of the Norwegian

education system. The team declared that: ‘The evaluation of educational reforms has been strengthened, information systems and better statistics have been introduced, and reporting of results have been underscored’ (OECD, 2002). The 2002 OECD panel recommended that the Ministry of Education, Research, and Church Affairs should shift its emphasis from a supply-driven model to a demand-driven model in its shaping of the educational system. It also recommended that the ministry should shift its focus from inputs to outcomes, noting that: ‘The learning outcomes should not be expressed in terms of grades, course content or performance ratings, but rather descriptions of what an individual knows and is able to do’. The review panel pointed out that this would not be a simple task and that it would certainly require creativity and hard work (OECD, 2002).

2011 review of evaluation and assessment frameworks for improving school outcomes

The OECD (2011) report focused, in particular, on assessment and evaluation and was part of a larger OECD study titled, *Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes*. Norway was one of 15 countries that participated in the review with a visiting external panel from the OECD.

The OECD panel reported that it was positive about the strong political commitment and political consensus within the education sector to prioritise issues relating to the evaluation and assessment of education in Norway. The OECD also acknowledged the considerable progress that had occurred since 2004, including the introduction and further development of the national quality assessment system (Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, 2011).⁵ The review panel recommended that Norway should:

- Clarify learning goals and quality criteria to guide assessment and evaluation
- Complete the evaluation and assessment framework and make it coherent
- Further strengthen the competence for evaluation and assessment among teachers, school leaders and school owners (OECD, 2011)

Realisation of OECD recommendations

The implementation of a system for quality monitoring in education in Norway as recommended by the 1988 OECD panel took more than a decade, despite a range of efforts.⁶ Moving from a tradition of input- and process-oriented education policy towards a results- and

⁵Retrieved February 2014 from <http://www.udir.no/Tilstand/Forskning/Rapporter/Ovrige-forfattere/Tre-rad-til-norsk-skole-OECD-rapport/>.

⁶EMIL-project, Report to the Storting no. 33 (1991/92), Report to the Storting no. 47 (1995/96), Resolution by the Storting no. 96 (1996/97), The Moe-report 1997, Report to the Storting no. 28 (1998/99).

outcomes-orientated system represented a significant shift in Norwegian education policy.

Over the past 30 years, on-going tension between governmental ambitions for regulating education and professionals in pedagogy resisting the government's interventions seem to have influenced Norwegian education policy (Telhaug, 1994). Drawing on arguments that schools are special organisations that cannot be governed by market, competition, and production or managed by objectives and controlled by results, professionals in pedagogy have suggested alternative approaches, which emphasise concepts such as 'the professional teacher' and 'school-based evaluation'. The main arguments emphasised that the process of improvement had to start at the school level with teachers who were trusted. In the 1990s, this led to a policy combining external control of inputs and school-based evaluations (Telhaug, 1994). The education reforms of the 1990s focused on broad general goals, with little attention given to mechanisms that could ensure the attainment of these goals. The reforms of the 2000s addressed the challenges of establishing new mechanisms and tools for ensuring that goals relating student results, outcomes and accountability were fulfilled (Hatch, 2013). Norwegian education policy seems to have been based upon a strong belief in the construction of structures and systems, the provision of inputs and the definition of processes through regulations and national curriculums. Over the past 15 years, the increasing focus on results and outcomes and innovations and practices in educational assessment in Norway has challenged this belief and invoked ideological disputes about educational assessment (Tveit, 2014).

The developments in Norway have also been characterised as a halfway move towards accountability, without traditional follow-up mechanisms of high-stakes incentives and rewards trying to find a compromise between answerability for the achievement of goals and responsibility for attainment of broader purposes (Hatch, 2013). Some researchers have argued that the developments in Norway have introduced a system that emphasises a 'softer' approach, which focuses on learning processes through a strong commitment to the central principles of assessment for learning (Norwegian Directorate for and Training, 2011; Hopfenbeck, Tool, Flores, & El Mari, 2013; Throndsen, Hopfenbeck, Lie, & Dale, 2009; Tveit, 2014). The previous suggests several reasons why it was difficult to establish a consensus domestically on the issues raised by the 1988 OECD panel. As pointed out by the 2002 OECD panel, this was no simple task.

Nevertheless, the PISA results of 2001, together with other coinciding events,⁷ pushed forward the development of a quality monitoring system at the beginning of the

2000s. The period after the first Norwegian PISA results were published has been described as a time of national shock and a bruised self-image caused by average results. It has also been described as a time when Norwegian education policy lost its innocence and suddenly got busy (Baune, 2007). The National Quality Assessment System was introduced in 2004. In 2006, the extensive 'knowledge promotion reform' was launched in primary and secondary education and training. Central elements of the reform were: a national outcomes-oriented curriculum, national tests, decentralisation, governing by goals and local accountability (Aasen et al., 2012; Prøitz, 2014b).

Since 2007, Norway has initiated a range of measures to improve evaluation and assessment in the education sector. Among other initiatives, it has revised the regulations for assessment, developed guidelines to supplement the outcome-based national curriculum and launched an extensive national project for the improvement of competence in evaluations and assessments by teachers, school leaders and 'school owners' (local authorities). The national project to improve the competence of teachers, school leaders and local authorities is on-going, and work is continuing to further improve the National Quality Assessment Framework.

The different policy recommendations of the OECD reports can be considered to have been downloaded, as most have been realised in one way or another in Norwegian education (Prøitz, 2014a). However, these recommendations likely worked in concert, resulting in a movement that led to the established outcomes-oriented Norwegian education policy of today (Prøitz, 2014a). The list of OECD recommendations formed a platform for changes in Norwegian education policy. They reinforced a results-oriented policy by introducing learning outcomes and assessments designed to improve the learning outcomes of all students and to hold actors accountable (Prøitz, 2014a). The OECD recommendations and a timeline identifying more extensive national activities are summarised in Table I.

The table does not attempt to represent all the recommendations of the OECD panels or the great variety of activities and initiatives taken within Norwegian education policy during the described period. Its purpose is to illustrate what seems to be a consistent line between the OECD's recommendations and more extensive and overarching events in Norwegian education policy development. It also illustrates how the OECD recommendations become more detailed and specific with the growing sophistication of the Norwegian system.

OECD 2013 synergies for better learning report

The OECD (2013) report titled *Synergies for better learning: An international perspective on assessment and learning* is an international comparative analysis. The aim of the report was to provide policy advice to countries on

⁷A comprehensive national research-based evaluation presented a harsh critique of the last education reform (Haug, 2003), and two official Norwegian reports suggesting a new education policy were published in 2002 and 2004 (NOU, 2002, p. 10, 2003, p. 6).

Table I. Overview of OECD recommendations and national activities

OECD reports and recommendations	National activities
1988 Review of national policies for education in Norway Shift from changes in structure to the quality of the system Influence through knowledge, good practices and critical evaluation	1991–1999: Several enquiries launched and reports produced 2001 PISA 2004 National quality assessment system 2006 Knowledge promotion reform 2009 Revised national regulations for assessment 2010 National assessment for learning project launched
2002 Review of national policies for education – lifelong learning Shift from a supply-driven to a demand-driven model Shift from inputs to outcomes by learning outcomes	
2011 Review on evaluation and assessment frameworks for improving school outcomes Clarify learning goals and criteria to guide assessment and evaluation Complete the assessment and evaluation framework and make it coherent. Strengthen competence for evaluation and assessment among teachers, school leaders and school owners	

how evaluation and assessment arrangements could be embedded within a consistent framework. The stated purpose of the report was to improve the quality, equity and efficiency of school education.⁸ The underlying project was introduced in 2009. According to the OECD (2013: footnote 6), the project was an answer ‘to the strong interest in evaluation and assessment issues evident at national and international levels’ among member countries.

Phase I content analysis – simple word count

The content analysis presented herein examined how Norway and the Nordic countries are presented in the report. First, a simple word count was performed to determine the numbers of times the 28 participating countries were mentioned. This provided a general overview of the frequencies of references to the countries in the report (see Fig. 2).

As per the word count shown in Fig. 2, countries with traditionally strong assessment cultures, such as Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand and the U.K., are most frequently mentioned (above the average of 197 times), as could be expected. Perhaps more surprisingly, Belgium and the Netherlands are also frequently mentioned. References to the Nordic countries (Norway, Denmark and Sweden) are around the average point, with Norway and Denmark mentioned most often and Finland and Iceland mentioned less often. The number of references to the Nordic countries all-together amounts to 14%

of all the other countries mentioned. This can be considered substantial compared to the references of the expert countries, which received the percentage of 28 all together.

Phase II content analysis – in depth reading

Simple word counts provide only an indication of the attention paid to a particular country in the report. Therefore, the word count was supplemented with in-depth readings to provide a closer look on how the Nordic countries, in particular, were described in the report. On reading the report, it is evident that the Nordic countries are relatively often referred to in highlighted self-contained boxes (Fig. 3), described as follows in the report: ‘A number of particularly innovative and promising initiatives ...’ The Nordic countries are referred to in 20 of 80 boxes presented in the report.

Most of the boxes where the Nordic countries are referred to contain examples of measures taken to promote aspects of evaluation and assessment often described in the report as being holistic and formative approaches. They also emphasise measures involving a high degree of collaboration and involvement of actors that promote dialogue for reaching common views and the involvement of student unions and teacher unions in the creation of formative feedback to teachers. The boxes also refer to the promotion of school self-evaluation to improve school results, as well as the need to take account of factors that affect student learning outside of schools.

In contrast, with regard to countries with traditionally stronger assessment cultures, the boxes emphasise other topics, such as data information systems of objective

⁸See the link for more information and access to the report. Retrieved August 1, 2014 from <http://www.oecd.org/education/school/oecdreviewonevaluationandassessmentframeworksforimprovingchooloutcomes.htm>.

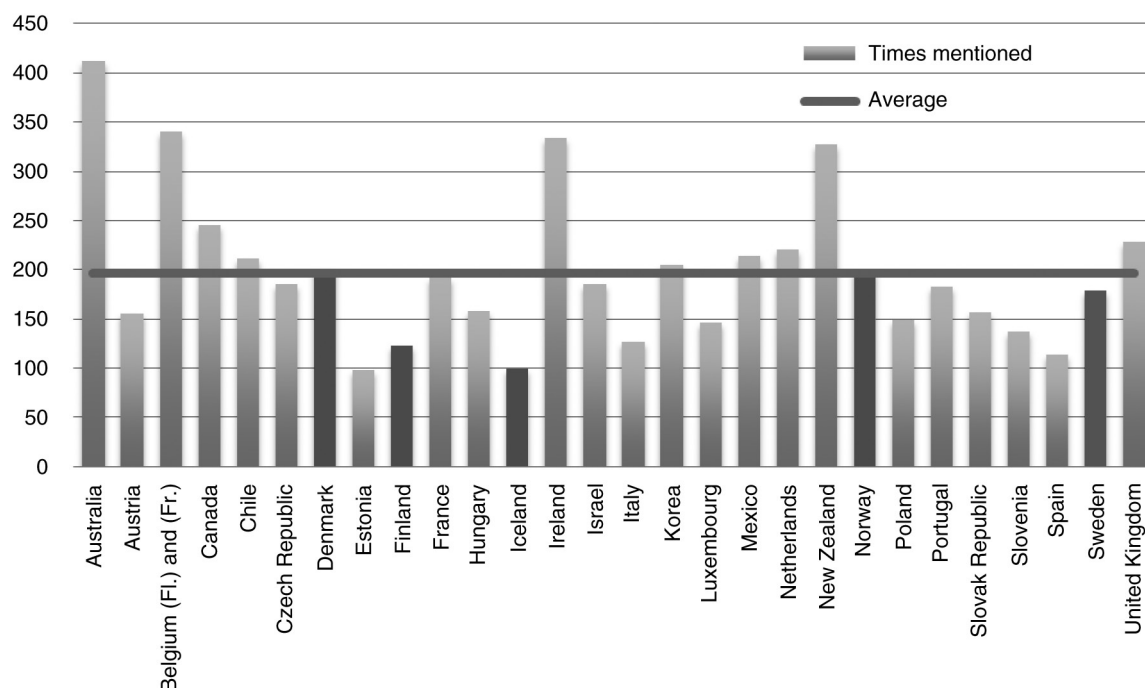


Fig. 2. Frequencies of references to the participating countries in the *Synergies for better learning report* (OECD, 2013).

diagnostic information, policies on reporting student performance, innovations in reporting systems for the standardisation of teachers' judgement, and appraisal systems for registration and certification of teachers. They also highlight the role of self-reviews and external

reviews in school evaluation and the need to recruit senior educators to join external school evaluation teams and have centrally developed tools for self-evaluation, in addition to targeted training and school self-evaluation, of school principals.

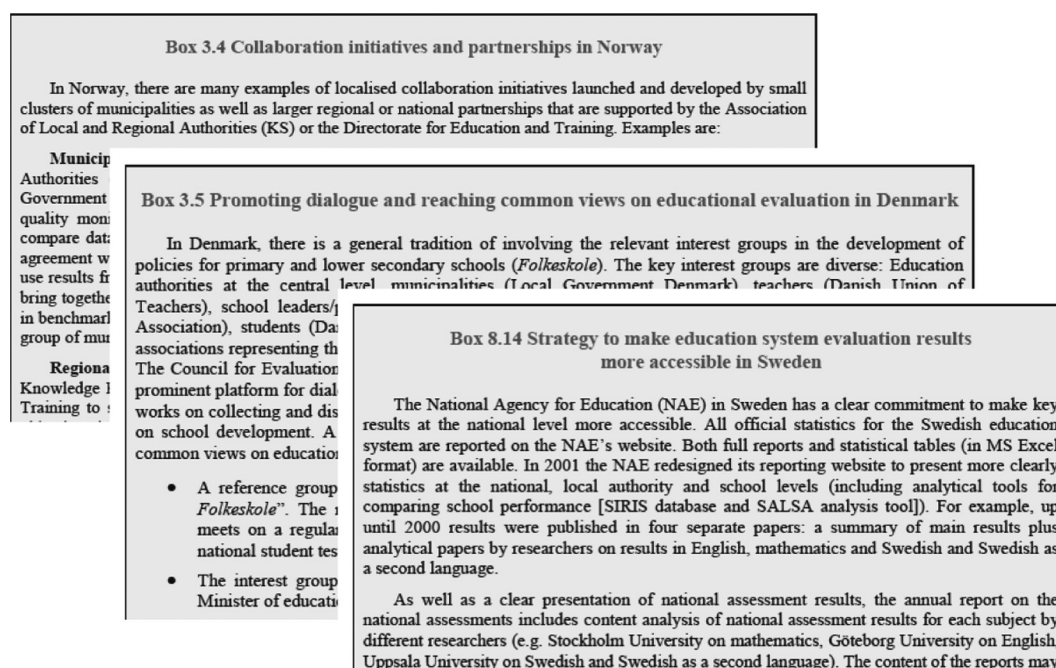


Fig. 3. Examples of particularly innovative and promising initiatives (OECD, 2013).

In general, the recommendations in the OECD report seem to be promoting a holistic approach to the formation of a coherent whole in evaluation and assessment that implies a change in focus, which possibly downplays the focus on testing and assessment for accountability. The OECD clearly recommended maintaining the focus on classroom practices by embracing the value of all types of evaluations and assessments and avoiding problems, such as teaching for the test, created by these due to their role in accountability. The recommendation seems to represent a more balanced approach to assessment and evaluation in education emphasising the importance of holistic, process-oriented and multi-dimensional approaches. This is further emphasised by the recommendation of placing the student at the centre (e.g., by monitoring broader learning outcomes with more wide-ranging performance measures and drawing on both quantitative and qualitative data) (OECD, 2013).

Arenas for downloading and uploading

The previous sections described how the Norwegian relation to the OECD takes several forms. First, as a membership relation through participation and funding of OECD activities, such as PISA studies and the CERI. Second, Norway is involved in the OECD through national representation and participation in governing bodies, as well as through national experts and policy analysts visiting the OECD for long or short periods. This involvement can be considered a potential arena for both downloading and uploading, as well as sequences of such through a variety of meeting points for dialogue, exchange of educational ideas and decision making for education policy development.

Downloading of OECD recommendations by Norway

The recommendations made by the OECD in its three reports (1988, 2002, 2013) and the seemingly corresponding Norwegian initiatives and activities can be interpreted as Norway systematically downloading OECD policies over a period of 25 years. At the same time, the analysis illustrates how difficult it seems to have been to make the shift from an input- and process-oriented education system in Norway to a more results- and outcomes oriented system. The main ideas and recommendations of the 1988 OECD panel were realised with the education reform of 2006, nearly 20 years later, illustrating that changing curriculum and assessment practices does not happen quickly.

Indications of successful uploading

The document analysis showed that the Nordic countries had a significant place in the OECD 2013 report. The simple word count showed that Norway, Sweden and Denmark were mentioned frequently, both individually and together as a Nordic cluster of countries, when compared with that of other more prominent countries

within the field of assessment. Further, Nordic measures emphasised as innovative and promising in the report promoting aspects of participation, inclusion and equity between groups (teacher and student involvement and participation in questions concerning assessment) in general, might have contributed to a holistic and formative approach to assessment and evaluation. These aspects (i.e., participation, inclusion and equity) can be argued to resonate well with Norwegian traditions in education in general (Telhaug et al., 2006). It is also recognisable in terms of a 'softer' Norwegian approach to evaluation and assessment only going 'halfway' in accountability compared to traditional Anglo-Saxon approaches to accountability (Hatch, 2012; Tveit, 2014). The results of the document analysis suggest that Norway (possibly together with the Nordic countries) might have had an impact on OECD recommendations, promoting holistic approaches that emphasises the need to consider the broader range of factors that influence students' learning and results.

However, this could also have been the result of coincidental developments in the OECD or the result of a general movement among the participating countries in the OECD study advocating holistic and formative approaches. Another possibility is that general developments within the field of evaluation and assessment coincided with the characteristics of the Norwegian evaluation and assessment policy. Alternatively, Norway (and the Nordic countries) may have uploaded and thus widened the scope and content of OECD recommendations for evaluations and assessments according to their preferences and, as such, acted as a successful uploader state within the OECD.

Providing evidence for such uploading activity requires rigorous and systematic documentation and investigations of the intermediate processes and sequences of dialogue, as well as of national and international developments. In lay terms, this means closely studying what whom is bringing to the table where, when and for what purposes and with what impact?

Uploading – downloading and uploading again

Most of the research identified in the review recognises that downloading is not a unidirectional process but complex and fluid (Forsberg & Pettersson, 2014, Steiner-Khamsi, 2014; Grek & Rinne, 2011). Researchers have also argued that the international scene does not represent an external power but rather is a part of domestically induced rhetoric (Steiner-Khamsi, 2014). Eide (1990) reported that Norway and the Nordic countries influenced OECD recommendations the 1960s and that the same ideas were valuable to the Nordic countries as 'OECD blessings' in a period of expansion and reform. Eide implies a situation of domestic ideas on a journey uploaded to the OECD and later

downloaded as OECD recommendations to support domestic policy directions at the time. This illustrates the complexity of these matters, as well as the importance of identifying drivers, motives and initiating actors underlying education policy development. The review of the literature on issues such as reception, translation, borrowing, and lending and the results and discussion in this article lead to the question of why Nordic education researchers seldom seem to be interested in the processes of uploading in education policy development or in the intermediate processes and sequences of uploading and downloading.

Within the cross-national policy literature on borrowing, researchers have highlighted the need to apply a bifocal lens to local patterns, as well as transnational patterns (Steiner-Khamsi, 2014). Focusing on the dual processes of policy reception and translation are considered important for the further advancement of policy studies (Steiner-Khamsi, 2014). However, these perspectives do not seem to consider the role and actions of the nation states as proactive entities in the meeting rooms of international organisations in the international policy arena. They also seem to fail to consider the possibility of nation states shaping transnational patterns through their powers as members, funders and participants in international organisations, such as the OECD.

Conclusion and implications

Studies of how international/supranational organisations influence domestic policies in education are important, as these have a growing impact on the lives of students, teachers, school leaders and communities in general. Studies on what makes countries change and reform their education systems, curricula and assessment policies in line with international movements are of importance. Adopting a one-dimensional national perspective offers only a restricted view of the actors, drivers, initiatives and motives involved in change. Steiner-Khamsi (2014) proclaimed that globalisation is not an external force but rather the result of domestically induced rhetoric mobilised at specific times to generate reform and build coalitions. Many studies have documented how domestic policies seem to pick and choose between internationally developed recommendations and advise transforming these into what fits the realities of national policies (Forsberg & Pettersson, 2014; Hatch, 2013; Hopmann, 2008; Karseth & Sivesind, 2010; Prøitz, 2014a, 2014b; Rinne et al., 2004; Steiner-Khamsi, 2014). As such, the way in which actors moves on and between domestic and international arenas, as well as how international developments are used domestically, is an important area of study for educational researchers to ensure an informed debate on national education policy developments in the fields of curriculum and assessment.

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Who governs the Swedish school? Local school policy research from a historical and transnational curriculum theory perspective

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In this article, we present a comparative research project on municipal school policy in Sweden 1950–2010 which in our view contributes to the research fields of education policy and curriculum theory. Our project which started in 2014 links to a line of international research on education policy concerned with the tensions between decentralisation and globalisation and comparative research investigating transnational transfers of education policy ideas. In this article, we provide some preliminary findings which display municipal school policy dealing with national and transnational school initiatives and affecting local school actions. Most of the findings in this article concern the time period 1950–1975, during which the present two Swedish school forms, Grundskolan (a 9-year comprehensive school) and Gymnasieskolan (upper secondary school), were introduced and established. We compare local policy, through six interrelated indicators, in two municipalities with different structures and origins. On the basis of our findings, we conclude that municipal school policy research in a comparative and historical perspective is an important field of research as it reveals the complexity of school governance. Historical studies of municipal school policy and practice are crucial for exploring different dimensions of curriculum theory, including the transnational dimension.

Keywords: *local school policy; local school history; education policy; curriculum theory; globalization*

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‘Who governs the Swedish school? Municipality, school and state during 60 years of Swedish school reforms – in a world of change’ is the name of an ongoing comparative research project, which started in 2014 (Román, Hallsén, Nordin, & Ringarp, 2014). We analyse municipal school policy in Sweden during the period 1950–2010, examining six decades of recurrent school reforms. The 3-year project comprises five empirical studies and a concluding analysis.¹ Empirical data are collected, mainly by scrutinising the municipal archives, primarily city council and school board archives, of the four municipalities of Stockholm, Malmö, Växjö and Tierp. In addition, we make use of data from other official and semi-official sources, such as the National School Agency and the Swedish Municipal Association (SKL) and its predecessors. We will also interview official representatives for complementary information.

The aim of this article is to present some preliminary findings from the project as an important contribution to

the research fields of education policy and curriculum theory. The municipal aspect is, in both branches, in need of further investigation, especially from a historical perspective. In Sweden at least, local school history has mainly been restricted to portraying individual school actors (students, teachers and principals) and specific schools, or describing the efforts of national policy actors to implement national decisions and guidelines. Local school policy – which in the case of Sweden equals municipal school policy² – has been a neglected field of research in Sweden, at least from a historical standpoint, especially compared to the number of national school policy studies. Studies of municipal school policy changes will also help to explore the concepts of nationalisation and municipalisation, labels used quite casually in the contemporary school debate in Sweden.³

²In international research, ‘local’ seems to be the common word used in studies on policy making in cities or smaller communities. In this article, ‘local school policy’ thus refers to such policy making in a more general sense, while ‘municipal school policy’ more specifically refers to the administrative division in Sweden.

³We will not explicitly discuss these concepts here, and neither will we explicitly discuss our findings in terms of effects on student outcomes, but we will address these aspects in future reports.

¹Román (2011, 2013a, 2013b, 2014) has carried out four previous historical studies on local school policy in Stockholm, which together work as pre-studies to our current project.

The article is divided into three sections:

1. *Local school policy research in a transnational context.* A brief overview of the national school reform history of Sweden is followed by a presentation of our theoretical framework.
2. *Historical investigations.* We provide some preliminary findings, which show municipal school policy dealing with national and transnational school initiatives and affecting local school actions, by comparing Stockholm and Tierp, the largest and the smallest of the four chosen municipalities. Most of the findings in this article concern the time period 1950–1975, during which the present two Swedish school forms, *Grundskolan* (a 9-year comprehensive school) and *Gymnasieskolan* (upper secondary school), were introduced and established. This reform package will be referred to as ‘the reforms of the 1960s’. To a large degree, the contemporary Swedish school debate still revolves around the same questions that were posed when these two school forms were introduced. In order to make our point, we present six interrelated indicators, demonstrating the importance of historical local school policy studies, both as an object of study in itself and for investigating the multidimensional interplay between school policy – at different levels – and school practice.
3. *Concluding arguments for a comparative and historical approach to local school policy.* On the basis of our preliminary findings, we sum up and sharpen our arguments for historical and comparative local/municipal school policy studies as a contribution to the development of a historically oriented and transnationally informed curriculum theory.

The national school reform history of Sweden – a brief overview

The Swedish national school reform history during the period 1950–2010 oscillates between centralisation and decentralisation. The initial Swedish school reforms of the 1960s were solidly planned in terms of time and resources, based on thorough investigation and school experiments led by researchers. The national school administrators were expected to maintain and develop the initial guidelines, and were given the main responsibility for carrying out reform adjustments on a regular basis (so-called ‘rolling reforms’, cf. Marklund, 1989). A bureaucratic machinery was established which in many ways marked a strengthening of national control over schools (Rothstein, 1986; see also Román, 2011, 2014).

Recurrent calls for increased decentralisation were heard in the 1970s and the 1980s. The school reforms in the 1980s and the 1990s emphasised the importance of local actors – politicians, administrators and school workers (Lundahl, 2005; Ringarp, 2011). The reforms of the 1980s implied changes that affected the local actors in

contradictory ways. These actors gained influence, but at the same time they were also given greater responsibility. Gradually, the municipalities took over some key areas of responsibility from the state, including teacher employment and fiscal distribution of school resources (cf. Ringarp, 2011). The new comprehensive school curriculum of 1980 and the curricula of 1994 emphasised that schooling take place in municipalities and in their local schools. Instead of being governed by detailed regulations formulated at the national level I, a new kind of management based on objectives and outcomes was introduced in the early 1990s. The change in school governing in the 1990s was argued for from different angles. Proponents at both the national and municipal levels supported it because it allowed greater school variation, in terms of methods and content, school administration and school choice opportunities. Many of these proponents emphasised decentralisation as a way to vitalise democracy (Lundahl, 2005). Others emphasised the need to apply liberal market principles more within the public sector.

The transformations of the Swedish school system after 1950 have their specific national features, but also work within the context of a more general, worldwide modernisation process. Education after World War II has been promoted as a key factor for economic progress, national welfare and more equal or at least fairer distribution of educational opportunities and life chances (Waldow, 2014). The pace of educational reforms has varied, and while countries like West Germany and Austria kept the parallel school system, others, including the Scandinavian countries, paved the way for a unified system. But regardless of system all countries embracing industrialisation and economic growth saw the need to dramatically raise their educational standards, and their share of students entering upper secondary education and universities rose rapidly from the 1950s. International organisations such as UNESCO, the EU and the OECD came to play an important role for establishing a shared set of guidelines, forming what has been called an emerging ‘world education culture’ (Meyer, Boli, Thomas, & Ramirez, 1997).

Local school policy research in a transnational context

From an international point of view, the Swedish school has been considered fairly homogeneous, with relatively small regional or social variations in education provision and student outcomes. The Scandinavian countries have gained an international reputation for being pioneers in terms of social engineering, including school adjustments. As researchers have pointed out, this has been an internationally reproduced and spread self-image, rather than an unquestionable state of fact (cf. Larsson, Letell, & Thörn, 2012, ch. 2; Nilsson, 1987). This self-image has also been strongly supported in the domestic school policy rhetoric. It is inherent in the slogan ‘a school for all’, a

claim that the Swedish school system must be equal: significant differences due to social or geographical conditions are not to be tolerated. Accordingly, contemporary studies on Swedish schools and school policy have put the school as a national project at the core. But, from a research standpoint, this national bias has contributed to some municipal distress, especially with regards to studying municipal school policy from a historical curriculum theory perspective. This in turn limits the possibilities to test the assumptions of Swedish school homogeneity and/or increased decentralisation. Curriculum theory in Sweden, following the tradition of Dahllöf (1967, 1971), Lundgren (1972, 1977, 1979, 1984) and Englund (1986, 2005), emphasises the value of studying education in its socio-historical context, taking into account school politics, school administration and school practice. And, as said before, the municipal dimension is essential for understanding the interplay and tensions between national and transnational school initiatives and local school actions (classroom activities). Taking the history of municipal school policy into account is an important aspect of curriculum theory which we find has not been fully recognised in Swedish CT research. The socio-historical context in which historically oriented curriculum theory researchers have interpreted their findings has often been tied to the geographical borders of nation-states, emphasising a national focus at the expense of local and transnational school policy in relation to school practice.

Today there are a number of theoretical approaches in social science which claim that the changes taking place in the late modern society in general and in the public sector in particular are part of wider policy trends travelling beyond as well as within national borders (Karset & Sivesind, 2010). These theoretical approaches, ranging from New Public Management theories to neo-institutionalism, reflexive modernity, governmentality and system theories (Hopmann, 2008), all recognise globalisation as an important feature in this change, although their focal points vary. Following Hopmann (2008), we will relate our findings to this set of theories rather than using one of them as our starting point, and like him we stress the need to recognise that local and national conditions affect the reception and impact of transnational policy.

Another important aspect of the upcoming complexity captured by different globalisation theories is that both global and local forces challenge the national supremacy. In line with this set of theories, different branches of urban research, including urban politics/policy (see Mossberger, Clarke, & John, 2012 for a review, or Dannestam, 2009 for a Swedish example), describe and analyse the tensions and interplay between local, national and international arenas and actors. But researchers disagree on how the national supremacy has been affected. Some claim that the national scope of action has become far more limited as new actors have become

important network players, while others claim that the national scope of action has changed rather than decreased. Either way, a prominent feature in this process of changed relations is that they are unevenly distributed. They affect different parts of the world, different countries, and different regions and communities in different ways. Large cities have been put forward as, in many cases, highly transnational. Generative concepts like 'glocalisation' (Brenner, 2004), 'global cities' (Sassen, 2001) and 'creative classes' (Florida, 2002, 2006), as well as 'urban governance' (cf. Pierre, 2011) all – in specific ways – highlight the connection between globalisation and the increased impact of urban policy, and how this in turn challenges the national political power, implying a shift from a Keynesian welfare state ideal to a more entrepreneurial governance approach. But this additionally implies that some communities – in rural areas or cities in areas where industry has declined – are less likely to be part of the global network building that is presumed to be taking place. In our project, one of our main objectives is to investigate how and to what extent global competition has affected school policy in different municipalities.

The argument of this article thus links to a line of international research on education policy concerned with the tensions between decentralisation and globalisation (Ball, Goodson, & Maguire, 2007; Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012; Ball & Junemann, 2012; Grek et al., 2009; Hopmann, 2008; Hopmann, Brinek, & Retzl, 2007; Karseth & Sivesind, 2010; Lundahl, 2007; Nordin, 2012) and comparative research investigating education policy borrowing and lending, that is, transnational transfers of education policy ideas (cf. Nordin & Sundberg, 2014; Steiner-Khamsi & Waldow, 2012). In this paper, we will argue for the need to approach municipal school policy from a historical perspective in a way that takes the transnational dimension seriously not just as a separate parameter but as a fundamental aspect permeating the entire analyses. This means analyses that incorporate local, national and transnational aspects in order to avoid one-dimensional and simplified interpretations of the complex processes of policy making taking place at the municipal level.

We use the concepts of policy and governance instead of politics and government/governing. Policy, in our case, refers not only to political practice in a formal sense but also to formal and informal political processes and products. Governance is, quite like policy, a concept given many definitions, although the common denominator seems to be its ability to cover the interplay between different policy actors, inside and outside the formal political institutions (cf. Stoker, 1998). In fact, both governance and policy have been claimed to provide a wider understanding of the complexity of politics and political action, and have both often been used to capture a political change that has taken place during the last 30 years or so: governing or government through politics has been replaced by policy

governance. In other words, this implies a change in how politicians perceive and perform their mission, suggesting that they have more or less abandoned the idea of treating political institutions, issues and actions as a self-supportive system in favour of a system with more blurred lines between politics and society.

But arguably this is not only an observed societal change but also a change in the way researchers approach political institutions, issues and actions. Although this new research approach has undoubtedly been launched as a tool for investigating actual political change, it may also work as a new way of investigating policy and politics in general, including historical reanalyses of policy actions from the past, which also take local actions into account. Policy making has always involved more actors than those who have been officially appointed, and it has never taken place solely at the national level (see Pierre, 2011).

Historical investigations: some preliminary findings

In this section, we will now present and compare some findings from Stockholm and Tierp. These locations have been chosen because in many respects they represent opposites with regards to size, location and educational resources. Our findings are preliminary – the Tierp analysis in particular is at an early stage – and possibly we exaggerate and oversimplify the differences between the two municipalities. But our main point with this article is to stress the perhaps obvious yet underestimated variety in municipal school conditions, and the seemingly unsolvable difficulties in reducing them – in this case the gap between urban and rural school governance as a historical fact. This comparative analysis primarily focuses on the period 1950–1975, although in some respects it covers longer time spans. We make use of the following six interrelated indicators to make our point.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. General conditions | Differences in geography, demography, political conditions and educational resources between the two case municipalities |
| 2. Educational infrastructure | The educational resources of the case municipalities when facing the reforms of the 1960s |
| 3. National relations | The municipal–national school policy relationship in the two case municipalities |
| 4. Reform pace | The temporal dimension of the municipal–national school policy relationship |
| 5. Educational efforts | Local initiatives for school experiments, research and development (R&D) |
| 6. Transnational exchanges | International aspects in local school practice and policy |

The first two indicators cover more general conditional aspects, whereas indicators 3–6 cover aspects tied to our empirical findings. They are all interrelated, because (1 and 2) local variations regarding general conditions and educational infrastructure have affected the scope of action for different municipalities with regards to national school policy concerning (3) the capacity to exchange school policy, (4) the temporal consequences of the school policy exchanges, (5) the capacity to develop and support local educational resources, and (6) the capacity to exchange policy and education ideas beyond the national spectrum.

General conditions: large capital city versus rural region

Stockholm and Tierp differ in a number of respects, including geographical position, size and structure, political majorities and educational resources.⁴ Simply put, they represent a large city and a rural community, respectively (see Table 1 below).

Table 1. Population, area and population density in Stockholm and Tierp 2013

Municipality	Population	Area (km ²)	Population density
Stockholm	897,700	187	4,796
Tierp	20,144	1,548	13

Note: Based on statistics from SCB. www.statistikdatabasen.scb.se [Befolkningstäthet (invånare per kvadratkilometer), folkmängd och landareal efter region och kön. År 1991–2013].

The following section provides some basic municipal data to illustrate their different structures and origins. In terms of area, Stockholm is a tenth the size of the rural Tierp, 150 km north of Stockholm, but its population is 44 times larger than Tierp's.

In Stockholm, there are still considerable divisions between different groups of students, brought up in different urban areas, in terms of socio-economic and educational resources. It is by far the most populated Swedish municipality and has, since 1850, experienced periods of strong population growth (1850–1960, 2000–) but also a period of decline (1960–1990) partly as a deliberate response to urbanisation as such. Stockholm has some large industries, mainly within the field of high technology, but is above all a national centre for commerce and administration. The socio-economic distribution is relatively uneven, with a large share of well-off inhabitants and a substantial share of low-income families. The political power in Stockholm has shifted

⁴In addition, Stockholm is the capital of Sweden, which makes it a special case with regards to its national position (That is why we also examine Malmö, another large city, within our project.).

between socialist and non-socialist majorities with periods where hinge parties have had significant influence. Generally, the population of Stockholm is (and has long been) well educated compared to other municipalities. In 2013, 55% of the adult population in Stockholm had some kind of tertiary education, while 11% had only a basic education (6 years in elementary school or 9 years in comprehensive school).⁵ Stockholm has also appraised independent educational alternatives more than most other municipalities. In 2014, Stockholm hosted 121 independent comprehensive schools and 71 independent upper secondary schools, whereas 145 comprehensive schools and 26 upper secondary schools were municipally run.⁶

Tierp is a small municipality, although it is not extremely sparsely populated. It is situated quite close to Uppsala and Gävle and about 150 km from Stockholm, but still in a basically rural part of Sweden. Tierp used to consist of seven different municipalities, but in 1974 they were merged into one large municipality, following a national reform aimed at reducing the number of municipalities in Sweden (see Wångmar, 2013). During the 20th century, the community of Tierp evolved to become the largest community in the area, but it is still not the undisputed centre of the municipal region. Compared to Stockholm, Tierp has a more even socio-economic distribution, with a relatively small share of wealthy inhabitants. Industry and farming are prominent in the region.⁷ Tierp as a region experienced the urbanisation effects differently from Stockholm. Whereas Stockholm experienced both periods of growth and decline, Tierp has stayed at a standstill; its population has stayed approximately the same as in the early 1960s.⁸ Tierp has politically been very stable. Since the merger in 1974, Tierp has been governed by a socialist majority. The level of education in Tierp is fairly low: 22% of all adults in 2013 had some kind of tertiary education, while 17% had only basic education.⁹ Finally, it is worth noting that all 11 schools in Tierp (one of which is an upper secondary school) are municipally run (2014).

Just by comparing Tierp with Stockholm with respect to size, location, socio-economic conditions and educational resources, it is obvious that these factors have substantially conditioned their municipal policies, including those concerned with planning and managing schools.

Educational infrastructure in the 1950s and 1960s¹⁰

The school reforms introduced in the 1950s and 1960s faced different types of educational infrastructure, due to the different conditions of the municipalities. The urban municipalities usually had a diversity of schools at different levels prior to the 1950s, while some rural municipalities only had elementary schools. The standardisation aims inherent in the reform bundle therefore could not successfully be met by implementing standard solutions that were too drastic.

As the capital of Sweden, Stockholm in the 1950s and 1960s – in comparison to other Swedish municipalities/cities – held a particularly strong position with respect to schools, although it was not the capital of higher education. The old universities of Uppsala and Lund for a long time were ascribed higher academic status than their counterpart, Stockholm University. On the other hand, Stockholm University as well as a number of specialised academic institutions in the capital city, such as the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), Stockholm Business School of Economics and the Medical University (KI), gained an increasing reputation for providing high-status education and research.¹¹ All of these academic or semi-academic institutions were founded in the 19th century or at the beginning of the 20th century.

When it comes to school education, Stockholm has a very long history. Some of the schools in Stockholm even had medieval roots, and since at least the 19th century, Stockholm offered a quite diverse set of options, including all kinds of school forms: either study-oriented or vocational and either publicly or privately run. Prior to 1958, municipal responsibility for schools in Stockholm was mainly restricted to elementary schools, girls' public schools, some vocational schools and a number of trial schools. Grammar schools were either nationally run or run by private owners. In other words, the parallel school system, which was to be replaced by a comprehensive school followed by a multi-tracked upper secondary school, held a strong position in the capital city. The national struggle between reform proponents and opponents which permeated the Swedish school debate in the 1950s was indeed a municipal concern in Stockholm.

The school reforms of the 1960s promised improved local conditions for education in Tierp. Few would argue

⁵SCB, 'Utbildningsnivå efter kommun och kön', 2013, www.scb.se.

⁶See Stockholms stad, 'Grundskola och grundskolskola', www.stockholm.se/ForskolaSkola/Grundskola/ and 'Gymnasieskola och gymnasieskolskola', www.stockholm.se/ForskolaSkola/Gymnasium/.

⁷SCB, Statistikdatabasen, www.scb.se [Sammanräknad förvärvsinkomst för boende i Sverige hela året (antal personer, medel- och medianinkomst samt totalsumma) efter region, kön, ålder och inkomstklass. År 1999 – 2012].

⁸SCB, 'Statistikdatabasen', <http://www.statistikdatabasen.scb.se> [Folk-mängden efter region, civilstånd, ålder och kön. År 1968 – 2013].

⁹SCB, 'Utbildningsnivå efter kommun och kön', 2013, www.scb.se.

¹⁰The empirical findings in the following sections are, in the Stockholm case, based on the pre-studies by Román (2011, 2013a, 2013b, 2014). The Tierp findings are based on our large collection of data from municipal school board protocols and attachments. We will generally not provide specific references in these sections.

¹¹Today Stockholm holds a strong national academic position, at least judging from international rankings. See for instance the Times World University ranking of 2013–2014, where KI and Stockholm University are the two highest-ranked Swedish universities (36 and 103). www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings/2013-14/world-ranking, [2014-09-29].

that this happened at the expense of a strong grammar school tradition, since that tradition was comparatively weak. Accordingly, the national school debate of the 1950s between reform proponents and opponents was not a major concern in any of the seven municipalities of the Tierp region. Before 1970, there was only one grammar school in Tierp leading to a lower secondary school exam and a number of vocational schools, but no upper secondary education to prepare students for university. The lower secondary grammar school in Tierp, established in 1905, was, until 1944, run by the municipality unlike the public grammar schools of Stockholm, which had generally always been nationally run. Some of the municipalities in the region hosted vocational schools. Most students finishing elementary schools either started working (at a local industry, on a family farm or in health and social care) or they enrolled in some vocational programme. A few attended the lower secondary grammar school in Tierp, followed in some cases by upper secondary grammar school studies, though not in the Tierp region.

National relations

Stockholm and Tierp have had very different ties to the national school policy arena, which is of course largely due to their structural and geographical differences. Stockholm, as the capital of Sweden, has had a close relation to the national policy arena but also a long, solid municipal history. Stockholm consequently has often been open, rapid and self-conscious when acting on national school policy initiatives. It has, on the one hand, long been keen to claim its self-determination and independence from national supremacy. Stockholm's elementary school system, for example, had its own local supervision instead of the regular national supervision to which most other Swedish municipalities had to adhere. Another example is the municipal research institute, which Stockholm established in cooperation with the Teacher Education Institute of Stockholm in the 1960s. On the other hand, Stockholm has been keen both to adopt national innovations in education at an early stage, and even to introduce new concepts and ideas which would later be spread nationally. Stockholm introduced the first 9-year schools in Sweden in the 1940s, and its large-scale school trials in the 1950s played an important role in launching the reforms of the 1960s (see section 2.5 below). Stockholm paved the way for these national reforms, and other reforms later on,¹² and thus it has been a reform pioneer. The rapid changes in Stockholm due to a fast population growth, especially during the 1940s and 1950s, helped push the reform ideas with a force that was arguably stronger than in most other parts of the country. In other words, Stockholm as a strong and

self-determined local policy actor has been a powerful exchanger of national reform ideas.

Tierp, in spite of being just 150 km away from Stockholm, represents another kind of national–local relationship, where the municipal school policy actors have generally had to await national approval and decisions before taking action. Tierp, representing the rural municipality, held a rather subordinate position in relation to interests at the national level. The implementation of the reforms of the 1960s in the Tierp region was to a large degree orchestrated by the National School Board and its regional administrative representatives, and was finally set by parliament and government decisions. The local policy actors' ability to claim their self-determination was limited, since they had weak resources and were busy carrying out a municipal merger completed in 1974.¹³ In short, Tierp had scarce administrative resources compared to Stockholm, which could act more autonomously both on the school reforms of the 1960s and the administrative reforms of the same era (and Stockholm did not carry out a major municipal reorganisation).¹⁴

In the case of Tierp and the reforms of the 1960s, it was not a question of national–local school policy exchange. To a large degree, Tierp school policy was supported and determined by national guidelines and directives, in combination with support and guidelines from the municipal association acting at a national level in order to promote municipal interests. Tierp had scarce resources to use for working out new ideas on how to organise and develop its schools. This does not imply that Tierp lacked local issues and initiatives, but they were mainly local and had only a minor impact at the national level.

Reform pace

The national–municipal relationship with regards to school governance and reform includes a temporal dimension. Stockholm took opportunities in the 1950s to try out and debate the pros and cons of the comprehensive school, and was determined in the 1960s to systematically launch the new reforms. In Tierp, the reform process practically did not start until the early 1960s, and the 9-year comprehensive school was not fully introduced until the late 1960s. The reforms of the 1960s met with positive political reactions in Tierp at an early stage. The national vision of a more uniform school was

¹³This parallel merger process included another kind of national–local interplay where Tierp was clearly subordinate. To achieve the municipal merger, the Swedish Municipal Association (and in the 1960s its predecessors) provided the necessary plans, information and courses required to complete the merger reform, including a new school administration.

¹⁴To illustrate this difference: Stockholm representatives played a very central role in the founding and development of the Swedish City Association, one of the two municipal associations preceding the Swedish Municipal Association founded in 1968 (Hayen, 2008). (The town of Tierp was part of the Swedish City Association, whereas the other six municipalities in the Tierp region belonged to the Swedish Rural Municipalities' Association).

¹²Later examples are the opening up for an independent school expansion in the 1980s and the reinstallation of an inspectorate in the 1990s.

basically embraced by all parties as a way to improve the general educational level and to attract more people to stay or move into the region. But they had to wait a long time before it was accomplished, partly because of their subordinate position described above, and partly because of internal disputes regarding school location.¹⁵

To conclude, Stockholm as a capital and a large city was faster to respond to school reform changes compared to a rural region like Tierp. New school organisation principles as well as new content and method ideals were generally introduced earlier in the large capital city, and with greater self-confidence. Thus it would be misleading to state that Stockholm as the large capital city has been more adaptive towards national school reforms than Tierp. Stockholm's quick responses to reforms also indicate that the capital city could make use of its well-established local educational resources, locally interpreting the national reform changes and eventually spreading some of those interpretations at a national level.). The small rural municipality, by comparison, experienced a

¹⁵In the 1960s, Stockholm put a lot of administrative effort into designing and establishing a powerful municipal school administration and delivering a variety of municipally run courses for the professional development of teachers (and in addition, teachers in Stockholm could take a variety of courses in the city run by other organisers). Tierp naturally did not possess very strong administrative resources. Prior to 1974, the small municipalities in the region had small school administrations, but cooperated within a mutual school association in order to prepare for the merger ahead. The merger of course in some ways strengthened the central school administration of the municipality, but according to the protocols, the central school administration remained fairly anonymous even in the 1970s. For instance, it took several years in the 1970s before the school administration of Tierp had its first official information sheet. And Tierp itself did not have much to offer when it came to professional development of teachers, at least not in the 1950s and 1960s. Of course its schools made recurrent efforts to provide professional development, for instance through thematic development days, which sometimes included invited lecturers. But such efforts were seldom municipally run. The teachers of Tierp generally had to travel to nearby cities for further education, and they had to apply for municipal financial support in order to participate in courses run either by the National School Board, a university, or some other organiser.

The expansion of independent schools is another example from a later period, which clearly illustrates differences in pace between the two municipalities. The improved financial conditions for independent schools introduced in the 1990s were again anticipated in Stockholm (see Román, 2013a, 2013b, 2014). At the end of the 1980s, municipal financial support for independent schools in Stockholm increased. Many school actors in Stockholm, with its long, unbroken history of hosting private schools, established a large number of new independent schools in the 1990s and the 2000s. Today, a special department of the Stockholm school administration handles supervision and information concerning independent schools. They have in a way become an integrated part of the municipal school body. Tierp, by contrast, has hosted only one or two independent schools, and they did not survive for long. Municipal school policy regarding independent schools in Tierp has mainly been restricted to referral verdicts concerning independent school applications in surrounding municipalities. In this case, Tierp has actively resisted implementing a national reform, a reversal of the approach it took towards the reforms of the 1960s. In both cases, the pace of reform was slower in Tierp than in Stockholm, but from the rural point of view the reasons behind it were quite different in the 1960s compared to the 1990s and 2000s. Tierp – probably like many other rural municipalities, especially those with strong and stable socialist majorities – has objected to the national incentive to affirm more independent schools, partly because that implies a relaxation of the unified school system, which Tierp's governing school politicians have claimed will decrease their students' educational opportunities.

delay in responding to the national reforms. It took time for the reform change to be implemented. Elementary schools continued to dominate in Tierp throughout the 1960s. According to the local school board protocols, when the 1960s reforms were finally implemented in Tierp, the process was not undertaken with a strong sense of self-confidence. It was more of a *fait accompli*, as the transformation was rather forcefully imposed on the municipality by the national authorities.

Educational efforts

In this section, we provide some examples of educational efforts in Stockholm and Tierp, which illustrate in greater depth the contrast between the scopes of action the two municipalities had when dealing with the 1960s reforms. Most of the examples concern Stockholm, since there were comparatively few distinct educational efforts in Tierp. Again we should stress that we are using clearly contrasting examples for the purpose of making our point. We have other cases – for instance, within in the field of communication technology – which are more complex in terms of differences and similarities.

Stockholm has indeed been a pioneer when it comes to picking up and introducing new reform ideas. Stockholm has a long history of school experiments, and school research and development, indicating a consistency over time; initiatives taken in Stockholm have affected national reforms rather than being affected by them, such as with the song classes at the *Adolf Fredrik elementary school, the 1947 schools* (the integrated junior grammar school) and *Pedagogiskt Centrum*, the municipal school research institute of Stockholm.¹⁶

In 1939, Stockholm had already introduced song classes within one of its 6-year elementary schools, Adolf Fredrik. To enter the classes starting at year 3, the young students had to pass a song test, but the test was open to all 9-year-olds in Stockholm. The song classes did not finish after year 6 but lasted three more years. The last 3 years led to a possible junior grammar school exam within the facilities of the elementary school. In fact, introduction of the Adolf Fredrik song classes (later renamed music classes) was the first school form in Sweden offering a 9-year integrated compulsory education. Later on the idea was modified by the municipal head of school into an 'in-built junior grammar school', which was introduced in Stockholm in 1947. The in-built junior grammar school worked as a buffer in the 1950s dispute over the pros and cons of replacing the old grammar school with a comprehensive school, followed by an upper secondary school. The junior grammar school substantially influenced the design of the final lower secondary school built in 1962 (*grundskolans högstadium*).

¹⁶The political debates in Stockholm on the trial schools of the 1950s and the song classes are described in Román, 2011. The history of the research institute is presented in Román, 2014.

The Adolf Fredrik music classes form perhaps the most consistent expression of the strong municipal educational drive in Stockholm. They started out as an experimental novelty, but in the midst of the reforms of the 1960s they had almost become an anomaly, since admission to the classes was selective. But they were popular and a very good municipal brand, so they survived into the 1970s and 1980s. In the 1980s, they were close to being dissolved, or at least displaced from the inner city, but they survived once again because of a strong back-up line (in terms of cultural capital). Further, at this point, the music classes worked as a vehicle for introducing increased educational variation, opening up for profile schools, alternative pedagogy and independent schools.

Another interesting Stockholm example is the municipal research institute Pedagogiskt Centrum, founded in the mid-1960s and lasting until the early 1980s. Stockholm in the 1960s in many ways mirrored national actions with respect to educational planning and development. Stockholm had an ambitious professional development programme for teachers, and every organisational and educational aspect of launching the new school forms (9-year comprehensive school, upper secondary education, adult education) was thoroughly investigated. The research institute also clearly reflected national efforts. The institute aimed to provide research closely connected to classroom activities, in order to make it useful for continuous school development. On taking a closer look at the institute's achievements, it seems it did not quite live up to the expectations people had for it, and eventually its justification was challenged. Critics argued that the research produced by the institute was addressing the academic world rather than the teachers. In order to be of municipal benefit, they argued, it would have to become more practice-oriented; otherwise, it would be just like any other national school research. The establishment of a municipal research institute was, in any event, another example of Stockholm paving the way for reform, in this case advocating decentralised school research at least a decade before school decentralisation became a major national policy concern.

The Tierp example is really a basic matter of school organisation, but from the standpoint of a rural region, a matter essential for educational development: the location of the upper part of the comprehensive school (a lower secondary school), and the location of an upper secondary school.¹⁷ Tierp had been a vital rural environment, at least during the first half of the 20th century, but in the 1960s it was a rather uncertain region divided into seven small municipalities. The community of Tierp had

evolved to become the administrative hub of the region, but it was not undisputed as the main town. The surrounding municipalities feared and sensed a negative development that threatened to make the northern parts in particular more and more peripheral. During the planning of the new merged municipality – a change that was met with mixed emotions – the location of schools was an important issue. Vendel, the most southern of the seven municipalities in the merged municipality, had already established a lower secondary school prior to the 1962 reform, and the community of Tierp was planning for another lower secondary school and was also the undisputed choice as the location of a new upper secondary school. But there was a prolonged struggle within the Tierp region concerning the location of a third lower secondary school in one of the northern municipalities. This posed a difficult dilemma.

For the three pre-merger municipalities in the north of the Tierp region, the establishment of a lower secondary comprehensive school locally was viewed as essential to their future aspirations. Providing 9 years of schooling locally, removing the need for long school bus transports, was seen as a key factor in order to attract people to stay and to move into the region, and thus stop the depopulation threatening the northern parts of the region. But they could not agree on where to locate it, and the depopulation prognosis worked as an argument against locating a lower secondary comprehensive school in the northern area. The construction of the 1962 comprehensive school presupposed a minimum size for lower secondary schools, since these schools were obliged to provide a variety of study options. The number of students in the northern region was considered too small. The National School Board decided to just allow one fairly large lower secondary school in the main town of Tierp, a school with about 700 students.

The examples above indicate substantial differences between the two municipalities: Stockholm made educational efforts in the 1950s and 1960s beyond organisation and beyond national demands. Tierp did not. This could in part be described as a difference in geographical justice from a national perspective¹⁸: the urban centre being privileged compared to the rural periphery (thus prompting the announced purpose of the 1960s reforms as the reduction of such regional differences with respect to educational opportunities). But our examples also illustrate a similarity in terms of geographical justice from a municipal perspective. Both the music classes in the 1960s and the 1980s and the trial schools of the 1950s became important school policy topics in Stockholm. In these

¹⁷These two issues were definitely major concerns for all of the school boards in the seven municipalities during the 1960s.

¹⁸Geographical justice is a concept in progress, which tentatively covers considerations on and consequences of school reform with regards to the geographical distribution of equal and/or fair educational opportunities.

political disputes, they all were treated as a matter of geographical justice. Their most justified location was at the centre of the debate. Was it an advantage or a disadvantage in the 1950s for students to live in a trial school area (or to live in a grammar school area)? Should the music classes stay in the inner city or should they be decentralised, in order to attract more suburban students? Just as in the Tierp case, school location as a vehicle/obstacle for optimising geographical justice was at stake. We find this fundamental aspect of school provision – the actual location of schools – to be crucial for our project.¹⁹ Municipal disagreements on school location have involved other actors besides school politicians, administrators and professionals, such as, in our cases, parental associations, media, prominent intellectuals and local industries. School location issues show that the complexity of municipal school governance is far from a new phenomenon. As said before, school policy making has always involved more actors than the ones officially appointed.

Transnational exchange

The transnational activities performed within our case municipalities are traced mainly by searching for municipal educational efforts, including international elements of some sort, such as introducing new subjects or study programmes with an international direction, starting immigrant education, arranging study trips to other countries, or hosting school visitors from abroad.²⁰

Transnational influences or exchanges were quite rare in Tierp during the 1950s and 60s. But there are some examples. When introducing English as a subject in the mid-1950s in grades 5–7, the schools in Tierp were short of competent teachers and had to rely on the use of English courses provided by national radio. These programmes soon became an important part of English instruction in the schools of Tierp, even after competent teachers had been recruited. Despite its proximity to Uppsala, Tierp continued to be challenged by a lack of competent teachers in foreign languages. When English was introduced as a mandatory school subject from year 4 in the 1960s, the shortage became even more acute. The municipal school boards had to take extensive measures for primary teachers to attend special courses in Junior English Teaching, arranged by the Regional Board of Education. Except for occasional visits by missionaries describing their work in Africa, or looking at the world

map during Geography lessons, the teaching in English seems to have been the predominant international strain in the Tierp schools during the 1950s and 1960s, judging from the protocols.

During the late 1960s and in the 1970s, employment immigration from Finland marked a new chapter in terms of internationalisation in Tierp. But despite recurrent information from the Regional Board of Education citing the need to provide adequate schooling for immigrant children, the Tierp school board(s) maintained a quite cautious approach, although they eventually adapted to the guidelines prescribed by the Regional Board.

Stockholm, in contrast, has held a more progressive attitude towards internationalisation, partly because Stockholm has acted as a role model for the Swedish education system as a whole. The Swedish school system in the 1960s and 1970s gained an international reputation for being the successful outcome of large-scale social engineering, and Stockholm soon became a popular destination for visits by international guests. During the 1960s and 1970s, people from all over the world came to Stockholm to witness the comprehensive school in action. The Stockholm school administration even set up a demonstration/trial school within their facilities, partly designed for the purpose of presenting the Swedish school to international guests. And although the Swedish school as a role model over time lost some of its attractiveness, Stockholm as a city has continued to work actively for increased internationalisation in schools. Striving for internationalisation has become part of a general policy statement to – once again – create a world-leading school ('En skola i världsklass' was the headline slogan of the Stockholm school policy programme of 2013).

Stockholm in the 1950s and 1960s naturally had a wider repertoire of skilled teachers when it comes to language instruction, including English, German and French, compared to Tierp. In 1971, *Skanstulls gymnasium* even offered Chinese as a third language (C-språk), on a trial basis. Unlike Tierp, where immigration was fairly limited, Stockholm had quite a diverse immigrant population early on. This has come to affect its schools in different ways. Although municipal immigrant education on a larger scale did not start until the 1970s, in the 1950s Stockholm already had a number of private schools with international origins and profiles. Some were founded after WW II (the Jewish Hillel School, the Estonian School, the Waldorf School) while others were rooted in the 17th and 18th centuries (the German School, the French School, the Catholic School). Together they contributed to laying the foundation for international profiling, both in independent and municipal schools. In the late 1970s, upper secondary programmes with an explicit international direction, like the International Baccalaureate, which in Stockholm started in a municipal school, began to expand

¹⁹Municipal receptivity towards independent schools, which we just touch upon briefly here but which have had significant importance during the last 30 years, is for instance closely connected to the school provision aspect.

²⁰In our project, communication technology development and international efforts comprise two separate empirical studies demonstrating specific educational efforts, although in this article we have excluded communication technology. It is worth noting, though, that the transnational exchanges and activities often coincide with efforts within the field of communication technology.

the educational diversity in Stockholm. Since then it has included a number of internationally oriented profile schools, study programmes and subject courses.

This brief and very preliminary comparison between Stockholm and Tierp has probably missed some of the transnational activities taking place in Tierp. Still, it illustrates a radical difference in terms of transnational exchanges, well rooted long before ‘the era of globalisation’ (which usually refers to a period starting in the 1980s, as the term was coined or at least spread). While the large capital city has explicitly striven for increased school internationalisation and thus has facilitated such developments, school internationalisation in the small rural municipality has been more reactive in relation to external pressure, be it recommendations from the Regional Board of Education or immigrants moving in. In short, Stockholm – but not Tierp – at an early stage made preparations to adapt to future global changes (i.e. taking part in a *world education culture* and qualifying as a *global city* attracting *creative classes*, to recall some of the concepts introduced in section 1.3).

Concluding arguments for a comparative and historical approach to local school policy

In this section, we will try to sum up the main contributions of this article based on our empirical analysis and theoretical approach. Our conclusions are structured along the following themes: 1) the history of local school policy, 2) the varying balance over time between national and local school governance, 3) the regional and local differences in school conditions and policies, and 4) school policy corresponding to transnational/global policy. And finally, 5) historical local school policy studies as a contribution to the development of curriculum theory as a field of research. These five themes put together reflect the comparative and historical approach which our project subscribe to.

The history of local school policy

First, we stress the importance of historical studies describing and analysing local school policy in great depth. This is of interest for a wide range of readers: researchers, policy makers at different levels, practitioners and a public audience. In-depth studies will provide better insight into shifting local school conditions. Of course, mainly studying documents at the municipal policy level, as we have done, will not tell us what happened in the classrooms, but will tell us some important things about the local school conditions. Municipal/local school policy actors (politicians and administrators) have planned and decided on a number of important school matters, either freely or by interpreting national guidelines and decisions. They have especially had a say when it comes to school location and plans to construct and/or restore school buildings and school yards. This very material aspect of

schooling is indeed a municipal concern (although the national school building regulations have been rigorous). Other such material aspects are school transportation, accommodation, heating, school meals and material supplies of different sorts. These material aspects make up the basic conditions for schooling. Arguably, such material conditions do matter for everyday life in school when carrying out curricular intentions, not least in rural areas. In addition, such issues are well suited for historically exploring the complexity of municipal school governance.

Varying balance over time between national and local school governance

In many countries, including Sweden, national and local governments have over the years explicitly shared the responsibility for their public schools. But in Sweden, as in other countries, the balance between national and local school governance has varied over time. Simply put, public elementary schools – and public girls’ schools – in Sweden were principally run by the municipalities (although, for the 19th century, it would be more accurate to say that they were run by parishes), whereas public grammar schools were nationally run. In the 1960s, school forms were replaced by a comprehensive school in combination with an upper secondary school, including both academic and vocational study programmes. A new kind of shared responsibility was introduced. In many ways, the national control over schools was strengthened, but at the same time municipal responsibility for schools was increased in other ways. The next major change was in the early 1990s, as the municipalities were exclusively made the principal organisers for public schools. On the one hand, responsibility for school resource allocation and for organising school activities is the responsibility of municipalities, but on the other hand, curricular and judicial guidelines and goals are set and controlled by national politicians and administrators. School renationalisation has become a popular political slogan in recent years, as a way to end the alleged municipalisation with regards to school governing. According to this critique, the increased municipal responsibility is a key factor in explaining contemporary problems in the Swedish school (mainly concerning student achievement and teacher performance and recruitment). From a research point of view, the political claim of renationalisation is interesting but somewhat confusing (see Jarl, 2012). Comparative in-depth studies of local school policy will definitely contribute to a more accurate and versatile understanding of the changing balance between national and local school governance.

Regional and local differences in school conditions and policies

A comparative study of local school policy will not only provide thicker and more nuanced descriptions and

analyses of how the balance between national and local school governance has changed over time but also show spatial variations. There are regional differences in school conditions and school policies. Arguably, variation in local school policy and school practice depends on the tightness of the national grip, so to speak. An excessive repertoire of detailed national regulations – perhaps like the school systems of the former Eastern European countries, which in some parts resembled the Swedish school system introduced in the 1960s – will lead to a quite uniform school system allowing for relatively few local initiatives. But not even the harshest national intervention could wipe out all the differences tied to geography, economy, demography and educational assets.

In other words, the local school policy response to national school policy differs among municipalities, due to their location and their socio-economic and educational conditions. This highlights the dilemma of equal educational opportunities and whether they require strong national uniformity and/or local sensibility for individual needs. The political shifts in Sweden in balancing national and local school governance to a large extent reflect changing attitudes towards the dilemma of equal educational opportunities. The school reforms of the 1960s, to which we have mainly restricted our empirical findings in this article, were fuelled by a strong support for establishing national school standards. The less extensive reform moves in the 1970s and 1980s in many ways counteracted the standardisation ideal, responding to a widespread and loud decentralisation movement. The reform shift in the 1990s opened up for increased municipal responsibility and a wider scope of action for local school actors in terms of deciding school content and school organisation. It also opened up for improved conditions for independent schools, and a more management-oriented school administration. Still, the shift in the 1990s paradoxically opened up for the next countermovement. The model restricting national governing to goal setting and outcome/output evaluation implied a stronger emphasis on outcome/output evaluation in due time. During the 21st century, a series of national tools for increased supervision and evaluation has been introduced and re-introduced, and the national curricular guidelines have been made more prescriptive. This oscillation between centralisation and decentralisation – possibly a Scandinavian speciality (see Hopmann, 2008, p. 431) – has, regardless of direction, been politically motivated as a means to make educational opportunities for students and regions more equal. But even today there are few historical studies on how the Swedish school reforms have affected regional and local differences regarding educational opportunities.

Local school policy corresponding to transnational/global policy

The balance between local and national school policy includes features that mirror the balance between national and international school policy. Different aspirations for internationalisation, through market mechanisms and through the political establishment of institutions, legislation, guidelines and so forth (and eagerly enforced at a discursive level by media) have been said to challenge national sovereignty. At the same time, our findings indicate that the extent of internationalisation differs between municipalities, depending on economic strength, demographic and educational conditions, and political leadership. The socio-historical as well as the political context of the specific municipality thus affects the ways in which internationalisation is facilitated and acted out. Our comparison between Stockholm and Tierp is also in line with Brenner's (2004) claim that the impact of international trend is more likely to influence and benefit the urban area than the rural region, and we may suggest – at this early stage of the project – that this difference in impact with regards to school and school policy has increased over time, just as Brenner and others have stated.

Still, from a historical perspective, the tension between urban and rural conditions and policy options is not new. In Sweden, the decades prior to the 1940s marked an urbanisation breakthrough, transforming the countryside from a place that was prosperous to one that was losing population and was allegedly dying. The national school reform project of the 1950s and 1960s to a large degree manifested more equal educational opportunities as a way to diminish the growing gap between urban and rural regions. Local access to 9-year comprehensive schools and at least regional access to upper secondary schools were important means to make rural municipalities more attractive.

But the urban municipalities like Stockholm, at least in the 1950s and 1960s, had a more elaborated educational infrastructure to start with, compared to their rural cousins (like Tierp), and possibly both their school policy actors (politicians) and school actors (principals, teachers and students) met national directives with a different sense of local self-determination. Different but not necessarily stronger: a small municipal region like Tierp, which only hosted elementary schools prior to the 1960s, might very well have been quite reform resistant due to its lack of complex infrastructure, provided that its school actors were strongly rooted in the elementary school tradition. Urban school policy and practice could possibly have deviated less from national policy than local school policy and/or school practice. Not least in the capital city of Stockholm, the modern urban settings seem to have been quite open to embracing experiments, new inventions and technologies. Of course, large cities have also harboured strong institutions and actors who have claimed an interest in the 'old school traditions'. But

at the same time the well-established infrastructure has presumably given large city school actors more room to experiment, refine and restore, and the same arguably holds true with regards to the international dimension of local school policy.

The changes in power balance between international, national and local policy that have taken place in the last 30 years have, according to some urban researchers, transformed a number of major cities in the world into global cities, as Brenner (1998) and Sassen (2001) put it. Global cities are, according to Sassen, contemporary cities that operate in global economic, political and cultural networks which are more important for them than their national policy context. This definition is partly reflected in Florida's (2002, 2006) concept of creative classes. According to Florida, the prosperity of cities and regions is dependent on their ability to attract creative people, including researchers, engineers, architects, designers and various kinds of artists. The creative class, Florida claims, is becoming the new aristocracy. To attract this group, a city or a region has to allow individuality, diversity and open-mindedness and to reward competence. In short, creative regions and cities – regardless of where they are located in the world – have more in common with each other than with regions and cities that are still based on linear hierarchical relations and skills rooted in the industrial era.

Whether Stockholm – being fairly small in a world perspective – would qualify as a global city attracting the creative classes is perhaps an open question, although it does fulfil many of the requirements listed by Brenner (1998, 2004), Sassen (2001) and Florida (2002, 2006). Our point here is rather to emphasise the need for historical and comparative local studies of rural and urban changes in a global perspective in our case concerning school and school policy, and not just studies investigating urban globalisation and urban governance as contemporary phenomena. In other words, we want to pose the question: To what extent are the observed local changes in Swedish school policy and school practice supporting post-industrial restructuring theories? Has the national impact on local school policy really declined, as government been replaced by governance? The national government's role in a governance regime of today may of course be different from the government role of yesterday's government regime, but it would be misleading to describe it as the rise and fall of the national state. Or as Pierre (2011) puts it: 'it is equally clear that even today government is a key actor – if not the key actor – in governance' (p. 19).

Contribution to the development of curriculum theory

The research field of curriculum theory has, in Scandinavia, developed in close connection with the emergence

of national school reforms. Accordingly, the theory to some extent originated as a top-down structural model, taking changes in socio-economic and cultural conditions and their consequences for national school policy as its point of departure. Curriculum theory in the Scandinavian tradition clearly touches the classical didactic questions 'What?', 'How?' and 'Why?', but from a socio-historical system perspective rather than from a classroom perspective. Consequently, the socio-historical 'why?' question is emphasised. As the name suggests, curriculum in a narrow sense (curricular agreements and arrangements through politically decided curricular objectives and guidelines and subject syllabi) are considered to be crucial for schooling in curriculum theory. The school ideal of a certain era is to some extent manifested in national regulations and guidelines. But a wider definition of curriculum takes into account a series of discursive policy actions by a number of actors within different school policy-related practices: national, municipal, local and transnational. National regulations and guidelines of course are imposed on schools and municipalities more or less forcefully, but it is definitely not a top-down nor a one-way sender–transmitter relationship. As we have tried to show, municipal school policy actors at schools respond to, interpret and obstruct national decrees in different ways, and so do the local school actors.

The varying municipal and local responses (positive, negative or indifferent) to national decrees represent, if looked at from another angle, a major vehicle for future national reforms, where of course some actors and institutions will be more successful than others. In fact, this is where the transnational dimension becomes very relevant. All the educational transfers taking place in the last 100 years are not only a matter of declared and silent borrowing and lending between nations or between nations and international federations (cf. Steiner-Khamsi & Waldo, 2012; Waldo, 2009). They are also a matter of national and transnational borrowing and lending between federations, regions and cities, processes which in turn affect national education policy. This is why historical studies of local school policy and practice are crucial for exploring different dimensions within the field of curriculum theory, not least the transnational dimension.

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